

Jennie Tiffany Towle Farley

November 2, 1932 — June 19, 2002

Jennie Tiffany Towle Farley, Professor in the Cornell School of Industrial and Labor Relations Extension Division, died on June 19, 2002 at the age of 69, after a thirteen month struggle with a mysterious auto-immune illness that defied diagnosis. It was an untimely passing that marked the end of an exceedingly rich and productive life.

Jennie, the third of four children, was born in Fanwood, New Jersey, to Dorothy Wagner Towle and Howard Towle. She earned a B.A. degree in English at Cornell (1954) and then worked as a writer for such publications as *Seventeen* and *Mademoiselle*, and later for *Punch* in London, *The Scandinavian Times* in Sweden, *La Prensa* and *The Peruvian Times* in Peru, and Cornell's Officer of Public Information. In 1956, she married Donald Farley, and they started their family, which accounts for the considerable time gap between Jennie's undergraduate and graduate degrees. In 1969, Jennie returned to Cornell's classrooms for an M.S. degree in Sociology and a Ph.D. degree in Sociology and Communication (1970) and her academic career began in earnest, though, as with most women, the going was slow and often difficult.

After a two-year stint as a Research Associate and Lecturer, she became an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations (1972). In 1976, she received a joint appointment as Assistant Professor in ILR, and in a new department known as Women's Studies, which Jennie helped found. She gained tenure and promotion to Associate Professor in the Extension Department of the ILR School in November 1982, followed by promotion to full Professor in January 1990. By then, it had become apparent that Dr. Jennie Farley's services to the university had brought that institution (over considerable resistance) into a new era of equality and justice. Some examples: Many people forget that in the early 1970s, when two members of the Board of Trustees—Adelle Rogers and Charlotte Conable—questioned why the lagging status of women at Cornell was so clearly a low to none-existent priority, they turned to Jennie, who armed herself with a then current Cornell Directory, and painstakingly counted the number of professors (including associate and assistant levels) and reported her findings to the Trustees in 1972. That report gave birth to the university's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, and, to a great extent, the program of Women's Studies. In the fall of 1970, she served as the academic coordinator of the "Female Studies" program. When the program was formalized as Women's Studies, Jennie became its first director, serving in that capacity from 1972-76. Jennie negotiated the Program's strategy of hiring, which was to have the Program hire jointly with other units of the university. The Women's Studies Program paid half of the new professor's salary up until tenure, at which time the full line would revert to the co-hiring

department and the half line would return to Women's Studies, allowing the program to initiate new hiring. A road map of Jennie Farley's 32 years of employment at Cornell is studded with other important examples of her creative innovation: special courses for Office Professionals, so that they (mostly women) can advance through the system; lunch bag seminars on issues of special importance to women open to everyone campus-wide; and in line with Jennie's strong belief in justice, her leadership of "Friends of the Cornell 11," a group which brought suit against the university on what was basically a double standard for awarding tenure to women and men. Although the suit lost, the message it sent did not.

Jennie was also an excellent teacher! Her course, "Women at Work" is remembered by many ILR students as their first introduction to problems faced by women in the workforce. Another course, "Writing in Industrial Relations" drew on her earlier journalistic experience to help students hone their writing skills in the various formats necessary for professionals in the field of labor relations. Students from as far back as the 1980s and as recently as the year 2000 comment on Professor Farley's availability, and her kindness which helped them meet her high standards.

In Extension, she capitalized on her expertise in issues related to working women to organize a number of national conferences which resulted in widely read publications. These include: *Women Workers in Fifteen Countries: Essays in Honor of Alice Hanson Cook*; *The Woman in Management: Career and Family Issues*; *Academic Women and Employment Discrimination*; and *Sex Discrimination in Higher Education*.

Jennie Farley worked tirelessly in Cornell governance. She served as a member-at-large of the Faculty Council of Representatives and the Faculty Senate. In 1988, she was elected as the Faculty Trustee to the Cornell Board of Trustees, where she made many important contributions to university policy. As former Dean of the ILR School, David B. Lipsky put it, "She leaves a lasting legacy that will benefit future generations of Cornellians."

Jennie was the recipient of many Cornell awards including the Andrew Dickson White Professor of the Year Award, and the Alice H. Cook and Constance E. Cook Award for her efforts on behalf of women at Cornell and beyond.

In the larger Ithaca and upstate communities, Jennie's many volunteer activities included leadership in the American Association of University Women, the Delta Chi fraternity, the Women's Resource Center and the Cornell Women's Club of Tompkins County. In recognition of these efforts, Jennie received the Humanitarian Award for service from the Ithaca community, the Corinne Galvin Award from the T.C. Human Rights Commission, the Woman

of Achievement Award from the Broome County Status of Women Council, and the Unsung Heroine Award from the Central New York Chapter of N.O.W.

Jennie was a strong family person. She shared a rich 46 yearlong marriage with Donald Farley, the J. Preston Levis Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Cornell. Their three children, Clair, Anne, and Peter, all of whom went to Cornell, enjoyed an exceedingly warm existence with their mother (and their father as well), as did three grandchildren, Laura, Christopher, and namesake, Jennie. The Farleys spent more than ten years living abroad, teaching, studying and learning the languages of several countries.

Jennie Farley had another extraordinary gift. Somehow she was able to make every person she knew feel special. In her supply of what seemed inexhaustible energy, Jennie was passionately engaged in supporting individuals or causes that needed her as teacher, friend, and colleague. Jennie's heart and her wonderful smile were big enough and her arms long enough to embrace the world.

Frank H.T. Rhodes said it for all of us:

"Jennie embodied all that is best in Cornell. She had a concern that reached far beyond her field, with basic fairness and generosity that she brought to every situation. She was mentor, example, and friend to so many, of whom I am one."

Susanne Bruyere, Ileen DeVault, Francine Herman, Lois Gray