E. Stanley Shepardson

January 13, 1913 — December 10, 2004

Edwin Stanley Shepardson (E.S.S.) and his twin brother, Walter Stanton, were born on January 13, 1913 to Stokes and Agnes Stanton Shepardson on a farm in the Town of Otselic, and reared on a farm in the Town of Smyrna in Chenango County, New York. In his youth, Stanley assisted his father with the operation of a 120-acre dairy farm, a practice that continued through the summers while he attended college. This background not only developed his keen interest in agriculture, but also set the path for his professional contributions in the years to come.

Stan, as he was affectionately called, received his B.S. degree from Cornell University in 1936, and that same fall joined the extension staff of the Department of Agricultural Engineering at Cornell as an extension instructor in agricultural engineering with responsibilities for 4-H programs in farm electrification. He was soon working with adult audiences, not only in farm electrification but also in farm machinery, farm power and related home applications. He was well suited to this work because of his farm background, readily developed a variety of related publications, and was popular with farm audiences—he knew their needs. He assisted the WWII Food Production Agency by developing and presenting programs and demonstrations throughout New York State on the repair and maintenance of electric motors and equipment, which were scarce resources due to the war effort. Later, he developed custom spray equipment for potatoes, fruits and vegetables, and trained operators in their use.

In 1941, he married his beloved life long companion, Mary Ward, and, after nine years in extension work, astutely recognized the need for advanced training to support his desire to contribute further to the field of higher education. He subsequently received his M.S. degree from Cornell University in 1947 and that same year was appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural Engineering. The year 1949 marked his move to teaching and research responsibilities, where his extensive personal experience on the farm and in his highly successful extension outreach programs aptly served students whom he taught in courses on farm machinery, farm power, rural electrification and mechanics. This also began his service as a faculty advisor to undergraduate and graduate students, bringing a special real world flavor to the research programs of the latter. In 1950, he was promoted to Associate Professor and to Professor in 1958.

Stan's specialty in research was the development of mechanical harvesting machinery and he held several patents on his work. He had a great appreciation for the removal of drudgery from food production activities. He was the recognized leader in the development of a mechanical harvester for grapes, an application that reduced labor by a

factor of forty and was rapidly adopted in the U.S. and abroad. He was also involved in the development of cabbage and lettuce harvesters, mechanical grape vine pruners, mechanical apple harvesting, and the mechanics of the milking process in dairy cows, submarine cultivation of pond soils to increase fish production, seed pelleting, waste management and environmental applications. He authored or coauthored over fifty technical or research papers. Stan worked abroad with USAID in Israel, IRRI in the Philippines on their agricultural engineering development program, and in Australia with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industry Research Organization's fruit and vegetable harvesting programs.

He made a special contribution to the department during the 1950s when the Agricultural Engineering Department's new 2-acre building, Riley-Robb Hall, was approved for construction on campus. Stan led the effort to determine the physical system needs for the department's teaching, research and extension programs, which included all aspects of the equipment and instrumentation required to support the faculty, staff and students, and was responsible for its selection, as well as supervision of its acquisition. In 1958-59, he was named Acting Head of the department while O. C French was on leave in the Philippines, was Coordinator of Research from 1960-72, and Department Head from 1972 to his retirement in 1978. During his tenure, the department gained national and international prominence under solid leadership.

Stan was an active member of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ASAE) and chaired the North Atlantic Region during 1968-69. In 1973, he was elected a Fellow of ASAE, and designated a Life Fellow in 1978. Within ASAE, he was instrumental in obtaining accreditation approval for the Master of Engineering degree at Cornell in this field, the first in the nation. He was also a member of the American Society for the Advancement of Science, the Northeast Society of Conservation Engineers, and the American Society for Engineering Education.

Stan was an active and enthusiastic supporter of Cornell. He served as Treasurer of the Class of 1936 for many, many years and was its local representative for organizing and operating Class of 1936 reunions. He was the first contributor to the department's capital campaign, establishing the E. Stanley Shepardson Scholarship Fund for the benefit of its undergraduate majors. In addition, he designated funds for unrestricted support of Cornell's football, lacrosse and hockey programs, and donated to other scholarship programs in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He was a member of Phi Kappa Phi and Sigma Xi, and in 1987, was honored by the Alumni Association of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences with its Outstanding Alumni Award. Additionally, he was a past Master of Hobasco Lodge 716 of the Free and Accepted Masons, and a member of Rotary International.

Stan greatly enjoyed the outdoors, and he and Mary traveled extensively in the U.S. and Canada, with their trailer regularly heading to Florida in later years to follow the sunshine. He also enjoyed hunting, fly tying and fishing, but the greatest of these was fly fishing, and he had the black fly bites to prove it following trips to their summer hideaway in the Adirondacks. Surprisingly, the insect bites did not bother him one iota!

Stan was appointed Professor Emeritus in 1978, and on the occasion of his retirement, it was noted that the number 13 was well suited to Stan's life. He and his twin brother came into the world at a combined weight of 13 pounds on January 13, 1913, he spent four 13 year periods of professional practice at Cornell University, and was honored at the celebration of his retirement on June 13, 1978. And he enjoyed every bit of it. He was a grand gentleman to know.

David L. Call, Everett D. Markwardt, Ronald B. Furry