

“A Giant Tree Fell in the Forest and Left an Opening Against the Sky”
Tribute to Dr. James B. Outhouse

Dr. James B. Outhouse, 84, longtime Professor of Animal Sciences and Sheep Specialist at Purdue University, died September 21, 2000. He was born September 21, 1916 in Canandaigua, New York.

It seemed fitting to excerpt a line from a tribute that Dr. Outhouse had written for a friend that had passed away, for a tribute to him. For he was so well thought of and respected by all that knew him, and he always seemed to have the proper words for all occasions. Whether it be a eulogy, a tribute, a Christmas poem, a prayer, or any other occasion that needed wise words, people trusted Jim to say the right thing.

Jim Outhouse had many friends in Agriculture and the sheep industry. People were naturally drawn to his warm personality, his positive outlook on life, and his wisdom and quick wit. He was described as a “gentle saint” in the eulogy given him at his memorial service, and this description fit him perfectly.

Jim Outhouse was a giant in the sheep research and education field. He left a mark that still influences sheep production to this day. In his 30-year career at Purdue University, he conducted the first research on accelerated lambing, the use of the Finnsheep breed to increase lambing rate, systems of artificial rearing of lambs, the use of turnips and other alternative forages to increase efficiency of sheep production. He conducted numerous other research trials that producers took information from to make their operations more efficient. He initiated performance testing programs, field days, youth workshops, he spoke at numerous sheep education meetings in Indiana, the United States and internationally. He published research articles, magazine articles and chapters in textbooks on sheep and livestock production. Jim served as the secretary and was a Board member for the Indiana Sheep Breeders Association for many years. He was secretary of the Indiana Southdown Breeders Association, assistant to the Director of the Indiana State Fair Sheep Department, and was for many years, Superintendent of the Sheep and Wool Show at the International Livestock Exposition in Chicago.

His accomplishments and influence also extended to all areas of livestock production and agriculture. He served as undergraduate teaching coordinator for the Animal Sciences Department at Purdue University for seven years. He organized and taught the first course in Animal Agriculture in the United States in 1952. This course is still taught at Purdue University and similar type courses are taught in all universities across the United States that have animal science programs. He served as the president of the National Block and Bridle Club and was named in the first Who's Who Among Former 4-H Club Members registry. Jim received many professional honors from the agriculture industry and from his colleagues. He was inducted into the Indiana Livestock Breeders Hall of Fame, he received the Hovde Award of Excellence in Educational Service to the Rural People of Indiana, he was a Sagamore of the Wabash, a Kentucky Colonel, a honorary fellow of the American Society of Animal Science, and received the Indiana Farm Bureau Award for Service to Indiana Agriculture.

Jim was also active in civic and church organizations. He served in the Navy in World War II as a minesweeper. He was a deacon at Central Presbyterian Church, and was the superintendent of Sunday school. He was a member of the 42nd Royal Highlanders, AARP, People-to-People International and numerous other organizations. He was an active and involved person in all facets of his rich and wonderful life.

Jim and Louise were married for more than 60 years. Surviving with Louise are two sons, a daughter, eight grandchildren, and eighteen great-grandchildren.

Jim had many friends as evidenced by the wide diversity of people present at the memorial service honoring his life. Academic colleagues, sheep producers, former students, and friends from his church and civic organizations were present to honor Jim and support his family.

Prepared by,

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