

In Memoriam

George Henry Vanderbilt Cecil

George Henry Vanderbilt Cecil, Asheville, N.C., 95, passed away peacefully at home on October 19, 2020, surrounded by his six children.

Son of the Honorable John Francis Amherst Cecil and Cornelia Stuyvesant Vanderbilt and grandson of George W. Vanderbilt and Lord William Cecil, he was born on February 27, 1925, at Biltmore House. At the age of seven, he and his younger brother, William, moved to Europe, where they lived and were educated in England and Switzerland. During World War II, he was an officer in the British Navy, spending most of his duty along the Gold Coast of Africa and Gibraltar.

In 1946, George returned to Biltmore Estate to assume responsibilities of the estate and farm. In 1955, shortly after his father's passing, he married the late Nancy Owen. For the next several decades, his passion was development and growth of the Registered Jersey herd and growth of the dairy operations at Biltmore Dairy Farms while William's focus was restoration and development of Biltmore House.

Biltmore Dairy Farms grew to become one of the largest full-service dairy companies in the South. The dairy's iconic bright yellow and black delivery trucks were a frequent site and the dairy bar a favorite venue for breakfast, lunch, and memorable ice cream treats.

The dairy operations at Biltmore were sold in 1985 to develop other aspects of the business. Today, Biltmore Farms is a multi-faceted community development company that includes the creation of towns, master-planned communities, and hotels. The company continues to operate with the same values of George's grandfather: a deep respect for sustainability and prosperity of the citizens of western North Carolina.

Though most of the herd was sold in 1985, a small group of the highly prized cattle was retained and is now managed at Small Acres Dairy in Mills River, south of Asheville. The largest Jersey herd in western North Carolina, the 400-cow Registered Jersey herd is enrolled on REAP and ably managed by Mike Corn. Until his passing, Mr. Cecil, as he was known in dairy circles, continued to serve as Chairman of Biltmore Farms. He was a long-time member of the American Jersey Cattle Association.

George sat on boards of Carolina Power and Light, Multimedia Communications,

First Union National Bank, UNC Hospitals, North Carolina Medical Care Commission and Memorial Mission Hospital. He was integral in the co-founding of Western North Carolina (WNC) Communities in 1949.

George, who spoke four languages, was known for his curiosity about the world, love for history and facts, appreciation of community and friends, humility, recognition of the needs of others and love of family. When not in their garden, he and Nancy travelled the world together, often with their children, and made countless return trips to England and Switzerland.

Mr. Cecil is survived by his six children, Jack (Sarah) Cecil and Catherine (Gordon) Taylor, Margaret (John) Sinnott, all of Asheville, N.C., Edith Cecil (Richard Parker) of Washington D.C., Chris (Ruth) Cecil of Charlotte, N.C., and Louisa Cecil Harrison (Bill Shiland) of New York, N.Y.; 16 grandchildren; a great-granddaughter; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Memorials may be made to WNC Communities, 594 Brevard Road, Asheville, N.C. 28806, or through the website info.wnccommunities.org.

John H. Rich

John H. Rich, Cortland, N.Y., 78, passed away on October 19, 2020.

He was born on April 3, 1942, son of the late Anna H. (McEvoy) and William H. Rich of Preble, N.Y. After the death of his father, he was raised with the help of his maternal grandparents, John and Lena McEvoy.

John graduated from Homer High School in 1960. That same year, he won the International 4-H Dairy Judging Contest held with the International Dairy Show in Chicago, Ill.

He was a lifelong farmer and passionate about dairy cows. After high school, he worked for McDonald Farms, traveling with the show cattle. He also worked for Heaven Hill Jerseys for a brief time before purchasing the home farm from his grandmother. He bred Registered Jerseys using the Wineland prefix.

The Riches lost their market for milk in September 2018 and dispersed the herd in October 2019. A small nucleus of cattle was retained, now owned with the farm by John's son, Patrick. The herd is enrolled on STEP.

John was a member of the American Jersey Cattle Association. As well, he served on the board of Preble Township and the county's junior fair board. He was known for his quick wit and ability to tell entertaining stories.

