

Lucille Williamson

December 12, 1893 — November 8, 1990

Cornell Professor Emerita Lucille Williamson died in Long Beach, California, on November 8, 1990, at the age of 96. She had been a member of the faculty of the New York State College of Home Economics for 28 years prior to her retirement in 1960. Professor Williamson held positions in resident teaching, research and extension service in household economics and management.

Professor Williamson received her Bachelors and Master's degrees from the University of Oklahoma and a Ph.D. degree in chemistry from Columbia University in 1923. She was a member of the faculty at the University of California from 1923 to 1928. She came to Ithaca when her husband, Professor Paul Williamson, began graduate work in agricultural economics.

When first in Ithaca, she participated in a study being conducted by Flora Rose of several thousand Belgian schoolchildren who had suffered from malnutrition during WWI. This study was initiated at the behest of President Herbert Hoover who had been recognized for his relief efforts in post World War I Europe.

Professor Williamson also helped to develop nutritious and economical cereals, particularly for use in New York City, to stave off malnutrition among poor families during the depression. The cereals contained a high proportion of skim milk mixed with/oats, wheat or corn. Eleanor Roosevelt sampled the cereal during a Farm and Home Week demonstration and later served the cereals at the White House to promote their adoption.

Professor Williamson's later work focussed on the performance and durability of household equipment. Her research provided the basis for extension publications which were widely used in programs throughout the United States. Professor Williamson directed many graduate students, including a significant number of foreign students, who remember her breadth of knowledge, her skill in directing research and also her genuine hospitality. Upon her retirement she spent several months in Europe and received a warm welcome from many of her former students.

Her home on Oak Hill Road was the favorite gathering place for faculty and graduate students in household economics and management. The good food, relaxed atmosphere and stimulating conversation were much appreciated.

She was a member of several professional organizations, including the American Standards Association, American Home Economics Association, Sigma Xi and Sigma Delta Epsilon. In Ithaca she was active in scouting, the PTA, League of Women Voters and the local chapter of her sorority, Alpha Phi.

Her husband, Professor Paul Williamson, a member of the faculty in agricultural economics, died in 1943. She is survived by her two children, James Williamson and Mrs. Barbara Ann Timmer; and three grandchildren.

Alice Davey, Rose Steidl, Jean Robinson