

## Frank A. Pearson II

*December 31, 1887 — May 31, 1981*

Frank A. Pearson was a member of Cornell's class of 1912 and an enthusiastic participant in reunions of that outstanding class. Following graduation he became associated with the University of Illinois, where he rose to assistant chief of dairy husbandry. In 1920 he returned to Cornell and entered the Graduate School, receiving the Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1922.

He was a member of the staff in Agricultural Economics from 1920 until his retirement in 1957. His specialty was prices and statistics, and he was an earnest developer of basic facts on the history of prices. One of his major contributions to the field was the development of a monthly index number of wholesale prices in the United States beginning in 1797. His research results were published in many articles, bulletins, and books. With the late George F. Warren, he wrote three outstanding books, which the publisher (Wiley) designated as the *Price Series: The Agricultural Situation* (1924), *Prices* (1933), and *Gold and Prices* (1935). His books were widely read and studied, and had a major influence on agricultural and price policies of the United States.

From 1923 to 1957 Pearson was editor of *Farm Economics*—a regular publication of the Department of Agricultural Economics. In addition to writing many of the articles, he edited and rewrote numerous articles by graduate students and younger staff members, teaching them to express themselves briefly, accurately, and clearly. The circulation of *Farm Economics* increased to ten thousand copies, and its readership included agricultural leaders of the state and nation. The editorial emphasis on the use of statistics to analyze the economic problems of agriculture had wide impact in the field.

He was an inspiring teacher, particularly of graduate students. He chaired over fifty graduate committees and served as a minor committee member for over one hundred others. His classes in prices and statistics for advanced undergraduates and graduate students were a special experience for several thousand students. His sparkle and fresh approach to these subjects captivated the students and encouraged them to study for genuine understanding. They recognized that the teaching materials were reflecting the ideas of an original and forceful mind.

Pearson's philosophy of life—and of economics—was expressed in an article published in *Farm Economics* in 1956:

*The farmer has only one way to improve his standard of living and that is by increasing his efficiency. There are a lot of bright urbanites with sharp pencils working nights and Sundays in the hope that they can gain an advantage over their competitors.*

*There are a lot of horny-handed farmers with stubby pencils doing just exactly the same thing. There is nothing wrong with the rule that the race is to the swift and to the victor belong the spoils—a higher standard of living.*

Following his retirement, Pearson pursued a number of special interests, including his flower growing, golf, photography, the campaigns of the Civil War, and the Fortress of Louisbourg in Nova Scotia. He gave his outstanding collection of pictures of Cornell scenes and people to the University Archives. He led a full life and encouraged others to do likewise.

He is survived by his wife, Amelia Feldkamp Pearson of Ithaca; two sons, Dr. Raymond Pearson of Springfield, Illinois, and Frank Pearson III of Ithaca; and seven grandchildren.

*Maurice C. Bond, Edward C. Lutz, Stanley W. Warren*