

# Louis Leibovitz

*May 29, 1921 — August 22, 1998*

Professor Louis Leibovitz, 77, died Saturday, August 22, 1998, in Falmouth, Massachusetts.

He was born on May 29, 1921, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he lived until he finished high school. He attended Pennsylvania State University from 1939-42 and then spent the next four years in the U.S. Army. From 1946-50, he was a student in the Veterinary College at the University of Pennsylvania and received his V.M.D. degree in 1950. He was a Doctoral candidate at Rutgers University but withdrew prior to receiving the Ph.D. degree due to the death of his major professor, Frederick Beaudette.

In 1963, after several years in private practice, and ten years as a Professor of Poultry Pathology and Director of the Poultry Diagnostic Laboratory at the Delaware Valley College in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, Lou began an association with Cornell University that placed him in three different locations. The first years were spent in Eastport, L.I., where he was a Field Veterinarian at the Cornell University Duck Research Laboratory. During his stay in that laboratory, Dr. Leibovitz made many contributions to avian parasitology and various diseases of ducks. His foremost contribution in this area was the first diagnosis of duck plague (duck virus enteritis) in North America coupled with extensive studies on the biology of this disease in domestic and wild waterfowl. He also described a new coccidial species in ducks.

In 1973, he was appointed Associate Professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine and moved his family to Ithaca. He was promoted to Professor in 1982. His major activity during his stay in Ithaca was the development and implementation of a comprehensive program of teaching, research and service in the area of aquatic animal medicine. Lou established a fish diagnostic laboratory and quietly carved a niche for his work and a clientele for his services, which were supported by the New York State Sea Grant Institute. The multimillion-dollar shellfish industry was having serious problems with disease and welcomed his help with clam and oyster propagation. He guided the graduate studies of several students who went on to serve the fish and shellfish industries. The tropical fish industry also used his services.

In 1981, after eight years in Ithaca, he undertook a “temporary” assignment in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. It came about as a result of a cooperative program between Cornell University and the University of Pennsylvania with support from the National Institutes of Health and the agreement of Professor Calnek who “loaned” Dr. Leibovitz to the program for one year to get it started. The intent was to establish an aquatic animal diagnostic

laboratory that could monitor the health of marine animals used by scientists conducting research at the Marine Biology Laboratory. Another goal was to develop disease-free and genetically defined stocks of marine animals for research purposes. This entirely new initiative was so successful that it was considered important for him to remain there and he thus continued his career as Director of the Marine Animal Health Laboratory until his retirement in 1989. During this period, he remained a member of the Cornell faculty.

Dr. Leibovitz took a sabbatic leave in France during the 1980-81 academic year, while serving as a Research Consultant to the French Government Shellfishing Agency. During the same year, he served as a Consultant to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In 1985, he was honored by receiving the 1985 Centennial Award of the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, and the 1985 Special Achievement Award from the Alumni Association of the same institution. He was an editorial board member for three scientific journals and belonged to seven professional associations. Over his career, he published nearly fifty scientific papers.

Lou was a scientist with insatiable curiosity and contagious enthusiasm for whatever he undertook. As problems presented themselves, he often opened totally new areas of research. He even became interested in starfish diseases, much to the dismay of the scallop and clam hatcheries that saw little need for studying the diseases of a major predator. In a community as diverse and knowledgeable as Woods Hole, many national and international disease problems were presented for solution. Some of these were: shell deformity in hard clams; a new disease of captive squid; a new disease of Pacific oysters; diseases of the horseshoe crab; and diseases of elasmobranchs. The best tribute to the success of his program is the fact that upon his retirement, it was deemed essential by both the Marine Biology Laboratory and the National Institutes of Health, who funded his work, that the project be continued.

Each year in May, when veterinary students arrived for the summer Aquavet Program, Lou would beam with excitement anticipating his interaction with them in the laboratory and classroom. His classes were infused with puzzling real problems requiring real solutions. Lou gave freely of his time while managing an increasing diagnostic load in a busy laboratory. His greeting of visitors was genuine and his enthusiasm for the work at the lab continued until the day he retired.

Work was all consuming for him, but he still found time for some woodcarving. He had considerable artistic talent and he used it effectively in preparing his own drawings of parasites and other objects for his publications.

When he retired on December 31, 1988, he was promoted to Professor Emeritus of Aquatic Animal Medicine in recognition of his many and varied accomplishments and contributions to the mission of Cornell University.

Lou was married to his loving wife, Anne, for 46 years. She predeceased him by less than three weeks. They are survived by two sons: Daniel Leibovitz, of Hilliard, Ohio, and Henry Leibovitz, of North Kingston, Rhode Island. Both Lou and Anne always became part of the community in which they lived and Woods Hole was no exception. Visitors to their home were always welcome and they enjoyed hearing about the success of others.

*Howard E. Evans, Julius Fabricant, Bruce W. Calnek*