



DAVID PERLMAN
1920–1980

1979 Charles Thom Award Winner, Society for Industrial Microbiology

The ninth Charles Thom Award was given to David Perlman on August 16, 1979, at the 36th General Meeting of the Society. The Charles Thom Award is the major award of the Society, granted to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to research in industrial microbiology. Dr. Perlman received the award for his outstanding scientific contributions and achievements in research in the field of applied microbiology in many capacities: industrial research scientist, academic research scientist, educator, administrator, author, editor, consultant, and organizer.

David Perlman, a native of Madison, Wisconsin, received his education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison: B.A. 1941; M.S. 1943; and Ph.D. 1945. His graduate research, under the tutelage of Professors W. H. Peterson and Marvin J. Johnson, involved important fermentation processes, and these programs had a marked effect on his subsequent career.

His continuing interest in antibiotics began in 1941 when he visited the Northern Regional Research Laboratory, and for over 35 years Dr. Perlman has made an effort to catalog and keep the antibiotic literature in some orderly fashion.

Professor Perlman spent 22 years in industry, where he made significant contributions to the biosynthesis and production of organic acids, antibiotics, steroids, and vitamins. He also contributed pioneering efforts in tissue culture and several other areas. In 1967 he returned to his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin, and soon became Dean of the School of Pharmacy, where his intensive efforts led to a much-enhanced recognition of the role of microbial and biochemical technology in pharmaceutical research. During his 7-year tenure as Dean, and in the years before and after, Professor Perlman main-

tained a highly productive research program, especially in the area of microbial and enzymatic transformations of steroids, antibiotics, and other medically and industrially important molecules.

Dr. Perlman has served as editor of 27 books, including the series *Advances in Applied Microbiology* and the series *Annual Reports on Fermentation Processes* (the successor to the "unit process reviews" of *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* and also *Biotechnology and Bioengineering*). He has served as a member of the editorial boards of five journals. His scientific publications total 384, and his nonscientific (professional) publications about 75. He was also an inventor on 28 U.S. patents, and has served as an Abstractor for *Chemical Abstracts* since 1947.

Professor Perlman was involved with many scientific organizations. He served as Chairman of the Program Committee of the Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy (1965–67); Chairman of the Gordon Conferences on Coenzymes and Metabolic Pathways (1967); Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Third International Symposium on the Genetics of Industrial Microorganisms (1978); Chairman of the Division of Microbial Biochemistry and Technology, American Chemical Society (1965 and 1976); Chairman of the Fermentation Division, American Society for Microbiology (1974); member of the Board of Governors of the American Academy for Microbiology (1971–74); member of the Board of Directors, and later President, of the American Society for Microbiology Foundation, Inc. (1972–75).

Among the honors Professor Perlman has received are: election to Fellowship status in the New York Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Microbiology, and the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences. He was awarded: the 1977 James VanLanen Distinguished Service Award and the 1978 Marvin J. Johnson Research Award by the Division of Microbial and Biochemical Technology, American Chemical Society; the 1979 Fisher Scientific Company Award in Applied and Environmental Microbiology, American Society for Microbiology; and the 1979 Pasteur Award for Research in Applied Microbiology, Illinois Section, American Society for Microbiology. He was currently Edward Kremers Professor of Pharmaceutical Biochemistry in the School of Pharmacy, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Professor Perlman's career was somewhat unusual in that he was able to transfer from a well-launched career in the fermentation industry to the academic environment. This transition utilized his considerable interest in expanding the research potential of applied microbiology. Some of his conclusions from study of the evolutionary patterns in the fermentation industry are: the industry is on the threshold of remarkable development and expansion; the traditional methods of fermentation processes for production of fine chemicals will undergo significant change in the not too distant future; and research technology enabling these changes is practically at hand. He was indeed a worthy recipient of SIM's Thom Award, and will be sadly missed by all of us.