



Spotlight
on Honoured
ISHS Members

> Jules Janick

Position

James Troop Distinguished Professor
in Horticulture, Purdue University,
West Lafayette, Indiana, USA

ISHS honour

Fellow and Honorary Member

1. Tell us a bit about yourself (hometown, current locale, family, hobbies, community involvement).

I was born in New York City in 1931 and lived there until I entered Cornell University at the age of 16. My graduate studies were carried out at Purdue University and I joined the staff in 1954 when I received my PhD degree. I have lived in West Lafayette, Indiana, ever since. However, I spent two years in Brazil, as part of a Purdue-Brazil project from 1963-1965 and had sabbatical leave or assignments at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, University College London, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna in Pisa, and the Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II Complex Horticole in Agadir, Morocco.

I met my wife Shirley at a high school junior prom in 1946 at which I found I preferred my friend's date to mine. I am the proud father of Peter (radiologist) and Robin (a lawyer for the Federal Judiciary) and between them I have four over-achieving grandsons. My hobbies are drawing and writing doggerel and song lyrics.

2. What got you started in a career in horticultural science?

I spent summers in Lake Oscawana, Putnam County, New York State, where my parents owned a summer cottage, and I tended a small garden. I was entranced watching my tomatoes grow. Looking back, that small garden turned out to be a key event in my professional career. I did not see myself as a doctor, lawyer, or engineer and very early in life decided on a career as a horticultural scientist/plant breeder. Farm practice experience was a requirement at the time to get accepted into the College of Agriculture at Cornell University and so I worked on farms in New York State for the



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> Jules in China where he served as consultant on loquat breeding.

Victory Farm Corps, starting in the summer of 1945, to help win the war and to start me on my quest. It worked, we won the war in my first year and I was accepted at Cornell.

The first summer on a chicken farm and the second on a dairy farm convinced me that horticulture was the path for me! My career path never wavered. I took all the plant breeding and genetics courses at Cornell as an undergraduate and entered graduate school at Purdue University, the home of the boilermakers, in January 1951. Thus, I have been at this institution for 66 years and am still working full time, although the retirements of my graduate students are sending me strong signals.

3. Give a brief overview of your career/achievements.

My MS and PhD theses involved the genetics of sex determination in spinach on the basis of some seed left by a former professor, Albert P. Lorz. My PhD thesis impressed my major professor, E.C. Stevenson, and I was offered an instructorship as a fruit breeder at Purdue upon receiving in 1954. Again I was fortunate to join a collaborative productive program on scab resistant apple breeding and extended this to pear. This program has released over 20 cultivars of apple and I have released three pears, a crack-resistant tomato cultivar in Brazil (with Homer Erickson), a tissue culture derived pelargonium (with Robert Skirvin), and a late blooming arugula (with Mario Morales). With my graduate students, research was carried out on anthocyanin studies in eggplant, plant population interactions, artemisinin production, and tissue culture studies including somaclonal variation, somatic embryogenesis, synthetic seed, and in vitro flowering. Early in my career I was able to pursue my interests in the history of horticulture with special emphasis

on iconography. I have explored Caravaggio's fruits, the plants of the Cupid and Psyche ceiling paintings of Raphael Sanzio and festoons by Giovanni Martini da Udine that decorate the residence of Agostino Chigi, now known as the Farnesina palace in Rome, the vegetables and fruits of Juan Sánchez Cotán, the strange 16th century manuscript *Histoire Naturelle des Indes* (The Drake Manuscript), crop origins (cucurbits, nightshades, carrots, milkweed), plants of the Taj Mahal, the unicorn tapestries, and illustrated herbals based on Pedanius Dioscorides. I now am immersed in unraveling the Voynich manuscript with my friend and colleague Arthur O. Tucker. It has been a pleasure to be able to combine my interest in horticulture, art, and history.

Throughout the years I have taught a number of courses including genetics, plant breeding, and plant propagation. With Anna Whipkey, my longtime associate, I presently teach History of Horticulture and Tropical Agriculture online with a combined total of 500 students per year.

4. What do you consider were your greatest achievements?

My greatest achievement is the success of my children and grandchildren but it is clear they have succeeded in spite of me. Professionally, my greatest success has been as a writer and editor. Although I had never enrolled or taught the introductory horticulture course, early in my career I convinced two colleagues, Charles Hess and Ken Johnson, to coauthor a college textbook, *Horticultural Science*. They soon dropped out, but I completed it myself. Published in 1963, it proved to be a fortunate career move. The book was well received and went into four editions and was translated into many languages. It was later expanded into a textbook entitled *Crop Science: An Introduction to World Crops*, coauthored with



› Jules with his first love, Cleopatra, working on a farm in 1945 for the Victory Farm Corps.



