WISCONSIN MEAT INDUSTRY HALL OF FAME

1997

James and Evelyn Hewitt
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James and Evelyn Hewitt are recognized for their accomplishments in building their company, industry and association in Wisconsin. They made a mark on the Wisconsin Association of Meat Processors because of their behind-the-scenes work, and because of their willingness to share. They insisted on only the absolute best educational programs for training and sharpening the skills of their fellow meat processors. They developed new programs, were involved in legislative matters, took leadership roles and put helping other people in their profession above all else.

Jim, as he has always been called, was born in Flint, Michigan on June 28, 1927 and at the age of four moved to Marshfield, Wisconsin. Evelyn was born in Wood County, Wisconsin on March 21, 1928, and Jim and Evelyn were married in 1946. They have three daughters and six grandchildren. Their processing plant, founded by Jim's father in Marshfield, Wisconsin, is one of the most progressive in the state.

Jim has had a leadership role in and contributed to a large number of organizations and activities in his local community, state and nation. He has been director, treasurer and president of the American Association of Meat Processors (AAMP). He has also served as a director of the Wisconsin Association of Meat Processors (WAMP) for 39 years, during which time he served as treasurer, president, and executive secretary. He has served as a legislative advisor for both of these organizations and was strongly involved in establishing the Wisconsin State Meat Inspection program. He has received many prestigious awards including WAMP's Meritorious Service Award, AAMP's Man of the Year Award, Wisconsin Pork Producer's Industry Award, Wisconsin Friend of 4-H, the Gold Cleaver Award for Outstanding Service to the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation, and the University of Wisconsin College of Agricultural and Life Science's Honorary Recognition Award.

Evelyn has been a true partner to Jim throughout his career and a tireless worker with him in many of his accomplishments. They have been a true team working together. Evelyn has also been recognized by WAMP with the Meritorious Service Award as well as AAMP's "Man" of the Year Award.

Jim has always displayed a commitment to excellence, and a competitive spirit in the many endeavors he has pursued. His accomplishments are tied to his strong belief in education, and his desire to help other people. His biography contains programs, relationships and recognition which were associated with high school, vocational-technical and university education. Also, from an international perspective, Jim has shared his expertise. In 1976, he spent several weeks in Nicaragua helping establish a municipal slaughter house and meat processing plant.

Jim and Evelyn have been strong supporters of education for meat processors. As a WAMP director, Jim played a key role in developing educational programs for fellow processors at association spring conventions and fall workshops. Both Jim and Evelyn have maintained very close ties with meat science programs at University of Wisconsin campuses, and have encouraged their development of Sausage manufacturing Workshops and other clinics specifically tailored to help Wisconsin's small meat processors.
In the early 1950's, Jim and Evelyn were involved in developing a competitive meat product show in Wisconsin. Although the first state event attracted only four bacons and five hams, the 1993 WAMP Product Show had a record 975 entries in 27 classes. Indeed, their main intent in helping start a Wisconsin product show was to give processors an opportunity to compare their products to those of other plants, and to learn and improve their meat products by this experience. In recognition of this forward thinking, Jim was elected to AAMP's Cured Meat Hall of Fame in 1993.

As a recent member of the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation Board, Jim conceived the idea of conducting a meat product show and auction at the Wisconsin State Fair, to help raise funds for the 4-H Foundation. This program was initiated in 1991, with 75 products entered into five product classes that first year. The 1994 auction of the top three products from each class provided over $17,000 for the Foundation, to be used to support youth programs throughout the state of Wisconsin. In 1996 the proceeds exceeded $25,000.

Among Wisconsin meat plant operators, Jim and Evelyn are associated with excellence in many areas. They have been extremely prominent in the leadership of AAMP and WAMP, and contributed to the strong positions these organizations occupy in the meat industry today. Their joint credentials make them very worthy recipients.