

## C. Arnold Hanson

*April 24, 1913 — June 29, 1983*

When C. Arnold Hanson left Cornell in 1961 to become president of Gettysburg College, a tribute from his colleagues described him as having “played a conspicuous role in the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations.” In retrospect that description was, and remains, true on a number of levels.

The son of working-class Swedish immigrants, Hanson took nine years to earn his B.A. degree from the University of Akron while working full time as production worker, then as supervisor, for B.F. Goodrich and Company. He taught for three years at Akron while pursuing graduate work at the University of Chicago. For the next three years he served as executive officer of a minesweeper in the Pacific.

Having enrolled in 1945 as the first graduate student in Cornell’s newly established field of industrial and labor relations (ILR), Hanson was awarded its first Ph.D. degree in 1948. He was among the first scholars to examine labor arbitration awards as a means of understanding labor relations problems. To early generations of ILR graduate students, many of whom went on to teaching posts around the world, he was a model of academic achievement. He demonstrated the respect for higher learning and for the institutions that support it that is often found in those who had to struggle for their right to be participants.

Upon receiving his doctorate Hanson was appointed to the school’s expanding faculty. In 1949 he became director of the ILR school’s Office of Resident Instruction, graduate field representative, and professor—posts he retained until his departure in 1961. In meeting the demands of this formidable array of positions, Arnold Hanson helped shape the decisions that determined the nature and composition of the school’s undergraduate and graduate student bodies and curricula. His success as an academic policy maker and administrator was the result of an enormous outlay of hard work and the respect of his colleagues. Their acceptance, in turn, was earned by consistent demonstrations of wisdom, courtesy, and personal integrity.

In 1957 Hanson was appointed dean of the University Faculty in the context of high tension between president and faculty regarding their respective orbits of authority. He proved a true and effective representative of faculty interests, a well-organized administrator of the dean’s office, and a creative force contributing to campus comity. His departure for Gettysburg was a loss to all elements at Cornell.

He served with distinction as Gettysburg's president until he retired in 1977. His life was a model of service to American academe, and Cornell is richer because so much of his service was performed here.

*John McConnell, John P. Windmuller, Frank B. Miller*