

# David Henry Geske

*August 25, 1931 — December 4, 1967*

To all who knew him, David Geske's tragic death at thirty-six brought shock and sadness. He will be sorely missed by both his colleagues and his students.

David Geske was born in Hartley, Iowa, and attended Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, where he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in chemistry, summa cum laude, in 1953. He received the Master of Science degree in 1955 and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1957, both at the State University of Iowa. He joined the Harvard University Chemistry Department as an instructor in 1957. He came to Cornell in 1960 as Assistant Professor and became Associate Professor in 1962 and Professor in 1966. His research concerned electrochemistry in nonaqueous media and electron spin resonance spectroscopy of organic free radicals in solution. He had pioneered the technique of electro-chemical generation of free radicals for electron spin resonance investigation.

The honors bestowed upon David Geske reflected the high esteem in which he was held by his peers. He held an Arthur Becket Lamb Memorial Fellowship at Harvard, was an Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellow at Cornell and, most recently, held a National Science Foundation Senior Postdoctoral Fellowship while on sabbatic leave. At the time of his death he had written twenty-six scientific publications. In addition to his research, he was sincerely dedicated to quality teaching and felt particular concern for undergraduate education. He was active in the Lutheran Church of Ithaca.

Surviving David Geske are his wife, Anna Diers Geske, son Mathew, and daughter Elise, all of Ithaca; his parents, Rev. August Geske and Mrs. Geske of Hildreth, Nebraska; and a sister Mrs. Dorcas Hueners of Bruning, Nebraska.

None of us who survives can escape the fact that in illness and depression David Geske took his own life. Hard as it is we must try to understand what David did. If there be any way to understand, it lies in David's own view of life. He once wrote:

*In order to be honest with himself a mature man must perform everything he does in exactly the manner he desires. Such a principle can be extended to a general scheme for life—to have yourself completely in hand at all times, to plan what you do and do what you plan.*

When he believed that illness had permanently impaired his ability to live by these high standards, he could no longer continue.