

IN MEMORIAM

On 2 December 1990, Dr. Helen R. Whiteley died after a prolonged illness. Her chairmanship of the ASM Publications Board (1 July 1980 to 30 June 1990) spanned one of the most eventful decades in the Society's history. The growth rate during the 1980s was dramatic: a 60% increase in published pages, a 30% increase in circulation, and a 140% increase in total budget. While recognizing the need to be flexible in this time of such extraordinary growth and innovation, Dr. Whiteley always held firm to her conviction that ASM journals should represent the highest quality research, that the journals program should be truly representative of all microbiological disciplines, and that journals should be distributed to the widest possible audience at the lowest possible cost.

To achieve these ends, many changes were made. Journal scopes were continually reviewed and often changed. The number of editors was increased by 40% to reflect both the increased number of submissions and the need to cover new subdisciplines. Two new journals, *Molecular and Cellular Biology* and *Clinical Microbiology Reviews*, were launched. Minireviews and letters to the editor were instituted to provide more diversity and spark the readers' interest. Page charges were reinstated to preserve fiscal solvency. A different printing company was engaged to reduce cost and production time while increasing reproduction quality. The journal covers were redesigned, and the size was increased to the more popular 8 1/4 × 11" format. All foreign deliveries were sent by air freight. And finally, a computer-assisted manuscript tracking system was put in place at ASM Headquarters to expedite manuscript processing and provide much-needed statistical reports. All of this required an immense commitment of time and energy by Dr. Whiteley. Still more was required to resolve conflicts between journal scopes that often occurred as a natural consequence of growth and innovation, to survey



Helen R. Whiteley, Ph.D.
1922–1990

the need for new journals, to control costs yet allow for growth, to seek new sources of revenue, and to respond to competitive pressures.

The increasing concern about ethical conduct of authors, editors, and reviewers occasionally resulted in lengthy, sensitive deliberations that found the Publications Board Chair squarely in the middle. She was able to resolve the problems with diplomacy yet without compromising principle. There was never any question that Dr. Whiteley was a true champion of integrity in all matters involving the Society's publications, and she worked diligently to develop a set of published guidelines that clearly delineated the Publications Board position with regard to ethical conduct.

In addition to her commitment to journals, Dr. Whiteley initiated a first-class monograph series for ASM, beginning with *Bacteriophage T4* and continuing with *E. coli* and *Mobile DNA*. These and similar works became the basis for a significant expansion of the books program. In her last presentation to the ASM Council, Dr. Whiteley persuaded that body to reverse a long-standing prohibition against publishing textbooks. This reversal was a singular achievement for Dr. Whiteley and a critical milestone in the development of the books program. Recognizing the need to bring into the Society a higher level of book publishing expertise, she agreed to the hiring of a senior editor for book acquisition and development.

Always fascinated by publishing innovation, Dr. Whiteley took a keen interest in the development of electronic publishing alternatives to print media. She enthusiastically supported the ASM research and development commitment to a CD-ROM version of ASM journals. She also felt strongly that ASM should assert itself as a leader in developing this new technology.

Dr. Whiteley's guiding hand was felt in all aspects of the ASM publications program, and her presence will be sorely missed.