

Richard William Guest

July 7, 1932 — February 24, 1997

Richard William Guest was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on July 7, 1932. He grew up on a grain and beef cattle farm near Menoken, North Dakota. Dick attended North Dakota State University, where he received both his B.S. (1954) and M.S. (1958) degrees, and was a Second Lieutenant in the US Air Force (1955-56). He met Myrth J. Weiser while in college, and married her in 1959.

Dick was appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering (ABEN) of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences on September 1, 1958; promoted to Associate Professor with tenure on July 1, 1964; and to Professor on April 1, 1983. He retired September 1, 1991 and was appointed Professor Emeritus. Following retirement, he continued part-time to develop a comprehensive publication on dairy manure management for the Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service. During his thirty-three years with the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Dick participated in the department's teaching, research and extension functions, but by far his first love was extension and the continuing challenge of applying engineering to the solution of problems associated with the dynamic world of production agriculture. Here, he developed principle specializations and expertise in the areas of Farmstead Engineering and Mechanization, and Animal Waste Management, during a time when rapid change was taking place in farming and solutions to attendant problems was in short supply. Dick loved a challenge and he met them head-on with his eternal optimism and wry smile.

His professional work covered a wide range of topics, the major areas being animal manure management, land application of wastes, milking systems, feeding systems, housing for livestock, energy conservation in livestock production systems, and mechanical fruit harvesting. He was one of the early leaders in developing solutions for the proper handling, utilization and disposal of wastes from dairy and other animal production systems. He attracted a wide national following for this work, well beyond the borders of New York State, and received requests from both national and international agencies for assistance as well.

Dick served as Interim Department Extension Leader and Consultant to the World Health Organization on farm sanitation practices. He was the recipient of several Blue Ribbon Awards from the American Society of Agricultural Engineers for exemplary publications, as well as designs for agricultural systems, and received an early award (1963) for the college's "Project M" milking systems over-the-road educational demonstration unit that traveled

throughout New York State to educate the dairy industry on proper milking system operation, practices and their influence on animal health. He helped design, build and test a successful mechanical cherry harvester, and was co-leader in the design and development of a mechanical harvester for processing apples. He taught Household Mechanics to hundreds of women in the fields of Human Ecology and Agriculture. His consulting activities, both overseas and domestic, have had a marked influence on practices that relate to the maintenance of environmental quality for agricultural production systems, as well as reduce labor tedium and increase production efficiency.

Always concerned with practical innovations and new challenges, in his role as Extension Agricultural Engineer, he advised several thousand farmers about free-stall dairy systems, milking parlors, swine housing, grain drying, ventilation systems, materials handling equipment and related facilities. He also helped many colleagues with the development of research facilities, especially at the Cornell Animal Science Teaching and Research Center, the Swine Barns, and at the Miner Institute in Chazy, New York. For two decades, he taught certified milk inspectors, and was a participant in Empire Farm Days for a decade. Dedicated to improving engineering in agriculture, his efforts and skills cannot be replaced. Dick spent his sabbatical leaves as a research and development engineer with Sperry-New Holland, in New Holland, Pennsylvania; as a consultant engineer with Alfa-Laval in Tumba, Sweden; as well as the Martin Manufacturing Company in Myerstown, Pennsylvania; and the Institute für Landtechnik in Weihenstephan, West Germany. He especially favored the hands-on practice of engineering and getting solutions into the mainstream of application utilization as soon as possible.

Dick was always a faithful supporter of the ABEN family, both professionally and socially. He also gave of himself generously in community activities beyond the university's doors, and most notably as a dedicated member of the Trinity Lutheran Church in Ithaca, New York. In 1995, the Dryden Sertoma Club honored him with its Sertoman of the Year Award. Sertoma stands for Service to Mankind, and for thirty-five years, in both the professional and non-professional worlds, Dick was truly Mr. Sertoma. He was a member of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, the New York State Association of Milk Sanitarians, the Northeast Dairy Practices Council, Tau Beta Pi, Sigma Xi, both the Ithaca and Dryden Sertoma Clubs, a 4-H Leader, and a member of the 4-H Acres Development Committee. Beyond this, over the years Dick also found some time occasionally to fish, hunt, fly a plane, bowl, play some golf, put on a benefit pig roast, and grow a rose or two in his home greenhouse. He truly enjoyed it all and remembered to "smell the roses" as well as share them with his friends.

Dick and his wife, Myrth, had three daughters: Katrina, Sheryl, and Linda; and four grandchildren, Adam, Nathen, Kyle, and Keirsten. He was understandably proud of them all, and will be long remembered and sorely missed by his family, friends, and colleagues. We can speak for them all by simply saying, “Mr. Sertoma, we salute you”.

Joseph K. Campbell, Wilmot W. Irish, Everett D. Markwardt, William F. Millier, Ronald B. Furry