

# John Baptiste Francioni, Jr., 1891–1977: A Brief Biography

Ralph F. Boulware<sup>1</sup>



J. B. Francioni, Jr. was born May 13, 1891, at Labadieville in Assumption Parish, Louisiana, the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Baptiste Francioni, Sr. His mother was the former Ptolema Landry.

He received his B.S. degree from Louisiana State University in 1914. Following graduation he became associated with the livestock industry of Louisiana when he organized the Feliciana Cow Testing Association, the first in the South, and served as the official tester for a year. In 1915–1916 he worked in a hog cholera program with the State Livestock Sanitary Board. From 1916 to 1920 he was engaged in swine club work with the Louisiana Agricultural Extension Service. He received an M.S. degree from Louisiana

State University in 1925 and did further graduate work at Iowa State.

Francioni joined the faculty of Louisiana State University as an assistant professor in 1920 and became Professor and Head of the Animal Industry Department in 1931, a position he held for 25 years.

He married Mae Brown in 1915. To this union two children were born, a daughter, Mrs. Charles Duchain, Jr., and a son, John B. Francioni III. He was an avid baseball fan and is said to have played in Minor League games as a young man. He regularly attended the Catholic Church, and he always made sure he could attend Mass when away from home.

He was a planner and designer, and was sometimes called an inventor. He planned the present Animal Science Building, which is now called Francioni Hall, and a food preservation building that became a model for food preservation centers throughout Louisiana. As an inventor, he developed or aided in the development of several pieces of equipment used in food preservation or animal slaughter. Among these are a continuous exhaust system, a steam blancher, a lye peeler, and a beef skinning cradle.

He held membership in the American Society of Animal Science and was named a Fellow in 1961. The American Association for Advancement of Science had elevated him to Fellow in 1939. He attended the first Reciprocal Meat Conference in Chicago in 1948 and was a charter member of the American Meat Science Association. In addition, he was a member of Phi Kappa Phi, Omicron Delta Kappa, Gamma Sigma Delta, and Alpha Zeta.

"Prof," as he was called by many former students, retired in 1961 after forty-four years of service on the Louisiana State University College of Agriculture faculty. Following retirement he remained active and served as an advisor to the State Department of Education's Agricultural Section. In 1970 Louisiana State University bestowed an Honorary Doctorate degree on John Baptiste Francioni, Jr.

Among his many honors and citations, plaques may be found given in recognition for Signal Service by the Reciprocal Meat Conference, Future Farmers of America, Louisiana Cattlemen's Association, and Kiwanis International, to name only a few. He served on the East Baton Rouge Fire and Police civil service boards and the Baton Rouge Community Chest.

In 1957 the Louisiana State University Block and Bridle Alumni Association presented his portrait to the Animal Science Department. It now hangs in the lobby of Francioni Hall. This Alumni group also

<sup>1</sup>Professor Emeritus, Louisiana State University.  
Received March 11, 1996.  
Accepted March 15, 1996.

established an endowed scholarship in his name.

Dr. Francioni was a gifted speaker and frequently served as Master of Ceremonies. He was one of those who could tell humorous stories and at the same time make strong points.

Outside the United States he was called upon by schools, private companies, and Ministers of Agricul-

ture in Central America for assistance with their programs.

Dr. Francioni died February 1, 1977. He is survived by Mrs. Francioni, Mrs. Duchein, John B. Francioni III, seven grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. He will long be remembered by those who knew him and those who worked closely with him.