

P. T. Johnson, biography

Phyllis T. Johnson was born in Salem, Oregon on 8 August 1926. Her A.B., in zoology (1948), and Ph.D., in parasitology (1954), are from the University of California, Berkeley. Her thesis, "A Classification of the Siphonaptera of South America," was published as a Memoir of the Entomological Society of Washington in 1957.

Until 1964, she engaged in research on various aspects of medical and systematic entomology: the systematics of fleas and sucking lice; epizootiology, transmission and culture of rickettsiae, mainly those of scrub typhus; and epidemiology and transmission of leishmaniasis. These researches were carried out at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C., National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C., and Gorgas Memorial Institute, Panama.

In 1964 she accepted a position at the University of California, Irvine, in E. A. Steinhaus's pathobiology unit, which became the Center for Pathobiology in 1969. The remainder of her career dealt with research on the pathobiology of various marine invertebrates, although she continued studies of sucking lice as an avocation until 1972, when lack of time put an end to those investigations. While at U.C. Irvine she authored "An Annotated Bibliography of Pathology in Invertebrates other than Insects" (Burgess, 1968) and did research on comparative aspects of defense reactions in species representing several phyla of invertebrates. She also worked extensively on the morphology and function of echinoderm coelomocytes.

From 1972 until her retirement in 1987, she was at the National Marine Fisheries Laboratory in Oxford, Maryland. There, her research concerned pathobiology of crustaceans, particularly the blue crab, Callinectes sapidus. She discovered six of the seven known viruses of the blue crab, and studied all of them. Much of her research concerned transmission, distribution and pathology of viruses, bacteria and protozoans in crabs and lobsters, and histological examination was often used. Unavailability of information on normal histology of the blue crab, with which to compare her diseased animals, led to the writing of "Histology of the Blue Crab" (Praeger, 1980).

Dr. Johnson is author, singly or with others, of 100 scientific publications. Most are reports on her research, but also included are four books, several chapters in edited volumes such as "The Biology of Crustacea" (Academic Press), and various book reviews. She is or has been member of several scientific societies. She is a Fellow of the Washington Academy of Sciences, Sigma Xi, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

She served on Ph.D. and M.A. advisory committees at the Universities of Delaware and Maryland, was a member of the Committee on Animal Models and Genetic Stocks of the National Academy of Sciences, and has received various honors and awards, including the U. S. Department of Commerce Bronze Medal and a medal from the City of Montpellier, France. She has presented papers at various scientific meetings, and given seminars and lectured in courses at several universities and research institutes.

She is a charter member and an honorary member of the Society for Invertebrate Pathology. For this society she organized and chaired various symposia and contributed paper sessions at the Annual Meetings and International Colloquia. She served on the Glossary Committee (1974-1984), Journal Advisory Committee (1987), Founders Lectureship Committee (1983-1990), Constitutional Revision Committee (1978-1980), and the Membership Retention Committee (1982-1983). She served as Vice President and President of SIP (1978-1982). During her administration, Bylaws and a revised Constitution were adopted and the Founders' Lectureship was established.

She was a manuscript reviewer for "Journal of Invertebrate Pathology" and "Diseases of Aquatic Organisms" and continued this activity for several years following retirement.