

# Victor Russell Stephen

*December 10, 1924 — February 1, 2000*

Vic was born in Philadelphia and grew up in Providence, Rhode Island. His immediate family includes Virginia, his spouse of 53 years; sons, Craig Russell and Scott David; and Craig's son, Evan Parker-Stephen, and daughter, Elise Parker-Stephen.

Vic studied illustration at Pratt Institute prior to World War II. After serving in the military as Bombardier, Navigation Instructor, and Second Lieutenant, he returned to Pratt and graduated in 1947.

His first employment at Cornell came in 1948, when he accepted a position as Publications Production Manager for the College of Agriculture. Then he attended Pennsylvania State University, receiving his B.S. and M.S. degrees in Art. Vic was Staff Artist at Penn State and headed the Division of Visual Services at the University of Illinois' College of Agriculture. Vic returned to Cornell in 1968 when he joined the Department of Communication Arts. He was named Emeritus Professor in 1983.

His international work led to advisory positions with the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences in Costa Rica (1951), with the Ministry of Agriculture in Jordan (1965), and with the USAID Basic Village Education Program in Guatemala (1976).

Vic was actively engaged as an artist his entire life. He looked forward each day to working on his drawings, etchings, and paintings. He won many prizes for his artistic endeavors in local and regional competitions and shows, such as the *Star-Gazette* Twin Tier Prize, Arnot Art Museum (Elmira); "Best in Show" Award, Ithaca Art Association Art Exhibit; and first in oil and graphics, Cayuga Museum of History and Art (Auburn).

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences published prints of four of his Cornell campus and local scenes—"Libe Slope, Afternoon," "Taughannock in Winter," "Buttermilk in the Fall" and "Moonlight Over the Bridge at Beebe Lake." Recently, an alumnus wrote to express his happiness of giving a print of the latter to his wife as a reminder of the place where he proposed to her. Vic's work had the evocative power to recall time and place in the memories of any viewer familiar with his subject matter. Prints of Vic's artistry hang in homes and offices of many alumni and friends.

Vic's colleagues in the Department of Communication remember fondly his pride in his students' work and the many hours he spent with students as they worked together to develop their ideas into effective visual messages.

He kept a jar of colored pencils on his desk and often was seen sketching ideas and rough drafts with students at his elbow in rapt attention.

Vic also reached out to people in the State of New York. He worked for many years on the State Fair exhibits for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and for the College of Human Ecology. His students included many Cornell Cooperative Extension field staff who attended his training workshops and used his visual materials in their work.

Truly, Victor Russell Stephen was a gifted artist and a dedicated, effective teacher who gave unselfishly of his time and tremendous talent.

*Royal D. Colle, Donald F. Schwartz, Ronald E. Ostman*