

# John Robert Moynihan

*March 16, 1906 — December 15, 1986*

John R. Moynihan died at Tompkins Community Hospital last winter after sixty years as a Cornellian. Jack was born in Buffalo, New York, of Irish immigrant parents, Cornelius E. and Mary Fitzgerald Moynihan. He came to Ithaca in the 1920s and received his B.S. in engineering; he was also awarded a master's degree in mechanical engineering in 1932. Jack lived in Ithaca for most of his adult life and moved away from the Finger Lakes to a winter home in Florida only after his retirement in 1971. It was there that his wife, Loretta Scanlon Moynihan, died in 1975, at which point he returned to Ithaca to be close to his daughter, Maureen M. Schmitt, and his granddaughter.

Jack Moynihan retired as professor of theoretical and applied mechanics forty-two years after he had begun his teaching career as an instructor of engineering at Cornell in 1929. Over the years at Cornell he served as chairman of the Department of Materials, acting chairman of the Department of Mechanics, and longtime secretary of the faculty of the College of Engineering. Jack took to these roles agreeably. While he was always easy to deal with, he was not pushed around by anyone. His fund of good, sound common sense served him well in confronting various academic problems and personalities.

Besides his academic duties at Cornell, Jack consulted for the Lincoln Laboratory of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, and Therm of Ithaca. He was a member of the American Society for Metals, the American Society for Testing Materials, Tau Beta Pi, Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi, and Pi Tau Sigma.

Jack's Gaelic heritage was apparent in the twinkle in his eye, his love of a good tale, and his willingness to raise a glass with his many friends. "Happy Jack" Moynihan, as he was affectionately known to several generations of undergraduate engineers and colleagues alike, had a wonderfully buoyant personality with a ready smile and a chuckle. He is remembered by scores of post-World War II Cornellians who studied in the mechanics laboratory that Jack ran together with the late J. O. Jeffrey. His friends and colleagues in mechanics fondly recall his love for his work and his well-known remark, "Where else but at a university can you get paid so well for doing what you like to do?"

Even in his late years Jack was active in athletic and social events around campus and town. For years he was the faculty adviser to Cornell's baseball team, and he accompanied the team on many spring trips to warmer climates.

He was proud to be one of the few emeritus professors in the Cornell Figure Skating Club. He enjoyed summer

evenings by the lake at the Ithaca Yacht Club and convivial winter gatherings at the Ithaca Country Club. In his difficult last years Jack frequently attended St. Catherine of Siena Church in Cayuga Heights, thereby gaining much comfort.

Jack was always at his best in dealing with people. It is those same people who will most miss him. Goodbye, Jack, we will always remember you.

*H. D. Conway, Richard H. Lance, Joseph A. Burns*