Scientist, Mentor, Colleague, and Friend

Eleanore Butz served as an editor at *Science* from 1960 until she retired in 1997. She trained the most senior of the present *Science* editors, whether biologist or physical scientist, although the term apprenticeship might better describe the experience. We referred to her as Mrs. Butz or "EB"; only editors-in-chief or their deputies might refer to her by her first name.

She was truly senior to the flock of younger editors that she trained, having received her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in biochemistry (or rather, medicinal chemistry) in 1934. She had lived through the development of much modern science that we only read about in textbooks. If we mentioned Watson and Crick, she reminded us of the work of Avery. If you mentioned Linus Pauling, she might tell you about a small meeting she attended in which Pauling and Eyring argued with each other at a blackboard about transition-state theory.

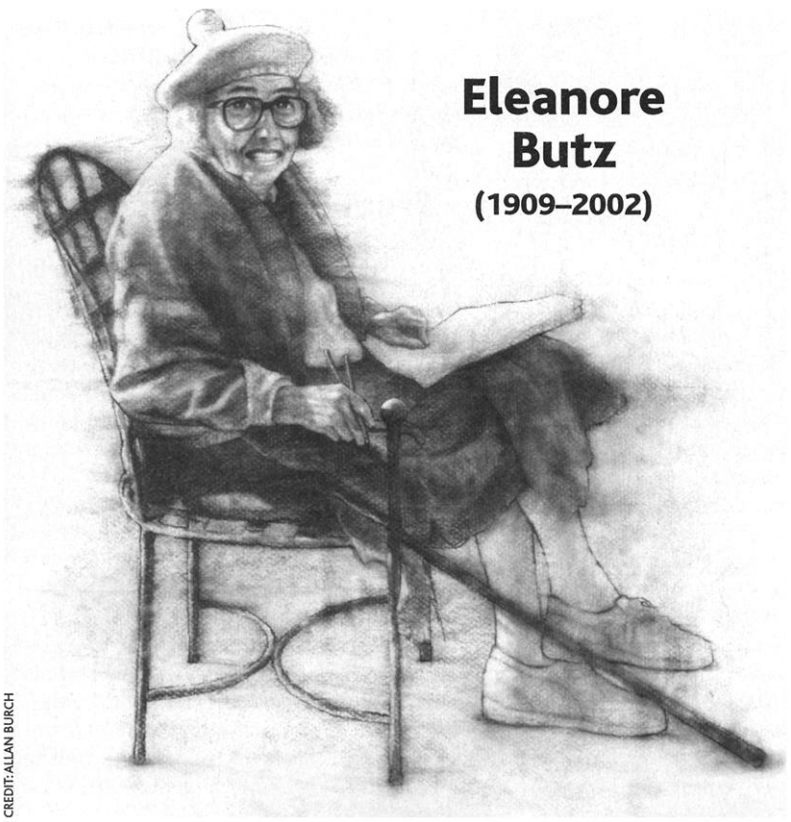
EB had no patience for papers that reported, with the help of new methodology, what a previous generation had already understood from harder work with lesser tools, and more careful thinking. She had a great appreciation for what new methods and theories could tell us about problems that had so far refused to crack, and embraced every revolution in science, especially those in molecular and structural biology. She was trained to think about life and its molecular basis in equal measure, and each new wrinkle that unfolded thrilled her. No longer a great traveler, and armed instead only with a telephone, she nevertheless discovered the latest results that we needed to publish.

What we received from her was an appreciation of our jobs as a craft. Getting reviews back on a paper might seem to be the end of the process for a journal editor, but she taught us to evaluate the actual science and what the implications of the work could be, not only for future work but for society. She taught us that the newest ideas often receive the harshest treatment in peer review, and she in fact "rescued" (to use her term for it) many papers with poor reviews. She taught us to ask our own questions: Why is this result being discovered now? Why not 10 years ago? (Sometimes a closer inspection showed that short memories made all things new.) We were taught not to be persuaded simply by check boxes on review forms.

The authors of her papers were subject to exacting editing (often over the phone). She was a great cutter of sentences, not only eliminating needless words but also splitting sentences so that one could actually find subjects and verbs. As the product of good Philadelphia schools, she upheld a standard of usage and clarity that put the reader first.

EB would have said that she had been educated "decently"—that is, to value all people, not only for their talents and achievements, but also for their intrinsic worth. Indeed, she labored hard to bring fair and equal education to a segregated Virginia in the 1950s and 60s, and came to AAAS originally to work on educational projects. Those that she found were not the ones she expected. One was to bring an expanding world of science to *Science*'s readers, and the other was to "train" a group of young and brash scientists about everything she knew. That training included not only our jobs but also our lives in general. Everything about us (that is, the entire staff) mattered to her—what our spouses were doing, where our children went to school—and her insights were uncanny. We are now a little older and, with her passing, we are sadder. She was wise and kind. It was an honor to work with her, and a blessing to have known her.

The Editors



CREDIT: ALLAN BURCH

Eleanore Butz was a great editor. When I first discussed editorial matters with her, her conversation seemed to wander down many irrelevant side paths. Soon I learned that these were not side paths at all, but crucial bits of information that she was collecting for the editorial decision we were about to make. Her knowledge went way beyond her Ph.D. expertise, which was in organic chemistry, from anthropology to solid-state physics. That didn't mean she was an authority in these fields (although she knew a lot), but it meant she knew who were the experts and what their strengths and weaknesses would be for evaluating a particular manuscript. There was an aura around this great lady. Her scholarship and professionalism were accompanied by an acute sense of humor and a quick wit so that it was always a joy to work with her. She was a woman of high idealism and great compassion who radiated excellence and dedication. Those who had the privilege of interacting with her as authors or colleagues have been inspired and will never forget her wisdom and special charm.

Daniel E. Koshland Jr.
former Editor-in-Chief of *Science*