› 'GoldRush' apple, one of the outstanding selections of the scab-resistant apple breeding program.



› Jules and Shirley, son Peter, and daughter Robin, at a gala celebrating Jules' 65 years at Purdue.

Robert Schery, Frank Woods, and Vernon Rutan. On the basis of these books I became editor of *HortScience* and later took on the *Journal of the American Society for Horticultural Science*. I discovered I had a knack for editing and at one time I was editing four journals simultaneously. I became an inveterate editor of books and proceedings including volumes in fruit breeding, and a series of *New Crops Proceedings*, *ISHS Acta* and *Scripta Horticulturae*, and various books for ASHS. I proposed that ASHS put out an annual review series but a committee decided there was not enough material, a decision with which I profoundly disagreed, and I founded and edited *Horticultural Reviews* (1979) and then *Plant Breeding Reviews* (1983). I consider these two series my most outstanding accomplishment. In 2016, after a combined total of 84 volumes, I turned the editorship of *Horticultural Reviews* to Ian Warrington and *Plant Breeding Reviews* to Irwin Goldman but remain a member of the Editorial Boards. Partly as a result of my career as editor of journals and books I received honorary degrees at four universities: The University of Bologna (1990), Technical University of Lisbon (1994), Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2007), and The University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca, Romania, (2010). In 2009, I was inducted in the ASHS Hall of Fame. That little garden of my childhood had unforeseen consequences.

5. Did you encounter difficulties along your career path and how did you deal with them or how did you turn them into opportunities?

As common to many professors, I am a worrier and anxiety-prone. Many of my shortcomings were made up for my graduate students; especially noteworthy were Wayne Sherman,

E.C. Tigechehaar, Richard Fery, Chi Won Lee, Harrison Hughes, Robert Skirvin, Richard Bell, Ralph Scorza, Sherry Kitto, Antonio Figueira, and Jorge Ferreira. Three of them earned best paper award for their PhD papers. Postdocs and collaborators included Paul Pfahler, Jack Ellis, Muneo Iizuka, Valerie Pence, Dan Wright, Halina & Andrzej Kononowicz, and Jehoshua Saranga. I have had close collaborations and interactions with colleagues including J.R. Shay, E.B. Williams, Harry Paris, Christine Daunay, Irwin Goldman, Rodomiro Ortiz, and Kim Hummer. My international experiences have been particularly rewarding and I treasure my collaboration and friendship with Carlos Portas and Antonio Monteiro of Portugal, Silviero Sansavini of Italy, Shunquan Lin of China, Eliezer Goldschmidt of Israel, A. Ayekin Polat of Turkey, and Radu Sestras of Romania. I have visited about 50 countries, one of the joys of being a Professor in Horticulture.

6. Tell us about one funny/exciting/interesting experience that happened to you during your career.

I had one unusual experience that I now consider humorous. When in Brazil I had to teach in Portuguese but language facility was not one of my strong points. My first course was Seed Production, a branch of horticulture of which I was ignorant at the time. Somehow I managed to teach a subject I did not know in a language I could not speak. I persevered and that gave me confidence that I could do anything if I set my mind to it and work hard.

7. What made you become a member of ISHS and why did you keep the membership? What contribution or role has ISHS played in your career?

I joined ISHS to attend the annual meeting in Brussels in 1962 and have become a loyal

member ever since. I have attended most of the Congresses. I represented the United States on the Council and had the privilege of serving eight years on the Board and was in charge of publications. I relished being editor of *Chronica Horticulturae* and working with Jozef Van Assche.

8. What advice would you give to young people interested in a career in horticulture/horticultural science?

Follow your passion wherever it leads. And I have remained passionate about horticulture: food for body and soul.

9. What are the most interesting new roles or opportunities you see emerging in the future within horticultural science?

Clearly horticulture has tremendous opportunities including plant breeding and genetics; controlled environment agriculture; the discovery of new foods, new uses, new ornamentals; development of new sustainable systems; and advancing and promoting the health aspects of horticulture crops, either as nutritional sources or new medicines. Finally, horticulture must always be considered as part of our humanity. In the 19th century, horticulture was considered as a stepchild of botany, and fought to be recognized as a science in academia. In the 20th century, horticulture struggled to find its place at the table of agricultural development where the emphasis was on calories rather than nutrition. Although, horticulture is the source of beloved foods, ornamental plants, turf, shade trees, medicines and beverages, it now has an image problem because in the mind of young people it is associated (incorrectly) with low skilled jobs and low salaries. This is our new challenge. 🍏