

Jenny Johansen – MS 1969 Pharmacy

In Memoriam: Jenny M. Johansen

1943-2011

by Ken Miller, CHP, Betsy Ullrich, CHP, and Mary Moore

The Health Physics Society (HPS) and profession lost yet another kind, honorable, capable, and contributing member. Jenny M. Johansen died peacefully on 26 July 2011 while on a flight from Pennsylvania to North Dakota to attend her high school reunion. Jenny retired from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in July 2010 after a distinguished career that spanned more than 30 years.

Jenny received her bachelor's degree in 1965 from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, and her master's degree in radiological health physics from North Dakota State University in Fargo, North Dakota, in 1969. After completing the U.S. Public Health Service Fellowship and receiving her degree, Jenny held positions as radiation safety officer (RSO), health physicist, chemist, and radiopharmacist, respectively, at Tufts University, Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, and the Joint Center for Radiation Therapy, Harvard Medical School. In 1974, she accepted the position of RSO at the University of Delaware, where she was also promoted to safety coordinator in 1976. In 1980, she left the University of Delaware to join the NRC.

At the NRC, Jenny held numerous positions in various materials-inspection and licensing programs and project management in Region I, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, and at the Office of Enforcement, Rockville, Maryland. Listed among her many titles at NRC were radiation specialist, senior health physicist, enforcement specialist, section chief, technical assistant, and senior project manager. At the time of her retirement, she was serving as a health physicist in the Materials Security and Industrial Branch, Division of Nuclear Materials Safety, Region I.

Those of us who knew Jenny and had the opportunity to work with or interact with her greatly appreciated her approach to regulatory inspections and licensing requirements. Jenny was a performance-based inspector long before that became the new modus operandi. She consistently balanced maintaining the highest standards with a practical and reasonable approach to any issue. She tried to instill this approach in the new inspectors she mentored in Region I. Her experience enabled her to view situations from the licensee's perspective, as well as that of the regulator. When approached with licensing questions, she was always willing to help. The depth and extent of her licensing expertise allowed her to quickly provide assistance or to refer the requestor to the best source for the answer. She always followed through on her commitments.

Jenny was an active and contributing member of the HPS, having served on numerous committees, as chair of the Rules Committee, and as Parliamentarian. She was National Registry of Radiation Protection Technologists registered and a member of the Government Section. At the local level, she was active in the Delaware Valley Society for Radiation Safety, where she served in several elected positions, including secretary, president-elect, and president.

In spite of all that she accomplished in her health physics career, Jenny will be best remembered for her warm and wonderful personality and her charming Norwegian accent. She was totally devoted to her

parents, who came from North Dakota to visit her often in her home in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Whenever they visited, Jenny always found an excuse to share these delightful people with her friends. They were professional bakers and made the most delicious Norwegian pastries, cookies, and cheesecakes. After her parents passed away, Jenny continued the tradition because she had inherited their love and skill for baking. Jenny is survived by three brothers: Kjell, also a health physicist, living in Wisconsin with his wife, son, and daughter; Norman in Minneapolis; and Bjarne in Seville, Spain, with his wife and son. Jenny was a true professional and a wonderful, warm, and considerate friend. She will be missed by her family, friends, colleagues, and beloved shelties.