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In Memory of Dr James A Shelford

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The agricultural industry and the academic community lost a respected researcher, teacher and friend with the untimely death of Dr. Jim Shelford. Jim was well known to the dairy community for his industry-relevant research and his participation in various associations. He was a man of optimism, dedication, and hard work, with a lifelong commitment to advancement of agricultural science. Jim's courageous struggle with cancer during the past four years has been a source of strength to many. He faced death as he faced life: with dignity, courage, and hope.

A large congregation of family, colleagues, industry associates and friends attended the funeral service on April 10 at St. Augustine's Catholic Church in Vancouver. Jim is survived by his loving wife Helen, and their three sons: Timothy, Jeremy and Mark.

Jim was born to a pioneer ranching family of Francois Lake near Burns Lake, BC. He attended the University of British Columbia and received his PhD in 1974. Since then, he has been a professor in the

Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, specializing in ruminant nutrition. He enjoyed teaching and research, and his many interactions with the dairy industry.

Throughout most of his life, Jim expended enormous effort and time helping young people. As an undergraduate student, Jim worked for the BC Ministry of Agriculture with young people in 4-H programs on Vancouver Island and in the Fraser Valley during the summers. Later, as his sons grew up, he was a leader in the Scouts Canada movement. In the Faculty, Jim was the Animal Science professor students most often sought for academic advice. He obviously enjoyed helping students achieve their goals. Jim also dedicated a great deal of time helping students obtain financial aid, and for years served on, or chaired, scholarship committees, both within the Faculty and at the university-wide level.

In recent years, Jim gave much time and energy to the establishment of the UBC Dairy Education and Research Centre in Agassiz, BC. This facility, a unique partnership of UBC and Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, was developed to serve both the dairy industry and UBC students. The Centre is fast becoming a leading international dairy research facility for animal behavior, nutrition and reproduction.

Jim's research activities covered a broad range of topics related to dairy and forage production in which he mentored many Canadian and international students, post-doctoral fellows and visiting scientists. His research was often collaborative with industry and was supported by numerous agencies including NSERC, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, and various industries. Jim was a valued member of the BC Institute of Agrologists and will be dearly missed by his professional colleagues. Brief tributes from a few of his university and industry friends follow on page two.

In consultation with Jim and his family, the Faculty has arranged to establish an endowed scholarship that will provide financial assistance to undergraduate and graduate students whose studies are related to dairy production. All donations to the scholarship will be matched dollar for dollar by the Faculty. Tax receipts will be provided to donors. Further details are provided on page two.

The James A Shelford Fund

Individuals and organizations interested in donating to this scholarship (cheques payable to UBC – Shelford Memorial Scholarship), or seeking additional information, are encouraged to contact:

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Tributes to Jim Shelford

“Jim was a great academic and people person, who took the time to understand our dairy industry. Jim was extremely well-liked and respected. His pleasant manner and ability to get practical research done and communicated to producers and other industry people were unique. We will miss Jim...God bless.”

Ron Barker, Dairy Specialist, BCMAFF

“Jim played a major role in my studies at UBC. He was always ready and willing to help both as my academic advisor and as my undergraduate research supervisor. Since beginning to work under Jim as a graduate student last fall, I became even more appreciative of his dedication and compassion for students and their research. I will always remember him as my mentor and as an inspiration to my education.”

Trevor Devries, Grad Student, UBC

“Up to the end of his life, Jim was a tireless campaigner for the betterment of students. His keen interest and enthusiasm in improving efficiencies in milk production, through nutrition research, will have a lasting impact on the dairy industry. The development of a dairy research and education facility, with ties to the dairy industry, was Jim’s dream that was realized with the UBC Dairy Education & Research Centre at Agassiz.”

Nelson Dinn, Manager, UBC Dairy Centre

“Jim Shelford may have left us, but his work lives on. It will continue to benefit dairy producers from across the province, the country and beyond.”

Andy Dolberg, Sec-Manager, BC Milk Producers Assn

“Jim Shelford exerted an indelible and invaluable influence on my scientific education. But more than that, the phrase, ‘a gentleman and a scholar’ will always refresh the fond memories I hold for Jim’s ability to bring both his scientific and personal contributions to our society.”

David Dyble, Nutritionist, Unifeed

“Jim Shelford committed many hours of his time to advising undergraduate and graduate students, and it is only fitting that we contribute to a scholarship fund in his memory for the support of students.”

Lorne Fisher, Dairy Research Scientist (retired), Agassiz

“Dr Jim Shelford was a sincere, successful dairy researcher and advocate. He will be missed by many.”

Bill Klop, Dairy Farmer and Member, Advisory Committee

“This is a big loss to agriculture, and particularly to the dairy industry. Jim, in his quiet manner encouraged much change and advancement, both to the industry and the people who worked within it. I was privileged to have worked with, and to be encouraged by Jim throughout my career. He will be highly missed.”

Annette Moore, BCMAFF

“Jim’s dedication and passion for the dairy industry will be greatly missed. His research and relentless efforts to improve and promote the understanding of dairy nutrition, benefited us all. His work and research goals were never questioned, because we all knew where his heart was!”

Louis Schurmann, Dairy Farmer, and Chair, SCDEA

“The Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre has lost a valuable link with the UBC Dairy Centre. Jim provided that link through his research collaboration and through his concern for the success of both Centres. Jim’s knowledge, never-ending willingness to help, and trustworthiness earned him a place in the hearts of many. I miss Jim, my dear brother-in-law, who helped me throughout my career, and who is loved by my family. I miss him as a colleague, my family member, and especially my friend.

Valerie Stevens, Deputy Director, PARC, Agassiz

“No one lights a lamp and hides it under a bed. Instead he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. (Luke 8:16). Jim Shelford lived his life as a shining light quietly giving friendship and support to all that crossed his path. I count myself as blessed to have had the privilege of working with Jim, as a graduate student and a research associate. May we all endeavor to live by his example.”

Marylou Swift, Nutritionist, Abbotsford Veterinary Clinic

“Jim was a tireless advocate for the dairy industry and was dedicated to helping students in the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences achieve their academic goals.”

Jim Thompson, Professor and Associate Dean

“What I remember most about Jim is the perpetual twinkle in his eye and his ready smile. These welcoming traits, which I will never forget, reflect the great warmth that this fine man gave to others.”

Brian Upper, UBC Herd Veterinarian

“Jim had a major effect on me as a new dairy researcher. He was very open and approachable, full of positive feedback and helpful suggestions, and made me feel like a welcome addition to the team. I am particularly grateful for the great research and teaching environment that Jim helped foster at the Dairy Centre. Jim’s quiet, respectful and supportive manner helped make the Centre an excellent place to work, and thus helped it attract some of the top students and researchers to work in British Columbia.”

Dan Weary, Associate Professor, Faculty of Ag Sciences
