In Memoriam—Roy W. Simonson

Roy W. Simonson, 100, of Oberlin, a soil scientist, died November 2, 2008 at Kendal at Oberlin.

He was born September 7, 1908 in Agate, North Dakota and was trained in soil science at the North Dakota Agricultural College, where he received his B.S. degree in 1934, and the University of Wisconsin, where he received his Ph.D. degree in 1938. He then accepted a position at Iowa State College to supervise soil surveys and teach classes. There he met and married Susan Miller of Albia, IA.

In 1943, he was offered the position of Soil Correlator for the USDA Division of Soil Survey in the southeast, and moved to Knoxville, TS. At the conclusion of World War II, he was loaned to the Military Geology Unit to spend a year mapping soils on islands in the Western Pacific.

In 1949, Dr. Simonson was transferred to the Washington, DC area to become assistant chief of the Division of Soil Survey. He held that post until 1952, when all survey activities were consolidated into the Soil Conservation Service. In this reorganization, he supervised the classification, correlation, and nomenclature of soils throughout the United States as director of Soil Classification and Correlation until retiring in 1973. Over the years, his work included field studies of soils on every continent except Antarctica.

After Roy retired, he taught at the University of Maryland and was editor-in-chief of Geoderma until stepping down in 1988. Roy and Susan moved to Kendal at Oberlin in 1993. He was a Research Associate of Oberlin College from 1994 to 1999.

He is survived by sons Bruce M. (Sue) Simonson of Oberlin; Walter M. (Louise) Simonson of Suffern, New York; four grandchildren; three great grandchildren; and a sister, Grace Gerard of Colorado Springs. He was preceded in death by his wife of 54 years, Susan M. in 1996, parents Otto and Johanne Simonson, five sisters, and one brother.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Stephens Education Fund of Kendal at Oberlin, 600 Kendal Dr., Oberlin, OH 44074. The fund is used to support any Kendal employee wishing to further their education.

Roy's 100th birthday party.