

EDITORIAL



Daniel Y.C. Fung, James M. Jay, and Nelson A. Cox: “The Three Musketeers” of Applied Food Microbiology

The Iconic Dr. James Monroe Jay

It was indeed a very sad day for me to receive the news of the passing of Dr. James M. Jay (1927–2008), one of the most beloved food microbiologists of all times. I stopped my work and reflected on the life of this extraordinary scientist, friend and colleague.

I consider Dr. Jay a true pioneer of food microbiology and the father of modern food microbiology. Before Dr. Jay, several giants of dairy bacteriology and meat/poultry microbiology had graced the field of applied food microbiology in the world. The publication of his classic text book *Modern Food Microbiology* (1970, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, NY) defined his unique contribution and position in the field of food science and food microbiology.

I used Dr. Jay’s book as the text book for my food microbiology course when I started teaching at the Pennsylvania State University in 1969–1970 school year. That book and subsequent editions and updated versions with other experts have touched the lives of thousands and tens of thousands of students, scholars, faculty members, professionals, microbiologists, food scientists, researchers, etc., all over the world to this very day.

The first time I met Dr. Jay was at the first Food Microbiology Research Conference held in the Allerton Castle in Monticello, IL in 1972. It was a

beautiful setting where most of the active food microbiologists of the day got together to discuss important issues of food microbiology without reservation and repercussions. It was a free-for-all discussion and debate conference – no proceedings and written records of the deliberations were kept or produced and no cameras, tape recorders, TVs or any electronic recording devices were allowed. Participants could only use pens, pencils and papers and their brains for record keeping. It was truly a great conference series from the very beginning and it has been in existence for many decades.

The gorgeous Allerton Castle was the ideal place for the meeting. All the participants stayed in the castle compounds with separate areas for boys and girls. The formal rose gardens, fountains, ponds, trees and luxurious lawns were meticulously kept and enjoyed by all. The abundant food and endless flow of drinks were fabulous.

Inside the castle, there were many impressive rooms and lovely parlors with exquisite furniture and huge antique oil paintings, and then there was a grand piano. Being a pianist, I could not help but to play some tunes. Suddenly, behind me, a deep powerful baritone voice started to resonate in the air along with my music. I looked back and saw a portly gentleman singing to my tunes, with a cigar still in the corner of his mouth!! I stopped and politely started to stand up to introduce myself but he said, “Sit down, sit down, young man let us have some more duets.”

So, that was how I met Dr. Jay. We became great friends for almost 40 years and have interacted in national and international meetings all over the world. I will miss him for a long, long time and maybe, somehow in another space and time, we can meet again. I will play the piano and he will sing again, probably without the cigar.

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Editor