

# Richard M. Ramin

*November 22, 1929 — May 27, 1995*

Richard M. Ramin, 65, who served as Vice President for Public Affairs at Cornell University for 24 years and as a member of the Cornell staff for 41, died peacefully and surrounded by his family on Saturday, May 27, 1995 at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Presbyterian University Hospital. He died of pulmonary fibrosis.

A memorial service was held for Dick on Sunday, June 18, 1995 in Sage Chapel on the Cornell University campus. The overflowing crowd of mourners attested to the words of President Frank H.T. Rhodes:

*The secret of Dick's extraordinary success is not to be found, I believe, in superior fund-raising technique or organizational structure, important as both things no doubt are. The secret lay rather in two qualities Dick embodied: his unwavering conviction of the transforming value of a Cornell education and his endless capacity for friendship. Dick knew everyone and everyone knew Dick. He was first a friend-raiser and a trust builder: the fund-raising followed. His friendship enriched us all too brief a while.*

Richard M. Ramin was born in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, on November 22, 1929. He was the son of Richard and Florence Ramin. Dick was a starting player for his high school football team, the Williamsport High School Millionaires, and in 1946 was named a lineman for the Pennsylvania All-State Team.

Ramin was a 1951 graduate of Cornell's College of Arts and Sciences. While an undergraduate, he was co-captain, with Rip Haley, of the freshman football team and was a starter on the varsity football team from 1948-50, a time when the team won two Ivy League titles. As a student at Cornell, Dick majored in political science. He was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity and the Sphinx Head honorary society.

After graduation, Dick served in the U.S. Army for two years as a First Lieutenant. He was then employed as a Cruise Director for the Holland-American Steamship Lines. Ramin joined the Cornell administration in 1954 as an Alumni Field Secretary. In 1956, he became an Assistant Director of Admissions, a position he held until 1959, when he was appointed an Associate Director of Development. From 1964-71, he worked as the Director of Development and in 1970 also became Assistant Vice President for Public Affairs. He participated in the Graduate School of Business and Public Administration's (B&PA) Executive Development Program in 1968. Speaking of Ramin's accomplishments as Director of Development, President Dale Corson said, "under Dick Ramin's guidance, Cornell's record in fund-raising has been unsurpassed by any educational institution in the United States."

In 1971, President Corson named Ramin to the post of Vice President for Public Affairs, in charge of departments responsible for Alumni Affairs, Alumni Systems and Gift Services, University Development, the University Council, the Trust Office, Office of University Events, college and unit Public Affairs offices and a network of ten regional offices, including International Alumni Affairs. For the past 24 years, Dick served in that position with great pride and distinction. During his tenure, the Cornell University Council and the University's Regional Public Affairs Offices were established—two precedent-setting achievements—and three major capital campaigns took place.

Under Ramin's leadership the Corneirs Centennial Campaign was successfully completed at \$73.2 million in 1965, and he had responsibility for the Cornell Campaign, completed in 1980 for \$250 million. Dick spearheaded Cornell's \$1.25 billion Capital Campaign, begun in 1991 and successfully completed in 1995. "Cornell never had a more devoted alumnus, nor I a more steadfast friend, than Dick Ramin," said President Rhodes. "He lived and breathed Cornell. He was a superb fund-raiser: his work will live on in the remarkable benefits that the present \$1.25 billion campaign will contribute to the future strength of the university he loved so much."

Robert V. Tishman (Cornell A.B. 37) reflected the thoughts of many alumni and friends when he said of Dick Ramin: "He was creative, knowledgeable, and the results of what I have done [for Cornell] under his guidance are among the most rewarding I have experienced. Behind that easy country-boy approach was a very sharp mind. I will miss him."

While serving as a Cornell administrator, Ramin was a member of the Board of Managers of Willard Straight Hall, the student union (1956-58) and a member of the Straight Board of Governors (1958-60). He was faculty advisor to Delta Kappa Epsilon social fraternity from 1956-59 and a member of the University's National Scholarship Committee during that same time. He also served as a member of the University's Administrative Systems Planning and Control Committee and was a member of the American Alumni Council (AAC) and the American College Public Relations Association (ACPRA).

In 1956, Dick married Frances Anthony of Penn Yann (Cornell A.M. '52), who was then employed in the Program Department of Willard Straight Hall. In all his activities, his wife Fran was a devoted and enthusiastic partner. In September 1960, Dick and Fran's first child, Robert Anthony was born, and in 1963, their daughter, Nancy Alice was born. Bob married Denise DeConcini in 1985. They have two children, Margaret Alice and Daniel Anthony. Nancy married Lawrence Dalton in 1987. They have a daughter, Christine Alice. Over the years, Dick enjoyed attending the children's school functions, traveling, cooking Sunday morning brunches, boating, barbecuing at

the cottage, playing with his grandchildren, winning at “The Poker Group,” listening to jazz, playing the boom bass, and relaxing with those he loved.

In Ithaca, Ramin was a member of the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, a deacon of the First Congregational Church, a member of the YMCA Board of Directors, and was active in Explorer scouting and the United Way.

Harvey Sampson, one of Dick’s closest companions for 48 years, remarked at Dick’s memorial service: “Dick was a very special person. He was modest and unassuming about his accomplishments, which were many and substantial. He was never boastful, nor did he do anything with fanfare or to promote himself. He always praised and gave credit to others.” Cornell is a better place because of Dick Ramin’s hard work and dedication to supporting its mission. He will be remembered fondly by those who worked for and with him, for his integrity, his kindness and compassion, his unswerving friendship, his gentle manner, the twinkle in his eye, and his pride in Cornell University and its potential.

*Dale Corson, Walter Lynn, James Maas*