



Harlan B. Brumsted

May 5, 1924 – October 23, 2016

Dr. Harlan Brown Brumsted, Emeritus Professor of Natural Resources, died on October 23, 2016 at age 92, just two months after the death of his beloved wife of 70 years, Evelyn Call Brumsted.

Harlan was born on May 5, 1924, to Edward and Rose Brown Brumsted of Batavia, NY. Harlan explored and enjoyed nature, which he found abundant around the rural, farming community in western New York where he grew up. His youthful experiences in the outdoors established his deep appreciation for and enduring interest in and natural resources in New York and beyond. He met Evelyn Call at Batavia High School and married her after serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Harlan began studies at Dartmouth College, but left Dartmouth to attend Midshipmen's School in 1942-44. Afterward he served as an ensign in the US Navy in the Pacific Theatre in 1945-1946. Remarkably, Harlan survived having two of the Navy ships that he served on sunk by enemy fire. He was honorably discharged from the Navy in 1946. He and Evelyn were married after he returned home from service, and began their life together in Hanover, NH, where Harlan finished his undergraduate studies at Dartmouth College, graduating in 1948. A lifelong lover of nature, Harlan's passion for the outdoors found the perfect outlet in the Dartmouth Outing Club. He led many Outing Club trips during his undergraduate years, often with Evelyn at his side, and the couple developed many friendships through the club, which they would maintain for the rest of their lives.

After Harlan's graduation from Dartmouth, he and Evelyn moved to Ithaca, New York, so that Harlan could pursue graduate studies at Cornell. He earned a master's degree in the newly formed Department of Conservation in 1948, gained two years of wildlife experience with the New York State Conservation Department (predecessor of the current New York State Department of Environmental Conservation), and completed his Ph.D. in Wildlife Management

at Cornell in 1954.

Harlan, or “HB” as he was referred to fondly by many of his colleagues, was soon hired by Cornell as the extension conservationist in the Department of Conservation, where over the next four decades, in addition to extension and outreach education, he taught undergraduate and graduate students about wildlife conservation and natural resources. In the 1950s, recognizing the individual and collective value of the tens of thousands of farm ponds found across the state, he introduced farm fish pond management programs at Cornell, and extended knowledge about pond management to farmers and other landowners statewide. He also sparked a successful effort to build group living facilities for conservation education at Cornell's nearby Arnot Forest in Van Etten, NY. The facility served for many years as a gathering place for natural resource educational programs for adults and youth, including conservation education for sportsmen-conservationists (for which The Wildlife Society dedicated its national Conservation Education Award in 1957). Harlan’s many collaborations with the NYS Conservation Department started with public education about provisions of New York’s Fish and Wildlife Management Act in 1957. He assumed primary responsibilities for statewide Cooperative Extension programs related to natural resources management, outdoor recreation enterprise development, and environmental education in the 1960s and 1970s, which were pioneering efforts at the time.

In the 1970s, Harlan initiated efforts that successfully led to establishing a wildlife specialist position in the federal Extension Service. He was committed to public involvement in natural resources management and worked extensively with the New York Conservation Council and the New York State Fish and Wildlife Management Board, serving on the latter for many years as representative of the Dean for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He served numerous advisory roles to New York State government, including the Temporary State Commission on Revision of the Constitution (1958), NYS Education Department, Subcommittee on Conservation Education, Director of the Budget, Temporary Commission on Youth Education in Conservation (1970-72), and the NYSDEC Division of Fish and Wildlife. Harlan was elected to and served from 1971-74 on the university Faculty Council of Representatives. From 1974-76, he served 2 years on the CALS Committee on the Master of Professional Studies Degree, during which time the committee developed the initial requirements for the MPS in Agriculture. Harlan served as chair of the Extension Committee on Early In-service Education, Agriculture and Natural Resources, from Fall 1980 to Fall 1985.

