

Robert Wilbur Spalding

May 27, 1920 — January 2, 2004

Dr. Robert W. Spalding was known by all his friends as Bob. Bob Spalding was born on May 27, 1920 in St. James, Missouri. He grew up on a general farm, and was active in the 4-H Program. Also, in high school, he played basketball and was in the band. He gained special experience with dairy cattle by working on a number of dairy farms.

He entered the University of Missouri in 1939, majoring in Dairy Husbandry. He was a member of the intercollegiate judging team. In addition to receiving a Sears Roebuck scholarship, he worked his way through college financially by employment in the Department of Dairy Husbandry. Also, he worked on the Hatch Experimental Dairy Farm during the summer of 1941. Other undergraduate activities included membership in the Dairy Club and the Agriculture Club. He received the B.S. degree in 1943.

In 1943, he married Margaret Ann Gibbs, and volunteered for duty in the Navy. After midshipman's school, he served for three years as an antisubmarine and radar officer. His Navy experience took him to many countries. He held the rank of Lieutenant when discharged in 1946.

He immediately continued his education by enrolling at the University of Missouri, studying for an M.S. degree, 1946-47. He was granted an assistantship, which, along with the GI bill, provided financial support. The assistantship afforded an opportunity for Bob to help teach courses in artificial breeding, production testing, and feeding and management of dairy cattle. For his Master's thesis, he worked on factors affecting gestation length in dairy cattle. This information was published in a Missouri research bulletin, a series for which the University of Missouri is famous.

In 1947, Bob Spalding came to Cornell where he was appointed as an Assistant Professor. He participated in all phases of the extension program, with a focus on reproduction and breeding. This was a critical period for the development of the artificial breeding program. Professor Spalding conducted intensive training programs to prepare inseminators for artificial insemination under the auspices of the Department of Animal Husbandry. As no suitable written training guides were available, he prepared a manual for training inseminators. Along with Professor H.W. Carter, he was instrumental in convincing dairymen that new methods of sire selection and testing developed by Professor C.R. Henderson must be adopted to replace the old natural service proofs, if the objective of

attaining the tremendous potential of genetic improvement of dairy cattle was to be achieved. Professor Spalding was appointed Associate Professor in 1952. The program continued to flourish with Cornell and the New York Artificial Breeders Coop., Inc. leading the world in breeding better dairy cattle through artificial insemination.

During this time, Professor Spalding utilized the three months off appointment and sabbatical leaves to initiate research toward his Ph.D. degree at Ohio State University, which was awarded in 1962. Following receipt of this degree, his position was changed to a joint extension-research appointment. He was promoted to full Professor in 1963. Professor Spalding was also made a member of the graduate faculty. New responsibilities included advising undergraduate and graduate students.

In the early 1950s, Cornell University developed a model program in international agriculture with the University of the Philippines at Los Banos, which resulted in advanced training of the Philippine staff, rebuilding the physical plant and improved teaching and research. Professor Spalding was given a leave of absence to serve as Visiting Associate Professor in the Department of Animal Husbandry, Los Banos, during 1957-58. His interest in international programs continued. In 1968, he served as a consultant to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, and he assisted the Ministry of Agriculture, Barbados, West Indies, in solving some of their livestock production problems.

Throughout his career, Professor Spalding took the leadership on many department and college committees. Among others, he served for 10 years on the College Extension Dairy Committee (Chairman 1962-64). He headed the College Farm Labor Program in 1966-67, and 1969-70, and then he served as the Program Leader for the Agricultural Manpower Program, New York State College of Agriculture, 1970-72. In 1972, he became the College Dairy Industry Program Leader, a position he held until retirement in 1977.

Professor Spalding served the university in other ways. He was treasurer of the Grad-Fac Club in 1948-49. He chaired the Program Committee of the Statler Club, 1964-66. He served on the Faculty Council of Representatives for two years, and served as Vice-chairman (1973) and then Chairman (1974) of the United Way for Cornell University. This responsibility expanded to Vice-Chairman (1976) and Chairman (1977) of the United Way of Tompkins County.

He authored many extension publications prepared as mimeographs, extension bulletins, and newsletters to extension agents, and as articles in farm magazines. Many of these publications discussed the selection and evaluation of sires used in artificial insemination, providing recommendations enabling dairy farmers to improve

their herds. He held management schools for dairymen and for extension agents to bring them up-to-date on the latest information on feeding and dairy management, on regulations concerning water pollution, and on testing for cattle diseases.

He initiated a seminal study in 1972 on breeding efficiency involving 200 herds of Holstein cattle. In 1975, this resulted in the first paper clearly documenting the dramatic negative effect that high milk production had on conception rates. Also, he conducted research on estrous cycle regulation. An illustrated flyer highlighting the effective methods of detecting estrus was used by extension, and by a commercial company (with permission), resulting in 100,000 copies being distributed. This was the largest circulation of any leaflet prepared in the Department of Animal Science.

Professor Spalding was a member of the American Dairy Science Association, the Dairy Shrine Club, Epsilon Sigma Phi, and Alpha Gamma Sigma. In Ithaca, he was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church and the Rotary Club.

Professor Spalding had many other interests. He was a master gardener, golfed, bowled, enjoyed dancing and fishing, and he was an avid bridge player. He and his wife, Margaret, raised three children, Jacqueline, Belinda and Steven. They spent many summers vacationing on Bob's Lake in Canada.

Professor Spalding lived in Ithaca for many years after his retirement as Professor Emeritus in 1977. During these years, he continued several of his hobbies, including traveling. Soon after the death of his wife, Margaret, in 1992, he moved to Sarasota, Florida. Summers for a few years were spent in Ithaca exploring the expanding wine trails and the great Adirondacks, but most of the time was spent in the mild climate of Florida.

He married his high school classmate, Eileen Bishop, in 1994. He continued his golfing, walking, and travels until ill health curtailed these activities. He passed away on January 2, 2004.

He is survived by his wife, Eileen; four sisters, Mary Lloyd, Maxine Birdsong, Iola Dean, and Meredith Morrison; three children, Jacqueline Woo, Belinda Spalding, and Steven Spalding; and several stepchildren and grandchildren.

Douglas E. Hogue, R. David Smith, Robert H. Foote