

California Avocado Society 1980 Awards of Honor



Roslyn B. Alfin-Slater



George M. Briggs

Both of the California Avocado Society's 1980 honorees have served this industry without fanfare as scientific members of the Nutritional Research Committee of the California Avocado Advisory Board and the successor Avocado Commission. Dr. Briggs was the committee's first chairman; Dr. Alfin-Slater, its second and present chairman.

The Nutritional Research Committee was conceived and organized in 1969 by Dr. Briggs in response to the industry's call for scientific help in debunking erroneous, misleading, and economically damaging publicity adverse to the avocado. His creation was an informal organization of nationally and internationally-known nutritionists and food scientists, drawn from institutions throughout the country. Brought together in hospitable surroundings, this group received input from the avocado industry and directed (in some instances, conducted) research into the nutritional values of the avocado and its place in human nutrition.

The committee has met more or less on an annual basis since its inception, in continuance of its purpose. Early in the committee's history, Dr. Briggs resigned his chairmanship (though continuing as a member), to be succeeded by Dr. Alfin-Slater, whose base is closer to the industry. Under her leadership, the development and promulgation of scientific data continued to benefit the avocado industry. Among other contributions, she co-authored (with her husband, Grant G. Slater, and two others) a paper on avocado composition that is the major reference work on avocado nutritional values now in use in the industry for the information of food writers and professionals involved in all aspects of food and nutrition.

The contributions of the two 1980 honorees, and of their colleagues—also deserving of

recognition, are of incalculable but great economic importance to avocado growers. It is fitting that their names be added to the list of those who have been recognized for their outstanding meritorious service in behalf of the avocado industry.

Roslyn Berniece Alfin-Slater is a biochemist and educator. A graduate of Brooklyn College, she earned her doctorate (Ph.D.) at Columbia University in 1946. Following a series of education and research assignments in the east, Dr. Alfin-Slater joined the faculty of the University of Southern California and, later (1959) the University of California at Los Angeles where she has remained, serving from 1969 as head of the division of environmental and nutritional science. Among her many professional affiliations are the American Heart Association, the American Public Health Association, The American Institute of Nutrition (which gave her its Osborne and Mendel award in 1970), and the Society for Nutrition Education — serving as its president in 1977-78. She is co-author, with Dr. Derrick Jelliffe, of a popular column in the *Los Angeles Times*, SFH (Science Food Health).

George McSpadden Briggs, a nutritionist, graduated from the University of Wisconsin and earned his doctorate (Ph.D.) there in 1944. Much of his early work was in animal nutrition at the University of Maryland and at the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland. He joined the faculty of the University of California, Berkeley, in 1960 as chairman of the department of nutritional sciences (until 1970) and as professor of nutrition in the Agricultural Experiment Station to the present. Dr. Briggs' special research has been with vitamin B-12, vitamin B complex, and animal nutrition. His professional affiliations are numerous. Mention of a few will suggest their scope: California Nutrition Council (chairman, 1970-71), Research Advisory Committee of the National Livestock and Meat Board, National Academy of Sciences, American Public Health Association (Fellow), Society for Nutrition Education (a founder and president, 1968-69), American Dietetic Association, Nutrition Society of Great Britain. Dr. Briggs received the Borden award in poultry science in 1958. He is a contributor to scientific journals and is the author (with Bogert and Calloway) of the book, "Nutrition and Physical Fitness."

Both honorees are listed in *Who's Who in America*, 40th edition, to which interested readers may refer for additional information.