

Kenneth L. Turk

July 14, 1908 — December 16, 1990

Farm animals lost a friend and his multitude of students, colleagues and employees lost a mentor and skilled associate. Dr. Kenneth L. Turk died December 16, 1990 after participating in the Cornell community for fifty-three years as a graduate student, instructor, professor, department head, director, and professor emeritus.

Born on a livestock and grain farm in the shadow of the Ozarks on July 14, 1908, Ken received a B.S. degree in dairy and animal husbandry from the University of Missouri in 1930, and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Cornell in animal husbandry in 1931 and 1934 respectively. He began his career as an extension specialist in dairy husbandry at Cornell in 1934. During that year he married Bernice Francis Stockier who had been an undergraduate at Missouri and a graduate student at Cornell. (Mrs. Turk died on October 20, 1988.) In 1938, he moved to the University of Maryland, later to become department head. He returned to Cornell in 1944 and was head of the Department of Animal Husbandry from 1945 to 1963. During his tenure the faculty expanded from 28 to 35, including 23, whom he hired; the budget increased nine-fold; the internationally recognized Cornell-Los Banos Philippine project evolved; and Morrison Hall came into being. For many of those years he taught an undergraduate course in dairy husbandry. In 1987 he completed a remarkably and characteristically well documented, illustrated book, *Animal Husbandry at Cornell: A History and Record of Development From 1868 to 1963*.

Ken left the Department of Animal Science in 1963 to become the Director of International Agricultural Development at Cornell, the first such position in the country. The program grew from a fledgling effort in a number of departments to a unified and vital cog in the total program of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences including professorships established in many departments. He laid the foundation and set an example for many of today's international agricultural programs worldwide.

He wrote profusely, authoring or co-authoring 70 scientific publications and over 300 articles for the popular press. He was associated with a number of scientific societies, and served as president of the American Dairy Science Association and the Association of U.S. University Directors of International Agriculture Programs. He received honors and awards from these organizations as well as from the American Society of Animal Science and the University of Missouri for his significant contributions to the field of dairy husbandry and international agriculture.

Dr. Turk's leadership of the Los-Banos Cornell Philippine Project is legend. The College of Agriculture at Los-Banos had been decimated during World War II and Cornell was called to restore it to productivity. Ken led the project. He went with a cadre of the best qualified Cornell personnel available. The project flourished and stands today. Dr. Turk summarized this effort in the book, *The Cornell-Los Banos Story*, published in 1974.

He was frequently in demand as an agricultural consultant and served on the boards and panels of the Rockefeller Foundation, Latin America Science Board of the National Academy of Sciences, FAO, National Livestock Centre for Africa, Agricultural Research for the US-USSR Joint Commission on Science and Technical Cooperation, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. In retirement he accepted a number of international consultancy assignments in Latin America, Africa, Asia, Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

Ken and his wife Bernice were a kind and caring team. No one knows how many babies they acknowledged in their own inimitable fashion; no one knows how many flowers appeared at hospitals, along with visits; no one knows how many brunches or dinners they supervised or how many students, foreign visitors, faculty or friends came under their spell. An invitation to the Turks was a trip to a never-never land which no one ever forgot. To the young folks they were an inspiration that the fantasy of living "happily ever after" could be a reality, that marriage could be team work. Their home was a veritable oasis of refreshment, relaxation, and *joie de vivre*.

Ken and Bernice's dedication to students, to the Department of Animal Science, and to International Agriculture is reflected by their generous legacy to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the College of Veterinary Medicine which will be used to support Animal Science graduate students with an interest in international agriculture and for visiting foreign academicians.

In recognition of his accomplishments, Cornell University, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and the Department of Animal Science dedicated the Kenneth L. Turk Seminar Room in Morrison Hall in 1986. A paraphrase of part of that dedication statement says, "With all his manifold contributions to teaching, research, extension and administration, we suspect Ken relished as much as anything the recognition that he was a darn good cow man".

Robert H. Foote, William G. Merrill, Richard G. Warner