



Alan K. McAdams

March 1, 1930 – September 14, 2013

Alan K. McAdams was an active Cornell University faculty member for fifty years, from 1960 until 2010. He joined the Graduate School of Business and Public Administration, now the Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate school of Management, as an Assistant Professor of Managerial Economics and Finance and was elected Professor Emeritus effective July 1, 2010.

Alan was born in Houston, Texas but spent most of his early years in Newton, Massachusetts with his three brothers as friends and competitors. He is survived by one of his brothers, Kenneth George McAdams. The high point of his adult life was his 57 year marriage to Ann Wheaton Svensson, who survives him. Together they devoted themselves to raising their four sons – Alan, Jr., Jeffrey, Lee, and Kendall - to follow their own passions and interests. Alan is also survived by a much loved granddaughter (Miranda) and grandson (Gideon).

Alan graduated from Yale College in 1952, where he excelled in economics and on the Yale University track team as a sprinter. Alan used his speed in his early years at Cornell in student-faculty football games. In later years, we all had more common sense (and fewer football injuries). After graduation from Yale, Alan immediately went on active duty in the U.S. Navy and spent four years as an officer on a destroyer, the USS Gatling. Most of his service was in the Mediterranean Sea, but his ship also saw duty in the Pacific region during the Korean War. Alan loved his experiences on the destroyer and told many good sea stories. After discharge from the Navy, he went to the Stanford University Graduate School of Business on the GI Bill, where he earned his MBA in 1958 and his Ph.D. in 1960.

Alan loved teaching, and he taught courses in such disparate areas as quantitative analysis for management, managerial economics, business-government relations, industrial policy and consulting. He stimulated his students to think deeply about complicated issues, and they respected him for that. James C. Morgan, long-time CEO of Applied Materials, frequently mentioned that it was in Alan's elective economics course that he wrote a paper that developed the concepts he used to build Applied Materials. Mr. Morgan made a major gift to Cornell in 2003 in honor of Professor McAdams. In 1996 and 1998 Alan was awarded the Stephen and Margery Russell Distinguished Teaching Award, which is given by the five-year reunion class to the faculty member who most influenced them. Alan was the first person to receive this high honor twice.

Alan was an enthusiastic person who always had a cause about which he was passionate. His academic interests focused on industrial policy, anti-trust economics, and environmental issues. And for the past few decades, he worked tirelessly to expand fiber-optic service to Tompkins County and the world beyond. We all fondly remember animated discussions with him as he sought to persuade us of the importance of his causes. In these debates, Alan was an effective and determined, but friendly competitor. Retirement did not slow him down. It merely gave him more time to spend on his current interests. When he retired he said, "In retirement I follow my longtime strategy. I sit in my office and wait for the world and its challenges to walk in the door. And they still do." Computer networks, smart grids and cross-laminated timber consumed his intellectual energy in his later years.

Alan was also actively involved in government, at both the local and federal levels. From September 1, 1971 to August 31, 1972, he was Senior Staff Economist for the President's Council of Economic Advisors. From 1972 to 1982, he was Chief Economist, Expert Witness, and Consultant for the Anti-Trust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, where he logged thousands of hours of service on the fabled IBM anti-trust case. He frequently testified before congressional committees. He briefed the chairs of both the Republican and Democratic Technology Caucuses (Ritter and Gephardt) multiple times. In addition to his government work, Alan was a passionate observer of the political scene, and he was a consistent supporter of the underdog.

He received fellowships from the Ford Foundation and Professional Achievement Awards from the IEEE-USA, which awarded him "Life Senior Member of the IEEE" status in 2011. Alan divided his professional energies among all levels of government, non-profit agencies, Cornell University administrative activities, while teaching a full load and publishing numerous monographs and articles.

Alan's service to Cornell included many years on both the Faculty Council of Representatives (FCR) and the Faculty Senate. He served as chair of the Committee on the Professional and Economic Status of the Faculty and on the FCR Budget

Committee and Financial Policies Committee. He was also a member of the Faculty Advisory Board on Information Technology. In addition to his teaching in Cornell's Johnson School, Alan worked on projects with students from several schools and colleges across Cornell.

Alan was a proud member of the Cornell University community. He was inspired by Ezra Cornell's motto – any person, any study - and what that implied for Cornell and for him.

L. Joseph Thomas, Chair; Harold Bierman, Jr.; Robert H. Frank