
Obituary

Loyl Stromberg

May 5, 1914 - September 30, 2011



Loyl Stromberg passed away on September 30. He was an American poultry breeding patriarch, both literally and figuratively, and committed his long life (97 years) to the study, promotion, and perpetuation of the legacy in the poultry industry. Loyl Stromberg was a writer and editor of 14 books, in one way or another associated with poultry. The internationally most notable were *Poultry of the World* (1996), *ABC's of Poultry Genetics* (compiled by Willard Hollander, 1989), and *Poultry Oddities, History, Folklore* (1992). It is difficult to identify his profession in one word: he was an entrepreneur, publisher, breeder, poultry amateur, and chicken guru, as he was even called. But perhaps most importantly, he was a Collector with a capital letter. He

said that he collected everything but money that he just liked to spend. His extensive collection of figurines, statuettes, and any other items which show the hens and roosters of different ages from antiquity to modern times, subsequently became an exhibit at the U.S. National Poultry Museum he created. He thought it was a great achievement in his life. The opening of the first museum building was held in 1994, and since it did not accommodate all the collected items, Loyl Stromberg made tremendous efforts to raise funds for a second building of the museum. Moreover, he made fun of it, comparing himself to a beggar with a hat who asks for money. And he reached his goal: in 2009 the second building of the museum hosted first visitors.

His collection exhibits related to the chicken theme reflect ethnographic and psycho-emotional features of people from almost all countries of the world! He found and bought them on trips to different countries, but also never tired of asking numerous friends and acquaintances around the world to send something with the image of chickens and roosters. The museum contains the exhibits even from Russia, Ukraine and many remote countries.

He also collected poems, jokes, songs, cartoons, sayings, and proverbs related to the chicken theme. Subsequently, they were compiled and issued in the form of the aforementioned book *Poultry Oddities, History, Folklore*.

In his life, as it can be judged from his correspondence for many years with others, Loyl Stromberg had a great sense of humour, was interested in everything that happened in the world and mankind. His pen pals got from him parcels of books, magazines, napkins, everything with pictures of chickens and roosters, a rooster alarm clock that crows, pens and much more!

He sent a lot of funny jokes, cartoons, poems, and exhortations how to live. The latter was very instructive, and one of those recommends the following way of life. In order to live properly, one needs to perform a total of five conditions: 1. Free your heart from

hatred. 2. Do not let troubles in your mind. 3. Live simply. 4. Give more. 5. Wait less. He further advised to make a wish list of 50 important things that a person should do before their departure from life. It mobilises people and alienates them from unnecessary, frivolous deeds. He also discussed in his letters scientific issues. When he was asked for some specific scientific information, such as polydactyly in chickens, he would immediately send excerpts from old books that described the condition. He also provided references to new books on poultry breeding, etc. At the end of his life, he often wrote that he was a very happy person and this was right: he complied the major items in his wish list, and had many friends around the world, which he greatly appreciated.

To learn more about the life and work of Loyl Stromberg, please visit a web page compiled by his Italian friend Elio Corti: http://www.summagallicana.it/english/loyl_stromberg.htm.

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