Jean Spencer Felton died in his seaside home in Mendocino, California, on June 12, 2003, after a life of devotion to his family, friends, and colleagues, and to the welfare of workers and the advancement of our profession.

Many of the contributors to this Special Issue of *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, a Festschrift in Jean’s honor, were among the hundreds of students and trainees who were privileged to have him as a mentor. His encouragement of younger colleagues, his devotion to occupational medicine, and his love of its rich history have inspired an entire generation.

A restless energy, both intellectual and physical, enabled Jean to do the work of three men in his lifetime, and he enjoyed the careers of as many. After rising to the challenge of a particular post, he would move on enthusiastically to the next opportunity to explore the heights of his talents. Along the way, he had a profound influence on occupational medicine in the West, perhaps more than any other practitioner of his time.

Born in Oakland, California, in 1911, Jean went to college and to medical school at Stanford. After a residency at Mount Zion Hospital in San Francisco, he practiced surgery until the outbreak of WWII, when he became an Army medical officer, with assignments that included the Philippines and Japan.

After the War, Jean was for a time medical director at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. A professorship in preventive medicine at the University of Oklahoma, which he accepted in 1953, sparked a lifelong passion for teaching. He returned to California in 1958 as professor of occupational health at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he built the foundation for its Occupational Medicine Residency Program.

In 1968 he became director of the Occupational Health Service of the County of Los Angeles, developing a preventive medical program for more than 80,000 employees. Next, Jean’s boundless energy resulted in his appointment as chief of the Occupational Health Service for the Long Beach Naval Region and its shipyard, in which position he conducted seminal research on the effects of asbestos and published many of his most important articles.

As clinical professor of preventive medicine at the University of Southern California from 1969 to 1980, he initiated the curriculum in occupational medicine. He then accepted an appointment as clinical professor of community and environmental medicine at the University of California, Irvine, where he became a leading force in its occupational medicine residency program. Jean finally retired in 1988 to a life of travel and the enjoyment of art and drama, while continuing to write and publish.

Many government advisory panels benefited from Jean’s participation during his long career, but he had a special commitment to the President’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, on which he served for more than four decades. In 1980 he received the “Physician of the Year” award from President Jimmy Carter, a tribute to his key role in promoting what later became the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Jean wrote many detailed and interesting papers on the history and practice of occupational medicine. Proud of the fact that he knew Alice Hamilton, he wrote the introduction to a later printing of *Exploring the Dangerous Trades: The Autobiography of Alice Hamilton*. One of his final acts was to donate his extensive collection of books and other historical materials to the University of California Library.

Contributors to the Festschrift in honor of Jean Spencer Felton were connected to this Renaissance man through many strands of his peripatetic career. Some, along with him, were Fellows of the Collegium Ramazzini, a society of international scholars in occupational health. Others have received the Felton Award for Excellence in Scientific Writing. The Felton legacy is grounded in historical studies of our field, globally oriented to the international dimensions of its challenges, and always centered on the ethical pursuit of scientific research and teaching. The Festschrift is a heartfelt tribute to a man of great stature, humanity, and humility.

Joe LaDou, MD

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