



# IAFP 2026 AWARDS BANQUET

**WEDNESDAY  
JULY 29**

Great Hall

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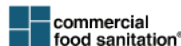
## PLATINUM



## GOLD



## SILVER



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## WELCOME

Manpreet Singh, IAFP President

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# PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

## OPENING COMMENTS

Manpreet Singh

## C.B. SHOGREN MEMORIAL

Ontario Food Protection Association

## SAMUEL J. CRUMBINE

Mecklenburg County Environmental Health  
Charlotte, North Carolina

## UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT COMPETITION

*Sponsored by the IAFP Foundation*

TBD

## J. MAC GOEPFERT DEVELOPING SCIENTISTS

*Sponsored by the IAFP Foundation*

TBD

## JOHN H. SILLIKER LECTURE

Ruth Petran

## HAROLD BARNUM INDUSTRY

*Sponsored by SafetySpect Inc.*

Bala Kottapalli

## ELMER MARTH EDUCATOR

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Mary Anne Amalaradjou

# PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

## **EWEN C.D. TODD CONTROL OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS**

*Sponsored by Marler Clark Attorneys at Law*

**Renata Ivanek**

## **JAMES M. JAY DIVERSITY IN FOOD SAFETY**

*Sponsored by Neogen*

**Daniel Weller**

## **LARRY BEUCHAT YOUNG RESEARCHER**

*Sponsored by bioMérieux, Inc.*

**Jingqiu Liao**

## **MAURICE WEBER LABORATORIAN**

*Sponsored by The Fred and Elizabeth Weber Trust*

**Jessica Chen**

## **FROZEN FOOD FOUNDATION FREEZING RESEARCH**

*Sponsored by Frozen Food Foundation*

**Lee-Ann Jaykus**

## **FOOD SAFETY**

*Sponsored by Consumer Brands Association (CBA)*

**Lone Jespersen**

## **INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**Deon Mahoney**

# PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

## FOOD SAFETY INNOVATION

*Sponsored by Walmart*  
EpiX Analytics

## HARRY HAVERLAND CITATION

Panagiotis Skandamis

## HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Robert Brackett  
Mariza Landgraf  
Eric Martin  
Kelly Stevens  
Tori Stivers

## PRESIDENT'S LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

James Dickson

## BLACK PEARL

*Sponsored by F&H Food Equipment Company*  
Kwik Trip, Inc.

## GAVEL PRESENTATION TO THE INCOMING PRESIDENT

*Awarded to: Manan Sharma   Presented by: Manpreet Singh*

## PAST PRESIDENT'S

*Awarded to: Manpreet Singh   Presented by: Manan Sharma*

# BLACK PEARL AWARD



**KWIK TRIP, INC.**

La Crosse, Wisconsin

**Kwik Trip, Inc.** is the 2026 recipient of IAFF's Black Pearl Award. This honor is given annually to one company for its efforts in advancing food safety and quality through consumer programs, employee relations, educational activities, adherence to standards, and support of the goals and objectives of IAFF.

Kwik Trip, Inc. is a family-owned company founded in 1965 in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The company operates 925 retail convenience stores across the Midwest, serving more than 12 million customers each week. Kwik Trip, Inc. operates under the Kwik Trip name in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and northern Michigan, and under the Kwik Star name in Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota, and South Dakota.



Over the past two decades, Kwik Trip, Inc. has expanded food service through a vertically integrated business model that includes company-owned production facilities, distribution centers, transportation, retail operations, and an A2LA® accredited Food Protection Laboratory. The majority of food and beverage products offered in its stores are produced and supplied daily by Kwik Trip, Inc., providing direct oversight of food protection and quality standards, traceability, and active managerial control.

Kwik Trip, Inc. attributes its success to the dedication of its people, including more than 38,000 coworkers who help ensure food protection and operational excellence across its operations. That work is reinforced by the trust of its customers, support from communities, and collaboration with regulatory and supplier partners.

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# PRESIDENT'S LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



**JAMES S. DICKSON**

Ames, Iowa

**Dr. James “Jim” Dickson** is the recipient of the 2026 IAFP President's Lifetime Achievement Award. This award is given at the discretion of the Association's President to recognize an individual who has made a lasting impact on “Advancing Food Safety Worldwide®” through a lifetime of professional achievements in food protection.

Dr. Dickson retired as the Morrison Endowed Chair in Meat Science and a Professor in the Department of Animal Science and the Inter-Departmental Program in Microbiology at Iowa State University in Ames. His research focused on the control of bacteria of public health significance in foods of animal origin. Prior to his appointment at Iowa State University in 1993, he was employed by the USDA-ARS as a Research Food Technologist and Lead Scientist of the Meat Safety Assurance Program, located at the Roman L. Hruska U.S. Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, Nebraska. He was employed in the food industry for three years before joining USDA-ARS.

