



# Chicago Section IFT the First Section



## Recognizing Emeritus Member: Sandra J. Bartholmey



### **Sandra J. Bartholmey**

Current status: Emeritus member ('08)  
IFT Positions: Chair, Nutrition Division ('00-'01)

### **Member of IFT Committees:**

Appointed to Nutraceuticals and Functional Foods *ad hoc* Coordinating Committee ('01-'02)  
IFT/American Dietetic Association Liaison ('00-'02)  
Nutrition Division Councilor ('98-'00)  
Nutrition Division Executive Council ('93-'95)  
AIN/Nutrition Division Liaison Committee Chair ('93)  
First Outstanding Member Award, Nutrition Division, ('05)

### **Other Professional Memberships:**

American Society of Nutrition (formerly American Institute of Nutrition) ('87)  
Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources, NRC, NAS Invited membership ('01-'06)  
American Diabetic Association, Corporate Board of Advisors ('02-'05)

Sandra was born and raised in Chicago and attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) where she earned a B.S. in Journalism and Communications. Several years passed with family and children keeping her busy before she returned to Sangamon State University (now UI Springfield) to earn an M.S. in Biology, after which she worked as a medical technologist at Memorial Hospital in Springfield. Three years later, she returned to UIUC for a Ph.D. in Foods and Nutrition just as her children were graduating from high school.

Thanks to good advice from Dr. Barbara Klein, professor of Foods at UIUC, who told her to pursue a doctorate instead of another Master's degree, Sandra learned how to conduct good research in the lab of Dr. Adria Sherman who worked in iron deficiency anemia and its effect on lipid metabolism in the rat model. Sandra's graduate work in carnitine metabolism in iron deficiency earned her the American Institute of Nutrition P&G Graduate Student award in 1984 and a Sigma Xi Research Paper Award in 1985.



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Sandra's advisor, Adria Sherman, encouraged all of her students to join the American Institute of Nutrition as a student member. Once Sandra was working in the food industry, Dr. Dale Romsos, encouraged her to join as a full professional member, which she did. Sandra went on to join IFT in 1987 to learn about ingredients and their nutritional properties as well as their functional properties in food products.

Sandra began her career in the food industry working with the largest baby food company in America, Gerber Products Company, as a corporate nutritionist. Working with Dr. Guy Johnson, director of infant nutrition, and Bob Wallace, nutrition lab manager, Sandra learned the finer points of food processing and its impact on nutritional quality. Nutrition labeling was always mandatory at Gerber but became mandatory for all food companies when NLEA became the law of the land. The new label formats required by NLEA caused major changes in baby food labels because of the small-sized baby food jars. Sandra worked with the FDA to establish portion size standards for infant foods.

As part of a research team composed of members from R&D and Marketing, Sandra helped design and execute infant nutrition and child development research programs and protocols. Sandra presented Gerber research results to audiences of health professionals, including pediatricians, dietitians, and to government officials, both domestically and internationally.

During the 1990s, Gerber expanded its markets into Europe, Latin America, and Asia. Working with international markets, she helped them accurately promote and use the research results on the benefits of Gerber baby foods in their marketing and advertising strategies. Sandra developed a patent for Gerber juice products in the Mexican market working with international and R&D colleagues. She created a plan that included different vitamins and minerals in a nutritionally rational progression to juices designed for infants and toddlers.

The project of which Sandra is most proud is getting zinc into baby foods. With researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), iron-zinc interactions on absorption were tested in a piglet model, clearing the way to add nutritionally useful amounts of zinc to infant cereals, jarred foods, and juice beverages.

When work at Gerber came to focus primarily on research with little opportunity for international involvement, Sandra was hired by Quaker Oats Company to help promote oatmeal to international markets. In 1997, Quaker Oats was then the first food company to achieve an FDA-approved health claim for the cholesterol-lowering properties of beta-glucan in its oatmeal. Working in R&D with other colleagues on the extensive Quaker Oats research program, it was Sandra's job to once again share the research results with international marketing and R&D colleagues in Europe, Latin America, and Asia. Also working with Quaker dietitians in Puerto Rico and Latin America, the team established a Quaker Oats Health Institute that promoted the research results of the Quaker research program to health professionals and to government officials to achieve health claims for Quaker oatmeal in countries that allowed health claims in advertising.

Throughout her career she made it possible for the nutrition technologists to join IFT and attend meetings for their professional development. She believes, and experience has shown her, that we learn so much from other people outside our place of work.

She retired in 2003 but continued teaching food science lectures and labs to senior dietetic students labs as Adjunct Professor at the University of Illinois in Chicago for three years. Her family, now including grandchildren, continues to claim her travel time and devoted attention.