

[Print Page](#) | [Close Window](#)

## 04). Carol Litchfield Remembrance

**Printed from:** ISSLR Forums

**Topic URL:** [http://www.isslr.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=265](http://www.isslr.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=265)

**Printed on:** 03 Sep 2014

### Topic:

---

**Topic author:** aoren

**Subject:** 04). Carol Litchfield Remembrance

**Posted on:** 17 Jan 2013 22:15:10

**Message:**

Our board member Carol Litchfield passed away on April 3, 2012. I first met Carol at the saline lakes symposium in Beijing in 1994, and that meeting was the start of a fruitful collaboration and joint research projects that resulted in nine joint publications. She has remained active, also as a board member of the ISSLR, until a few weeks before her death.

Here is a short obituary I wrote for SIL News:

Obituary - Carol D. Litchfield - 1936-2012

Carol Ann Darline Litchfield (née Ross) was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on October 10, 1936. After her M.Sc. studies at the University of Cincinnati (1960), Ph.D. studies in biochemistry at Texas A&M University (1969) and post-doctoral studies at the University of North Wales she joined the faculty of the Department of Microbiology at Rutgers - The State University of New Jersey (1970-1980). She then moved to industry, and from 1980 until 1992 she worked for DuPont, first as Head of Environmental Toxicology at Dupont's Haskell Laboratory, and later as Senior Scientist for its bioremediation subsidiary. In 1993 she returned to academic life when she joined the faculty of George Mason University, Fairfax and Manassas, VA, as an Associate Professor of Microbiology, first in the Department of Biology, later in the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy.

"Salt" is the keyword in nearly all Carol's work in the past two decades. The vanity license plate "SALT BUG" proclaimed what her interests were. As my own studies on salt-loving microorganisms led me first to the exploration of the Dead Sea and later of solar salterns as biotopes, I came into contact with Carol quite early in my career as a "halophilic" microbiologist. I first encountered her in 1992 at the symposium on "Halophilic Bacteria: Research Priorities and Biotechnological Potential for the 1990s", held in Williamsburg, VA, where she presented the opening lecture. By that time she already had done extensive work on the taxonomy, physiology and ecology of halophilic microorganisms. One of the highlights of that work was the discovery and description of *Halomonas elongata*, isolated from a saltern on the island of Bonaire, and now the model organism for studies on moderately halophilic bacteria. Unfortunately she did not attend the remainder of the congress. My first true interaction with Carol was at a symposium on saline lakes held in Beijing in 1994. We happened to be the only microbiologists there, so inevitably we started to discuss science. Those discussions led to a fruitful collaboration that, in addition to numerous mutual visits, brought us to the salterns of Newark - California, Eilat - Israel, Useless Point - Western Australia, and Se#269;ovlje - Slovenia for joint sampling trips. The application of techniques of polar lipid analysis, assessment of community metabolic potential, and pioneering the use of 16S rRNA-based molecular methods to the study of solar saltern microbiology led to the publication of nine joint papers.

Carol also had a great passion for the history of salt making and all aspects of the history of salt. As an active member of the International Commission on the History of Salt (CIHS) she performed research on salt production in different places worldwide.

Carol was an avid collector of rare books, documents, and artifacts relating to salt manufacturing

over the ages. She spent much time and money, first in antiquarian bookshops, and later using eBay and other internet sites to locate and purchase new items for her collection. Carol and her late husband Carter (1932-2007) maintained two apartments: one being the living quarters, the second being the "library", half occupied by Carol's books and documents on salt, half by Carter's collection of books on lipid chemistry and on the history of fat processing industries. On a typical working day Carol would, after finishing work at the university, drive to the "library", have a swim in the swimming pool of the apartment building, then work with Carter for 1-2 hours in the library, and finally move to their living quarters to prepare dinner.

Carol has been active in many professional associations. Together we served on the board of the International Society of Salt Lake Research, on the International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes (ICSP), and on two of ICSP's taxonomic subcommittees. She was President of the Society for Industrial Microbiology (2007-2008), and shortly before her death she was awarded the Charles Porter prize of that society for her achievements in applied microbiology and her exceptional service. She further was an active member of the Society for Industrial Archaeology, and together with Carter participated in many of the society's excursions. She was elected Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology.

At the end of each year, Carol and Carter sent to their friends and relations the latest issue of "The Litchfield Times" - "All the news about Carol and Carter that's fit to print". Altogether there have been 50 issues, spanning half a century of a happy and productive life. The newsletter was always accompanied by an underwater photograph of some interesting fish or other marine animal she had taken in the past year during one of her diving expeditions. Carol was an enthusiastic diver, who, until the last year of her life, and in spite of two hip replacements, made yearly diving trips to the Caribbean, Egypt, and other coral reef sites.

In the beginning of 2012 Carol was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, which had already spread to her liver. She passed away on April 3. A memorial service will be held for Carol on 27 May at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, VA.

We will all miss her.

Aharon Oren  
Institute of Life Sciences  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
Jerusalem, Israel

## Replies:

---

**Reply author:** NikolayAladin  
**Replied on:** 04 Mar 2013 23:11:38  
**Message:**

Dear Prof.Dr. A. OREN,

I read a short obituary that you wrote for SIL News. We must to remember those who worked with us and before us.

---

**Reply author:** aoren  
**Replied on:** 19 Mar 2013 21:58:10  
**Message:**

Thanks, Nick, for this comment.

---

**ISSLR Forums** : <http://www.isslr.org/forums/>

© **International Society for Salt Lake Research**

[Close Window](#)