Dr. Dickson joined IAFP in 1987, and served as President in 2002. He received the Maurice Weber Laboratorian Award in 2013; the Fellow Award in 2022; and the IAFP Honorary Life Membership in 2024. He is a Fellow in the American Academy of Microbiology and also active in the American Society for Microbiology and is a Certified Food Technologist with the Institute of Food Technologists. He has served on two FAO/WHO Joint Expert Microbial Risk Assessment panels. Dr. Dickson chairs the Institute of Food Technologists' delegation to the Codex Alimentarius Committee on Food Hygiene.

Dr. Dickson has published more than 150 peer-reviewed scientific publications and has authored or co-authored 16 book chapters on topics relevant to food safety. He received a B.S. from Clemson University, an M.S. from the University of Georgia, and his Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

# HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD



**ROBERT BRACKETT**

Herndon, Virginia

**Dr. Robert Brackett** is a recipient of the 2026 IAFP Honorary Life Membership Award. Dr. Brackett serves as Senior Vice President at IEH Laboratories and Consulting Group and Dean of the IEH Academy in Herndon, Virginia.

Dr. Brackett's professional career has included roles in academia, government, and industry. Prior to joining IEH, Dr. Brackett served for 11 years as IIT Vice President and Executive Director of the Institute for Food Safety and Health, and seven years at the FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN). Prior to joining the FDA, Dr. Brackett served for 16 years as Professor at the University of Georgia, where he studied growth and survival of foodborne pathogens, including *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Clostridium botulinum*, and *Salmonella* Enteritidis.

Dr. Brackett is a 49-year IAFP Member and served as IAFP President in 1998. He received the IAFP Fellow Award in 2005 and the President's Recognition Award in 2007, and presented the John H. Silliker Lecture in 2024. He has been actively involved in IAFP committees and PDGs and co-led the establishments of the Georgia Association of Food Protection and the Capital Area Food Protection Association, both IAFP Affiliates.

Dr. Brackett holds a bachelor's degree in Bacteriology and an M.S. and Ph.D. in Food Microbiology, all from the University of Wisconsin. His research while at UW focused on presence and stability of aflatoxin in dairy foods.

Dr. Brackett enjoys being active and spends his spare time cycling, hiking, and visiting wineries.

# HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD



**MARIZA LANDGRAF**

São Paulo, Brazil

**Dr. Mariza Landgraf** is a recipient of the 2026 IAFP Honorary Life Membership Award. Dr. Landgraf is a retired Professor from the University of São Paulo in Brazil, where she taught Food Microbiology as a main subject along with her work on research and extension for more than 46 years. Prior to that, she was responsible for the Food Microbiology and Microbiology Control of Drugs at the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at São Paulo State University. During her time as Professor, she advised M.Sc. and Ph.D. students and published more than 100 articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals; co-authored *Microbiologia de Alimentos (Food Microbiology)*, the only book on the subject in Portuguese; and has spoken at numerous meetings and symposia.

Dr. Landgraf is a consultant member of the Brazilian Delegation of the Codex Alimentarius Committee on Food Hygiene. She is also a member of the working group on Food Hygiene at the National Sanitary Surveillance Agency (ANVISA), having participated, additionally, as a member of the Technical Group for the Revision of the Food Microbiological Standards (2014–2019).

An IAFP Member since 2000, Dr. Landgraf, along with Dr. Maria Teresa Destro, established the Brazilian Association for Food Protection, the first IAFP Affiliate in Latin America, in 2002. Dr. Landgraf served on its Executive Board as President, Vice President, and Secretary for several terms, and also served as the Affiliate Delegate at IAFP Annual Meetings.

Dr. Landgraf has served as Vice President of the Brazilian Society for Microbiology (SBM) and the Coordinator of the Food Microbiology Division of SBM, responsible for the Professional Specialization Course in Food Microbiology. She also served on the Editorial Board of the *Brazilian Journal of Microbiology*.

Dr. Landgraf earned her M.Sc. in Food Science and Ph.D. in Sciences (Microbiology) at the University of São Paulo.

# HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD



**ERIC MARTIN**

Louisville, Kentucky

**Mr. Eric Martin** is a recipient of the 2026 Honorary Life Membership Award. Mr. Martin is Senior Director of Food Safety for Texas Roadhouse, Inc., in Louisville, Kentucky. Prior to his current employment, he spent 10 years with Margaritaville as the Director of Food Safety and Quality Assurance. He also spent 13 years with Darden Restaurants in a variety of positions, including as Director of Food Safety and Quality Assurance. Every company where he worked held (or became) an IAFP Sustaining Membership.

