**The Kenneth A. Spencer Award**for outstanding achievement  
in agricultural and food chemistry

Founded 1955

**American Chemical Society  
Kansas City Section**

Endowed by the Kenneth A. and Helen F. Spencer Foundation



Kenneth A. Spencer

(1902–1960)

“There is no field of human endeavor so enduringly important to man’s welfare as the field of agricultural and food chemistry. Men of vision in agricultural and food chemistry have always labored to improve on life’s necessities by providing more nourishing foods, better shelter and better clothing. If man is to continue to have an improved standard of living, these endeavors must make vigorous progress. Therefore, I have long felt that the efforts in industry, research and education by the chemists who toil for better living through better agriculture and better foods should be rewarded.”

This award is respectfully dedicated to Kenneth A. Spencer, a man of vision, ideals and deep humility, who constructively and progressively built his dreams into reality for the betterment of his fellow men.

# Biography: Kenneth Aldred Spencer

Kenneth Aldred Spencer was born in Columbus, Kan., Jan. 12, 1902. After receiving his preparatory education, he attended Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., and the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kan. He graduated from the University of Kansas in 1926 with a B.S. in geology and chemistry. In January 1927, he and Helen Elizabeth Foresman were married. They had no children.

Starting in 1926 as a junior engineer in construction with his father’s company, The Pittsburgh & Midway Coal Mining Company, Spencer successively became chief engineer, general manager, vice president and treasurer. In 1942, he succeeded his father as president. In 1941, he organized and became president of the Military Chemical Works Inc, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Pittsburgh & Midway Coal Mining Company. In 1940, Spencer submitted a proposal to the U.S. War Department calling for the development of a chain of war plants to produce explosives in the Midwest. As a result, he was requested to take on the responsibility of constructing and operating the Jayhawk Ordinance Works near Pittsburg, Kan., to supply wartime demands for anhydrous ammonia and ammonium nitrate. He discharged this responsibility with great distinction.

At the end of the war, The Military Chemical Works Inc. leased the Jayhawk Works for peacetime operation. The name of the corporation was changed to the Spencer Chemical Company and it ceased to be a subsidiary of the coal company.

The Jayhawk Works was purchased outright from the government in 1948. Additional plants were purchased or built in Calumet City, Ill., Henderson, Ky., Vicksburg, Miss., Fort Worth, Texas, and Orange, Texas. Through an international subsidiary company, products of the company were distributed in 43 states and Canada in addition to many foreign countries. Three years after Spencer’s death, the stockholders of Spencer Chemical Company voted to accept a favorable offer from Gulf Oil Corporation to purchase the company and in October 1963, the sale was consummated.

Spencer was one of the nine original incorporators of Midwest Research Institute of Kansas City. He served on the boards of several local companies and took an active part in the civic, cultural and political affairs of this area.

On a national level, Spencer served as a member of the Business Advisory Council to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce from 1951 until his death. He was a trustee of Commerce for Economic Development. Also, he was a member of the board of directors of such corporations as American Telephone & Telegraph, Armco Steel Corporation, Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. and International Harvester Company. Serving with Herbert Hoover, Spencer was a National Associate of Boys Clubs of America.

Spencer was the recipient of numerous honors. The University of Kansas awarded him a citation for outstanding achievement in 1943. In 1957, Baker University in Baldwin, Kan., awarded him an honorary LL.D. degree. Park University in Parkville, Mo., awarded him an honorary D.Sc. degree in 1959. In 1955, the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts presented him with its Distinguished Service Award. He received the Sam Casey Award from the Society for the Advancement of Management in 1957. He was a member of the National Coal Association, American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical and Petroleum Engineers, the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, Alpha Kappa Psi, Sigma Gamma Epsilon, Sigma Tau, Tau Beta Pi and Beta Theta Pi, whose local alumni chapter named him “Man of the Year” in 1959.

Kenneth Spencer died in Miami Beach, Fla., Feb. 19, 1960.

The Kenneth A. Spencer Award - The Kenneth A. Spencer Award, recognized as one of the most prestigious awards presented to chemists working in the many different areas of agricultural and food sciences, endorses meritorious contributions by scientists in academia and industry. The outstanding achievements of the past Awardees helped for more than 50 years to establish the great reputation of the Spencer Award within the United States. - The Award was founded 1955 by Kenneth A. Spencer as the Charles F. Spencer Award in honor of his father, the owner and president of the Pittsburg & Midway Coal Mining Company in Southeastern Kansas, who predicted the tremendous possibilities for the use of chemicals in coal. - For the first decade the Spencer Chemical Company supported the Award leaving the administration to the Kansas City section of the American Chemical Society. Following the death of Kenneth Spencer and the sale of the Company to Gulf Oil the Kenneth A. and Helen F. Spencer Foundation under the leadership of Mrs. Spencer rededicated on December 9, 1966 the Award as a memorial to Kenneth A. Spencer as the **Kenneth A. Spencer Award** for: “*so long as the foundation is in existence and determines the award to be worthy of Mr. Spencer’s name.*” - After the board of directors voted in September 1978 to dissolve the Kenneth A. and Helen F. Spencer Foundation, a generous grant was presented on January 24, 1979 to the *Kansas City Section of the American Chemical Society to guarantee the perpetuity of the Award, which shall henceforth be sponsored and administered by the Kansas City Local Section.*

