Who was Fleur L. Strand, Ph.D.?

Fleur L. Strand was a native of South Africa and an accomplished physiologist. She attended New York University, where she obtained her B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. In 1957, Dr. Strand received a National Institutes of Health postdoctoral fellowship to study at the Physiological Institute of the Free University in Berlin, Germany. After her postdoctoral training, Dr. Strand returned to NYU, accepting a faculty position in the Biology Department. In 1980 she became the first female chair of the department, and stayed at NYU for 36 years. From 1991 to 1997, she was the Carroll and Milton Petrie Professor of Biology, and a Professor of Neural Science. During her distinguished career, Dr. Strand was prolific mentor and teacher, mentoring more than 80 graduate student dissertations. She was awarded the NYU Distinguished Teaching Medal in 1995.

In addition, Dr. Strand was a highly productive research scientist, and a pioneer of “neuropeptide” concept. She was the first to demonstrate how the stress-induced hormone ACTH can modulate the peripheral nervous system. Dr. Strand authored multiple textbooks and research articles, and co-founded several professional societies, including the International Neuropeptide Society. In 1976, Dr. Strand was named a Fellow of the New York Academy of Sciences, and elected as president of this society in 1987.

Dr. Strand passed away in 2011, leaving a legacy of students behind her. In recognition of outstanding achievements in physiology research and mentoring, Dr. Strand’s former graduate students established the Fleur L. Strand Professional Opportunity Award from the American Physiological Society. This award recognizes the achievements of a young physiologist (graduate student or postdoctoral fellow), enabling the recipient to attend the Experimental Biology meeting. It is granted to the top ranked Caroline tum Suden/Frances Hellebrandt Professional Opportunity Award applicant.