



The Walter F. Snyder Award for 2006

Presented to
Arthur L. Banks

"The carefully cleaned vegetables in the grocery salad bar, the fully-cooked hamburgers at the neighborhood fast-food restaurant, the fresh cold milk on the lunch tray at the nursing home—these foods are all prepared by people who pay attention to details."¹

Arthur Banks is being honored for his more than 40 years of attention to detail as an advocate, educator and mentor of public health in food safety.

Art Banks, a Registered Sanitarian, first entered the environmental profession as an intern with the Franklin-Williamson Bi-County Health Department in Johnston City, Illinois, while attending Southern Illinois University. Upon receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Sociology in 1965, he accepted a position with Monroe County Health Department in Bloomington, Indiana. In 1966, he assumed a half-time position as sole "County Sanitarian" with Brown County Health Department, Nashville, Indiana, while working half time for Monroe County. He carried on these crossover duties for the next five years. In 1970, he resumed full-time duties with Monroe County, advancing to administrator. During his time in Bloomington, Art expanded his education through graduate courses in Public Health at Indiana University.

In 1972, Mr. Banks began a long exemplary career with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), formerly HEW (Department of Health and Human Services), in the New York Field Office, Region II, Brooklyn, NY. As Senior Food Specialist and Milk Specialist, Art was responsible for New Jersey, New York, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the (then) Panama Canal Zone. Following 5 years of field service, Art accepted a position with the Retail

Food Protection Branch in Washington, D.C., and was appointed its director in 1980.

The daily challenges in striving to meet the mission of FDA "...protecting the public health by assuring the safety, efficacy, and security of human and veterinary drugs, biological products, medical devices, our nation's food supply..." became part of Art's demeanor. A small example of significant FDA initiatives include:

- Developing procedures for use by FDA investigators to use in conducting inspections at the request of the Secret Service for "protectees" and dignitaries;
- Conceiving the plan for jointly updating model ordinances covering food service, food stores, and food vending and combining them into the new *Food Code*; and,
- Designing the retail food protection electronic bulletin board that became the *FDA Prime Connection*.

Recognized as an expert in the development of food programs and food establishment standards, Mr. Banks was recruited by the United Nations to provide technical assistance and consultation to multiple UN organizations. Among his many contributions were authoring "Food Service Establishments - Formal Sector," for the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation of Food Protection for Urban Consumers, Rome, Italy, 1980; and, serving as Vice Chair, WHO Consultation on Health Surveillance and Management Procedures for Food-Handling Personnel, Geneva, Switzerland, 1989.

Completing his fortieth year in public health service, Art is recognized by his colleagues as the one person who can discuss and render opinions on food safety and its impact on public health.

He has established an extensive network of individuals at all levels of industry and government and brings them together to seek solutions to ever-changing problems as food processing technology progresses and new dangers arise, e.g. emergence of adaptive organisms or virulent pathogens that survive changing conditions.

If you read the opening paragraph of the *Food Code*, you would understand Art Banks' influence on our nation's public health. "The *Code* gives the public health community the information it needs to speak with one voice about what's important for food safety..." states Banks.

While maintaining a rigorous schedule at the FDA, Art found time to be actively involved with the prison ministry. He was appointed Chair of the Staten Island Chapter of HOPE (Help Offenders Pursue Education) and for the past 30 years has continued to be active in prison ministry. Today, Mr. Banks represents the State of Virginia on Kairos Prison Ministry International's Board of Directors and serves as International Board Secretary and member of its Executive Committee.

Mr. Banks is a strong believer in science as the basis for regulation and has worked diligently to promote those beliefs through his leadership in the development of NSF International consensus standards. He has advanced public health through his service on NSF International Technical Committees, Joint Committee Task Groups, and member of the NSF Council of Public Health Consultants since 1981. Elected by his peers, Art currently serves as Chair of the Council.

During his tenure on the Council, he has reviewed more than 400 proposed, new or revised standards. Art continues to promote the use of standards to supplement regulations and laws where standards establish the criteria for performance.

Mr. Banks, always willing to share his talents and knowledge with colleagues, has served as a member, officer, or advisor to numerous professional organizations. His extensive list includes: Indiana Association of Sanitarians, Comprehensive Health Planning Council of Indiana, International Association of Milk, Food, and Environmental Sanitarians, and appointed by the Assistant Secretary for Health to a three-year term on the Sanitarians' Professional Advisory Committee (SPAC) to the Surgeon General. Currently, he is active in the National Environmental Health Association; the Conference of Food Protection; and Underwriters' Laboratories Environmental and Public Health Council.

Notes a colleague, "He [Art] is most humble." This is notable in Art's own words, "my vocational and avocational activities have been diverse, challenging and personally rewarding. But I've always preferred to be a minimalist in documenting or posting my achievements. I always enjoy serving behind the scenes as a 'worker bee.'"

The Walter F. Snyder Award is conferred each year upon a professional who upholds the strong ideals and commitment of environmental health subscribed by the award's namesake. Mr. Banks truly meets these criteria.

NSF International and the National Environmental Health Association take great pleasure in awarding to Mr. Arthur L. Banks the 2006 Walter F. Snyder Award for Achievement in Attaining Environmental Quality.

¹ Foulke, Judith E., "New Food Code: A Menu of Modern Safety Standards, 1994.

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