



Shellfish Pioneer

Susan E. Ford



Susan E. Ford
(1942-2017)

“[Susan] was a relentless and magnificent researcher and truly cared about the effective management of the shellfish resources that she and her mentor Hal Haskin held so dear. Her myriad contributions to the field of shellfish research have dramatically advanced our knowledge of shellfish pathology and parasitology and, during the course of her career, she mentored and touched the lives of countless students and colleagues.”

- Rich Lutz, NSA Past President
and Honored Life Member



With “Doc” Haskin at HSRL, 1987



STEM4Girls Workshop, 2017
Photo Credit: Eileen Hoffman

At a time when there were few women working in science, Susan, still a student, presented seminal research on MSX disease in Delaware Bay at the 1970 NSA annual meeting and became the first woman to receive the Thurlow C. Nelson Award for best student presentation. In recognition of her contributions to the shellfish industry and for her work in bridging the gap between science and industry, Susan would go on to receive the David A. Wallace Award in 2004, again the first woman to be awarded such an honor. Susan also played an active role in organizations like NSA, serving on various editorial boards and committees as well as moderating sessions and judging student presentations. Throughout her career, Susan took special care to mentor students and encourage promising young researchers. In acknowledgement of her contributions to the field of shellfish research, she became an Honored Life Member of NSA in 2012. Through her dedication to research, education, and outreach, Susan Ford created a legacy of professional accomplishments that will serve the field for decades to come.

A renowned shellfish pathologist, researcher, and mentor, Susan began her professional career working as a laboratory technician under Harold “Doc” Haskin in 1966 at the Rutgers Oyster Research Laboratory, now known as the Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory. Throughout her career, Susan sought to understand the biology and ecology of shellfish pathogens, always with a goal of improving management of wild and cultivated populations. Her expertise was sought by academics, regulators, and industry members around the world as she served on numerous scientific boards, government committees, industry panels, and non-governmental organizations. A career and life dedicated to collaboration and understanding earned Susan respect within her field and in the broader community in which she lived.



Volunteering to shuck at the New Jersey Conference of Mayors, 2007 Photo Credit: Iris Burt

TIMELINE

