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# Hall of Fame

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By **Pete Grasso** • Technical Editor

It's a pleasure each year to welcome the new class into the *PMP* Hall of Fame. A tradition that's been around since 1997, the *PMP* Hall of Fame honors stalwarts of the pest management industry who have made a significant difference.

Not only is it important to learn from history, it's imperative we honor and cherish the individuals who have helped shape our industry into the profession it is today. Many of the policies, techniques and knowledge we now consider routine is a direct result of the contributions made by *PMP* Hall of Famers.

This year's class is no different. One inductee has risen to the occasion and helped industry suppliers organize and combat the anti-pesticide movement with great success. Another has been an advocate of change and contributed to the tremendous growth of the industry's national association. A third inductee has been a teacher and a mentor to many of today's teachers and mentors. Another is remembered as someone who always strived to make this industry better through his involvement in myriad organizations. Finally, one inductee through his deep obligation as a protector of public health, ended up making a significant scientific discovery.

Please join us in welcoming Allen James, Bob Kunst, Charles Wright, Paul Adams and Charles Pomerantz into the *PMP* Hall of Fame!

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Allen James **25**



Bob Kunst **29**



Charles Wright **33**



Paul Adams **37**



Charles Pomerantz **40**

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# Rising to the Challenge

E. Allen James took a fledgling idea of an association and built it into an industry powerhouse representing the interests of everyone associated with pest management.

By **Pete Grasso** • Technical Editor



In 1991, the specialty chemicals industry was in a state of what can be described as chaos. Not in the sense that it was chaotic, it was simply unorganized. The industry was, and still is, under constant attack from the anti-pesticide movement and those attacks were focused on the industry suppliers.

It was time for some organization. The applicators — those who used specialty chemicals out in the field every day — were well organized through many associations in each of their sectors, but the companies that supplied them were not.

Through all this chaos, Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) was born and the man picked to lead this organization from its infancy to successful advocacy group was E. Allen James.

Under James' leadership, RISE grew from a small idea into a powerful opponent of the anti-pesticide movement with a \$3 million annual budget. It is with great pleasure that we induct James into the *PMP* Hall of Fame, Class of 2010.

## Starting Small

Immediately preceding his appointment to president of RISE, James served as president and CEO of the International Sanitary Supply Association.

“That association has, as part of its industry, a pesticide division,” James says. “We represented cleaning materials companies, and certain cleaning materials are pesticides. I had some familiarity with pesticides used in the industrial and institutional environment.”

Also in his favor was his background in agriculture.

“We used pesticides on the farm, so I had a broad understanding of pesticides,” James says. “As I applied for the position, I had a working knowledge of the industry and I believe that helped.”

Getting someone with a background in pesticides wasn't the only requirement the newly formed association needed. RISE was starting from scratch and it needed someone who had experience building and leading at the same time. Again, James fit the description perfectly.

He already had served as president of two successful organizations, so the RISE board of directors gave him broad authority to construct the initial operating structure of its fledgling association.

“The opportunity to build an association was one that intrigued me,” James says. “My history with Delta Sigma Phi was one of rebuilding a strong organization from a period of when the

organization was not very strong.”

James was successful in building the national college fraternity — to this day, Delta Sigma Phi awards its top undergraduate annually with the E. Allen James Leadership Award.

“I knew I could build an association, because rebuilding an association is much like starting from scratch,” James says. “That's

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Allen James testifies in front of Congress during the early days of Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE).

continued from previous page

where I felt my strength was — in building from the ground up.”

When James started, RISE had no bylaws and no operating standards — he was truly starting from scratch.

“The board knew I had previous experience with all aspects of association work, so they really depended on me to put the structure of an association together, subject of course, to their approval,” he says.

Immediately after the first few months of putting the association together, James went into a strategic planning process. He brought in the board and some volunteers to look at what he and his team had put together, and to look ahead and plan for the needs of the industry.

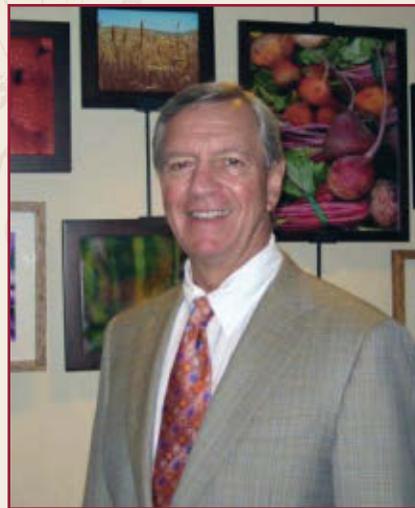
### Overcoming Challenges

James’ first hurdle seemed simple: Identify the companies within the industry. But it proved not to be the easiest of tasks.

