



The Walter Snyder Award for 1981

Presented to

CHARLES H. GILLHAM

Although he graduated from Texas Technological University in May, 1939 with a BS Degree in Dairy manufacturers, Charles Henry Gillham was soon to apply his training in an unexpected field; he spent nearly four years in the US Army's Sanitary Corps as a medical laboratory technician, and served overseas for 38 months during World War II.

Returning home to his chosen field, Gillham was sales manager of Guth Dairy for three years; and for eight years, served as superintendent of milk plants in Lake Charles, Louisiana. In 1955 he joined the staff of the Calcasieu Parish Health Unit in Lake Charles as a sanitarian in charge of the milk program. The die was cast for his lifetime of service in public and environmental health.

During his twenty-one year association on the staff of the Calcasieu Parish Health Unit, Gillham's work was characterized by his dedication to the advancement of his profession, his leadership, his integrity and his devotion to family and friends. These qualities, coupled with his solid technical background, brought him early recognition as an expert in the field of milk and dairy products, regulations, quality control and administration. His advice and counsel was valued by the industry and regulatory officials within his jurisdiction — as well as outside of it. A hallmark of his character was his patient and disarming manner which turned hostile situations into cooperative ventures. He always found time to listen to both sides of an issue and was admired for his ability to apply good common sense in the practical solution of problems.

While serving the community of Lake Charles as a sanitarian, Charles Gillham expanded his lasting sphere of influence by helping to establish and develop undergraduate and graduate programs leading to bachelor and master degrees in environmental science at local McNeese State University. As part-time faculty member and environmental science training coordinator at the University, he provided orientation in the practical application of the sanitary and environmental sciences for students in the program. His influence continues to this day with graduates holding key positions nationwide in state agencies and industry. Fittingly, in 1973, Charles Gillham received his MS degree in environmental science from McNeese State University.

An impressive list of additional achievements is associated with Charles Gillham. In 1957, he became president of the Louisiana Association of Sanitarians, giving solid leadership to the organization. Under Gillham's guidance, membership increased; and today, the organization — now the Louisiana Environmental Health Association — serves as a respected voice for sanitarians and is addressing key environmental issues in that state. Elected regional vice president of the National Environmental Health Association in 1962, he became the organization's second vice president in 1969 and was elected president in 1972. During the eleven years he served as an officer in NEHA, he was awarded two Presidential Citations and four Certificates of Merit for his leadership and contributions to the organization's integrity, growth and development.

Concurrently, Gillham was active in the Texas Public Health Association, Texas Environmental Health Association and the Louisiana Public Health Association. He also received the Velma Pressburg Memorial Award for Outstanding Public Health Worker in Louisiana. In addition he has served nine years as a member of NSF's Council of Public Health Consultants.

In 1976, Gillham "moved next door" to Texas to work as chief sanitarian of public health, Region 8, in Corpus Christi — a position he still holds. Again, his abiding concern for public health and environmental science was manifested in the conduct of his regular duties and the extension of his work through "extra curricular" activities. He is a founder-diplomat of the American Academy of Sanitarians; Radiological Defense Officer, District 3 Disaster Committee, Texas Department of Public Safety; and was elected a fellow in the Texas Public Health Association in 1980. Also in 1980, he received commendation from the Texas Health Commissioner for supervising a PCB spill in the area.

With the numerous activities in which Gillham has been actively involved, he is a truly outstanding sanitarian going far beyond the call of duty in helping to advance the status of the professional sanitarian. In recognition of nearly a third of a century of dedicated service to the health of fellow and future Americans, and for a lifetime of achievement in attaining environmental quality, Charles H. Gillham has been selected by a committee of his peers to receive the Walter F. Snyder Award for 1981.

PAST RECIPIENTS OF THE WALTER F. SNYDER AWARD

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