Starting in the 1980s through his retirement in 1991, Harlan served as his department's coordinator of advising, becoming known for giving his time and talents to Natural Resources students. His commitment to students was recognized in 1986 by an appreciative alumnus with creation of the Harlan B. Brumsted Scholarship, providing worthy students with needed financial assistance annually.

Harlan’s lengthy career was capped by being named Conservationist of the Year by the New York State Conservation Council in 1991, and being awarded the Exceptional Service Award in the Cornell Department of Natural Resources in 1998. He also was honored with an Outstanding Alumni Award from the Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in 2003.

Harlan’s professional affiliations included The Wildlife Society, The American Fisheries

Society, the Soil Conservation Society of America, and, the American Conservation Association. Elected memberships included Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi, Epsilon Sigma Phi, and Gamma Sigma Delta.

Harlan was an active member of the Ithaca Community including: serving as troop committeeman for the Boy Scouts; chair of the Tompkins County Scenic Highways Committee; member of the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council and chair of its Unique Natural Areas Task Team; serving as deacon, elder and several key committee roles for the First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca; and co-chairing the Cornell University Basketball Boosters with spouse Evelyn in 1977-81.

Harlan remained active in the Cornell community after his retirement in 1992 assisting with the Cornell Campaign, communications with Department of Natural Resources alumni, and planning the 50th anniversary of the Department of Natural Resources and 100th anniversary of its precursor, the NYS College of Forestry at Cornell. In 1986, Harlan became organizer of a new group, the Connecticut Hill Student Internship Advisory Committee (referred to as the "Hillers"). This committee arose from the interest of 1930's-era CALS alumni who as students had worked on the NYS Conservation Department's long-term study of ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) at nearby Connecticut Hill State Wildlife Management Area. The intent of this alumni group was to commemorate the students' role in the historic ruffed grouse study by establishing an internship to support current students seeking field study experience. But with Harlan's energy and leadership, more came of it than an internship program. Assisting with this grass-roots committee of Hillers led to one of Harlan's more ambitious and rewarding projects after retirement. Working with friends and colleagues Mary Margaret Fischer, Emeritus Professor Richard (Dick) B. Fischer and Bradley L. Griffin, these collaborators wove together and captured the extraordinary human story of the ground-breaking wildlife research and education project by writing "Voices from Connecticut Hill: Recollections of Cornell Wildlife Students, 1930-1942." Based on documents and participant interviews, Harlan and colleagues describe in this book the remarkable efforts of state wildlife biologists and Cornell students to study the biology and ecology of the ruffed grouse inhabiting the 12,000-acre wildlife management area. The book, published in 1994 by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, not only describes the landmark research in the words of people who were there, it also highlights how the experience helped produce several of the leading wildlife professionals of the 20th century.

Harlan will be lovingly remembered by his family and friends for his positive attitude, warm personality, his kindness, and his concern for others. An avid fisherman and outdoorsman, he especially enjoyed spending time in the Adirondacks at the Brumsted family camp at Bisby Lake. It was there that he gathered with family for over half a century to enjoy the beauty of nature, pursue his love of fishing, and simply work around the camp. He and Evelyn were wonderful hosts - both at Bisby and in Ithaca - opening their home to others and sharing many special times together. In many ways, Harlan and Evelyn were ambassadors for the Department of Natural Resources, often serving as an informal welcoming committee for new faculty as they started to settle into their new community. Although he had retired before many current members of the Department of Natural Resources were hired, his friendly greeting and warm smile during his visits to Fernow Hall were welcomed by younger faculty who had the pleasure of meeting him.

Harlan is survived by his four boys and their spouses, Dave Brumsted (Julie) of Ithaca, John Brumsted (Jessica) of Shelburne, VT, Alan Brumsted (Nancy) of Jackson, WY, and Jim Brumsted (Maria McClellan) of Shelburne, VT. At the time of his death, Harlan also had ten grandchildren, four step-grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

Written by Daniel J. Decker and Michael W. Duttweiler