Support for the goals and objectives of IAFP is a lifelong commitment, and Mr. Martin has reflected this level of commitment with more than 35 years throughout his IAFP membership. In the beginning, the International Association of Milk, Food and Environmental Sanitarians (IAMFES, now IAFP) helped form his mindset around food safety, leading him toward pursuing it as a profession. As a further commitment to the Association, he held several positions at the state Affiliate level, including as President of the Florida Association for Food Protection (FAFP). He is part of the team that recently revitalized the Kentucky Association for Food Protection (KAFP), and currently serves as the Affiliate Delegate, while continuing to help mentor the next generation of food safety professionals.

Mr. Martin previously served as Co-Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee at IAFP 2007 in Orlando, Florida. He also served as Chair of the Developing Scientists Awards in 2012 and as Program Chair for IAFP 2013 in Indianapolis, Indiana. He participates in several PDGs, has presented at Annual Meetings in the past, and participated as a panelist on an IAFP webinar on Norovirus in Food Service.

Mr. Martin has shown great support by attending nearly every Annual Meeting over the last 25 years, only missing conferences due to job changes or COVID-19. He has also participated in many of the FAFP Business Meeting skits, providing food safety comic entertainment and presenting thousands of dollars to the IAFP Foundation.

Mr. Martin is a member of the Conference for Food Protection and previously served on Council I. He currently serves on its Digital Temperature and Issues Committees.

Mr. Martin holds a degree in Microbiology and Cell Science from the College of Agriculture at the University of Florida. He has been married 41 years to his supportive wife, Pam, and has two adult children, Lindsay and Neil, and a granddaughter, Hazel. Fortunately, they all wash their hands a lot.

# HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD



## KELLY STEVENS

Golden Valley, Minnesota

**Dr. Kelly Stevens** is a recipient of the 2026 IAFP Honorary Life Membership Award. Dr. Stevens is the Director of the Global Food Safety Center of Expertise at General Mills, based in Golden Valley, Minnesota. In this role, she has global accountability for the Food Safety and Regulatory Compliance (Food Safety Center of Expertise). This global team is comprised of the company's food safety technical expert team; its verification center of excellence (food safety auditors); its sanitation subject matter experts; and its regulatory compliance pillar.

Dr. Stevens joined General Mills in 2004 and has held varying roles in the quality organization, including three manufacturing location assignments (Quality Engineering and Quality Manager); Manager of Microbiology; Manager of Premiums, Licensing, and Sampling activities; and FSMA Implementation lead. Her previous experience includes eight years with Campbell Soup Company on its microbiology and food safety team where she developed her expertise and passion for thermal process microbiology. In addition to developing a strong technical portfolio, Dr. Stevens' passion is to develop and mentor food safety professionals at all levels. She volunteers her time in developing and mentoring others and championing diversity.

Dr. Stevens holds an M.S. and Ph.D. in Food Science from North Carolina State University.

# HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD



**TORI STIVERS**

Peachtree, Georgia

**Ms. Tori Stivers** didn't aspire to be a food safety nerd...until attending her first IAFP Annual Meeting in 1993 when she joined the Association. As the seafood specialist at the University of Georgia's (UGA) Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant, she primarily focused on helping commercial fishers market their catch and promoting consumption of Georgia seafood. She was so impressed by IAFP meeting presentations and the people she met that she began to concentrate more on seafood safety, obtaining federal funds for a national outreach program to prevent *Vibrio vulnificus* infections in at-risk raw oyster consumers and teaching seafood HACCP to hundreds of Georgians so they could start or maintain a seafood business.

During her 33 years as an IAFP Member, Ms. Stivers has served on the Executive Board as Affiliate Council Chair and on numerous program and nominating committees, and has organized several Annual Meeting sessions. She received the IAFP Fellow Award in 2019.

Ms. Stivers so much enjoys seeing long-term friends and making new ones at IAFP Annual Meetings that she continues to attend despite retiring from UGA in September 2023. Since then, she's been appointed to the IAFP Foundation Committee and serves on IAFP's DEI Council as its Secretary.

Majoring in Food Science and Technology, Ms. Stivers received her BSA and M.Sc. from UGA in 1981 and 1983, respectively. When not volunteering for IAFP, she enjoys jogging, advocating for LGBTQ equality, ringing handbells, choral singing, coordinating a liturgical dance group, and international travel.

# HARRY HAVERLAND CITATION AWARD



## PANAGIOTIS SKANDAMIS

Kallithea, Greece

**Dr. Panagiotis "Panos" Skandamis** is the Food Safety Professor at the Agricultural University of Athens in Greece and Vice Chair of the BIOHAZ panel of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). His research interests include predictive microbiology, quantitative microbial risk assessment and methods to control pathogens in foods.

Since January of 2022, Dr. Skandamis has served as Editor-In-Chief of IAFP's *Journal of Food Protection*, and is a member of the Editorial Boards of *Applied and Environmental Microbiology* and *International Journal of Food Microbiology*.

