

Louise Jane Daniel

October 28, 1912 — October 18, 2001

Louise Jane Daniel was born on October 28, 1912 in Philadelphia along with her twin sister, Marcia. She majored in Chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 1935. She received her M.S. degree in Biological Chemistry from Penn State in 1936, and her Ph.D. degree in Nutrition and Biochemistry from Cornell University in 1945. She taught Chemistry and Physics from 1936-42 at Penn Hall Junior College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. After finishing her Ph.D. degree, she worked as a Research Associate in the Cornell Poultry Department from 1945-48, and then joined the Cornell faculty as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Nutrition in 1948. She was promoted to Associate Professor in 1951 and to full Professor of Biochemistry in 1958. She retired in 1973, as an Emeritus Professor. Louise's major hobbies were bird watching and gardening. Louise continued to live in Ithaca until 1985, when she moved to California where she lived with her sister. Louise died on October 18, 2001 in Carmel, California.

Despite the major difficulties facing women scientists in the first half of the Twentieth Century, Louise carried out pioneering research on the role of vitamins focusing on folic acid and vitamin B12, often collaborating with Dr. Louise Gray in the U.S. Plant Soil and Nutrition Laboratory. She trained twelve Ph.D. students, several of whom joined the Cornell faculty and published forty-one papers.

Louise's first love was teaching, at which she excelled. She taught Introductory Biochemistry in the College of Home Economics (Human Ecology) from 1948-58 and General Biochemistry in the College of Agriculture from 1958-73. In addition, she taught a biochemistry laboratory course from 1948-64, and wrote a laboratory textbook with Professor Leslie Neal in 1967. Finally, she taught an upper level course on the Biochemistry of Vitamins every other year from 1955-73. Despite her general biochemistry course being scheduled at 8:00 a.m., her lectures were always well attended. Each year she would consult with faculty specializing in different areas of biochemistry to make certain her course was up to date. In 1964, Louise took a sabbatical leave touring European universities to study their biochemistry courses and teaching methods.

Her retirement led to a major change in biochemistry teaching. It took six people to replace her as her course was split into an auto tutorial course, BioSci 330, and a lecture course, BioSci 331. Her longtime associate in teaching, Dr. Joan Griffiths, wrote:

"I knew Dr. D for several decades, first as one of her graduate students, as her teaching assistant, and as a friend. She was the best educator I have encountered anywhere, but she was more than that. She was the consummate professional. Dr. D never refused to serve on committees and was always available for her students. Her research was impeccable and she required the same precision from her graduate students. I feel as if an era has ended."

Louise was honored for her teaching by being voted the Professor of Merit in 1970 by the graduating seniors in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The Alpha Chapter of Sigma Delta Epsilon/Graduate Women in Science also honored her in 1988. Louise was such a warm and friendly person, and will be missed by all who knew her.

George Lust, Ross MacIntyre, David B. Wilson