As IUNS reached its 75th anniversary in 2021 the Council decided to update its history and asked us to undertake this task. There were already two excellent brief histories: the first by Dr Leslie Harris, Secretary General from 1946 to 1960, who wrote about the formation of IUNS in 1946 and events up to 1960; and the second by Professor Barbara Underwood, IUNS President from 1997 to 2001, who chronicled events from 1960 to 2001. Many of the historical facts about IUNS and these histories are now on the IUNS website. We therefore decided to update the history rather differently and entitle it ‘Reflections on 75 years of IUNS’. We have based these reflections on personal recollections of many people who have been involved with IUNS including current and past Presidents, Vice Presidents, Treasurers, Secretaries General, Council members, Task Force Chairs, and local organisers of International Congresses of Nutrition.
“The Proposal to found an International Union for Nutrition, analogous with those already established for Physiology, Biochemistry, and several other sciences, first took shape at the so-called ‘European Conference on Nutrition’ convened by The [British] Nutrition Society in 1946. The title, ‘European Conference’ was itself something of a misnomer, because in fact delegates from several countries outside Europe (e.g. the United States, Canada, India, East Indies) also attended this gathering, which became in effect the first in the series of ‘International Congresses of Nutrition’.”

Dr Leslie Harris (IUNS Secretary General from 1946 to 1960)

“I think that the biggest future challenge for IUNS is also one of our biggest strengths; the sheer diversity of disciplines, research, and research contexts that IUNS has, and must continue to draw under its umbrella. For example, we need cutting-edge advances in biological sciences to build the ever-evolving evidence at the core of nutrition. However, we equally need agriculture, food science, anthropology, ethnography, ethics, behaviour sciences, economics, among other disciplines to understand nutritional determinants, behaviours, health and other outcomes and to effectively address the growing – not diminishing – problem of malnutrition.”

Professor Lynette Neufield (IUNS incoming President 2022)

“Don’t think careers can only be linear; sometimes the most interesting career paths take very deviant routes where you may learn unexpected things that help you grow and distinguish yourself from your peers.”

“Know the person before you know the task – take time to get to know your collaborators and building trusting relationships before embarking on the task.”

SEE THE BOOK AT HTTPS://IUNS.ORG/ABOUT-IUNS/HISTORY/ OR VISIT THE IUNS STAND TO SEE THE HARD COPY.