

Louis Melville Massey, Jr.

April 28, 1923 — February 2, 1987

Louis Melville Massey, Jr., professor of food science, died on February 2, 1987. Dr. Massey joined the Department of Food Science and Technology at Geneva in 1958 to conduct research on the chemistry and postharvest physiology of fruits and vegetables. For many years his expertise was in the area of food irradiation—the department's six-thousand-curie gamma radiation source was under his administration. In 1968 he received the Joseph Harvey Gourley award from the American Society for Horticultural Science for his research on the effect of ionizing irradiation on the metabolism of Cortland apples. In addition to conducting his research program, he was a member of the executive committee and group research coordinator for the Northeast Regional Committee on postharvest physiology of fruits and was an advisory member of the Perishable Freight Claims Committee of the Association of American Railroads.

Lou's loyalty and affection for Cornell were strong and deep. Born in Ithaca, he was the son of Louis M. Massey, a former head of the Ithaca department of plant pathology. When Lou was appointed to a Cornell assistant professorship, he was pleased to be following in his father's footsteps.

Lou graduated from Oberlin College with a B. A. in 1947, following a break in his education caused by World War II and his service in the navy as a commissioned officer. He then returned to Cornell for his graduate training and obtained his doctorate in 1951 with specializations in biochemistry, plant physiology, and pomology. He was employed as a biochemist in the U.S. Army Biological Laboratory, Crops Research Division, at Fort Detrick for six years before returning to Cornell.

Lou had numerous outside interests. He was a member and treasurer of the Finger Lakes Torch Club for many years. He was an accomplished cabinetmaker, and he enjoyed gardening and auto mechanics. Perhaps he was at his happiest when communing with nature. His cabin in the Maine woods was his Shangri-La. Canoeing on Maine lakes and streams was a favorite pastime. His commitment to activities such as camping with the Boy Scouts and support of the Audubon Society bear witness to his love of nature.

A passage from William Cullen Bryant's *Thanatopsis* well describes Lou's beloved Maine woods, mountains, and lakes.

To him who in love of nature holds communion with her visible forms, she speaks a various language ... The hills, rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun—the vales stretching in pensive quietness between: the venerable woods—rivers that move in majesty, the complaining brooks that make the meadows green: and poured round all, old ocean's grand and melancholy waste—are but the solemn decorations all of the great tomb of man.

Louis Massey and Henry Thoreau had much in common. As Walden was to Thoreau, the Maine cabin was to Lou. Thoreau has been described as a flinty man with a strong moral conscience and a special sense of humor. When he was on his deathbed a friend asked, “Have you made your peace with God?” To which Thoreau replied, “I am not aware that we ever quarreled!”

Dr. Massey leaves his wife, Cynthia; his son, Nathan; his daughter, Deborah; and two grandchildren.

R. C. Lamb, W. B. Robinson, D. F. Splittstoesser