

Vaughn Crawford Behn

November 15, 1922 — June 8, 1976

Vaughn came to Cornell from the University of Delaware in September 1960 to join the faculty of the School of Civil Engineering as an associate professor, after a successful early career in sanitary engineering. Prior to his appointment as an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of Delaware in 1955, Vaughn had worked first as a development engineer for the National Council for Stream Improvement and later as a sanitary engineer for the Atlas Powder Company.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, the son of George and Alice Ruth Behn, Vaughn grew up and attended schools in Brooklyn and New Jersey. He received a bachelor's degree in engineering from Rutgers University, an M.S. degree in industrial hygiene from Harvard University, and the D. Eng. degree from Johns Hopkins University. He was a member of Sigma Xi and Chi Epsilon.

Vaughn's entire career as an engineer was marked by equally strong interests in the academic and the professional aspects of environmental engineering. Before coming to Cornell he had demonstrated excellence in his research into the properties and behavior of non-Newtonian fluids and sludges. He continued and expanded these studies with his graduate students at Cornell, subsequently redirecting his research interests to the theoretical and experimental analysis of the performance of trickling filters and, more recently, to the analysis of the gravity thickening of sewage sludges.

Since coming to Cornell, Vaughn had been associated professionally with the Tompkins County Health Department, Greely and Hansen Engineers in Chicago, and Lozier Engineers in Rochester, the U.S. Public Health Service, and the University of Texas at Austin.

Further professional interests were manifested in his active role as a fellow in the American Society of Civil Engineers, in which he was serving on the Industrial Waste Practice Committee, and as an active member of the American Water Works Association and the Water Pollution Control Federation.

Vaughn's concern for the professional practice aspects of the education of environmental engineers made him a natural choice to take charge of the design project that the environmental engineering students in the master of engineering program carry out as a key requirement for the degree. The special attention that he gave to this design project, and to each of the students in the professional master's program, has been a major factor in the program's

success. The close relationships that sometimes develop between professor and students were exemplified in these projects that were done during recent January intersessions.

His many students, undergraduate and graduate, will recall Professor Behn as an understanding and devoted teacher, advisor, and friend, continually concerned about their academic progress and their welfare, always ready to answer questions and help with problems. He was generous with his time to everyone who came to him for assistance, which they got, together with an opportunity to see just how a cigar should be enjoyed.

His colleagues remember Vaughn Behn as a loyal and dedicated member of our faculty who never overlooked a chance to help in redefining the educational objectives and improving the curriculum of the school. He was forever eager to play a part in the education of young civil engineers at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels.

The misfortune of an early illness, which would have destroyed lesser men, hampered his efforts to reach the personal successes that his early research had suggested would be within his reach. His determination to regain a level of physical fitness that enabled him to rejoin the midday runners won our admiration. Similarly, his response to the deterioration of his health more recently seemed to have been a redoubling rather than a lessening of his efforts. Vaughn's enthusiastic participation in ongoing school activities and his anticipation of future programs never flagged. Only those who knew him well realized the heavy burden that he had been carrying. His refusal to give up in his struggle to overcome illness, along with his unceasing devotion to the school, the students, and to the environmental engineering profession, will remain as an inspiration to all of us who knew and worked with him.

Vaughn found time to contribute to the community in numerous roles, most importantly as a member of the mayor of Ithaca's advisory council, and for years as an assistant leader of Boy Scout Troop 99.

We will remember Vaughn as a warm and kind companion, gentle and mild-mannered. He had patience, sympathy, and understanding for the problems and difficulties of those around him. His fifteen years in Hollister Hall will be fondly recalled; his absence from Hollister Hall will be keenly felt.

Professor Behn is survived by his wife, Vida M. Behn of Ithaca; a son, Vaughn C. Behn, Jr., of Ithaca; two daughters, Penelope Behn of Brooklyn and Vida Alice Behn of Ithaca.

James J. Bisogni, Jr., Wilfried H. Brutsaert, Walter R. Lynn, Charles D. Gates