“We knew the key companies and we knew of some companies that participated in different segments,” James says. “But no one person could name all the companies within the industry, because it’s so segmented.

One of the earliest challenges was to identify the players in the industry,” he recalls. “Then, once identified — and that’s a continuing process — there was an opportunity to recruit them into RISE.”

Once a company became a member, James needed to get its



Through James’ leadership, RISE has grown from a fledgling organization into a powerful opponent to the anti-pesticide movement.

people involved in the association — a major challenge itself. James says RISE follows the 80-20 rule — 80% of the membership pay their dues and don’t participate in any other way;

By Harvey F. Goldglantz

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Left: James was honored for his 20 years of service during the RISE/ CropLife America 2009 annual meeting.

Right: Bill Culpepper is the first recipient of the E. Allen James Leadership Award, created to recognize outstanding contributions as a RISE volunteer.

20% pay their dues and provide volunteers to help.

“From that 20%, you have many key companies that provide a majority of volunteers and help to the association,” he says. “If we can get a company to attend an annual meeting, where they can witness all the things we’re doing first-hand, then we can begin to convince them they need to have volunteers involved as well.”

### Superb Results

Since taking the helm in 1991, environmental extremists and local, state and federal governments and agencies have turned up the heat on RISE members. Thanks in large part to James, who retired this September, RISE has five full-time staffers, an annual budget of nearly \$3 million and more than 200 members that account for more than 90% of the nation’s specialty pesticide production.

The relationship between agriculture and specialty chemicals would not be as strong and as productive as it is if James had not been chosen to lead RISE.

“The opportunity existed to bring organization to what could be described as chaos,” James says. “This industry needs an association to do those things that individual companies cannot do by themselves.

“That’s what RISE has provided: A unity within the industry.” **PMP**

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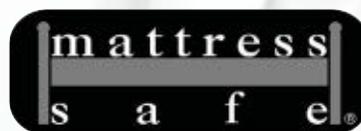
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# Change Agent

Bob Kunst served as the cog driving the National Pest Control Association to triple its membership during his term as president.

By **Marty Whitford** • Editor-in-Chief



It took the National Pest Control Association (NPCA) more than 60 years to grow to about 1,600 members. But, in October 1995, change agent Bob Kunst took the helm. As president, Kunst and his association brothers fortified NPCA's joint state membership program and, in the process, tripled membership during his one-year term.

When Kunst took the NPCA presidency, Executive Vice President Harvey Gold had just been terminated and the association was operating in the red. Despite these challenges, Kunst helped grow the association to nearly 4,900 members, from about 1,600, primarily by increasing the number of states participating in the NPCA's joint state membership program from 5 to 31 states.

"I have a knack for bringing people together," Kunst notes. "Perhaps I learned it in college: I earned my bachelor's from Florida State University and my master's from arch rival University of Florida. I started out uniting Seminoles and Gators. It doesn't get tougher!"

Kunst's leadership also helped NPCA — now the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) — return to solvency. Instead of being a dues-driven association, NPCA launched a series of mini-conventions, with the Academy being the first. Regional conferences and The Harvard Business Seminar followed.

For serving as the association's agent of change, as well as 36 years of giving back to the industry and his community, we're pleased to induct Robert L. Kunst into the *PMP* Hall of Fame, Class of 2010.

"Induction into the Hall of Fame marks the pinnacle of success in this industry," Kunst says. "Having known most of the other inductees, I am both honored and humbled to be in such fine company."

## Team Player

Little did Kunst know then but in 1974, when he answered a Rollins ad in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, he was answering his true calling.

"All the ad said was 'Manager-Trainee Wanted, Rollins Inc., Apply in Person,' and then it listed the address to the company's Atlanta headquarters," Kunst recalls.

"When I applied, I found out it was for a position with Rollins' Orkin Division. I accepted the position — and so began my unexpected love affair with this business."

For seven years, Kunst moved up at Orkin. His last position with Orkin was Central Florida district manager. When he took the post in '78, the district ranked No. 39 out of 39 Orkin districts in the country. When he left Orkin in 1981, his district was ranked No. 2.

