LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From Richard H. Kruse

Dr. Emmett Barkley has done a masterful job submitting three papers (Volume 1, Number 1, 1996; Volume 2, Number 1, 1997; and Volume 2, Number 2, 1997) that were in Dr. Wedum’s files that he never published and I would like to thank him for the introductory commentary he provided for each. As an “old timer” of 20 years in Industrial Health and Safety at Fort Detrick, and 42 years attending Biological Safety Conferences, I had the honor and privilege of working for and with Dr. Arnold G. Wedum. Many newcomers to ABSA never had the privilege of knowing Dr. Wedum and his remarkable wisdom. At Safety Conferences he never criticized, but in his indomitable way, praised and encouraged the speaker. He was proud of the Biological Safety Conferences as he enjoyed the fellowship and learning what other individuals were doing. He did not believe in cliques, he constantly credited subordinates, he stressed education, and his willingness to impart safety served as a strong foundation to ABSA. At the 14th Conference when participants presented an engraved plaque to the “Father of Microbiological Safety” he was speechless. The plaque hung in his office until his death. When closing the 18th Biological Safety Conference, I stated I was fortunate to study with Drs. Norman Conant, Howard Larsh, and Arnold Wedum. Dr. Wedum said he was honored to be included in this distinguished company.

In many friendly conversations after working hours or at social events, I knew Dr. Wedum as well as anyone not part of his family. We had a camaraderie that existed even after I left Fort Detrick. He was a perfectionist and many can relate to his cognizance of safety situations.

As a co-author with Dr. Wedum, I learned from his expertise. Compilation of data for “Assessment of Risk” took many long hours resulting in additional information that was used in reports. His concern, not only of respiratory infection and aerobiological challenges, resulted in the completion of “Cross Infection with Eighteen Pathogens in Animals.” At the 18 Safety Conference, Dr. Wedum presented “History of Microbiological Safety.” Emmett has a copy and I believe it should be published in JABSA for it is a classic.