

## Obituary



**Dr. Julius Fabricant  
1919–2011**

Dr. Julius Fabricant, an icon in the field of avian diseases, died on November 11, 2011 in Ithaca, NY, at the age of 92. Born on March 30, 1919, he grew up in Philadelphia, entered Pennsylvania State University in 1936, and soon decided to become a veterinarian. After earning the V.M.D. degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1942, he became a meat inspector with the USDA where he enhanced his interest in pathology. In 1944, he returned to Penn State to complete his studies for his B.S. degree, and subsequently decided to pursue a Ph.D. at Cornell University. There he became a student of Dr. Peter Olafson, a noted veterinary pathologist. He minored in poultry diseases with Dr. P. P. Levine, and this was to point him in the direction he followed for his entire career.

His entrance into the field of avian pathology was enabled in part by being introduced to other graduate students upon his arrival in Ithaca. In his words: "One of these graduate students was Catherine Greci, the graduate assistant in the laboratory of Dr. P. P. Levine. This lovely young lady offered to show me around Ithaca and as a susceptible young bachelor, I quickly accepted the offer. In three months we were engaged and in six months married. So quickly was my fate determined." Julius and Catherine raised two children (Daniel and Barbara) and later collaborated on seminal studies on the induction of atherosclerosis in chickens by the Marek's disease herpesvirus.

After receiving the M.S. degree for studies on enterotoxemia in sheep, he switched to a Ph.D. program with Dr. Levine as his mentor, and he worked on avian respiratory infections. Over many years following his Ph.D. studies, he collaborated with Dr. Levine on a large number of studies on respiratory viruses and mycoplasma. Also, they isolated the duck hepatitis virus, which was devastating the duck industry on Long Island, and they developed methods for its control. Dr. Fabricant's work on mycoplasma and chronic respiratory disease in chickens was particularly noteworthy, and together with Dr. Levine, he perfected methods for the eradication of mycoplasma. Particularly successful was the novel procedure of dipping eggs in an antibiotic solution to prevent egg transmission. His work on mycoplasmas was supported for several years by grants from the National Institutes of Health. He also collaborated with Bruce Calnek on a series of Marek's disease research projects.

Julius Fabricant earned a well-deserved reputation as a "gadfly" (his word) at national and international meetings. He enjoyed finding a seat at the front of the auditorium, preferably one near a microphone. When he deemed it appropriate, which was often, he would ask (in his words) "simple informational questions or questions about the validity of the methods used, the adequacy of control groups or the conclusions drawn from the data presented." This was most certainly a learning experience for a good many speakers over the years. Meetings will not be the same without him.

Julius is survived by his two children, Daniel and Barbara, Daniel's spouse Michele, and two grandchildren, David and Anne.