

George Raymond Hanselman

January 5, 1901 — January 1, 1993

George Raymond Hanselman was associated with Cornell for just over fifty years and lived in the Ithaca area for seventy-five years. He was born in Dunkirk in 1901 and graduated from high school in 1918. He moved to Ithaca for the rest of his life. He died in 1993 following a prolonged illness. He was survived by his wife of 69 years, Hazel M. Hanselman. There were no children.

From high school he entered the Sibley School of Mechanical Engineering and received the degree of mechanical engineer in 1922. During academic vacations, he gained practical experience at the American Locomotive Company, the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, and the American Creosoting Company. The first-named company gave him a total of 9 months in drafting, checking, assembly, etc., the second a training in the company's proceedings, and the third six weeks operation of retorts. Following graduation, although it is said that he declared that he did not intend to make teaching a life-time profession, he did accept an offer of a position as instructor in the Department of Engineering Drawing in the Sibley School. Here we recognize that seventy years ago, engineering drawing was a very important branch of mechanical engineering. This factor, together with his exposure to steam engines, automobile tires, and tar, may have led him to consider an academic career. This was fortunate for Sibley, as shown by his distinguished service in the years to come.

In 1931 George was made instructor of administrative engineering. Here he could start to build his lifetime career and prepare for it by studying business law, accounting, and factory cost control. He studied law assiduously in order to teach business law and with that as his minor subject and accounting as his major subject, he gained a master's degree in 1936. At the same time, he was promoted to assistant professor of administrative engineering. He wrote *Cases on Business Law* (1934 and 1935) and, with J.R. Bangs, *Principles of Accounting* and a problem book (1941).

As if to make up for the lengthy initial period of instructor of engineering drawing and because of his resolute studying for teaching business law and engineering accounting, he was promoted to associate professor in 1941 and to professor of administrative engineering in 1945.

At war's end in 1945, there was a time of confusion engendered by the rapid demobilization of the armed forces and the re-establishment of the system of past years. He was made the first assistant director of Sibley. He had shown the capability for administration in the sorting out of the post-war growth of admissions, of veteran's problems,

of counseling of individual students, of record keeping, of pre-registration, etc. Typically, he would seldom make a quick decision of any magnitude but would take his time to work all around a problem before establishing a satisfactory solution—he had seen too many ill-considered effects on others. Not long after being made assistant director of Sibley, he braved this opening answer to the office of the dean of the College of Engineering: “You have repeatedly asked me for specific recommendations as to the re-organization of the office of the School of Mechanical Engineering. I have given this matter a great deal of consideration and am now ready to report”. There followed two pages of tightly-spaced administrative recommendations. His appointment was changed to professor of mechanical engineering in 1949.

A new five-year undergraduate program was introduced in 1946 with quite a different curriculum and this raised some scheduling difficulties because of its concurrence with students returning to complete their baccalaureate. There were choices and restrictions, a four-year curriculum and a five-year curriculum, and several points-of-entry. As the *College Announcements* of those times quoted optimistically, “such minor modifications have become necessary”. George was invaluable in the difficult task of reorganizing the administration of mechanical engineering to accommodate these problems.

George had about a score of years from his assistant directorship in 1946 to his nominal retirement in 1967, nominal because the dean requested that he remain for some part-time work, which he did for another three years. In that twenty years, he was able to develop and refine his ideas, his own as well as those which were thrust upon him. Engineering education changed from being mostly one of tutelage and representation to one of systematic analysis and exploration. The teaching of accounting grew less important as the years passed by. The subject matter had simply worn down and what remained was absorbed by others for their own special uses. Professor Hanselman, however, was in considerable demand across the campus for his knowledge and experience in scheduling and for his willingness to share them. For many years he coordinated the scheduling requirements of the College as chairman of the Engineering Scheduling Committee and also served as chairman of the University Faculty Committee on Registration and Schedules. Other University committees on which he served were those of the Faculty on Student Activities and on the Scheduling of Public Events. He also served as chairman of the College Faculty Committee on New York State Community Colleges and Technical Institutes, and was a member of the Joint Faculty Committee on Agricultural Engineering. In the early 1960s several changes within the College of Engineering were made that increased greatly the value to the Sibley School of George’s detailed knowledge of the operation of the various units within the University. In 1961, a Division of Basic Studies was set up within the College of Engineering.

This division effectively removed the first two years from the control of the individual schools and departments. Then in 1962 the Department of Industrial and Engineering Administration within the Sibley School of Mechanical Engineering became the Independent Department of Industrial Engineering and Administration in the College. Finally, in 1965 the five-year bachelor's degree program was eliminated and all programs had to be restructured to fit into four years.

Professor Hanselman was a member of the Atmos Society, Kappa Tau Chi, Pi Kappa Phi, the Cornell Society of Engineers, the American Accounting Association, the National Association of Cost Accountants, and the American Society for Engineering Education.

Yes, George Hanselman did indulge in some recreation but one finds that much of it was given to its literal meaning, re-creation as help for others. He was a Rotary Club member and held the position of the director in charge of work for crippled children and was active in making arrangements to bring Cornell dramatic productions to the infantile paralysis center. He served from 1955 to 1979 with the Cayuga Heights Volunteer Fire Department and the Fire Police, with many valuable volunteer actions for which he was recognized. For outside hobbies, he played golf regularly and grew fine flowers, but perhaps he would say his favorite pastime was attracting the birds and the small animals to his garden. Where many gardeners try to discourage the squirrels from eating the bird seed, George tried to get them eating from his hand and he made friends with a pair of raccoons.

He was always to be seen at the annual alumni reunions up to the time his health would no longer allow him. He knew many alumni and they knew him and appreciated his help in their student days.

Professor Emeritus George was the right man at the right time: self-assured but not self-opinionated; self-relied but not self-serving. Well did he serve his School. Well did he serve his College. Well did he serve his University.

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