

# Hollis Rexford Davis

*October 18, 1915 — January 13, 1995*

Hollis Rexford Davis, Associate Professor of Agricultural Engineering, retired on February 28, 1978, after over thirty-three and a half years of service to the Department of Agricultural Engineering at the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University. In March of 1978, he was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus of Agricultural Engineering.

He graduated from South Otselic High School where he played baseball and basketball and participated in band and orchestra. He was active in 4-H and played in the Chenango County 4-H Band which made a trip to the Chicago World's Fair in 1933. At Cornell, he was a pitcher on the Freshman Baseball Team and played in the Cornell Marching Band. He received both his degrees from Cornell University, the B.S. in Agriculture in 1937, and the M.S. in Agricultural Engineering in 1948.

Hollis taught vocational agriculture at DeRuyter High School. In January 1942, he was appointed District Agricultural Engineer to work with the New York State Emergency Farm Machinery Repair Program, directed by the Department of Agricultural Engineering at Cornell University. Hollis served in the U.S. Marine Corps from October 1943 to March 1946 and returned to Cornell University as an Extension Agricultural Engineer in April 1946.

Hollis distinguished himself as an outstanding teacher in educating farmers, dealers, and equipment service personnel in proper selection, operation, and adjustment of agricultural machines and equipment. As the program emphasis changed, Hollis was called upon to broaden his Extension commitment to include structures and electrification, dairy and poultry building ventilation, and materials handling systems. His Cornell Extension Bulletin 849, "Adequate Farm Wiring Systems," became a widely used publication throughout the United States.

Mr. Davis was promoted to Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Engineering, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University, in 1956, and in 1962 was promoted to Associate Professor. He was an authority on poultry laying and pullet housing systems. Builders, equipment manufacturers, and poultry producers throughout the United States continually sought his advice. He worked with government agencies in developing plans and regulations in the design of egg grading and breaking facilities, processing plants, and slaughter plants for poultry operations.

Davis was also involved in the problems associated with the disposal of waste from the above facilities as well as for home sewage disposal systems. In the 1970s, he worked with growers and builders to design common refrigerated and controlled atmosphere storage facilities and ventilation systems for crop storage. He helped develop drying systems for potatoes and onions that made it possible for growers to salvage their crops during wet harvest seasons. He collaborated on the most practical and authoritative cabbage and onion storage bulletins that are available in the United States today.

He consulted in England, Italy, Greece, Iran, India, and with the World Bank. He was widely respected by growers, equipment manufacturers, contractors, government agencies, professional peers, and his friends for his expertise, friendliness, and desire to help people with problems. He served the agricultural industry of New York State in a dedicated, conscientious manner, always emphasizing practical solutions.

Early on, Hollis was an active sportsman indulging in hunting and fishing. Later he became an ardent golfer and continued to be one for the rest of his life.

Hollis was an active member of the American Legion and past Commander of the Owen Woodford Post 894, DeRuyter; past Master of Masonic Lodge 692, DeRuyter; member of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers; and member of the Ithaca Lions Club.

Hollis and his first wife, Harriet, had a happy life with their four sons. Harriet died in 1982.

Later Hollis married Margaret Sullivan Paetow. Hollis and "Peg," both ardent golfers, enjoyed life at their summer residence in Ithaca and their winter townhouse at Suntree in Melbourne, Florida.

Hollis is survived by his wife Margaret; his four sons: Richard of Merrit Island, Florida; Robert of Atlanta, Georgia; Allen of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Steven of Reading, Pennsylvania; and his two stepdaughters: Elizabeth Cowger of Rochester, New York, and Anne Barnett of Jasper, Indiana.

*Everett D. Markwardt, Richard W. Guest, E. Stanley Shepardson*