

Samuel L. Hansard, 1914–1999: A brief biography

S. L. Hansard, II*

*Center for Veterinary Medicine, FDA, 7500 Standish Place, Rockville, MD 20855



Samuel L. Hansard retired in 1979 as professor of animal nutrition from the staff of the Comparative Animal Research Laboratory (Oak Ridge) of the University of Tennessee, the laboratory being situated in the “Atomic City,” where a significant part of his career began. Serving a joint appointment beginning in 1946, he advanced to the rank of professor on the Animal Husbandry-Veterinary Science faculty at the University of Tennessee and to the rank of senior scientist with the Atomic Energy Commission (now the U.S. Department of Energy). In 1957, he joined the Animal Science faculty at Louisiana State University, where he directed graduate programs, chaired the Animal Nu-

trition Committee, and served as director of the Radioisotope Laboratory. In 1968, he returned to the University of Tennessee where he completed his professional career. His early work at Oak Ridge and later at Louisiana State University represented pioneering efforts in the application of atomic energy to farm animal research through the use of radioisotope techniques. It was through his ingenuity and initiative that many of the present-day procedures for the use of radiotracers, particularly in the field of mineral metabolism, were developed.

Professor Hansard, born June 5, 1914, grew up near Knoxville, TN, developing a strong work ethic as well as gaining respect for animals on a Bull Run Creek bottomland farm—the “gold standard” for good fertile soil in that part of the state. He was awarded valedictorian at graduation from the local high school, but because only a point or so separated his average from another’s, he requested a special dispensation from the principal, and so became co-valedictorian with his friend, Paul Lewis.

Following completion of two degrees from the University of Tennessee, and a master’s degree from Ohio State University, he went to work as a county agricultural agent in Tennessee. Soon afterward, he married Erma M. Brobeck, daughter of Lunsford Pitt and Ethel Louise Brobeck, of Limestone, TN, November 8, 1941, in Fort Payne, AL. The marriage bond was an enduring one, continuing beyond their 50th wedding anniversary in 1991 until Erma’s death on November 25, 1994.

During World War II, Professor Hansard saw service for 4 yr at Ft. Sill, OK, and in the South Pacific, completing his tour of duty with the rank of captain in the Medical Service Corps. He joined the University of Tennessee faculty in 1946 and began an unusually productive research career. He took leave of absence for graduate study from the fall of 1951 to June 1953 and completed a Ph.D. degree at the University of Florida in Gainesville under the mentorship of Dr. George K. Davis.

In 1957, Hansard joined the Animal Science faculty at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. He returned to the University of Tennessee in 1968 as professor of animal husbandry and veterinary science and was selected as department head in 1971 and chairman of the newly combined Department of Animal Science in 1972. His interests and activities were recognized in several professional fields. He served as president of the Southern Section of the American Society of Animal Science 1974–75, and in 1977 received the Distin-

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guished Service Award from that sector of the Society (*J. Anim. Sci.*, 45:410).

Dr. Hansard is the author or co-author of over 300 scientific publications. He received American Institute of Nutrition travel grants for the 1963 Edinburgh and 1966 Hamburg International Nutrition Congresses. In 1963, Hansard received the Louisiana Chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta Award of Merit for outstanding research. Recognition bestowed on him by the American Society of Animal Science included the American Feed Manufacturer's Association Award in 1966 (*J. Anim. Sci.* 25:1298), the Gustav Bohstedt Award for Mineral and Trace Mineral Research in 1970 (*J. Anim. Sci.* 31:1270) and the Morrison Award in 1976 (*J. Anim. Sci.* 43:1322). Hansard was made an honorary fellow of the society in 1979. Dr. Rodney L. Preston is said to have warned him after this recognition not to expect any more awards from the society. "You have been given every award the Society has to offer in your field." It would be duplicative to detail here what is in print elsewhere. Suffice it to say, Hansard was recognized widely for professional competence and for numerous significant contributions in animal nutrition.

One of Hansard's students, Dr. Les B. Waymack, eulogized that "to those of us who worked under him as graduate students, he was a complex 'dynamo' of infinite physical and mental energy." To the three children, Sam II, Martha, and Peggy, he was just "Dad." Not many know that he was also a "dynamo" Dad at home as well. It seems unlikely, on reflection, that he could have accomplished the degree of national and even in-

ternational recognition while doing all the extras that he undertook as a husband and father. At one point in the mid-1950s, for example, superimposed on professional life, he was faculty advisor to Omicron Delta Kappa, superintendent of Sunday school, president of Knox County Community Clubs, building and installing a bedroom and bath on the back of our farm house, milking Maude before leaving for Oak Ridge in the morning, orchestrating the quarter-acre garden, and still taking time to help his son build a box trap for rabbits. As you have surmised, this writer is that son. My most sincere compliment to my father has been for me to follow in his footsteps in animal nutrition. Even in later years, my dad's intensity level did not diminish much. To provide a cushion for the often too energetic pace, he was always able to make us laugh when things looked grim or activities became hectic. Great encouragers and believers in education, Sam and Erma Hansard saw a total of eleven college and graduate level degrees achieved in the immediate family.

The last award Samuel L. Hansard received was for "Distinction in Intellectual Contributions Recognized Both Within and Outside the University" for which each recipient is honored by a plaque placed in the newly built John C. Hodges Research Library on the Knoxville campus of the University of Tennessee (October 1992). It has been meaningful for three children and two of his six grandchildren who, to date, have attended the University of Tennessee to have visible a tribute to the "dynamo" who was their dad and granddad.