In 2020–2021, Dr. Skandamis chaired IAFP's Microbial Modelling and Risk Assessment PDG and developed the predictive modelling and QMRA software tool, "*Growth Predictor*." He has served on the scientific committee of the International Conference on Predictive Microbiology in Foods (ICPMF) since 2008; the IAFP European Symposium organizing committee (2015–2021); and multiple IAFP award selection committees. He co-hosted the European Symposium in 2017; the FoodMicro Conference 2022; and the 13th ICPMF in 2025.

Dr. Skandamis has co-authored/authored 303 papers in SCI journals, which have attracted 15.049 citations (*h-index=58*); one student textbook, *Food Hygiene and Safety*; 31 book chapters; and co-edited one book. He has secured more than 6.0 million Euros from European and national competitive grants, as well as direct contracts with the food industry.

In February 2026, Dr. Skandamis was elected as a member of the International Committee of Predictive Modeling in Foods and of the Hellenic Agricultural Academy. He is also a member of the International Scientific Advisory Panel of New Zealand Food Safety Science & Research Center and the Working Group of ISO 23891, Microbiology of the Food Chain–Determination and Use of Cardinal Values.

Since 2017, Dr. Skandamis has served as the lead tutor in predictive microbiology and risk ranking modules of the EUFORA training program of EFSA. An IAFP Member since 2003, he received the IAFP Maurice Weber Laboratorian Award in 2021 and both the IAFP International Leadership Award and the President's Recognition Award in 2023.

## HARRY HAVERLAND

Harry Haverland joined IAFP in 1962 while a Commissioned Officer in the United States Public Health Services and served in many countries including Egypt, Malaysia, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. During his 35-year Membership, he served as IAFP President in 1982, received the Sanitarian Award and the Honorary Life Membership Award, and was inducted as a Fellow.

# FOOD SAFETY INNOVATION AWARD



## EPIX ANALYTICS

Fort Collins, Colorado

**EpiX Analytics** is the recipient of the 2026 IAFP Food Safety Innovation Award, recognizing a transformative approach to controlling *Salmonella*.

Based in Fort Collins, Colorado, EpiX Analytics is an independent risk and decision analytics firm with deep expertise in epidemiology and advanced modeling at the intersection of human health, animal health, and food systems. Its innovation fundamentally redefines how *Salmonella* is evaluated and managed across food systems, with the aim of maximizing public health benefits while reducing product losses. The innovation integrates whole-genome sequencing, epidemiological evidence, artificial intelligence, and quantitative microbial risk assessment to identify *Salmonella* strains that pose the greatest risk to human health.

What sets this innovation apart is its ability to link genomic virulence traits directly to quantitative human health outcomes and food production data, enabling effective virulence-based control strategies. By targeting higher-risk strains, the system enables cost-effective microbiological criteria, the development of highly accurate diagnostic tools, and performance benchmarking at facility and company levels, while reducing unnecessary product diversion and food waste. In peer-reviewed articles, EpiX showed that virulence-targeted criteria could cut illnesses by up to 75% while reducing product diversion nearly nine-fold compared to non-targeted criteria.

The approach has already influenced U.S. regulatory risk assessments and proposed policy for poultry, and continues to gain adoption across industry, academia, and government. Through this innovation, EpiX delivers a data-driven, AI modeling technology for safer, smarter, and more sustainable food safety systems.

# INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD



**DEON MAHONEY**

Collingwood, Victoria, Australia

**Adjunct Professor Deon Mahoney** is the recipient of the 2026 IAFP International Leadership Award. This award recognizes his promotion of the mission of the Association in countries outside the U.S. and Canada. It also recognizes his longstanding commitment to the ideals of IAFP and his significant contributions to reducing the burden of foodborne illness globally, particularly in developing countries.

Professor Mahoney is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Agriculture and Food Sustainability at The University of Queensland in Brisbane. He holds qualifications in Food Science and Microbiology from Western Sydney University in Hawkesbury and the University of Sydney.

Over a distinguished career, Professor Mahoney has worked across academia, industry, and government in more than 25 countries. He has held leadership roles with the World Health Organization (WHO); the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ); Dairy Food Safety Victoria; the Papua New Guinea University of Technology; the International Fresh Product Association; and the Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology. He has also contributed to the work of Codex and JEMRA.

In 2002, while based in Geneva, Professor Mahoney drafted the first WHO global strategy on food safety. From 2009–2012, he led a major food safety program in Bangladesh, supporting the modernization of food legislation; strengthening inspection systems; building laboratory capacity; and enhancing consumer awareness. In 2018, he was a member of a WHO team that established the source of a major listeriosis outbreak in South Africa and helped inform prevention strategies. More recently, his work has focused on risk assessment and its application in developing food standards, as well as training in risk analysis.

Professor Mahoney joined IAFP in 2003 and received the IAFP President's Recognition Award in 2021.

