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In memory of Herman J. Phaff (1913–2001)

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Professor Herman Jan Phaff was born in Winschoten, The Netherlands, in 1913 and spent most his childhood in the appropriate environment for a future yeast researcher—at his family's winery. The family business certainly spurred his interest in microorganisms, particularly those involved in the making of wine and beer, and had a strong impact on his professional life. While in Europe, Phaff attended the Technical University in Delft, where he earned a BS degree in chemical engineering with a thesis on "The elaboration of extracellular pectin-hydrolyzing enzymes by fungi," a subject still of much importance to the wine industry. Phaff's interest in that particular field was later demonstrated by the classical papers of the 1950s that he published in *Nature* with A. Demain, which are still often quoted in the literature. In addition, as a result of this work many younger researchers were drawn to the yeast pectinase field, including, for example, Prof. Rombouts, who is now in The Netherlands.

At the age of 26 and following the recommendation of the renowned microbiologist A.J. Kluyver, Herman Phaff went to California to pursue graduate study at UC Berkeley, in the Division of Fruit Products (which later became the Department of Food Technology, based first in Berkeley and then, as the Department of Food Science and Technology, at UC Davis). His initial research,

which was done in the laboratory of Emil Mrak (later chancellor at UC Davis), and his Ph.D. studies, carried out under the direction of Maynard Joslyn and H.A. Barker, focused on yeast taxonomy, ecology, and physiology. Emil Mrak's teaching and influence had a tremendous impact on the young Phaff and marked the rest of his scientific life and, in turn, the lives of every one of us who worked and interacted with him.

In 1943, Phaff accepted a faculty position at UC Berkeley, moving to UC Davis in 1954 when the Food Science Department was transferred there. In all, he was an active member of the University of California faculty for 58 years. During that time, he published two books and hundreds of research papers and was the recipient of numerous awards, including being named as University of California at Davis Faculty Research Lecturer in 1969. In 1985, Professor Phaff co-authored a definitive bibliography of viticulture and enology publications with the distinguished professor Maynard Amerine.

Although he officially retired from full-time research in 1983, Professor Phaff maintained a very active laboratory. He continued daily study and research on a collection of over 6,000 yeast strains, representing over 400 of the 700 known yeast species—many of which are available only from his collection. The collection contains the strains Professor Phaff collected on global expeditions throughout his research career as well as several hundred yeast strains collected in the 1930s by Professors Mrak and Cruess. Few microbial culture collections of this size and diversity have been collected and maintained by any institution, let alone by a single researcher. This collection is utilized by academic and industrial researchers throughout the world.

Herman Phaff was also noted both for his professional skill as a cellist and his passion for the arts and culture. He was a founding member of the Davis Comic Opera Company and the UC Davis symphony orchestra—playing it its inaugural concert in 1959—and a dedicated player in chamber music groups in the Bay area and Davis for five decades. He was chairman of the Committee for Arts and Lectures at UC Davis and in

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1960 was made an honorary member of the Music Department.

When discussing experiments or simply talking with Herman, one quickly had the feeling that his interests were much greater than simply the subject at hand. To those who knew him, including the contributors to this special issue, it was his love of music that made Herman Phaff such a special person. Moreover, these two interests, yeast and music, were imprinted on all his students, now spread all over the world.

Herman was a hard worker all his life and perhaps represents the last of his kind. He not only taught in the classroom but also spent several months a year out in the field collecting, identifying, classifying, and proposing new yeast taxons. These activities were accompanied by writing books and papers, supervising PhD theses,

delivering conference lectures, and assisting in the organization of congresses, and were complemented everyday with playing cello.

In the present issue, the editors have done their best to present classic as well as modern topics of the yeast world. We thank the Spanish Society of Microbiology, which supported us in every possible way, the Ramón Areces Foundation, and all the contributing authors, who did their best to meet the publishing deadline for this volume. Finally, we thank all the persons and institutions that helped one of us (TGV) in organizing the 19th National Congress of Microbiology, to be held in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, September 21–25, 2003, where the papers of this issue will be presented.

God bless you Herman!