

Contributions to the Profession: The World Classroom

Few IFT members were coached by Bear Bryant and had General Chuck Yeager as his copilot. Few were honored on the halftime football field for outstanding diversity achievements or have a library in the Philippines named in his honor. Fewer yet wrote a Food Science Sourcebook (1600 pages) and gave free access to food science students over the internet. Perhaps none are as humble and have a global record of advancement of our profession as this IFT fellow nominee.

A freshman knee injury refocused quarterback Herbert Wood Ockerman's collegiate football goals into scientific goals. Nobody knew at the time this would lead to a lifetime of significant contributions to the advancement of food science. Those lives directly improved by Ockerman include 184 graduate students and visiting professors, and countless undergraduates.

The food science scholarly literature grew with a robust 223 scientific journal publications, 129 books and book chapters, 280 congress proceedings papers, for a grand total of 1,955 publications from the desk of Professor Ockerman.

Ockerman is well known for his research in muscle biology. He was the first person to produce germ free muscle tissue in a natural, not denatured state. This was such a significant advance that the Battelle Research Institute purchased the tissue at \$400 per pound in 1970, to explore canning without a heat treatment, an early foray into non thermal processing of low acid foods.

An intriguing technology is tumbling of meat, a process successfully transported from Europe to the U.S. when Ockerman sent a student to the Netherlands to figure out how this secret system worked. It involves forming glue-like proteins that make a solid appealing tissue, resulting in a quality value added product. Today, many pork products, such as deboned hams, are based on this technique. When used to cure meats, processors report a four-fold increase in profit.

Herb Ockerman's passion for food stretches far beyond his work as a professor of meat science. This educator has dedicated 49 years

in academia to promoting food and agricultural studies in diverse areas of the world. IFT bestowed its International Achievement Award to Herb in 1998 based on his global reach.

During the last decade Ockerman excelled at encouraging innovative approaches to learning about agriculture. Along with introducing American students to diverse cultures

through study abroad, Ockerman is dedicated to helping international students. He was advisor to 98 international graduate students from 35 countries and 86 post-doctorate and visiting scholars from 25 countries. *"He knows no boundaries when it comes to giving support and help to international students so that they realize the full potential of their educational and life experience,"* wrote a nominator for a successful 2010 Distinguished Diversity Enhancement Award, now in its 26th year. Herb selflessly reinvested the \$1200.00 prize into his international book program. But Herb did not forgo the ceremony, waving from the field at the Ohio State versus Purdue

"Not only has Ockerman helped educate students he will never meet, he's taught a lesson to those at home: One person can change many lives"

Editor, the Columbus Dispatch, December 9, 2010

halftime ceremony honoring all five 2010 Distinguished awardees. This was a fitting tribute to a person who played the field 50 years earlier while running an offense for **Coach Paul (Bear) Bryant**.

Ockerman creatively finds current ways to promote food and agriculture education. He sends a daily listserv to his international alumni providing each with meat industry news. He provides educational information to several international students' communities.

In a most impactful project, Ockerman collects and distributes books to worldwide university libraries. To-date book donations have an estimated value of more than \$500 million. This is based on the price of books if sold not donated, and totals 1500 separate shipments to more than 350 global destinations.

The philanthropy began in Brazil, where he visited students and noticed there were no books. To remedy that, Herb began visiting three bookstores a day, mostly used bookstores, and purchased books that would "fit into a school or university library," Ockerman said. He also gets donations from Half Price Books, Ohio State and fellow faculty who routinely shed books.

Mark Maxwell, manager of Half Price Books, Columbus Ohio, said the store gives Ockerman books that would be unsellable and end up in a landfill. "A 5-year-old textbook isn't marketable to anyone here but it's useful to people in places like Guatemala and Bangladesh," says



Maxwell. Sometimes Ockerman finds stacks of books on his porch from anonymous donors.

The books he donates aren't limited to food science. He sends books in all scholarly areas, including math, philosophy and medicine. Ockerman cleans and boxes them in his garage. Heavy copy-paper boxes get stacked 15 high, a 4 hour per day labor of literary philanthropy.

He ships about 36,000 books at a time at his personal expense. To load the cargo container, he calls on students, neighbors, the bookstores and anyone who will

help. Ockerman sends them to Turkey, Taiwan, Argentina, Spain, China, Morocco, Brazil and the Philippines.

Cavite State University in the Philippines was so grateful that it named its library **Ockerman Hall** in 2008. They hired 15 people for more than six months to catalog and barcode every book in the shipment. "This library is six stories tall, and before I gave them books, they only had half of one floor with books," Ockerman said. "Now it's full."

He named his program the Frances J. Ockerman International Book Endowment, after his wife who died of lung cancer. "He credits his late wife with a lot of his motivation," said Mary Kay Pohlschneider, a food science department lecturer and one of Ockerman's former students. "He always said the world is your classroom, and that is definitely the motto he's lived by."



