



## **Robert W. Everett, Sr.**

January 17, 1938 – March 25, 2011

Robert W. Everett, commonly known as Bob, a Professor Emeritus of Animal Science in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences dedicated his career to dairy cattle breeding and genetic advancement. He obtained his graduate degrees in dairy cattle genetics at Michigan State University under the mentoring of Dr. Clint Meadows who was a visionary in the practical application of quantitative genetics principles to dairy cattle breeding. Bob pursued this vision by joining the world renowned dairy cattle genetics group at Cornell University in the Department of Animal Science as a postdoctoral fellow (1966), then proceeded through the professorial ranks of assistant professor (1968), associate professor (1974) and professor (1982) with appointments mainly in research and extension. Even after his retirement, he continued both his research program in dairy cattle genetics and his teaching role including a team taught course and guest lectures in genetic related courses.

For more than four decades, Everett made advances in the approaches and principles of dairy cattle breeding that improved the efficiency of dairy cattle milk production, ensuring greater profitability for dairy farm families and more affordable dairy products for consumers. As a New York State employee through the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Bob held dear the commitment and promise that his academic program served for the betterment of consumers by offering greater abundance of nutritious dairy food ingredients at more affordable prices. Bob also held the belief that a research program should be the driving force of educational outreach programs which he very effectively achieved. His research program over time has influenced the genetic advancement of millions of dairy cattle throughout the world. His research program has had a profound and long lasting influence on the dairy industry and the efficiency and profitability of dairy cattle production. With regard to the undergraduate program, Bob passionately argued for flexibility in the curriculum so that the interests and needs for individual students could take precedence over all else. He disliked

any attempt at rigidity in the undergraduate program and, to benefit his advisees, was quite happy to ignore guidelines imposed.

Bob was viewed by his peers to be a private person with a quiet personality, but with a unique way of thinking and expressing himself that at times caused people to be reluctant toward accepting his research findings and advice. Once he was understood, his thinking and reasoning were respected; as a result, many industry professionals and faculty benefited from Bob's approach of challenging long-standing paradigms pertaining to issues in the dairy cattle industry and even more far-reaching issues. He had an innate ability to analyze large data sets to derive very practical applications of dairy cattle breeding and management that benefited the dairy industry. With his non-traditional approach, he was highly criticized by his peers in the genetic advancement arena. However overtime, his research findings were implemented and integrated into national dairy cattle genetic advancement programs. In Bob's quiet way, he accepted the criticism with a smile, confident that his findings would advance the dairy industry on its own and would eventually be adopted by the industry. His goal was always to improve the efficiency of milk production in dairy cattle and to provide a better living for all people throughout the world even at times when it cost him personally.

Bob and his wife Anne endowed the Robert and Anne Everett Professorship in Dairy Cattle Genetics at Cornell University with a gift of \$2 million. This gift demonstrates their commitment to the university along with recognizing Bob's dedication to his Cornell work and the continuation of the concentration of dairy cattle genetics in the College. In making the gift, Anne said "My husband always valued the innovation that occurred at Cornell University, and he was so proud to be a part of this special institution.

Endowing a professorship was truly a dream we had for many years. Fulfilling this dream brought Bob great happiness". With this endowment, dairy cattle genetics research will continue at the university he loved and which is clearly Bob's and Anne's way of committing to the betterment of future generations.

*David Galton, Chairperson; Michael Van Amburgh, Bruce Currie*