Kunst then served as GM of a Terminix franchise in New Orleans from 1981 to 1986. There he nearly tripled sales and bolstered profit margins from 14% to 26.5%.

As Kunst grew the franchise's profits, his income grew — to the point where at the end of 1986 he had enough funds to purchase with a partner a \$400,000-a-year pest management business.

Since then, Kunst and company have grown Fischer Environmental Services twenty-fold to an \$8-million-per-year business. More important, he says, Fischer Environmental is living up to its name and leading the charge in sustainable, integrated pest management.

Mandeville, La.-based Fischer was awarded the "Champion of the Environment" distinction by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and was among the first two pest management companies awarded the



*PMP* Hall of Famer Bob Kunst served as president of the National Pest Control Association (NPCA) when it tripled in size from about 1,600 to 4,900 members.

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Gold Standard Level by the U.S. EPA in its Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP).

### Sharing Unselfishly

Kunst has served as president of the Louisiana Pest Management Association and is a four-time past president of the New Orleans Pest Control Association. He has worked on 60-plus national and local committees, and twice was selected NPMA Committee Chairperson of the Year.

He regularly shares his experience with pest management professionals (PMPs) across the globe. He has spoken on PMP topics in most states and 17 countries throughout Asia, Europe and Latin America. He mentors PMPs, by sharing his vast business and technical experience.

In part because of his experience teaching an integrated pest management (IPM) class at Louisiana State University, Kunst was appointed by two different



Bob Kunst really jams when it comes to developing and implementing sustainable integrated pest management (IPM) solutions.

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From Left: The National Pest Management Association (NPMA) — formerly named the National Pest Control Association — twice selected *PMP* Hall of Famer Bob Kunst as NPMA Committee Chairperson of the Year; Louisiana Pest Management Association officials recognize Kunst for his decades of service and declare him a native, despite the little-known fact that Kunst was born in Manhattan; and, last but not least, Kunst says he has no problem serving as a change agent who gets the industry's propeller moving — in the correct direction.

Louisiana governors to serve two terms on the Louisiana Structural Pest Control Commission (2004-2012).

Kunst has been honored with the FMC Lifetime Achievement Award, Paul K. Adams Award of Excellence and many other accolades.

As busy as he is, Kunst has championed several community causes, including empowering at-risk individuals with the benefits of a college education. He also has been actively involved in a Volunteers of America program that brings together home bound seniors with school-age children for mutual appreciation.

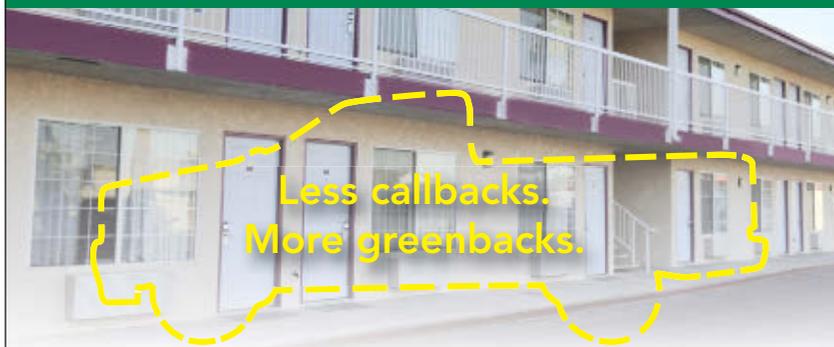
"We're all called to leave this world a better place," Kunst concludes. "I'm just trying to do my little part." **PMP**

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# The Godfather

The history of pest management and its modern practices traces its roots through North Carolina State University's Charlie Wright. His contributions include residue research that led to crack-and-crevice treatments, dealing with the German cockroach and training generations of PMPs.

By Dan Jacobs • Managing Editor



The history of the pest management industry can't be written without several chapters being devoted to *PMP* Hall of Fame inductee Dr. Charles G. Wright.

"He's been involved in almost all phases of what a land grant university offers to the pest management industry: research, teaching, working with the industry on continuing education, training, education," says Gary Bennett, a professor of entomology and director of the Center for Urban Pest Management at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind. Bennett is also a *PMP* Hall of Famer — and Wright's first graduate student.

Combine that with Wright's role as the first state inspector of structural pest control in the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, and his contributions to regulatory oversight at the state and national levels, and the impact of his research on an international scale, and it's easy to see the impact he has had on the industry.

