Frank Latta Fairbanks

December 16, 1884 — March 5, 1939

Frank Latta Fairbanks was born at Ithaca, New York, December 16, 1884, and died on March 5, 1939, of injuries received in an automobile accident while engaged in work for the University.

Professor Fairbanks was of a sturdy family founded in this country by Jonathan Fairbanks, who came from Somerby in the West Riding of Yorkshire, England, in 1633 and in 1636 erected a dwelling at Dedham, Massachusetts, which is standing, habitable, and owned by one of the family today. Harvey Fairbanks, great-grandfather of Professor Fairbanks, moved from Cornish, Vermont, to Homer, New York, in 1816 and cleared a farm on the Scott Road that is now occupied by a grandson. In the barn on this farm the first installation of the Fairbanks-Goodman ventilating system for dairy stables was put into practical operation in 1925.

The son of a father expert in mechanical matters from whom he gained valuable early experience, Professor Fairbanks graduated from Sibley College of Mechanical Engineering in 1910, served the H. H. Franklin Company of Syracuse as test engineer, and had a varied engineering experience in Pendleton, Oregon, from 1911 until 1915, when he was recalled to Ithaca to care for his parents. He served as librarian of Sibley College from 1915 until 1917, when he became assistant in Farm Mechanics in the New York State College of Agriculture. After 1918 he was successively instructor and assistant professor of Agricultural Engineering. The title of professor came to him in 1934.

Early teaching work was in the tractor schools given during the World War to promote food production, after which, in addition to teaching, he carried on investigations in the artificial illumination of poultry houses, farm power machinery, applications of electricity to agriculture, and air-conditioning of animal shelters. In the latter field the development of the Fairbanks-Goodman system of ventilation of dairy stables, addresses before the American societies of Agricultural Engineers and Heating and Ventilating Engineers, bulletins and other publications have given deserved national standing to work done with scientific thoroughness and with a sympathetic and informed appreciation of agricultural requirements. He was a member of Sigma Xi, of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, and of Masonic fraternities, being a 32nd-degree Mason.

His colleagues have lost a true friend and an able associate. The farmers of the State have lost a sound and capable adviser.