The Kansas City Section continues to present this award to stimulate educa­tion, research and industrial developments in science and technology at all levels in the area and to promote chemistry in agricultural and food science nationwide. The Award consists of a medal and an honorarium of $6,000, both of which are presented at a public meeting sponsored by the ACS Kansas City Section. At this meeting the recipient will deliver an address outlining his achievements.

Award Symposia to honor the Awardees are planned in cooperation with American Chemical Society units, the Division of Agrochemicals (AGRO), the Division of Agricultural and Food Chemistry (AGFD and the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry and mostly scheduled at ACS National Meetings.

# Eligibility

To be eligible for the award, a candidate must be a citizen of the United States and must have done the work for which he or she qualified as a candidate within the United States. The candidate need not be a member of the American Chemical Society. A candidate’s work, whether done in education, industry or research, should have meritoriously contributed to the advancement of agricultural and food chemistry.

# Nomination

Each year, the Kansas City Section requests nominations for the Award by advertising widely to the scientific communities. This includes notifications to scientists in government laboratories, listings for chemists in the ACS weekly magazine C&EN, Chemical and Engineering News, and the newsletters of the supporting groups, the CORNUCOPIA of the Division of Agricultural and Food Chemistry and the PICOGRAM of the Agrochemical Division.

Nomination Forms and detail information can found on the Section web-site; http://ACS-KC.com or E-mail JonfTally@gmail.com.

# Selection of Award Winner

The Spencer Award process is managed *by a standing committee of the KC Section, the AGRO Division and the AGFD Division of the ACS.* The committee will select a jury of 12 people from the membership at large of the American Chemical Society to evaluate the applicants. The jury will fairly represent industry, education and government research and will be selected on a nationwide basis. The jury shall have the prerogative of determining that no award should be made if the qualifications of the candidates do not meet the standards established by the jury.

**Winners of the Kenneth A. Spencer Award**

1955 **Dr. Ralph M. Hixon**Dean of the Graduate College, Iowa State University

1956 **Dr. Conrad A. Elvehjem**President, University of Wisconsin

1957 **Dr. William C. Rose**Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin

1958 **Dr. E.V. McCollum**Professor Emeritus, Johns Hopkins University

1959 **Dr. Karl Folkers**Executive Director of Fundamental Research  
Merck, Sharpe and Dohme Research Laboratories

1960 **Dr. C.H. Bailey**Dean and Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota

1961 **Dr. H.L. Haller**Agricultural Research Service, Department of Agriculture

1962 **Dr. A.K. Balls**Professor Emeritus and Collaborator, Department of Agriculture

1963 **Dr. C.G. King**Lecturer and Associate Director, Columbia University  
Consultant, Rockefeller Foundation

1964 **Dr. Daniel Swern**Senior Research Investigator, Fels Research Institute  
Professor of Chemistry, Temple University

1965 **Dr. Aaron M. Altschul**Chief Research Chemist, Department of Agriculture

1966 **Dr. Robert L. Metcalf**Chairman, Department of Entomology, University of California

1967 **Melville L. Wolfrom**Regents’ Professor of Chemistry, Ohio State University

1968 **Dr. Hervert E. Carter**Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, University of Illinois

1969 **Dr. Edwin T. Mertz**Professor of Biochemistry, Purdue University

1970 **Dr. Lyle D. Goodhue**Former Technical Manager, Phillips Petroleum Company

1971 **Dr. William J. Darby**President, The Nutrition Foundation Inc.  
Professor of Biochemistry, Vanderbilt University

1972 **Dr. Emil M. Mrak**  
Chancellor Emeritus, University of California

1973 **Dr. Esmond E. Snell**  
Professor of Biochemistry, University of California

1974 **Dr. Roy L. Whistler**  
USDA, Institute for Agricultural Utilization Research   
Professor of Biochemistry, Purdue University1975 **Dr. Thomas Hughes Jukes**  
Professor of Medical Physics, University of California

1976 **Dr. E. Irvine Liener**  
Professor of Biochemistry, University of Minnesota

1977 **Dr. N. Edward Tolbert**  
Professor of Biochemistry, Michigan State University

1978 **Dr. John F. Casida**  
Professor of Biochemistry, University of California

