

Sanford Reuben Shapley

October 15, 1906 — March 12, 1997

Blessed with curiosity and a mind that loved knowledge, combined with the practical skills required for application, S. Reuben Shapley made significant contribution to Cornell and to New York State agriculture. He did it with confidence and with a thoughtful manner, recognized both on and off campus.

Born on October 15, 1906 in Hamilton, New York, he was the son of Sanford L. and Minerva C. Shapley and was raised in South Otselic, New York. His formal training began when he enrolled as an undergraduate in the College of Agriculture at Cornell University in 1924. While a student, he was a member of Alpha Zeta Honorary Fraternity, Ho-Nun-De-Kah and winner of the first Farm Life Challenge Contest (now Rice Stage Debate). The application of his acquired knowledge was made available via the Extension Service starting in 1928 and extending through 1939.

He was then appointed District Agricultural Agent in Land Use Planning. Recognition of his dedication to public service and his skill in delivering agricultural knowledge to his clientele led to positions of leadership from associates and Extension administrators. In 1943, he was appointed Associate Professor in Extension Service and Assistant Leader of County Agricultural Agents. During the trying years of World War II (1943-45), Professor Shapley gave unique leadership to the State's Farm Labor Program in the capacity of Supervisor.

In 1945, Shapley was named Professor of Farm Practice for the college. In this role, he guided the diverse Farm Services of the college and in addition developed farm practice opportunities for literally thousands of students so that they might meet their work experience requirements for graduation. Being able to assist students gain essential experience with recognized successful practitioners was a high point for many of our students and a personal delight for "Reub". For many, this became a life-long association and a valuable part of their Cornell experience.

In 1958, he was named Professor in Personnel Administration in the Office of Resident Instruction. During the 1960s, Professor Shapley expanded the operations in the work experience area to encompass an intern program with interested agri-business organizations, an innovation well received in a period where relevancy was becoming a key goal of students. He also wrote several articles and other publications regarding the work experience requirement of the N.Y.S. College of Agriculture.

After serving Cornell for 44 years, Reuben retired in 1972. In recognition of his many duties and responsibilities with the Cooperative Extension Staff, with fellow faculty and with undergraduate students in particular, Professor Shapley retired as Professor Emeritus.

In addition to his career at Cornell, Professor Shapley was an active community leader. He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church and a trustee and elder in the church. He helped establish and was a charter member of the Ellis Hollow Community Center, Inc. From 1950-56, he was member and chairman of the Ithaca area school study committee that led to the consolidation of 44 school districts. In 1958, he was presented a citation by the Ithaca Teachers Association for services to education. He was a member of the Rotary Club and a local 4-H leader. Reub enjoyed gardening, growing Christmas trees, raising Airedales, traveling, photography, refinishing furniture, hunting, fishing, making wine and playing bridge. Through 1991, he lived in his country home in Ellis Hollow. Later he moved to Concord, New Hampshire to live at the New Hampshire Odd Fellows Home in Concord to be near his daughter, Judy. He died March 12, 1997.

He was survived by two sons, S. Philip Shapley, Owen Sound, Canada; Bruce D. Shapley (deceased, 7/25/97); a daughter, Judith Waterman, Bedford, New Hampshire; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and a sister, Esther S. Day, Bainbridge, New York. He was predeceased by his first wife, Elizabeth D. Coon, April 1955; his second wife, Mildred R. Coon, November 1991; and a brother, Charles S. Shapley.

A man of substance, integrity and honesty, each of us who knew him did profit from the encounter. To be called an associate was an honor.

Herbert L. Everett, Leonard W. Feddema, Richard A. Church