

David Malcolm Simons

May 24, 1925 — August 19, 1983

Professor David Malcolm Simons died August 19, 1983, after a valiant twenty-year battle against cancer. Thus ended a long, distinguished, and productive life. He is survived by his wife, Virginia, their sons, Jonathan and Jeffrey, and their daughter, Elizabeth.

David Simons was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and reared in Washington, D.C. After obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from Cornell in 1945, he enrolled in the U.S. Naval Officer Training Program. Subsequently he taught at the Naval Pacific University in Guam, attaining the rank of lieutenant. Upon completion of his naval service he worked for a prominent engineering firm in Baltimore, Maryland, for several years. He then attended graduate school at Princeton University, from which he obtained a Master of Fine Arts degree in architecture in 1951. At graduation he was awarded the Gold Medal of Excellence by the American Institute of Architects. Professor Simons then practiced as an architect in Washington until 1959, when he became an assistant professor of architecture in the College of Architecture at Cornell.

Throughout his teaching at Cornell he took a lively interest in his students and showed special concern for their interests and problems. As a professor of architecture he was particularly interested in developing methods for the better integration of the scientific and artistic aspects of the building design process in order to obtain a more unified architecture. This was a matter he continued to pursue until the time of his death.

David had a very active mind and devoted all the energy he could command to his role as a teacher, steadfastly nurturing in himself and his students the ability to think critically and creatively. His standards were high, and his colleagues and students had great respect for him.

During the early years of his illness he rose above physical pain to share with his students his knowledge and views of architecture, always with a positive outlook and a delicate touch of humor. But in 1978-79 his illness forced him to take a medical leave of absence from his teaching responsibilities.

During the last years of David's life his role as husband and father received an increasing share of his attention. He also became interested in the education of younger children and made many contributions to his wife's elementary school teaching program in the Ithaca city schools. As his physical strength declined, he continued to nourish his mind through voracious reading and discussions among family members, colleagues, and friends. David was

a gentle and self-effacing man. Despite adversity his great strength of character, his concern for others, his love for his family, his pride in his children, and his constant optimism sustained the vitality of his spirit. He used his life to grow intellectually and emotionally and to give to others, gifts that will long be greatly appreciated by his many friends, his colleagues, and his family, who remember him with deep affection as a devoted husband, father, teacher, and friend.

Charles W. Pearman, Francis W. Saul