1979 **Dr. Charles W. Gehrke**  
Professor of Biochemistry, University of Missouri

1980 **Dr. George K. Davis**Institute of Food and Agricultural Chemistry  
University of Florida

1981 **Dr. John Speziale**  
Former Director of Research, Monsanto Company

1982 **Dr. Howard L. Bachrach**  
Research Chemist, Plum Island Animal Disease Center

1983 **Dr. Peter Albersheim**  
Professor of Biochemistry, University of Colorado

1984 **Dr. Richard H. Hageman**  
Professor of Agronomy, University of Illinois

1985 **Dr. Bruce Nathan Ames**  
Professor of Biochemistry and Department Chairman  
University of California

1986 **Dr. John M. Brenner**Curtiss Distinguished Professor in Agriculture  
Iowa State University

1987 **Dr. Hector F. Deluca**Professor of Biochemistry, University of Wisconsin

1988 **Dr. Boyd L. O’Dell**Professor Emeritus, Department of Agricultural Chemistry  
University of Missouri

1989 **Dr. Robert H. Burris**Professor Emeritus, Department of Biochemistry University of Wisconsin

1990 **Dr. John E. Kinsella**Dean, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences  
University of California

1991 **Dr. George Levitt**Research Associate, DuPont Experimental Station

1992 **Dr. Clarence A. Ryan Jr.**Charlotte Y. Martin Professor, Institute of Biological Chemistry  
Washington State University

1993 **Dr. Bruce Hammock**Professor, Departments of Entomology and Environmental Toxicology, University of California

1994 **Dr. William S. Bowers**Professor, Department of Entomology and Chemical Ecology  
University of Arizona

1995 **Dr. Robert T. Fraley**President, Ceregen unit of Monsanto Company

1996 **Dr. James N. BeMiller**Professor and Director, Whistler Center for Carbohydrate Research, Purdue University

1997 **Dr. William M. Doane**  
US Department of Agriculture, Peoria, IL

1998 **Dr. Mendel Friedman**  
US Department of Agriculture, Western Regional Research Center, Albany, CA

1999 **Dr. James A. Sikorski**  
Science Fellow, Monsanto Company

2000 **Dr. Wendell Roelofs**  
Entomology Department, Cornell University

2001 **Dr. James H. Tumlinson**  
US Department of Agriculture, Gainesville, FL

2002 **Dr. Daniel W. Armstrong**Caldwell Professor of Chemistry, Iowa State University

2003 **Dr. Eric Block**  
Distinguished Professor of Chemistry  
University at Albany, State University of New York

2004 **Dr. Steven D. Aust**Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry  
Utah State University

2005 **Dr. Don R. Baker**Berkeley Discovery Inc., Orinda, Calif.

2006 **Dr. Russel J. Molyneux**US Department of Agriculture, Western Regional Research Center, Albany, CA

2007 **Dr. David A. Schooley**Department of Chemistry, University of Nevada - Reno

2008 **Dr. Ron G. Buttery**  
US Department of Agriculture, Western Regional Research Center, Albany, CA

2009 **Dr. George P. Lahm**Principal Research Investigator and Dupont Fellow, DuPont

2010 **Dr. Clive A. Henrick**Trece Inc.

2011 **Dr. Michael W. Pariza**  
Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Madison

2012 **Dr. James N. Seiber**  
Professor Emeritus, University of California-Davis

2013 **Dr. Attila Endre Pavlath**   
US Department of Agriculture, Western Regional Research Center, Albany, CA

2014 **Dr. Ronald Horst**

US Department of Agriculture-National Animal Disease Center, Ames IA / Heartland Assays, Ames, IA

2015 **Dr. Thomas Selby**

Dupont Crop Protection, Stine Haskell Research Center

2016 **Dr. Agnes Rimando**

US Department of Agriculture -Oxford MS

2017 **Dr. Bruce German**

U. C., Davis, Dept. of Food Science Technology

Davis, California

2018 **Dr. Thomas Stevenson**

FMC Agricultural Solutions

2019 **Dr. Thomas Sparks**

Corteva Research Team

2020  **Dr. Jerry King**

Consultant, Professor Emeritus, Univ. Arkansas, Division of Agriculture

2021 **Dr. Takayuki Shibamoto**

Professor Emeritus U. C. Davis, Dept. of Toxicology

2022 **Dr. H. N. Cheng**

Immediate past President of the ACS.

2023 **T.B.D.**

The Kenneth A. Spencer Chemistry Building on the University of Missouri-Kansas City’s Volker campus was funded in part by a gift from the Kenneth A. and Helen F. Spencer Foundation. The building houses the Kenneth A Spencer plaque and for more than 40 years has hosted various meetings of the Kansas City Section of the American Chemical Society.