"He's kind of like the Godfather of the pest control industry, when you look at what he's done," says Billy Tesh, founder and president of Pest Management Systems, Greensboro, N.C., and another of Wright's former students.

## A Lifetime of Education

"I've devoted my career to the pest control industry," Wright says. "It's a big honor to join those inducted into the *PMP* Hall of Fame. I have a high respect for them."

Wright was the first member of his family to continue his education beyond high school. He went to North Carolina State University (NCSU) in 1952 as a graduate student, following time in the U.S. Army, where he worked in the Army Chemical Center. Wright later became the technical director for Wilson Exterminating Co. Those five years working in the field would have a huge influence when he later moved to the



Wright served as technical director of Wilson Exterminating Co. in Winston Salem, N.C. from 1958 to 1963.

classroom.

"He had some on-the-job experience and the type of training needed to present to pest management technicians," Bennett says. "So when he went to NC State, he continued to do that as part of his appointment. He offered broad training to the industry as a whole."

Not only did Wright take his students into the field to experience real-world pest management situations, he never let his students leave the educational realm. He would call former students looking for various insects, or he would ask them to join him in the classroom and lecture about what it means to be in the pest control industry.

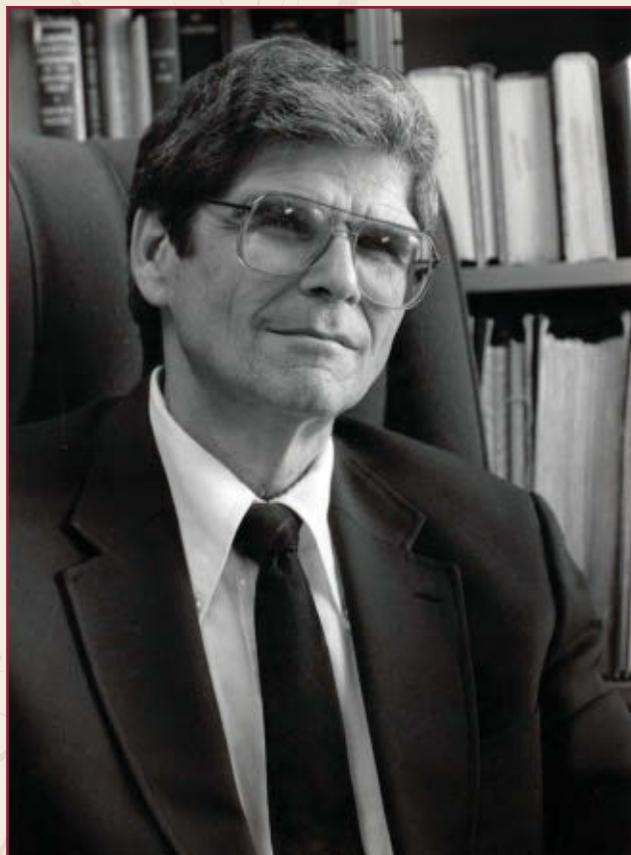
"He said, 'You're here not to learn everything. You're here to start learning how to learn about this industry,'" Tesh recalls. "That's astounding. It begins with that footing of knowledge. Not any one person knows it all."

Wright listened to his own advice and developed a relationship with fellow *PMP* Hall of Famer Blanton J. Whitmire, the founder and former president and CEO of Whitmire Research Laboratories. The pair was among the first to investigate and document how traditional application methods led

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Right: Wright sits in his office at North Carolina State University.

Below: Wright in the classroom, circa 1960.



or working with pest management companies, Wright was always focused on furthering knowledge.

“One of the things that he always prided himself in was advancing the educational component of our industry, and getting people to understand not only why we use pesticides, but also the insects that we’re controlling and how that gives us the ability to do a better job,” Tesh says.

Tesh recalls that Wright had a winning way of doing that.

“He has a unique sense of humor,” Tesh continues. “He would educate by making things fun. Entomology can be a boring thing if you’re just looking at the insects and the life cycles, and the different components of those different species. He made it interesting enough that people got engaged in his classes and, as a result, always seemed to do better.”

And the industry is better for it.

“In addition to being a really nice guy and a positive person, Dr. Wright truly has the interests of the pest management industry at heart,” Bennett says of his mentor. “Everything he did as part of his job was to help improve the industry, help it grow and develop.”

