

In memoriam – Dr. Lucille K. Georg

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Letter to the Editor:

It is my sad duty to report the recent death on June 17, 1980 of Dr. Lucille K. Georg Pickard. Mercifully, her last illness was sudden in onset and of short duration.

At Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, Dr. Georg studied in Dr. John Gardner Hopkins' renowned Dermatology Department under the direction of Dr. Rhoda Benham, one of the era's leading medical mycologists. During the years 1946–1948, she fulfilled all the academic requirements for her doctoral degree with distinction and worked on her thesis. When published in 1950, this seminal work, entitled "Nutritional Requirements of the Faviform Trichophytons" (*Annals N. Y. Acad. Sci.* 50, 1315–1347), revolutionized the basis for classifying and identifying dermatophytes.

Upon graduation, Dr. Georg joined the staff of the Dermatology Department under Dr. Benham and assumed teaching and research responsibilities in the field of medical mycology. Her publications in that period dealt primarily with three dermatophytes: *Trichophyton equinum*, *T. mentagrophytes*, and *T. verrucosum*.

After entering the U. S. Public Health Service, I was given the responsibility of creating and organizing a medical mycology laboratory for the newly created Communicable Disease Center (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia. During a visit to Dr. Benham's Medical Mycology Department in 1949, I met Dr. Georg for the first time and learned that she was seeking a new position. Shortly afterwards I was authorized to offer her a position at the CDC.

Thus began a long and felicitous collaborative association with an extraordinary individual who quickly became one of the world's most productive and influential medical mycologists. Her fruitful career involved not only research but teaching, diagnostic services and administrative duties. As Assistant Chief of CDC's Mycology Division – a career which spanned 23 years (1949–1972) – she published 92 papers and participated in numerous national and international workshops, courses, and conferences.

In addition to her significant contributions to the taxonomy of the dermatophytes, she described and characterized a fatal poultry disease caused by a new fungus species, *Dactylaria gallopava*.

She was instrumental in developing a selective isolation medium for pathogenic fungi that had cycloheximide as one of its prime components. The medium, now commercially available, is used throughout the world. She also collaborated in the introduction of the hair perforation procedure for identifying isolates of *Trichophyton mentagrophytes* and *T.*

rubrum. Dr. Georg organized an actinomycete diagnostic service for the Mycology Division and made many notable contributions to our knowledge of the microaerophilic and anaerobic actinomycetes.

Before retiring from the Mycology Division in 1972, Dr. Georg received many honors in recognition of her manifold contributions to medical mycology and public health, including:

1961 – Recipient of the U. S. Department of Health Education and Welfare's Superior Service Award.

1963 – President of the Medical Mycological Society of the Americas.

1973 – Recipient of the Kimble Award.

1974 – Recipient of the Medical Mycological Society of the Americas' Rhoda Benham Award.

Dr. Georg led a full life – one that was not exclusively devoted to her actinomycetes and fungi. In 1950, after a whirlwind courtship, she married the late Leonard Pickard, one of Southern Bell's telephone system experts. Their life together was harmonious and full of many shared pleasures. She was a woman of courage, who, early in her marriage, underwent one of the first heart valve operations.

Dr. Georg was much admired and beloved by all for her knowledge, wisdom, and personal warmth. Her legacy of good works as a person and as a professional should inspire us all. In medical mycology, she is already one of the immortals.

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Postscript:

All those wishing to honor the memory of Dr. Georg may do so by sending contributions to the Lucille K. Georg Memorial Fund. The monies will be used to create a medallion for the International Society for Human and Animal Mycology. It would be presented during ISHAM's assembly meetings to the individuals designated as having made significant contributions to the field of Medical Mycology.

Checks made out to the L. K. G. Memorial Fund should be sent to Dr. Libero Ajello in care of the above address.