# FOOD SAFETY AWARD



## LONE JESPERSEN

Hauterive, Switzerland

The recipient of the 2026 IAFP Food Safety Award is **Dr. Lone Jespersen**. This year's award is presented to an individual for highly significant food safety development or in recognition of a long history of outstanding contributions to food safety. Dr. Jespersen is the Principal and Founder of Cultivate SA in Hauterive, Switzerland. She is driven by a passion to eradicate foodborne tragedies through cultural change. Inspired by a tragic outbreak she experienced early in her career, Dr. Jespersen has dedicated nearly 20 years to helping organizations worldwide build stronger food safety through organizational culture.

Holding a Ph.D. in Culture-Enabled Food Safety from the University of Guelph and a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering from Syddansk University, Dr. Jespersen leads her team in developing practical, science-based solutions that turn compliance into lasting business performance. She contributes globally as a board member of STOP Foodborne Illness and IFPTI, and is an active contributor to AIFST, GFSI, IAFP, and NZFSSRC. She has been an IAFP Member since 2010.

Known for her energy, compassion, and collaborative approach, Dr. Jespersen partners with companies, regulators, and universities to create healthier, more resilient communities—one food safety culture at a time.

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# FROZEN FOOD FOUNDATION FREEZING RESEARCH AWARD



## LEE-ANN JAYKUS

Durham, North Carolina

**Dr. Lee-Ann Jaykus** is the recipient of the 2026 Frozen Food Foundation Freezing Research Award. This award honors an individual, group, or organization for preeminence and outstanding contributions to research that impacts food safety attributes of freezing.

Dr. Jaykus is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor Emerita affiliated with North Carolina State University, where she was on faculty for 30 years. Her research efforts are broad, with a focus on food virology; quantitative microbial risk assessment; and fresh and frozen produce safety. She is internationally recognized as a preeminent food virologist, having served as the scientific director of the USDA-NIFA Food Virology Collaborative (NoroCORE) from 2011–2018.

Dr. Jaykus has authored more than 200 scientific publications; instructed more than 600 university students; and trained more than 60 young professionals. She has also served on many national and international committees and panels, including FAO-WHO. Her specific service to the frozen food industry has been ongoing for almost a decade, as she has aided AFFI and its stakeholders in understanding and managing enteric viral (human norovirus and hepatitis A virus) contamination risks in the frozen berry supply chain. In this capacity, Dr. Jaykus has served as a scientific resource, including on the interpretation of test results; led an international panel that published a seminal paper on enteric virus detection in soft fruits; gave countless webinars and presentations to suppliers, growers, and processors; and helped the industry navigate challenges presented by a newly emerged, non-cultivable group of recalcitrant pathogens. She did this largely without financial remuneration and in the spirit of true commitment to the industry and public health.

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# MAURICE WEBER LABORATORIAN AWARD



## JESSICA CHEN

Decatur, Georgia

**Dr. Jessica Chen** is the recipient of the 2026 IAFP Maurice Weber Laboratorian Award, recognizing her dedicated and exceptional contributions in the laboratory and her commitment to developing and applying innovative analytical methods that support food safety. Dr. Chen leads the Bioinformatics Research and Development (BIRD) Team in the Enteric Diseases Laboratory Branch at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, where she has worked since 2015. She received her Ph.D. in Animal Science from Texas Tech University in 2013, with an emphasis on molecular microbiology and food safety.

With more than 15 years of experience in food safety, Dr. Chen provides scientific leadership in genomic surveillance and antimicrobial resistance by designing, validating, and operationalizing bioinformatics workflows used by PulseNet-participating public health laboratories nationwide, supporting analysis of more than 65,000 bacterial isolates annually. Her work has been instrumental in advancing long-read sequencing technology for foodborne pathogen surveillance and modernizing laboratory workflows. Dr. Chen has also directed genomic analyses characterizing reoccurring, emerging, and persisting strains of enteric pathogens. She is a co-author of more than 50 peer-reviewed publications and received the CDC NCEZID Nakano Citation in 2024 for excellence in research.

Dr. Chen joined IAFP in 2008 and has been an active contributor throughout her Membership. She currently serves on the IAFP Program Committee and has organized and moderated multiple symposia and roundtables at Annual Meetings. She served in executive leadership roles with the Georgia Association for Food Protection, an IAFP Affiliate, from 2018 to 2024, including as President from 2022 to 2023. Dr. Chen received the IAFP Student Travel Scholarship in 2011 and the Developing Scientist Award in 2012.

### MAURICE WEBER

As the owner of a busy commercial laboratory, Maurice Weber continued to perform much of the lab work himself, believing that a good laboratorian would turn out accurate results and, without failure, see that the people working under him would do the same.

Sponsored by **The Fred and Elizabeth Weber Trust**

# LARRY BEUCHAT YOUNG RESEARCHER AWARD



**JINGQIU LIAO**

Blacksburg, Virginia

**Dr. Jingqiu Liao** is the recipient of the 2026 IAFP Larry Beuchat Young Researcher Award, recognizing her outstanding ability and professional promise in her career as a young researcher.