And while Wright might not agree with the level of influence, like the Godfather from the movies, his life has touched so many others.

“It makes me feel good,” Wright says of his time working in the industry and training generations of pest management professionals. “To me, it’s life well spent.” **PMP**

You can reach Jacobs at [djacobs@questex.com](mailto:djacobs@questex.com).

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Wright, who has quite a unique sense of humor, often took his students to job sites. Former student Billy Tesh recalls Wright told students to grab a bat or stick to finish off the rats that escaped while they were being gassed. The structure was so overrun, it collapsed. Wright knew it was futile, but chuckled to himself while students flailed away, chasing scurrying rats.

to pesticide drift, which meant pesticide residue was found in unwanted places. Their work led to the standard crack-and-crevice treatments in use today.

Wright’s ties to Whitmire led to a \$4 million donation to NCSU, at the time the largest individual gift to the university. It led to the establishment of two endowed professorships in entomology. He also was able to secure private funds to establish two graduate fellowships within the Urban Entomology program at NCSU.

### Focus on Cockroaches

In addition to his work with Whitmire, Wright became one of the leading experts on German cockroaches. He worked closely and extensively with the pest control industry to help professionals with their German cockroach management programs.

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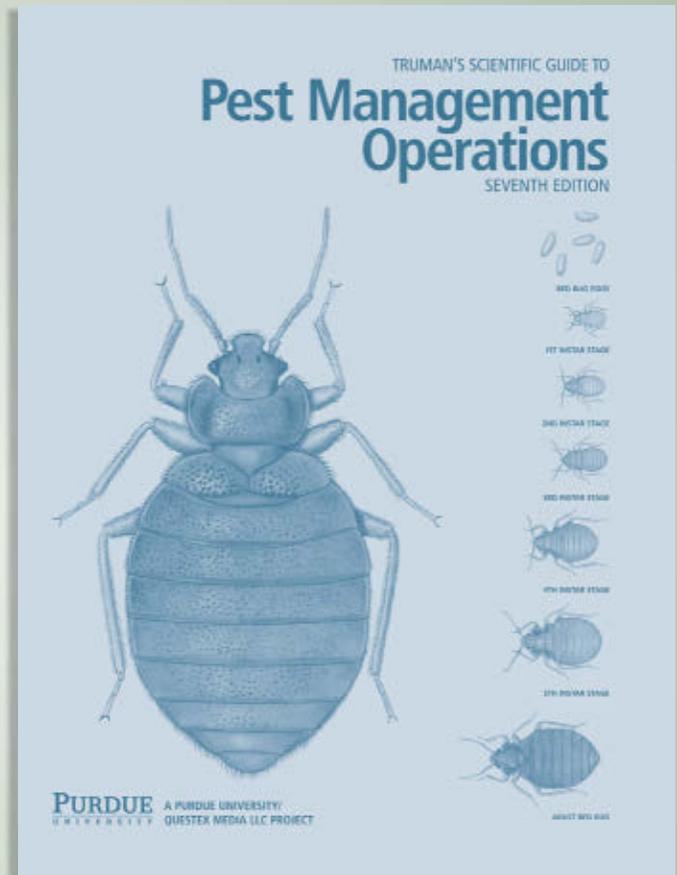
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# Guardian & Giver

*PMP* Hall of Fame posthumous inductee Paul Adams developed the first state minimum termite treatment standards and defended the industry against attacks by Rachel Carson and other so-called 'environmentalists.'

By **Butch Morrison** • Contributor



Paul K. Adams was among the first researchers to decide for the U.S. Army how to use and apply DDT during World War II, as well as to work with chlordane.

He wrote the first minimum termite treatment standards for the State of Louisiana — the first state to develop and implement such guidelines.

Adams also re-established the Louisiana Pest Control Association — now named the Louisiana Pest Management Association (LPMA) — in 1968 and stayed treasurer of the group until his death. He also served on the Louisiana Structural Pest Control Commission for 28 years.

As president of the National Pest Control Association — now named the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) — the year Rachel Carson's controversial "Silent Spring" came out, Adams traveled the U.S., defending the industry's people and products as protectors of public health and the environment. He also served as the association's Political Action Committee (PAC) chairman.

As the owner of a successful business, Adams Pest Control, in Alexandria, La., Adams was a shining example of giving back to his associates and the community. He established the first Boys Club and Girls Club in Alexandria, and accordingly received the Silver Medallion award from the U.S. Congress for his service to children.

