

Mary Ann Handel, Ph.D.

"My most meaningful contributions are the successes of my trainees and collaborators" Mary Ann.

Awards and Honors

1998: Association for Women in Science East Tennessee Chapter, Distinguished and Sustained Scientific Contributions Award

2002: The Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health Larry Ewing Memorial Lecture

2010: AAAS Fellow, 2010

2017: ASA, Steinberger Lecture & Award

2018: FIR - MBL - NIH, Jerry Strauss Beacon Award

2018: SSR, Jansen Service Award

Research Accomplishments

Continuously NIH funded since 1982

Over 100 publications

Co-led the ground-breaking ReproGenomics ENU mutagenesis screen at the Jackson labs.

Has served on key study sections throughout her career and continues to do so even after retirement.

Two illustrious careers: one at the University of Tennessee and then a second later career as a leading figure at The Jackson Laboratory



2026 HERITAGE HONOREE



From Mentees and Collaborators

Service to the Community

1994 – 2004: Editorial Board: Molecular Reproduction

1999 – 2004: Editorial Board: Biology of Reproduction

2000: Program Chair, SSR Annual Meeting

2001-2004: Board of Directors, SSR

2003: Organizer & Program Chair of XVIIth North American Testis Workshop, Phoenix AZ

2004-2009: Co-Editor-in-Chief, Biology of Reproduction

2007 – present: External Advisory Board Chair (CoRe)

2012 – 2014: Program Co-Chair, CSH Germ Cell Conf.

2018: Editorial Board, Molecular Reproduction

2018 : Editorial Advisory Board, Development

2009 – present: Member, SSR Publications Committee

Trainees Mentored

12 postdoctoral Fellows

16 graduate students

2 Teacher Interns

40 undergraduates

"Mary Ann Handel is one of the most supportive and selfless scientists I have ever met. We ask the same question she so often posed: "And what did we learn?" It was her way of grounding us in our core questions—and a gentle reminder that science only matters if we can share what we've learned." – Dr. Ewelina Bolcun-Filas

"Working with Mary Ann was transformative. She is a powerhouse of reproductive genetics who balances demanding scientific rigor with a deep, genuine care for her trainees. She taught me how to be a better scientist, and more importantly, a true mentor." — Dr. Philip Jordan

"It's just been amazing to me how 'available' she has been throughout the stages of my career to give advice and support, she served as an important informal mentor for ~20 years." – Dr. Chris Geyer

"Many times- She congratulated me on papers, read my grant aims, and checked in on my career - never performatively, always sincerely. She brings people in, uplifts them, and makes them feel they belong. " – Dr. Sue Hammoud

"My time as a graduate student in Mary Ann's lab at UT was truly foundational for my career as a scientist and entrepreneur. – Dr. Shannon Eaker

"Mary Ann was always open to my ideas, even when she didn't necessarily agree. She is there to provide direction, but not to dictate each step." – Dr. John Cobb

"I was never formally mentored by Mary Ann but consider her a career mentor. Without being asked....and perhaps without knowing it....her calm, consistent demeanor; her interest in my work and career; thoughtful approach to science; and gracious nature set an example that is worth emulating" – Dr. Kyle Orwig

"Mary Ann has an extraordinary ability to help young scientists grow. She taught me not only how to approach challenging scientific questions, but also the importance of integrity, critical thinking, and collaboration. – Dr. Yasu Fujiwara

"Mary Ann has brought her traits of perseverance, integrity, intelligence, diplomacy and selflessness to the service of JAX and the Society for the Study of Reproduction. She is a wonderful friend and colleague." - John Eppig, Ph.D.

"Mary Ann has shaped my career over 25 years — not through any formal role, but through pure dedication to the field and genuine care for junior colleagues. I have never met a more generous, insightful, and kind person, and I am deeply grateful to have been one of the many she chose to invest her time and knowledge in." – Dr. Paula Cohen

