



I would like to start out by saying a grateful "Thank You" to the American Cheese Society and the ACS Scholarship Committee for selecting me as the recipient for the John Crompton Memorial Scholarship for 2012. Without the help of this scholarship I would not have been able to attend the Cheese Conference in Raleigh this year. The knowledge I gained from this conference is not only invaluable, it is already helping me own my future and contribute, I hope, in fresh new ways to the cheese industry.

I had many wonderful experiences at the Conference this year. The need for everyone in the industry to increase their knowledge of cheese was confirmed, beginning with the first time reception all the way through the conference ending with the Festival Of Cheese. As I continue my journey of learning in this industry I find the saying, "The more you know the less you know" is very true. I have created a large library of cheese books, have attended "Murray's Boot Camp" in New York City and various cheese classes offered locally in Dallas to increase my knowledge of cheese. But, attending the ACS Annual Cheese Conference in Raleigh this year is the ultimate advantage and a valuable experience for me, encouraging me in my journey to learn more about cheese and the industry so that I can share this knowledge with others.

Attending the ACS was especially supportive to me in the fact I am not alone in making a life career change. I grew up on a farm in the Midwest and after college entered the corporate world. When I realized I needed to reinvent myself due to downsizing and life events, I made a career change and followed my passion to enter the culinary world full time and started to specialize in the dairy and cheese world. At the ACS Conference I met many others in this industry who have made similar career changes and are very successful. Attending this

conference and meeting professionals from many regions gave me more support in the fact that I am not alone in reinventing myself professionally and following my passion in life.

The keynote presentation from Temple Grandin was outstanding. She informed all of us on how important it is to demonstrate best practices in the industry and be strong leaders so that we continue to make and market quality cheeses from quality dairy products and communicate that to consumers.

The Networking salons were so beneficial for me. This was a great opportunity to meet the sponsors and try the various cheeses and accompaniments. I have come away with new fresh ideas that I can't wait to share with colleagues and customers that shop at Central Market.

The Sensory and Technical Evaluation by Mary Anne Drake was outstanding. Her explanation in understanding regional and international differences of artisanal cheddars from North America and the UK will help me in my retail position. I offer my customers the opportunity to taste different cheddars but now have a better understanding of cheddars and will be able to explain why there are differences in taste along with the similarities of flavors between pasteurized and raw milk cheddars.

“Artisan Preserves & Cheese “was another valuable session for me. In this session, local North Carolina Preserve Producers and a local cheesemonger explained the art of preserving food, whether it is milk, fruit or vegetables and pairing it with different cheeses for a sweet and savory experience. I came away from this session with new Artisan Preserve and Cheese pairing ideas that I am anxious to share with others.

The Conference ending with the Festival of Cheese was fantastic! I not only got to see all of the cheeses and to taste any one of them but had the opportunity to see the 2012 ACS winning cheeses in person. The display at the Breakfast of Champions and the Festival of Cheese were really awe-inspiring and beautiful!

The knowledge I have gained from this conference is priceless. The ACS Conference has made my life richer and I am anxious to share this knowledge with others and to give back to the ACS community. Thank you again, American Cheese Society and ACS Scholarship Committee for the 2012 John Crompton Memorial Scholarship. I look forward to being a part of ACS for years to come!

Rick McDonald – Plano Central Market