Dr. Liao is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. Before joining Virginia Tech in 2022, she completed her postdoctoral training at Columbia University Irving Medical Center. She earned her Ph.D. in Microbiology from Cornell University in 2020 and holds an M.S. in Environmental Science from Peking University and a B.S. in Ecology from the University of Science and Technology Beijing.

Dr. Liao's research program seeks to develop a mechanistic and predictive understanding of microbe-environment interactions, with a focus on foodborne pathogens and environmental microbiomes across natural, agricultural, and food ecosystems. It also aims to translate that knowledge into ecologically informed tools and strategies to address pressing challenges in food safety and ecosystem resilience. Drawing on interdisciplinary expertise spanning microbiology; ecology; environmental science and engineering; and AI, she connects fundamental microbiological research to broader societal benefits in environmental and public health.

One of Dr. Liao's most notable contributions to food microbiology/food safety is the creation of the first nationwide genomic atlas of soil-dwelling *Listeria*, which provides a unique genomic resource for research on foodborne pathogen ecology, evolution, pathogenicity, epidemiology, and microbial genomics more broadly. Her research also encompasses other major foodborne pathogens, including *Salmonella* and *Escherichia coli*, with the goal of uncovering the ecological and evolutionary processes that shape pathogen genomic variation and antimicrobial resistance.

Dr. Liao joined IAFP in 2022 and is dedicated to contributing to the Association's scientific and professional communities.

## LARRY BEUCHAT

Dr. Larry Beuchat is a Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus at the University of Georgia, where he has been for 50 years. During his 55-year IAFP Membership, he has received the IAFP Fellow Award, the Elmer Marth Educator Award, the President's Recognition Award, the Harry Havenland Citation Award, the GMA Food Safety Award, and the Honorary Life Membership Award.

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# JAMES M. JAY DIVERSITY IN FOOD SAFETY AWARD



## DANIEL WELLER

Atlanta, Georgia

**Dr. Daniel L. Weller** is the recipient of the 2026 IAFP James M. Jay Diversity in Food Safety Award. This award recognizes an individual who has made exceptional contributions to enhancing equity, diversity, and inclusion in the field of food safety.

Dr. Weller is a Senior Epidemiologist in the Enteric Diseases Epidemiology Branch at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and an adjunct research professor at Virginia Tech and the University of Rochester Medical Center. He studies the ecology, epidemiology, and control of foodborne and enteric pathogens to help build safer, more sustainable, and more equitable food and health systems.

At the CDC, Dr. Weller leads epidemiologic studies and develops analytic methods to better understand the environmental, structural, and social drivers of foodborne and enteric disease disparities and transmission dynamics. He serves and has served as a subject matter expert in several areas, including health equity and climate change. As co-founder and co-lead of the Enteric Diseases Health Equity Mission Coordinating Team, he helped develop the CDC's first strategic plan for addressing inequities in enteric diseases and worked to integrate health equity as an operating principle across surveillance, analysis, prevention, and response.

In his academic work, Dr. Weller studies the ecology and control of foodborne and enteric pathogens across farm-to-fork systems and their implications for public health. His goal is to identify approaches that reduce risk while still fitting the varied goals, constraints, and day-to-day realities of industry, community, and public health partners.

Dr. Weller has been active in IAFP since 2014, holding leadership positions across multiple PDGs, including the Water Safety and Quality and the Data Management and Analytics PDGs. He contributes to the IAFP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council and is the incoming Vice Chair of the *Journal of Food Protection* Management Committee. He has also helped organize roundtables that expand participation and representation within IAFP and the broader food safety and public health fields. Dr. Weller received the IAFP Student Travel Scholarship in 2016, the Developing Scientist Award in 2018, and the Larry Beuchat Young Researcher Award in 2024.

## JAMES M. JAY

Dr. James Monroe Jay was a food microbiologist for 33 years at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, conducting research and publishing through an adjunct professor appointment at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas. Dr. Jay presented the Ivan Parkin Lecture in 1995 and received the Fellow Award in 1999. He joined IAFP in 1982 and passed away in 2008.

# EWEN C.D. TODD CONTROL OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS AWARD



## RENATA IVANEK

Ithaca, New York

**Dr. Renata Ivanek** is the recipient of the 2026 IAFF Ewen C.D. Todd Control of Foodborne Illness Award, recognizing her dedicated and exceptional contributions to reducing the risks of foodborne illness. Dr. Ivanek is a Professor of Epidemiology in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, with an interdisciplinary career spanning veterinary medicine, epidemiology, public health, and food safety, and widely recognized expertise in mechanistic and data-driven modeling.