Honors and Awards

It might be a cliché to say someone has too many awards to list, but this is the case. His web page of international awards totals 100 and his international activity spans all continents of the world.

<http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~profock/inthonor.w.htm>

Several unsolicited awards like the Cavite University Ockerman Library are meaningful. Highlights include the 1998 IFT International Achievement Award; an honorary degree from Wyższa Szkoła Rolniczo-Leśniczo-Żywnościowa, University, Poland and an **honorary Ph.D. in Humanities** from Cavite State University Philippines in 2008 (photo).

A letter dated December 7, 2010 from the President of a recognized Taiwan university shows global impact. *“Dah-Yeh University will soon have our 21st Anniversary on Dec 19”* writes President Wu Dong-Seng. *“It is my greatest honor to invite you to visit our university during this occasion and to receive the **medal of honor** at an award ceremony specially held for you.”*



Any ten year snapshot of Herb's career is meritorious. But during the last ten years he made exemplary contributions to the profession and several domestic recognitions affirm this. The 2010 Distinguished Diversity Enhancement Award is most recent, but just last year he was named a **Kentucky Colonel** by Governor Steve Beshear. This is the highest honor awarded by the Commonwealth of Kentucky to individuals with noteworthy accomplishments and outstanding service. Just two years ago he earned a certificate of appreciation from the US Department of Labor.

A **Phoenix Pentagon award** shows the special regard his advisees have for him. During the confusion of the horrific 9/11/2002 terrorist attack, Herb helped locate a former student, Julie Marie Carrier, who was in the Pentagon. During the Phoenix rebuilding project, surviving DOD employees received a small replica of the Pentagon with the impact outlined, and were asked to give it to someone who made a difference on 9/11. Julie, a former Miss Virginia and popular author of *“Chicken Soup for the Soul”* awarded her Phoenix Pentagon to Herb.

Evidence of leadership

A Google search for Herb Ockerman yields 20,500 cites, but most important, a search of IFT.ORG yields 61 current cites. Ockerman actively advances the profession and scholarship by way of IFT.

Ockerman's laboratory produced two national secretaries of agriculture, a college president, several deans, and at one time four deans of Agriculture were from his lab. On this list are many university professors, several owners of food companies, and several directors of food research institutes. Many visiting scholars now continue promotion and career progression with his guidance.

Ockerman recently sent a doctoral student, Lopa Basu, to Rome to work at FAO. She was named an ambassador to her home country and at age 23, this was a remarkable achievement. Lopa wrote *“Dr. Ockerman was also instrumental in arranging for me to be a judge at the latest 2010 World Food Prize competition where I got to network with many current and past laureates, famous NGO's,*

leaders, and government/educational administrators.” Ms. Basu may be the first student **World Food Prize juror** in history; an outcome of Ockerman’s effective and caring mentorship of future leaders.

Ockerman contributed 11 of his 1st author books to the OSU knowledge bank giving students and the public free access, including the comprehensive 1600 page **Food Science Sourcebook**.

<https://kb.osu.edu/dspace/simple-search?query=ockerman&submit=Go> Several more books are in the pipeline. He has a passionate desire to give through education.

Service to IFT

Herb is a long time professional member of IFT, since 1973. He is active within the Ohio Valley IFT regional section, is a member of the Canadian IFT, and participates in IUFoST. He is extremely active with ICoMST (International Congress of Meat Science and Technology). He summarizes papers from this congress for three food organizations. Ockerman served on confidential IFT Awards Juries such as the International Award Jury. This relatively thankless behind the scenes service to IFT fits Herb well, as he is modest and takes joy in the achievements of others.

Professional History

- Professor, Ohio State University 1971-present. Global impact on food science profession.

- Associate Professor, Ohio State University, 1966-1971. Impact on meat science profession.
- Assistant Professor, Ohio State University, 1961-1966. Impact on meat science scholarship.
- North Carolina State University Assistantship 1958-1961
- University of Kentucky Teaching Assistant 1958
- United States Air Force, Aircraft Commander, navigation training and test pilot, 1955-1958.

Training aviators navigation in the Bermuda Triangle for two years gave



A shipping container for books arrives at the home of Herb Ockerman for another global shipment. Neighbors rarely complain but often help load.

this IFT Fellow nominee an academic compass that proved accurate over decades of achievements. **General Chuck Yeager** recalls being Ockerman’s copilot-- we are fortunate that both men stayed out of the Triangle waters. Today Ockerman continues to give back as an active participant in the **Honor Flight**, which transports WWII veterans to the Washington DC memorial.

Thank you for considering the stellar contributions to the profession of food science by Herbert Wood Ockerman.