In addition to his son, Patrick, he is

survived by a daughter, Maria (Jeffery) Montesano; former spouse, Margaret Rich; and two grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to the Robert P. Blatchley 4-H Memorial Fund, 60 Central Avenue, Cortland, NY 13045.

Dr. Clarence C. Olson

Dr. Clarence C. Olson, Westby, Wis., 97, passed away on October 28, 2020, at the place where he was born on January 2, 1923.

Son of Otto and Ella Olson, he was born at the family farm homesteaded in 1848 and graduated from Westby High School with honors in 1942. He attended Platteville State Teachers College and then left school to join the Navy during World War II. He played in the Navy's concert, marching, ceremonial and dance bands as a member of the V-12 program. Upon discharge, he enrolled in the University of Minnesota, where he earned an undergraduate degree in dairy science, a master's degree in genetics and a Ph.D. in nutrition.

Clarence began his employment as an extension dairyman at North Dakota State University in Fargo in 1945 and then joined the department of dairy science at the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison in 1961. During his tenure, he introduced an electronic method of fat testing in DHI labs that replaced the Babcock test as a less expensive, safer, and more reliable means of measuring butterfat.

He was also instrumental in convincing dairy producers to use DHI. He developed and led the campaign "Over Six in 76" to increase enrollment to more than 600,000 cows in Wisconsin in 1976. Similar campaigns contributed to enrollment of more than 800,000 cows by 1982.

An advocate for women in agriculture, Dr. Olson developed dairy schools for women under the theme, "Partners in Better Farming;" in the 1970s and 1980s. Nearly 10,000 women earned diplomas that documented their ability to make proficient decisions on the farm.

Dr. Olson was an early proponent of the Genetic Recovery program as a means of bringing unregistered Jerseys into the herd book of the American Jersey Cattle Association and recovering the loss of valuable genetic information. He also pressed for the expansion of protein testing in Wisconsin DHI. He received the national Jersey organizations' Award for Meritorious Service in 2006.

Clarence was active with World Dairy Expo from the onset. He was superintendent or assistant superintendent of the Jersey show from 1967 through

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career retirement years. He earned the organization's "Friend of Expo" award in 2004. He was membership chair for National Dairy Shrine and honored with their Pioneer Award in 2013.

As well, he was secretary of the Wisconsin Purebred Dairy Cattle Association for 19 years and a member of the committee that developed the National 4-H Dairy Youth Conference.

Dr. Olson was named Man of the Year by the Wisconsin Jersey Breeders Association and earned the Second Mile Award from the Wisconsin Association of County Agricultural Agents. He was awarded emeritus professor by UW-Madison and was honored by the American Dairy Science Association and DHIA.

Among his favorite summer pastimes was loading the camping trailer to travel with family to judge county fairs, regional shows and state fairs, an act he performed more than 300 times over the years. He also established training conferences for aspiring judges.

He was a member of Bethany United Methodist Church, where he sang in the choir, and sat on the board of the Midvale Heights Community Association. He also belonged to Trout Unlimited, Yggdrasil Literary Society, Epsilon Sigma Phi, Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, and Middleton-Ionic Lodge. He was especially committed to Boy Scouts, serving as cubmaster or scoutmaster for more than 50 years and mentoring more than 500 members, 76 of whom earned Eagle Scout rank. Twice he was named National Scoutmaster of the Year. He also earned the council's Award of Merit, Silver Beaver and Lifetime Achievement awards.

An avid vegetable, fruit and flower gardener, he taught these skills to family so they could enjoy the year 'round benefits of gardening. In retirement, he became proficient in Norwegian rosemaling art, winning numerous awards at state and national shows for his designs.

He is survived by four children, Janet Johnson, James (Heidi) Olson, David (Liz) Olson, and Donna (James) Zarek; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; a sister, Ruth (Jerry) Apps; numerous nieces and nephews; and countless colleagues and friends.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 72 years, Louise, siblings, Pearl (Arnold) Johnson, Jean Olson, Burton (Maxine) Olson, and son-in-law, Dale Johnson.

Memorials may be made to Bethany United Methodist Church; Glacier's Edge

Council, Boy Scouts of America; or the UW School of Agriculture.