

Howard Styring Tyler

February 24, 1910 — May 20, 1980

Howard Styring Tyler died suddenly on May 20, 1980, at his home, Peruville Road, Groton, New York. He served thirty-seven years as graduate assistant, instructor, and professor with the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. In January 1972 he was named professor emeritus by the Cornell University Board of Trustees.

Professor Tyler, born February 24, 1910, grew up on a farm in Plainville, Connecticut. He received the Bachelor of Science degree from the Connecticut Agricultural College, now University of Connecticut, in June 1932. Before coming to Cornell in July 1934, he worked as a farm manager in North Haven, Connecticut, in advanced registry testing of dairy cattle, and as farm manager and agricultural instructor at Connecticut Junior Republic in Litchfield.

At Cornell he was a graduate assistant in agricultural economics while working for his doctorate, which he received in 1938. He was an instructor in the Department of Agricultural Economics for two years before his appointment in October 1940 as assistant professor in personnel administration in the Office of Resident Instruction. He was appointed associate professor in July 1944 and professor in July 1948.

Dr. Tyler's life was devoted to helping people. For more than thirty years, while in charge of vocational guidance and placement, his talents were focused on making the college a place where students would have opportunities to find academic success and satisfying careers. His educational philosophy emphasized freedom of choice and individual responsibility with a minimum of regulations and required courses.

As a member of the admissions committee, his attention to detail made him adept at recognizing potential for success. His students in the orientation course came away with an appreciation of the history and traditions of a great educational institution, as well as a knowledge of how to choose a specialization and a career.

Howard's ability as a moderator and chairperson guided many committees and groups with divergent ideas to reach consensus. His committee and faculty minutes were cogent, clear, and concise as was all of his writing.

Because of his reputation as a counselor, students with problems came to him from all parts of the college and University for help in organizing what they knew of their abilities, interests, and values into a self-concept which they then used in selecting a specialization and eventually a career. Dr. Tyler personally advised hundreds of young men and women in general agriculture as they explored the varied offerings of the University.

Each year he scheduled interviews with all graduating seniors. Those who wanted assistance developed a personal profile and resume and were put in touch with appropriate employers. His letters of recommendation were classic examples of objective analysis of potential, achievements, and demonstrated abilities, but did not overlook weaknesses. The student and his adviser always received a copy of these letters.

As part of his duties Dr. Tyler supervised the preparation of promotional booklets explaining the college to prospective students. Each year he compiled a report on the starting occupations and beginning salaries of the June graduating class. In 1954 he made the first of four studies of the occupational status of alumni. Eventually data was compiled on the career progress of graduates in 1949, 1954, 1959, and 1964.

Professor Tyler maintained a strong interest in farmers and farming until his death and was secretary-treasurer of the Owasco Valley Milk Producers Cooperative from the time of its organization until 1979. In addition to his academic work he operated a small dairy farm from 1941 to 1958.

He was a member of Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi, and Alpha Zeta honorary societies. Active in community organizations, he was president of the Groton Central School Board of Education and a thirty-year member of the Groton Rotary Club. He served as chairman of the Tompkins County Board of Health and the County Social Planning Council and vice chairman of the County Comprehensive Health Planning Council, and he was a member of the Executive Board of the local council of the Boy Scouts of America. He served as moderator of the Groton Community Church of the United Church of Christ and after retirement became lay associate pastor assisting the minister of the church. In religious affairs he was a strong advocate of ecumenism and served for many years on the board of Area Congregations Together.

He is survived by his wife of forty-five years, Margaret Smith Tyler, three sons, two grandsons, and four granddaughters.

Richard A. Church, Herbert L Everett, John P. Hertel