

Laure Moutet

A reflection on a career and the value of mentorship

As a new president of Women in Flavor and Fragrance Commerce (WFFC), Celine Roche of Mane, was sworn in during the organization's annual business meeting, the organization honored one of its founding members. Laure Moutet has been with the WFFC since its founding 30 years ago and served the group in various capacities until 2003, in the process raising money, founding its newsletter, and organizing memorable study trips to Spain and the south of France. She was also the first WFFC Woman of the Year and the first female board member of the former Fragrance Materials Association (now International Fragrance Association North America). In opening remarks, Pat Halle (Ungerer & Co.) praised Moutet for her total commitment to the WFFC.

Born in Grasse, Moutet was the third generation of her family to enter the aroma trades. From her mother she learned skills necessary for business, while her father, Jean Paul Moutet, imparted his vast expertise in essential oils. He could judge products simply by smell, Moutet said. When her father passed away, the family business was renamed with his initials—JPM Imports.

Moutet moved to the United States in 1968, and said she was inspired by Ben Benveniste, founder of Phoenix Aromas & Essential Oils, to move forward in the wake of the loss of her father. Moutet noted the hard work she put into the company, which required multitasking—including loading and unloading barrels of ingredients when necessary. Moutet ran the company for 30 years until it merged with Manheimer—coincidentally run by Stephen Manheimer, whom she had married in 1978. The Manheimer company, in turn, was eventually acquired by Kerry Ingredients & Flavours, from which Moutet recently retired.

Moutet thanked her mentors in the industry, highlighting the importance of the WFFC's mission. In fact, she pointed out, her colleagues at WFFC—Cecilia Castoro, Fran Macchia and Joanne Vertucci—were all WFFC members. Having retired, Moutet noted in a recent reflection in the WFFC newsletter, "My wish is to



Honoree Laure Moutet, left, and incoming WFFC president Celine Roche (Mane)



Kathryn Bardsley (IFF), left, presented Diane Schmitt (Cornell University) with the WFFC Flavor Scholarship Award.

become a big sister to the young people in the WFFC, sharing with them my experience."

It was fitting, then, that Moutet's speech was followed by a presentation of the 2012 WFFC scholarships. Lauren Ritzmann (Kerry Ingredients & Flavours) was awarded the Rita Flynn Memorial Fragrance Scholarship Award, while Diane Schmitt (Cornell University) received the WFFC Flavor Scholarship Award toward her master's degree in food science and efforts, in conjunction with the Institute of Food Technologists, for product development for Tanzanian women suffering from obstetric fistula.

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