For these and myriad other significant contributions to the industry, environment and his fellow man, Paul K. Adams is a posthumous inductee into the *PMP* Hall of Fame, Class of 2010.

## Teacher

"Paul Adams demonstrated true leadership through his years of dedicated service to the LPMA and NPMA, and served his home community in numerous civic organization and activities, and donated generously of his time, talent and treasure to the betterment of the pest management



*PMP* Hall of Famer Paul Adams and his team in the early days of Adams Pest Control.

profession," says Allen Fugler, director of the Florida Pest Management Association and former executive director of Louisiana Pest Control Association. "His legacy is clearly seen in the people he touched and causes he championed."

Many changes took place in the pest management industry during the years Adams was in business — most of them for the better. He has been recognized as having been in the forefront in bringing about several of those positive changes.

"Paul Adams was my friend," says Bob Kunst, owner of Fischer Environmental Services and fellow inductee into the *PMP* Hall of Fame, Class of 2010. "He helped me many times when he did not even know it. I listened to him and learned a great deal about people and pest management.

"Paul was the first in his family to go to college," Kunst adds. "Once, when Paul was not doing well in school, he received a letter from his father that said it was OK if school did not work out because Mary missed him and he was welcome home. Mary was the plow mule."

Paul redoubled his efforts and graduated from college.

"After hearing this story, whenever things looked tough for me, I knew it was simply because I really had not known what tough was, and I stopped feeling sorry for myself and got on with the job at hand," Kunst says.

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### Lifelong Student

Immediately after graduation, he was hired by the U.S. Public Health Service to do mosquito control work. Soon afterward, however, Adams joined the Army, where he was shipped to Central America as an instructor and a research entomologist with the Army School of Malariology. He pursued more mosquito control work as part of a training program for malaria control units to be sent into areas in the Pacific. While there, he received a direct commission as an Army Entomologist and did much of the early research with DDT prior to its use in aerial applications over Okinawa.

Adams' nearly 40 months in the military gave him valuable practical experience in the field of pesticide research and insect and rodent control. It also offered him the unusual opportunity to work on research projects with the authors of some of his college textbooks.

The Army later assigned him to Camp Livingston, near Alexandria. While stationed there, he met his wife, Betty, and decided Alexandria is where he wanted to stay. Fresh out of

the Army after World War II, he tried to set up a pest control department with a local feed and seed store, but was unable to work out an acceptable agreement.

Having already met all necessary requirements to become a licensed entomologist — and short of funds — Adams had no other choice but to go to work in pest management. Mustering \$300 from his military pay, and a \$5,600 loan from a bank in his hometown of De Kalb, Miss., Adams founded Adams Pest Control in March 1946.

### Simply the Best

Always an innovator in the field of employer-employee relations, Adams placed extreme importance on screening, selecting and training employees. His business model of hiring self-motivated technicians who know how to communicate and follow the Golden Rule guaranteed success.

“Mr. Adams was an excellent motivator who insisted you give your best,” says Culby Smith, who was hired by him in 1957 and still works as a technician for Adams Pest Control.

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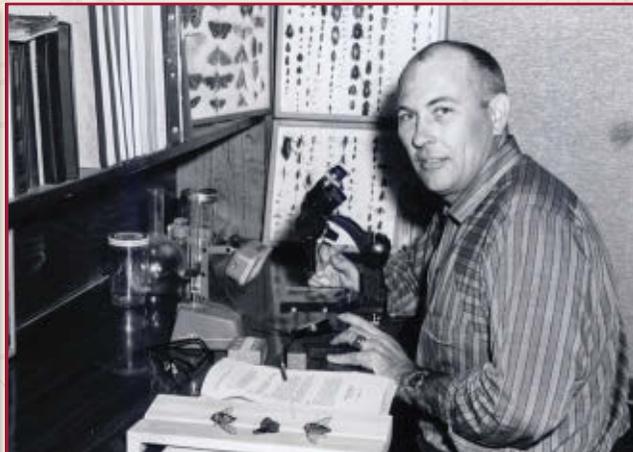


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Left: Adams served as a research entomologist for the U.S. Army during World War II. Center: Throughout his life, Adams always strived to learn more about the field of entomology and pest management. Right: Adams receives the President's Award in 1996.

In 1953, Adams established a profit-sharing plan for his employees — one of the first ever for small business. This, he believed, gave his people long-term security and provided an incentive for longevity with the company.

