



Richard Brian How

July 15, 1918 – June 26, 2012

R. Brian How, Professor Emeritus of Marketing, spent most of his professional life at Cornell University in the Department of Agricultural Economics in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, where he worked most effectively with his colleagues in the plant sciences seeking to improve the quality of the fruits and vegetables produced and marketed by farmers in the Northeast. He was an enthusiastic teacher, a good listener, and a hard worker. His textbook, *Marketing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*, 1991, New York, Van Nostrand & Reinhardt, Inc. was widely recognized as an important addition to the literature of the time. He was a leader in the use of mathematical programming in risk analysis and in guiding production decisions in fruit and vegetable processing plants. He also served the Department as its Extension Leader in the 1970s and 80s.

Richard Brian How was born in Montreal, Canada, on July 15, 1918, the son of Christian Carr Martin and Richard George How. He graduated from McGill University in 1939 and served in the Canadian Armed Forces during World War II. In 1944 he was among the Canadian armored divisions that landed at Juno Beach on D-Day, and was in northern Germany heading towards Hamburg when the war ended. He rose to the rank of Captain and served finally in the Armed Forces Intelligence Division. During the post-war reconstruction in late 1945 he led truck convoys for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, bringing supplies to the many corners of Europe.

Following World War II Brian entered the Graduate School at Cornell University and completed his M.S. in 1949 and his Ph.D. in 1951 under the direction of Professor Glenn Hedlund. He joined the faculty of the University of Saskatchewan in 1950 and advanced to the rank of Associate Professor. In 1954 he became an Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph and then moved to Cornell University in 1956 to his faculty position directing a program in marketing fruits and

vegetables. He spent the summer of 1961 at the Green Giant Company learning about their methods of acquiring vegetables, their quality control programs with both growers and in their processing plants, as well as their development programs with buyers of their products. He sought similar opportunities to observe operations of processors in the Northeast building good relationships with their management and staying abreast of issues across the industry from farm to consumer outlets.

Together with one of his graduate students, Peter B. R. Hazell they presented one of the key papers at the IAAE meetings held in Minsk, USSR in 1970, "Obtaining Acceptable Farm Plans Under Uncertainty", demonstrating how linear programming assisted in examining alternatives and providing good solutions for different yield and price situations. He and another student, Albert J. Nyberg, prepared another widely used bulletin, *Mathematical Programming to Guide Production Decisions in Fruit and Vegetable Processing Plants*, in 1964.

He sustained strong, professional, working -relationships with his colleagues at Universities in Canada, serving as an editor of the Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics one year and, used a sabbatical leave to assist the Canadian Government in a study of horticultural crops and their potential for supplying additional markets. He also joined colleagues in rural sociology and labor relations at Cornell to publish a timely report on viable farmer worker relationships, a study of selected cases in New York State in 1966, a time of substantial unrest, when housing for summer labor was a topic of national interest. He responded willingly with the help of student assistants in obtaining relevant field data to answer questions of concern to growers, processors, and the larger marketing community.

After retiring from Cornell in 1988, Brian continued as an active participant in the Ithaca community. He was a member of the Cayuga Rotary Club, drove regularly for FISH, and donated his time working at Loaves and Fishes. He served on the Board of the Protestant Cooperative Ministry at Cornell and served as a Master Gardener for Tompkins County Cooperative Extension. He enjoyed hiking, camping, canoeing, sailing, skiing and skating until his health declined.

He and his wife, Janet Selke, met as graduate students at Cornell and married in September 1949. Together for 63 years, their children included George (1957-1993), Sarah How Alexander of Ithaca, NY, and Katherine How Conschafter of Midlothian, VA. Brian was pre-deceased by his parents, brother George, and sisters Lorraine and Anne. Janet Selke How continues to live at their home at 109 Birchwood Drive, Ithaca, NY.

Bernard F. Stanton, Chairperson; Gene A. German, Gerald B.
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