Henry Fischbach, co-founder, charter member, and honorary member of the American Translators Association and the last surviving signatory of its Articles of Incorporation, passed away on September 25, 2008.

Born in Vienna, Austria, Henry moved to the U.S. with his family at the age of seven, only to return to Europe a few years later. He attended French Lycée in Belgium and, upon moving back to the U.S., earned a degree in comparative linguistics and pre-med studies from Columbia University. He was involved with scientific and technical translation for over 50 years, including several years with the U.S. government during World War II in its overseas news operations.

Upon his return to the U.S. after the war, he joined Lewis Bertrand Languages in 1947, where he attained the position of general manager before he left in 1950 to establish his own translation bureau, The Language Service.

Henry served as president (1965-1967) and vice-president of ATA, as a director for over 25 years, as vice-president of the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, and as ATA’s representative to the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs (FIT). He also served as FIT’s vice-president and chairman of its Technical and Scientific Translators Committee.

Henry was certified by ATA for translation from French, German, Spanish, and Portuguese into English, and was equally competent in Italian and Dutch. He initiated or spearheaded many of ATA’s important programs and undertakings, essentially shaping the Association as it exists today. He was instrumental in establishing ATA’s Accreditation (now Certification) Program, in writing ATA’s Bylaws and Ethics Code, and in organizing and promoting its conferences. He chaired countless committees and presented sessions on medical translation, translators’ business practices, and other topics.

Henry was the recipient of ATA’s Alexander Gode Ehrennadel for “exceptional merit” from BDÜ (the German Association of Translators and Interpreters). He was a member of the American Chemical Society and the American Medical Writers Association, as well as one of the founders and two-term president of the Interlingua Institute.

Henry was a prolific author of articles on medical translation and a frequent presenter, moderator, or panelist on medical and scientific translation. In 1998, he was guest editor of *Volume X: Translation and Medicine* in the ATA Scholarly Monograph Series. His articles were published in the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, *Advances in Chemistry Series*, and other professional journals. He contributed to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization compendium on sci-tech translations and to the official discussions preparatory to the adoption of the Nairobi Recommendation to promote translator rights and qualifications.

Henry was a mentor and role model to a generation of translators. He was a principled advocate of translators’ rights and promoter of the highest standards of professionalism. He not only employed translators, but educated and nurtured them. Upon learning about his death, several “old-timers” came forward to share their reminiscences about him. They were unanimous in mentioning his uncompromising quality standards as a translator and editor, known for not only pointing out errors and inelegancies in translations submitted to him, but also for generously praising a well-turned phrase or a creative solution to a difficult translation problem. They also remember him as the perfect gentleman of the old European tradition, always courteous and soft-spoken, even when fiercely defending a principle or an important project.

As a leader in translation compensation in the U.S., Henry’s bureau, The Language Service, was able to recruit the best medical-pharmaceutical translators and to charge premium prices for its translations. By the time of Henry’s retirement in 2005, The Language Service was the oldest translation bureau in the U.S. operated by its original translator owner, with an impeccable reputation as a provider of quality and service among its clients and as a fair and generous, albeit demanding, client among translators.

Henry was predeceased by his wife of 62 years, Stefi, and is survived by their daughter Monica and her partner Stephanie, son Peter, daughter-in-law Pattawan, and two granddaughters, Chalalai and Saranya.

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—Gabe Bokor