

Earl Brooks

March 7, 1914 — May 30, 1994

Earl Brooks, aged eighty, died unexpectedly of a heart attack on May 30, 1994 at his home in Ithaca.

Earl Brooks joined Cornell University in 1947 after World War II service in the U.S. Navy. His initial teaching was in the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations as a Professor of Personnel Management, but in 1955, he accepted an invitation to join the Graduate School of Business and Public Administration (the original name of the current Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management). Earl also headed up the School's Executive Education Program for a decade and was a major contributor to that program for over thirty years. In recent years, Earl taught in the School of Hotel Administration and in executive programs.

While Earl's courses were in the area of human resource management (personnel management and negotiations), they were characterized by Earl's sense of humor and insights into people. There was frequent laughter followed by interesting insights and conclusions. Many of the School's most successful alumni, when asked what courses in their M.B.A. program they found most useful, would answer "Earl Brooks' courses". As one graduate wrote to Dean Tarr in 1984: "Earl Brooks was and continues to be a very special person to many of us who graduated from the School. He influenced us in a profound, but common sense way that found immediate application in the real world."

Once asked by a student his opinion of a sycophant, Earl quoted a CEO he knew, "I don't want just 'yes' men around me in the office. Hell, when I say 'no', I want them to say 'no' too."

Earl did considerable consulting that involved a large amount of travel. He was very proud of the fact that he never missed a class and would go to extraordinary lengths to make it back to Ithaca in time.

Earl was the first recipient of the General Electric Crotonville Bell Ringer Award in recognition of over 28 years of distinguished service in their Management Development Institute; and was very proud of being the fourth Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient from Bowling Green State University in 1963.

Earl loved athletics of all types. In his early days, he played baseball and was an outstanding pitcher. We suspect that he would effectively make his point both with the hitters and with the umpires. He was also a fine golfer.

Earl's personality and motivations were strongly shaped by his upbringing on a farm in Ohio during the great depression of the thirties and by his U.S. Navy experiences in World War II. He had a deep pride in his teaching

and expected his students to be in class and to be prepared. Those who did not make the effort paid a severe price. He did not accept lack of effort and he had a wide range of facial expressions indicating displeasure. Students stayed awake in Earl's classes, laughed, and learned. Few professors worked harder to educate or had greater concern for their students.

Earl never seriously considered retirement. Teaching was fun for him, and he would have done it without monetary compensation (but he intelligently kept this a secret from the deans). The community of teachers was fortunate in having Earl in their group, and future students are going to miss a rewarding learning experience with Earl gone.

Earl Brooks served Cornell University effectively for 47 years. His dedication to his students met the highest standard.

Thomas R. Dyckman, Alan K. McAdams, L. Joseph Thomas, Harold Bierman, Jr.