

TRIBUTE TO HOWARD McWARD^{1/}

For some time, I have believed that our University Grain Dealer Conferences should include the recognition of outstanding leaders in the industry--persons whose activities have extended beyond their personal careers, whose accomplishments have been significant, and whose influence has been constructive.

The man we are honoring today so obviously meets these qualifications that his selection was natural.

Howard McWard has given 47 years of distinctive service to the Illinois grain industry, either in the active management of grain firms or in services supporting the grain trade.

Born near Vinita, Indian Territory, in 1904, Howard's parents brought him back to their Christian County farm near Morrisonville in 1910.

After rural grade school, Howard attended the Morrisonville high school, graduating in 1922. He then taught school two years, farmed nearly 2 years, and then entered the grain business in 1926 as manager of the Palmer Farmers Elevator.

In 1931, fully committed to the country grain business and facing the great depression, Howard sought the hand of Irene Duncan of Taylorville. Irene had many attributes; she was intelligent, she was beautiful, and she was gainfully employed at a Taylorville bank. To this marriage two daughters and a son were born; namely, Carol, Mrs. James Layton, of St. Louis, Mo; Marilyn, Mrs. Frank Pontious of Glen Ellyn; Richard of St. Louis, Mo.

Dick and wife Debbie and Carol and Husband Jim are with us. We regret that Marilyn and Frank could not be with us today.

To have both a son and a son-in-law occupying prominent positions in the grain industry is, without a doubt, a great source of joy and pride to both Howard and Irene.

Back to Howard's career. In 1947, Howard accepted the management of the Illinois Grain Corporation and moved to Chicago. While with Illinois Grain, Howard supported industry programs to improve grain inspection, grain warehousing, and management skills of country grain dealers.

In March, 1961, Howard resigned from the Illinois Grain Corporation and began his public service career as assistant director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture. He served in that capacity for eight years, and then had the unique and complimentary experience of being asked to continue to serve in the department under the opposing administration, which he did until 1970.

While assistant director of the Illinois Dept. of Agriculture, our honoree continued to press for improvements in the service and regulatory programs of the department. In addition, he represented the department in several market promotion tours to Japan and Europe.

In July 1970 Howard left the Department of Agriculture and accepted a half-time position as legislative consultant with the Grain and Feed Association of Illinois, where he remained until February of 1973.

Perhaps it was in that position as much as any other that Howard McWard's personal attributes became most apparent and very helpful to the grain industry, as a result of his broad knowledge, his integrity, and his impartiality. His counsel was respected by grain dealers and by state legislators of both political parties. In dealing with grain dealers Howard's concern for their welfare was surpassed only by his desire to pursue measures which would contribute to the development of a sound country grain industry in this state.

Those who know Howard best characterize him as a warm and kind person, a sincere person, a person of great integrity, and a person who lived by the rule "if you can't say something good about your fellow man, don't say anything at all."

Howard McWard's sincerity has demonstrated the truth of the observation of a famous philosopher: "The shortest and surest way to live with honor is to be in reality what we would appear to be." (Socrates)

His integrity in dealing with others supports this imploration of A. P. Stanley: "Give us the man of integrity on whom we can thoroughly depend, the man who will stand firm when others falter: the adversary just and chivalrous, and the friend, faithful and true."

And, lastly is Howard's kindness. The poet Goethe wrote, "Kindness is the golden chain by which society is bound together."

We all agree, I am sure, that along with Howard's professional competence, his personal attributes of integrity, sincerity, concern for others, and kindness have done much to bind the grain trade together. His example, like that of Dr. Roger Bannister in breaking the four-minute mile, will encourage all of us to break the psychological barriers which hinder efforts to build a better grain industry in this state.

L. F. Stice
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