

A Remembrance

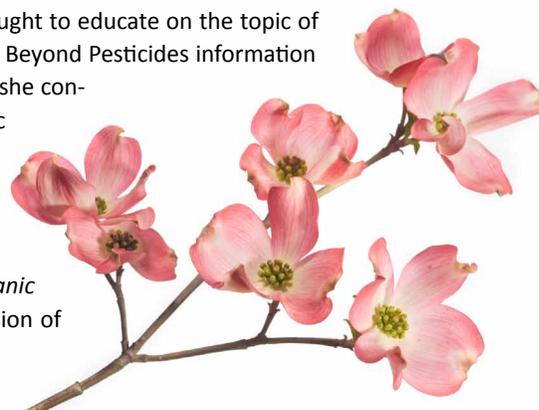
Creating a Legacy for Protecting Health and the Environment

Reflections and Gratitude by Jay Feldman

At 30 years, there are countless people that have helped Beyond Pesticides with the clarity of vision and resources to have a real effect. The many people that I have come to know that make up the Beyond Pesticides village give me the deep belief that in our communities and as a nation we will embrace the changes necessary to protect the environment and people. In this spirit, we celebrate the lives and legacies of two people who passed on this year.

Jean Wallace Douglas

Jean believed in the power of people and small organizations. She believed in her own ability and the power of the individual to ensure the planet's sustainability —long before the word sustainable became widely used. She was among the first through her philanthropy to get behind organic agriculture as a credible alternative to chemical-intensive agriculture. I was sitting in the office of the League of Conservation Voters when, in the middle of our conversation on a timely policy issue, the director, Marion Edey, picked up the phone and said. "Jean, there is someone in my office I want to introduce to you." We met and began a three-decade relationship of mutual respect and admiration, one that enabled Beyond Pesticides to advocate for a transition to organic agricultural practices that were viewed at the time by most in policy circles as a fringe endeavor. But, Jean knew the transition to organic practices was necessary in a world increasingly contaminated by pesticides. She supported the work of the Institute for Alternative Agriculture, which went on to become the Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture, named for her father, the Secretary of Agriculture and then Vice-President in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration. The organization was started by Garth Youngberg, who as an employee of USDA launched the original organic office and then was fired by the Ronald Reagan administration. Jean was an avid organic gardener, rejected chemical lawn treatments in a neighborhood that embraced them, and always sought to educate on the topic of pesticide hazards and alternatives. She would call me to say that she was bringing Beyond Pesticides information to her golf course and wanted people to know that the Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma she contracted was likely associated with pesticides. She did not hesitate to discuss organic gardening with the wife of President Reagan's Secretary of Agriculture John Block as they gardened next to each other at their community garden. Jean taught her family, community, nation, and the world that we must live by an environmental ethic, and we must all do whatever we can to educate and advocate for that ethic. The work that she believed in so deeply will go on, with the passage of the *Organic Foods Production Act* in her lifetime, to fulfill her vision for the complete conversion of conventional agriculture, gardening, and land management to organic practices.



Lorens P. Tronet

Lorens knew he was correct about people being poisoned from legal labeled use of pesticides. He relied on his own experience as a person who struggled with repeated poisoning daily. But, he also knew the science and what the science did and did not offer us in defining the extent of the pesticide poisoning problem. As a member and then board member of Beyond Pesticides, he stretched the organization's understanding of low-dose exposure to pesticides, the chemical sensitization caused by daily exposure, and the failure of the regulatory process to protect those suffering. He banned from our vocabulary the use of the phrase "allergic reaction" to pesticides because he said, "These are not histamine reactions, these are chemical poisoning effects." He expressed an unrelenting sense of urgency to stop the poisoning and sought to remove from the market chlorpyrifos (Dursban) over a decade before EPA was forced to admit its unacceptable neurological effects. Well before the science was settled, he explained that indoor contamination was occurring from the outdoor use of pesticides. Scientific studies now find residues of pesticides used outdoors, such as the weedkiller 2,4-D and insecticides, inside homes. Due to drift and track-in, these pesticides contaminate air, dust, surfaces, and carpets and expose people. Anyone who attended a Beyond Pesticides national forum in the late 80's and 90's knew Lorens was there. He challenged the speakers, conference participants, and the organization to address the needs of victims. During our forum meetings in Congress, he did not mince words when talking with members and staff of the agriculture committees, which have jurisdiction over pesticides, and expounding on the law's dreadful failure. As the executive director of the American Defender Network in Crystal Lake, Illinois, he challenged mosquito and gypsy moth spraying, and joined with communities in advocating for public notification of pesticide spraying, banning pesticide use, and focusing on the elimination of the conditions that contributed to pest problems. Annette Alaraj, who worked closely with Lorens to take pesticides out of schools, said he would tell people, "You haven't lost until you've given up." With his alarming directness and his blunt challenges to the current thinking, Lorens embodied Apple Inc.'s 1997 *Think Different* advertising campaign, "The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the people that do."