Adams' work ethic was beyond reproach, as well as his way of relating to co-workers and customers. When he came to me in 1992 about buying his business, it was one of the easiest and best business decisions of my life.

Adams always strove to improve the pest management industry. In 1996, the National Pest Control Association

awarded him its first Pinnacle Award. Winner of numerous other accolades, Adams has an endowed professorship of urban entomology in his name at Louisiana State University.

Perhaps summing it up best, when the LPMA established the Paul K. Adams Award of Excellence, Adams was called the "Father of Modern Pest Control in the State of Louisiana." **PMP**

*You can reach Morrison, who purchased Paul K. Adams' pest management company, at [morrison@upnadams.com](mailto:morrison@upnadams.com).*

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# Scientific Glory

*PMP* Hall of Fame posthumous inductee Charles Pomerantz was a self-trained entomologist who played a pivotal role in identifying the etiology of a 1946 outbreak in New York City stemming from a disease transmitted by mites infesting mice.

By Norm Cooper • Contributor



It's quite unusual to find a previously undiscovered disease that makes its first known appearance to medical experts in a metropolis, let alone in New York City. It's even more unusual that unraveling the cause of this hitherto unknown malady, which had eluded scientists, was solved primarily through the perseverance of a self-taught entomological authority who had never attended college. Such is the incredible story of *PMP* Hall of Fame, Class of 2010, posthumous inductee Charles Pomerantz.

Charles Pomerantz was a pest management expert and self-trained entomologist who played a pivotal role in identifying the etiology of a 1946 outbreak in New York City of what was later named rickettsialpox.

Born in Poland, Pomerantz immigrated to the United States as a child. He grew up on Manhattan's Lower East Side and first worked for a manufacturer of ladies coats. Later, he entered the pest management business with the goal of performing a greater service to the community — and that's exactly what he did.

Pomerantz was credited with identifying this as a zoonotic disease spread through mice and the mites that infested rodents. After culturing and isolating the organism in laboratory mice, the pathogen named *Rickettsia akari* was identified as the ultimate cause of the disease now called rickettsialpox. The Department of Health announced a program to work with building owners to exterminate the mice that were the vector for the disease. More than 500 cases of the disease were diagnosed in New York City from 1947 to 1951.

Later that year, Dr. Edward W. Baker of the United States Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine honored Pomerantz with the naming of a mite discovered in peach orchards in the Southern United States, calling it *Pomerantzia charlesi*. A species of flea discovered in the Philippines was named for him in 1951 — *Stivalius*

*pomerantzi*. Over the course of his career, Pomerantz also was honored by having his name given to a crane fly and a group of prostigmatic mites.

## Public Health Hero

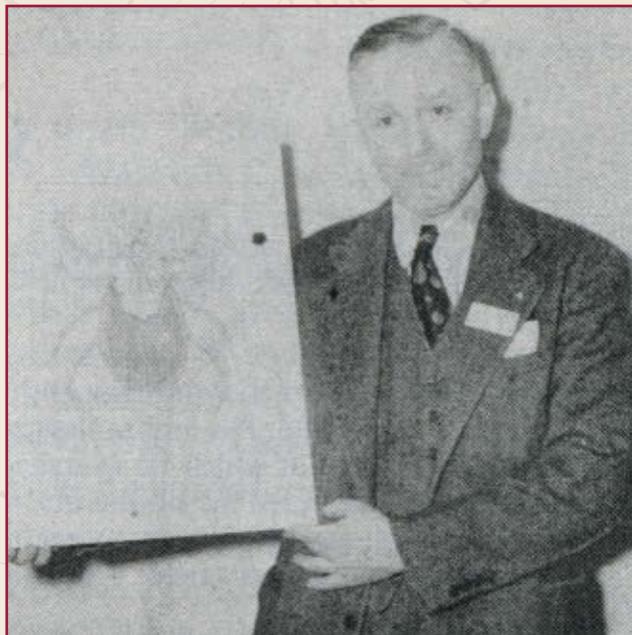
Pomerantz's scientific fame came about as a result of a mysterious near-epidemic which began in February 1946 in Queens when an 11-year-old boy living in the Regency Park housing development was hospitalized with a blisteringly high fever, achy muscles, a rash and lesions. Various tests concluded the boy did not have any known disease displayed by the symptoms.