Dr. Ivanek began her professional career as a veterinarian in Croatia, working in mixed veterinary practice and government service. She earned a master's degree in veterinary epidemiology from the University of London, followed by doctoral and postdoctoral training at Cornell in comparative biomedical sciences and quantitative modeling. She served on the faculty at Texas A&M University from 2009 to 2015 prior to joining Cornell.

Dr. Ivanek's research integrates epidemiologic studies, risk assessment, simulation modeling, machine learning, and social science to advance the prevention and control of foodborne pathogens across the food supply chain. She has led influential work on antimicrobial-use stewardship in food animals; innovative digital food safety tools; modeling approaches to protect food security; and the responsible application of artificial intelligence in food systems. She also serves as Co-Director of the Cornell Institute for Digital Agriculture and Director of Cornell's DVM-PhD program pathway.

A devoted educator and mentor, Dr. Ivanek has authored more than 120 peer-reviewed publications. She joined IAFF in 2024.

## EWEN C.D. TODD

Dr. Ewen C.D. Todd is a consultant for Ewen Todd Consulting in Okemos, Michigan, with more than 50 years' experience in food microbiology. Throughout his 39-year IAFF Membership, he has received the IAFF Fellow Award, the Honorary Life Membership Award, and the Harry Haverland Citation Award.

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**MARLER CLARK**  
— THE FOOD SAFETY LAW FIRM —

# ELMER MARTH EDUCATOR AWARD



## MARY ANNE ROSHNI AMALARADJOU

Storrs, Connecticut

**Dr. Mary Anne Roshni Amalaradjou** is the recipient of the 2026 IAFP Elmer Marth Educator Award, which recognizes an IAFP Member for dedicated and exceptional contributions to the profession of education. Dr. Amalaradjou is an Associate Professor in the Department of Animal Science at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, where her work focuses on food microbiology, poultry food safety, and microbiome-based approaches to improving food protection.

At UConn, Dr. Amalaradjou teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in Food Microbiology and Safety, Scientific Writing, and Probiotics and Prebiotics. She is deeply committed to student mentoring, particularly in preparing students to apply microbiological principles to real-world food safety challenges. Her mentoring approach emphasizes inclusive, structured support that equips students from diverse backgrounds for careers in research, industry, and public health. Her contributions to student success have been recognized through student-nominated awards for undergraduate advising and graduate career mentoring.

An IAFP Member since 2020, Dr. Amalaradjou currently serves as Vice Chair of the IAFP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council; is a member of the Committee on Control of Foodborne Illness; and is a mentor in the IAFP Mentorship Program. She has also contributed to the IAFP Webinar Committee and the Food Safety Education PDG.

Dr. Amalaradjou's work extends beyond the classroom through national and international engagement, including service on the FAO/WHO JEMRA roster and prior service on the U.S. National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI), contributing to the integration of food safety research, education, and practice.

### ELMER MARTH

Dr. Elmer Marth was a professor at the University of Wisconsin – Madison for 34 years. Throughout his 52-year IAFP Membership, Dr. Marth received the Harold Barnum Industry Award, the Fellow Award, the Harry Haverland Citation Award, the Honorary Life Membership Award, and the GMA Food Safety Award.

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# HAROLD BARNUM INDUSTRY AWARD



## BALA KOTTAPALLI

Omaha, Nebraska

**Dr. Bala Kottapalli** is the recipient of the IAFP Harold Barnum Industry Award, honoring his dedication and exceptional service to IAFP, the public, and the food industry.

Dr. Kottapalli currently serves as Senior Director of Food Safety at The Marzetti Company in Omaha, Nebraska, where he leads the Food Safety Center of Excellence, advancing science-based standards in microbiology, sanitation, auditing, and regulatory compliance. His career spans more than 21 years, including leadership roles at Walmart Inc.; Conagra Brands; Kraft Foods; and IEH Laboratories. At Walmart, Dr. Kottapalli led the Global Food Safety Science Center of Excellence, supporting international markets and developing data-driven tools that improved product safety disposition decisions and reduced food waste.

As an accomplished applied scientist, Dr. Kottapalli has strengthened food safety systems through risk-based auditing, predictive modeling, and validation of preventive controls. His work established industry benchmarks in last-mile delivery safety and quantitative risk assessments for pathogens such as *Salmonella* and *Listeria monocytogenes*, while supporting the development of safe food products across complex supply chains.

An active IAFP Member since 2003, Dr. Kottapalli has served as Chair of both the HACCP Utilization and Food Safety Systems and the Modeling and Risk Analysis PDGs and currently serves on the *Journal of Food Protection* Management Committee and Editorial Board. He has presented numerous abstracts at IAFP Annual Meetings and has published extensively, with most of his peer-reviewed work appearing in the *Journal of Food Protection*. He has also contributed to national food safety research priorities through his service on the USDA's National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF).

Dr. Kottapalli holds a Ph.D. in Food Safety from North Dakota State University and an MAS in Applied Statistics from Penn State University.

