

Chase Delmar Kearnl

July 26, 1917 — June 27, 1973

The life of Chase Delmar Kearnl was dedicated to family, work, and service, and to living each day fully. After a day at the office and an evening of work in the garden, he was found dead in the pasture of their farm home on the night of June 27. A medical examination identified a massive coronary as the cause of death. His attachment to family, his commitment to work, and his interest in agriculture was pursued to his life's end.

Delmar Kearnl grew up in an agricultural environment, his father having been an agricultural extension agent. He did his undergraduate work at the University of Idaho and at Utah State University, where he received the Bachelor of Science degree in 1941. He was active in student affairs and on the yearbook staff. During World War II, Kearnl served as an officer in the anti-aircraft artillery. He participated in the invasion of Normandy and was wounded during the recapture of France and Belgium. While in military service, he met and married Marjorie Lail of North Carolina.

In 1946 Delmar Kearnl came to Cornell University to do graduate work in agricultural economics. He received a master's degree in 1947 and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1949, and upon completion he joined the staff of the agricultural economics department as an assistant professor of farm management. He became an associate professor in 1952 and a full professor in 1961.

Professor Kearnl taught a course on farm cost accounting, but he spent most of his time doing research on farm enterprise costs and returns, and on the evaluation of new technology. His research was carried out with farmers of the state, who on a voluntary basis agreed to keep detailed physical and financial records for each productive enterprise on their farms. A special commitment and persistence is required on the part of a researcher to gain this kind of cooperative effort and to insist that it be done well. Analysis can be tedious and pedestrian, but Del never let detailed work interfere with the larger purpose, recognizing the value that such research can have in the development and maintenance of a viable agriculture. In recent years, he restructured and computerized the Cornell farm cost accounting system, the oldest and most respected in the United States. Among its many uses, the basic input-output data from this project is used throughout the nation in the linear programming and budgeting of farm enterprises. He was a strong advocate of the principle of making research results available promptly to all who could use them, so he was a frequent contributor to the *Extension News* and other farm magazines, and the author of many college publications.

Del Kearn had a unique faculty for sensing critical areas related to changes in farming. He researched these areas in order to arrive at conclusions which he was willing and able to defend. This he did with such areas as specialized poultry operations, free-stall housing for dairy cattle, sugar beet production in New York, the places of soybeans and of corn for grain in this region, and recently, changes in systems for growing fruit. In approaching these situations, he faced facts squarely and encouraged others to do the same. He spoke clearly on the basis of his analysis even though it differed from views held by others. He was respected for his fearless desire to present facts as he saw them, and for his belief that such commitment was essential in applied research.

Del Kearn served as secretary-treasurer of the American Agricultural Economics Association from 1958 to 1969 and assumed primary responsibility for preparing and publishing the first two directories of the membership of the Association. At the termination of his office, a special citation in recognition of his service was presented to him at the annual meeting of the Association.

From 1954 to 1956, Professor Kearn was a member of the Cornell-Los Banos team to the University of the Philippines, College of Agriculture. He assisted in developing their department of agricultural economics and at the same time interested a number of young Filipinos in the study of agricultural economics — some of whom now hold key positions in the Philippines. He also provided leadership in organizing the Philippine Agricultural Economics Association. In 1960 he went to Uganda as an adviser to the Department of Agriculture. There he collaborated with Ugandans in writing a text on farm management which included illustrations from East African experiences. He also served as a consultant in Jamaica, to the University of Venezuela, and to the Puerto Rican Agricultural Experiment Station.

In addition to his professional duties, Professor Kearn participated in many activities of the Greater Cornell community. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Cornell United Religious Work, and served several years as a director of Cayuga Lodge, a cooperative housing unit on campus. He and his wife were former cochairmen of both the Belle Sherman and the Lansing Parent-Teacher Associations, and board members of the Grad Fax Club. He had been president of the Bryant Civic Association and was a member of the Lansing Lions Club. He served as a scoutmaster, on local and regional scout boards, and at the time of his death was chairman of the sustaining membership committee of the Louis Agassiz Fuertes Boy Scout Council. He was a Kiwanis Little League baseball coach and a Pee-Wee hockey coach, having had a winning team that played throughout the Northeast and Eastern Canada.

Delmar Kearn was active in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. He served as a missionary in England from 1937 to 1939 and, while living in the Ithaca area, held numerous administrative positions in the local, regional, and state branches of the church. He served as chairman of the building committees for both the Mitchell Street Chapel built in 1952 and the Burleigh Drive Chapel built in 1970.

Home and family ranked high among Del Kearn's values. Even with a heavy professional schedule, he found time to coach his boys' teams and to teach them how to work and assume responsibilities. He purchased a farm home in order to enhance the environment for rearing his children. Gardening was one of Del's hobbies. He planted more than enough for the family needs and enjoyed sharing vegetables and flowers with neighbors, friends, and colleagues. His home and garden were always well cared for and a source of much satisfaction to him and his family.

He is survived by his wife, Marjorie Lail Kearn; three daughters, Mrs. Sandra Kearn Stone, Debbie Ann, and Shari Lyn; three sons, Steven, Kenneth, and Rodney; a sister and four brothers.

The life of Del Kearn was a full and busy one. He organized and managed well, was meticulous in attending to details, and was devoted to the improvement of agriculture and the well being of mankind. He was strong in his convictions, believed in the right to think otherwise, respected the rights of others, and fostered the Cornell tradition of freedom with responsibility. His contributions to the University, state, nation, and the world will continue as farmers, students, and professional colleagues benefit from the work he did and the ideas he developed during the more than twenty-five years of association with Cornell University.

Eddy L. LaDue, William W. Reeder, C. Arthur Bratton