The boy recovered, but within a few weeks dozens of similar cases with similar symptoms were reported and, curiously, all the victims lived in the Regency Park apartments. Despite many inspections and blood tests, nearly 100 more cases of the Mystery Disease (as it was dubbed in the New York press) were reported and still the New York City Department of Health could not ascertain the exact cause. Authorities still weren't any closer to a solution of this baffling disease that went away by itself after a few weeks, ostensibly caused no permanent damage and afflicted only residents of Regency Park.

Five months after the initial case of unremitting high fever and strange rashes, people were still falling ill to this malady that did not affect anybody in the neighboring Kew Gardens area, nor in any other section of Queens, nor any other part of New York City — not even in other parts of the United States.

"I was intensely fascinated," Pomerantz told *New Yorker* magazine. "Here was a disease resembling Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. A tick transmits Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. And the tick is my specialty. I said to myself, 'If even the doctors are baffled, then Charles Pomerantz has a moral obligation to look into it.'"

Pomerantz then repeatedly walked the streets of the neigh-



Pomerantz (1896-1973), Bell Exterminating Company, New York, discovered the rickettsialpox vector.

boring area and asked dog owners if their dogs had ever experienced ticks. He even combed dogs for tick specimens.

“I found it fantastic to believe that enough ticks — it would take hundreds, thousands — to cause so many people to become ill, could suddenly invade an area without anybody finding a single one, not even kennelmen,” Pomerantz said. “Ticks are not so small that they’re invisible, and when they are gorged with the blood of the necessary host, they’re as big as a kidney bean.”

Pomerantz remained perplexed, but the answer came to him like a thunderbolt: Perhaps rats or mice are the “middle men.” Rats and mice were not known to transmit any rash-inducing disease, so the next logical assumption was that the rodents must be hosts to a disease-bearing parasite that can bite and infect man as an accidental host.

### Ticks Out, Mites In!

Pomerantz contacted Dr. Shankman, the doctor who treated the first group of the Mystery Disease cases. Despite the conventional wisdom of that time that mites could only transmit two serious feverish diseases (Japanese River Fever and Endemic Typhus), Pomerantz convinced the doctor to consider his deduction and to assist in enabling Pomerantz access to the Regency Park basement and incinerator areas.

On July 28, 1946, Pomerantz entered the basement areas and, after hours of intensive searching, collected 45 mite samples. He was ecstatic.

“I, a humble pest control operator, had found something to relieve the uncertainty of men of scientific learning,” Pomerantz said at the time. “I can’t describe my sensation of glory.”

The next morning, Pomerantz traveled to Washington by train and showed his mite specimens to Dr. Baker, who confirmed that the specimens contained a rather rare species of mites, *Allodermanyssus sanguineus*.

Pomerantz was elated. He returned to the Regency Park apartments and spent seven weeks in the basement and incinerator areas, where, by this time, government scientists had set up a field laboratory to process and expedite the shipment of Pomerantz’s newest mite catches. Dr. Robert Huebner of the U.S. Public Health Service worked closely with Pomerantz. When some Regency Park tenants reported, “the walls were moving,” Pomerantz peeled back loose wallpaper to discover the walls surging with mites.

Pomerantz was credited with discovering the mystery malady as a zoonotic disease spread by rickettsial pathogen transmitted by mites and borne by mice. The disease, now called rickettsialpox, was controlled by eliminating the mice — but not until 1952 after nearly 500 New Yorkers had contracted the disease.

President Harry Truman, New York Governor Thomas Dewey and New York City Mayor William O’Dwyer honored Pomerantz at a huge banquet. In addition to countless newspaper feature stories, his contributions to public health were recognized in books (“Eleven Blue Men and Other Narratives of Medical Detection” and “The Ratcatcher’s Child”) and several interviews with him were published in the *New Yorker* magazine.

Pomerantz was invited to speak at the Harvard School of Public Health, the Tufts School of Medicine and the Israel Ministry of Health, as well as at countless other universities and at symposia throughout the globe.

If you knew Pomerantz, however, you couldn’t help but be aware that the tributes he cherished most were the naming of several species of mites, fleas, chiggers and other arthropods in his honor and utilizing the nomenclature *Pomerantzia*, *Pomerantzia charlesi* or other Latinized versions that would immortalize his name. **PMP**

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*You can reach Cooper, president of Norm Cooper Associates and PMP Hall of Famer, at [normcooper@verizon.net](mailto:normcooper@verizon.net).*