

# Martin P. Catherwood

*January 28, 1904 —November 23, 1978*

Few members of Cornell's faculty have served the University, New York State, and the Ithaca community with such devotion and distinction as Martin P. Catherwood. To these employments he brought energy, probing Intelligence, administrative skills, and close knowledge of industry, labor, and government.

His education and teaching experience prepared him admirably for the tasks he later undertook. After earning a master's degree in agriculture in 1927 at the University of Illinois where he had received his bachelor's degree the year before, he came to Cornell for his doctoral degree. His doctoral dissertation, completed in 1930, dealt with an activity of great importance to New York State's economy: *A Statistical Study of Milk Production for the New York Market*. Appointed assistant professor of business management in the College of Agriculture in 1930, he was promoted to the rank of full professor in 1936. Three years later, he became the first professor of public administration in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Cornell. The studies of local government that he published during these years were conceived and carried out in the best tradition of applied research.

In 1938 Governor Herbert H. Lehman appointed Catherwood to the chairmanship of the New York State Planning Board. In this post, which he occupied until 1941, he acquired wide knowledge of the state's formal and informal administrative and legislative process through his wide acquaintance with legislators and government officials in Albany. His investigations of local government had already opened many doors to him throughout the state, but now even more doors were opened.

As a result of the close working relationship that had developed between the State Planning Board and the Joint Legislative Committee on Industrial and Labor Conditions headed by Irving M. Ives, the majority leader of the Assembly, the legislature created the Division of Commerce as of May 1, 1941. Governor Herbert H. Lehman appointed Catherwood as the first commissioner of commerce and Governor Thomas E. Dewey continued him in that office. In this important and pioneering post, Catherwood set the foundations and structure for the division that it has retained ever since. As commissioner, Catherwood expanded his already large knowledge of the state. He served on the Advisory Committee on Technical Industrial Development and the Governor's Reconversion Service Agency. He was also a member of the Postwar Public Works Planning Commission, the Veterans Advisory Commission, the Commission on Building and Development, and the Apprenticeship Council. He served, too, on the Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin and on the board of directors of the World Trade

Corporation. As commissioner of commerce he became an ex officio member of Cornell's Board of Trustees and began his long years of service on the board.

Edmund Ezra Day selected Catherwood to succeed Irving M. Ives as dean of the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations in 1947. Catherwood had been involved in the events that led to the creation of the school by the state legislature. The concept of the school had originated in the Joint Legislative Committee on Industrial and Labor Relations through the brilliant initiative of Ives and William B. Groat, the committee's counsel and Ives' intellectual alter ego. Although the temporary board of trustees had defined the school's purposes in its exemplary report and had also suggested the means to achieve them, it fell to Catherwood to devise the institutional arrangements for establishing sound standards for undergraduate and graduate teaching, research, and extension. During his tenure as dean from 1947 to 1958, he helped to shape the departmental structure of the school, engaged able scholars, encouraged research through generous grants of time and funds to the faculty, and established the three extension centers outside of Ithaca. Because of his experience in the College of Agriculture, he stressed the important relationship that extension bore to both resident instruction and research. He was also aware of other benefits that would accrue to the school by providing adult classes for labor, management, and the public. With his usual insight and vigor, he responded to the growing interest of the country in international affairs. He encouraged the faculty to undertake teaching and research assignments abroad and in Ithaca with regard to the international and comparative aspects of industrial and labor relations.

While dean, Catherwood chaired the board of inquiry that investigated the dock strike in New York City in 1951. He was a member of two national emergency boards under the Railway Labor Act and of a minimum wage board for Puerto Rico. The state's Senate Committee on the Affairs of New York City appointed him as its consultant in 1957 concerning labor-management relations in public transit.

In 1958 Governor Nelson Rockefeller named Catherwood to the important post of industrial commissioner of New York State. The New York Times headed its profile of the new commissioner, "Rural Expert on Cities." As head of the Department of Labor, he sought to coordinate and streamline its manifold activities. He established himself and the central administrative offices in Albany and used the New York City offices as regional headquarters. He remained industrial commissioner until his retirement in 1971 when he became professor of industrial and labor relations emeritus.

In 1970, on the occasion of the celebration of the school's twenty-fifth anniversary, its library, the largest and most comprehensive in the field, was named in Catherwood's honor. As industrial commissioner he had become, once

again, an ex officio member of Cornell's Board of Trustees. He was named trustee emeritus in 1971. During his long service of almost three decades on the board, he was active on the Building and Grounds Committee, the Ad Hoc Committee on State Relations, and the Committee on Special Educational Programs (COSEP). He became one of the earliest and most active members of the University's Tower Club. He served as a member of the administrative board of the Cornell University Council from 1957 until the time of his death. Between 1971 and 1976 he was a member of the advisory councils of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and of the College of Veterinary Medicine. He also lent his talents to the Tompkins County Memorial Hospital Corporation's board of trustees and served as its president for two years. He participated as well in the activities of the Tompkins County United Fund and headed its leadership gifts division. He was a member of the board of directors of the First National Bank and Trust Company of Ithaca for thirty years.

Basic to Catherwoods remarkable achievements were his sterling traits of character. He was forthright, candid, to-the-point, plain-spoken, and just. He possessed rare integrity. He knew where he stood and accorded that blessing to all those who knew him.

*Donald E. Cullen, Vernon H. Jensen, Maurice F. Neufeld*