

Edward S. Flash

February 23, 1921 — January 27, 1987

Edward S. (Ned) Flash was a modest man who contributed greatly to the university community. It was a measure of his modesty that during his lifetime those of us who knew him only in particular roles could not fully appreciate the magnitude of his contribution. That began to become clear at his memorial service at Sage Chapel. Cornellians, Ithacans, and others came in such large numbers that one could not help being awed by the outpouring of love and respect from so many of such different ages and such diverse backgrounds. They paid tribute to a man who was unique.

Ned Flash (B.A., 1949; M.P. A., 1950; Ph.D., 1961—all from Cornell) was a Cornellian through and through. He was a gentleman, personifying grace, elegance, and dignity in all that he did. His accomplishments flowed daily from his being Ned—in his concern for students, in his commitment to fair play, and in willing participation in the uncelebrated tasks that made the living and working of others easier.

After he had earned his first two Cornell degrees, Ned worked for six years in Washington, D.C., first with the Department of the Navy, aiding in its relations with Congress; then on a personnel task force for the second Hoover Commission; and finally as director of training for the District of Columbia government. Then, returning to Ithaca for doctoral studies in public administration, he worked part-time as director of admissions, placement, and student and alumni affairs in the Graduate School of Business and Public Administration. After receiving his Ph.D. in 1961, he became a member of the faculty of the school, now the Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management, and was a member of that faculty for the rest of his life.

Ned was exceptionally conscientious in all his undertakings. Whether it was a brief task force, a long committee assignment, or very long service as library adviser, he was willing to undertake the study and detail work necessary to do the job well. He was truly exceptional in his treatment of colleagues. Every kind thought and generous impulse was acted on immediately. One staff member recalls how he not only said thank you when receiving help, but that months later he would write a note or make a call to repeat the thanks and to say again how much he had been helped. Inevitably he was called on to do more than his share of committee work for the university. His work as chairman of the Faculty Committee on the Professional and Economic Status of the Faculty was particularly important.

From 1966 through 1982 Ned directed Cornell's Education for Public Management program, a continuing education program for midcareer federal government officials. He was active in consulting, including doing an analysis of long-range planning for the *Apollo* and post-*Apollo* programs of NASA's Manned Spacecraft Center. His doctoral study of the President's Council of Economic Advisers and the relationship between knowledge and power grew into a book, *Economic Advice and Presidential Leadership*, published by Columbia University Press. His growing concern with the conflict between environmental issues and economic development is reflected in a significant case study, *The Battle of Cow Green*. At the time of his death he had almost completed a book on the cause-and-effect relationships in the development and execution of public policy.

Since his primary professional interests were in public administration, Ned was deeply disappointed when his school decided to drop the formal degree program in that field. That decision went against his firm conviction that those who aspire to leadership in government need specialized education in the administrative methods peculiar to the governmental process. Nevertheless, to no one's surprise, his dismay at that decision did not diminish his love for Cornell, his contributions to the school, or his sense of humor, although the latter continued to surface as a deluge of outrageous puns.

Ned developed some of the most innovative courses at the Johnson School: "The Management of Governmental Systems," studying the manner in which legislators, political executives, bureaucrats, and judges interact to make decisions, and "Effective Management Consulting," in which students undertook real-life consulting tasks. Building on his governmental experience, he assembled teams of students to work as consultants with local businesses and public offices as well as Cornell offices. This course was enormously time-consuming but very valuable and well regarded by the participants.

In a quiet way Ned was a sincerely religious man—one who practiced his faith in the acts of daily living, turning his whole life into a continuous affirmation of his faith. He was active in Cornell United Religious Work, especially with the Episcopal group. To those who knew him it was not surprising that the Episcopal group had a fall-term project to help him prepare for a new course on ethics in the Johnson School. Such interweaving of academic work, religious life, and social activities was typical of the fabric of the life of this man.

Ned's last class was the first lecture in that new course, "Ethics of Managerial Power," an appropriate epitaph for a man whose entire life was a course in ethics, and who, at sixty-five, was still eager to grow and contribute in new ways to his university and his school.

Ned was unsurpassed in his devotion to Cornell. He maintained close ties throughout his life with many of his friends from undergraduate days and added to that group the generations of students who regarded him as a friend as well as a teacher. Ned was an oarsman at Tabor Academy as well as at Cornell, exhibiting the intense loyalty peculiar to that sport. He was an avid cruising sailor with a strong preference for saltwater rather than fresh. Although his sloop, *Fanfare*, bore Ithaca on her transom, her home port was in Maine, and Ned loved that beautiful, if often foggy, coast. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps in the South Pacific in World War II and after the war as a captain in the Marine Reserve.

Ned's sailing companion, navigator, and wife was Dora Grabfield Flash, a senior lecturer at Cornell's School of Hotel Administration. They have two children, Dorothy and Stephen, both Cornellians married to Cornellians, and one granddaughter, not yet a Cornellian.

Ralph Bolgiano, Dick Conway, Alan McAdams, John McClain, Betsy Ann Olive, Seymour Smidt