

Ernst J. Pyler



To emphasize an individual's expertise in an area of study, the expression, "He wrote the book on the subject," is popular. In the case of Ernst J. Pyler and the technology of baking, the expression isn't just a metaphor. He actually did write the book on baking. In 1952, Mr. Pyler wrote "Baking Science and Technology," a book that

has become the primary teaching text for baking schools around the world. Mr. Pyler updated the book with new editions in 1973 and 1988. The textbook continues to sell, and a new printing of the third edition is expected to be available later in 2006.

A native of Didikon, Switzerland, Mr. Pyler emigrated to the United States in 1929 at age 16.

Shortly after graduating from the University of Chicago, Mr. Pyler joined the staff of the Siebel Institute of Technology in 1936 as an instructor. Siebel named him associate editor of *Bakers Digest* in 1936 and editor in 1942.

Siebel was a well-established educational and scientific research organization specializing in fermentation — baking and brewing. *Bakers Digest* was one of the institute's publications, aimed at helping its graduates and others in the baking industry. The publication was self-described as "an encyclopedic digest of technical progress in the baking industry."

Mr. Pyler was credited with raising the bar for the magazine due to his knowledge of baking that exceeded that of his peers and that of his readers. His teaching background shaped his editing style.

In spite of this high level of tech-

nical proficiency, Mr. Pylar worked hard to ensure *Bakers Digest* articles were understandable to a wide audience and spent considerable time working with authors of submitted articles to be sure the language was clear.

A number of technologies, both ingredient and equipment, received their first exposure to the industry through the pages of *Bakers Digest*. Often these articles were written by the inventors themselves and provided unique insight into the production issues of the day.

In 1965, Mr. Pylar and associates acquired Siebel Publishing Co., and he added the title of publisher, becoming *Bakers Digest* chief salesman. When the publication was acquired by Ammark Publishing Co. in 1978, Mr. Pylar moved into a consulting role. He was succeeded as editor by his son, Dr. Richard Pylar. The magazine was acquired by Sosland Publishing Co. in 1983. At that time, Laurie Gorton was named editor of *Bakers Digest*. Six years later, it was merged into *Baking & Snack*. Its focus on serving production superintendents is carried on in the annual *Bakers Production Manual*.

Mr. Pylar's strength as an educator was emphasized in comments by Morton I. Sosland, editor-in-chief of *Milling & Baking News* and chairman of Sosland Publishing Co.

"As a teacher with a great store of knowledge gained from experi-

ence and observation, Ernie Pylar delighted in being an instructor to what he saw from its birth as a new industry — the large-scale production of bread and other baked foods," Mr. Sosland wrote shortly after Mr. Pylar's death in 2002.

His background as a teacher extended to his personal style, too. Mr. Pylar always made time to answer readers' questions or to clarify a technical matter for someone new to the industry.

Although the first edition of "Baking Science and Technology" was written more than 50 years ago, the content was completely updated in the subsequent editions to reflect the latest theories and developments in ingredient science, formulating and processing technology.

Mr. Pylar also wrote "Bakers Handbook," a glossary of baking terms that is widely used today and is published on the Internet at bakingbusiness.com.

Notwithstanding his academic demeanor, Mr. Pylar was a well-known figure in the baking industry and was among the first members of the American Society of Bakery Engineers (now the American Society of Baking) to attend 50 consecutive

conferences. Additionally, Mr. Pylar indexed the society's proceedings from 1970 to 1998.

Late in life, Mr. Pylar and his wife, Sophia B. Pylar, moved to the Raleigh, N.C., area from Chicago. Still, he maintained his activities



Mr. Pylar was an avid photographer and took many pictures for *Bakers Digest*. This cover features a photograph he took of his daughter, Sylvia.

with the A.S.B. and the American Association of Cereal Chemists until the end of his life. He passed away in October 2002 at Fugay-Varina, N.C. In April 2003, the American Institute of Baking established a scholarship fund honoring Mr. Pylar.