## HAROLD BARNUM

Harold Barnum was a Chief Milk Sanitarian for the city and county of Denver, Colorado for more than 20 years before his retirement, at which time he became involved with the development of the Whirl-Pak Bag for NASCO International. Mr. Barnum served as IAFP President in 1953 and received the Honorary Life Membership Award and the Sanitarian Award throughout his longtime Membership.

# JOHN H. SILLIKER LECTURE



## RUTH PETRAN

Ruth Petran Consulting, LLC  
The Acheson Group  
EAGAN, MINNESOTA

As a passionate yet practical food safety scientist, **Dr. Ruth Petran** is Principal and Founder of Ruth Petran Consulting, LLC, in suburban Minneapolis, Minnesota, and also serves as Senior Advisor, Food Safety, for The Acheson Group. Prior to starting her own business, Dr. Petran held technical food safety and public health leadership roles at Ecolab, Pillsbury, and General Mills. She is skilled at tactical application of technical food safety risk management strategies spanning the global farm-to-fork supply chain and has focused on managing safety and quality concerns of microbiologically-sensitive foods and systems. She has led food safety assessments at food manufacturing facilities worldwide, focusing on applied food safety systems and regulatory compliance.

An IAFFP Member since 1986, Dr. Petran served as IAFFP President in 2023 and received the IAFFP Fellow Award in 2018 and the Honorary Life Membership Award in 2025. She served two terms on the U.S. National Advisory Committee for Microbiological Criteria for Foods; is a Certified Food Scientist; is a member of the Institute of Food Technologists; and chaired the Minnesota Food Safety and Defense Task Force.

Dr. Petran holds a bachelor's degree in Consumer Food Science from Cornell University and an M.S. in Food Science and Ph.D. in Public Health, both from the University of Minnesota. Her thesis focused on leveraging data from health department inspections to improve food safety.

## JOHN H. SILLIKER

Dr. John H. Silliker founded Silliker Laboratories in 1967, now known as Mérieux NutriSciences with more than 75 locations in 18 countries. Throughout his 50-year IAFFP Membership, Dr. Silliker received the Harold Barnum Industry Award and the IAFFP Honorary Life Membership Award. He passed away in 2015.

# C. B. SHOGREN MEMORIAL AWARD



The Ontario Food Protection Association (OFPA) is the recipient of the C. B. Shogren Memorial Award, which is presented to an Affiliate demonstrating exceptional overall achievement in promoting the mission of IAFP.

Founded in 1958 as a non-profit educational association, OFPA's main objective was and still is to provide a common forum through a series of educational events that allow our members to exchange ideas and information, make connections, and build contacts with like-minded professionals. The organization strives to provide members with hot topics and industry updates in food manufacturing in Ontario specific to food safety that will affect your business. Collectively, the Affiliate offers student scholarships, provides an informative and timely newsletter, and recognizes excellence through industry-associated awards. OFPA is also proud to be affiliated with the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP).



**KAJAM KUNARAJASINGAM**

President



**TANYA WARAICH**

Vice President



**MARIN PAVLIC**

Past President



**STEPHEN VIJAYAKUMAR**

Treasurer



**ELLEN GRAVI**

Delegate



**DHARAMDEO SINGH**

Student Liaison



# Call for Awards Deadlines

**January 19, 2027**

Student Travel Scholarship

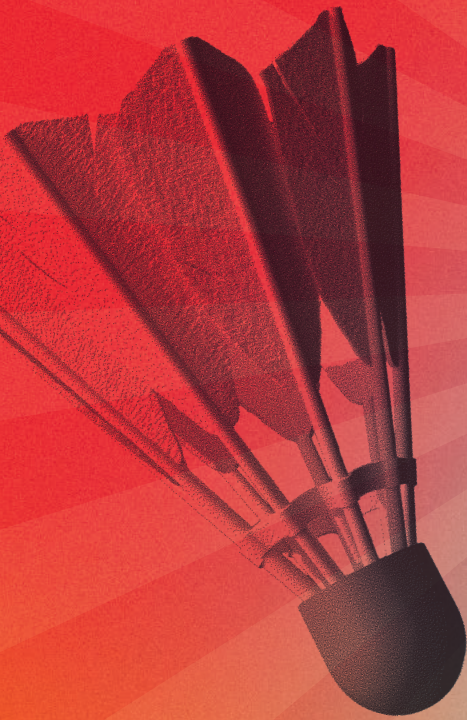
**February 9, 2027**

Award Nominations

Watch the IAFP website for award application and nomination information.

[www.foodprotection.org](http://www.foodprotection.org)





**IAFP**★  
★**2027**  
**Kansas**  
★**City**  
**Missouri**  
**July**★  
**18-21**

**THANK  
YOU FOR  
ATTENDING.**

**See you next year!**

To learn more visit:  
[www.foodprotection.org](http://www.foodprotection.org)



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