



Lawrence H Skromme

LAWRENCE H. SKROMME

1913–2012

Elected in 1978

“For expansion and application of agricultural engineering technology coordinated with human resources in reproductive service to humankind.”

BY CHERLYN SKROMME GRANROSE, INGA SKROMME HILL,
AND KAREN SKROMME SEQUINO
SUBMITTED BY THE NAE HOME SECRETARY

LAURENCE H. SKROMME, a 34-year member of the National Academy of Engineering, Section 12, died on December 3, 2012, at the age of 99. He pioneered the use of teams of design, production, and service engineers working with marketing specialists to create a unique and highly efficient engineering system that earned him recognition and praise throughout the industry.

He was born on August 26, 1913, in Roland, Iowa, to Austin G. and Ingeborg (Belle) Holmedal Skromme. He graduated from Kelley High School in 1931 with an agriculture scholarship for his work in Future Farmers of America and earned his degree in agricultural engineering, with honors, from Iowa State University in 1937. During his college years he worked daily on his parents' farm, riding to classes with a neighbor who was the vocational agriculture teacher.

After college he worked as design and test engineer at Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. and assistant chief engineer at Harry Ferguson, Inc., where he designed tow motors for aircraft carriers during World War II and then plows and farm implements for Ford-Ferguson tractors.

Hired as Sperry New Holland's chief engineer in 1951, Mr. Skromme reorganized the engineering division, separating testing and design. Promoted to vice president of engineering in 1961, he oversaw global engineering for New Holland until his retirement in 1978.

He then became a consulting agricultural engineer for the US Agency for International Development and World Bank, supervising agricultural mechanization projects in developing nations. He also gave back to the community as one of the founders of the Lancaster Farm and Home Foundation, serving as both director and president, as an officer and director of the Lancaster County Agricultural Land Preservation Board, and as a member of the Pennsylvania Governor's Commission on Agriculture and Land Preservation.

In addition to his NAE membership, Mr. Skromme was a registered professional engineer and active in many professional societies. He was president and fellow of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers (now the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers) and received its John Deere Gold Medal in 1974. He was a member of the American Society for Engineering Education, International Association of Agricultural Engineers, National Society of Professional Engineers, Phi Kappa Phi, and Tau Beta Pi. He served on the advisory board of the US Congress Committee on Science and Technology, the research advisory committee of the US Department of Agriculture, and the Engineers Joint Council of New York City.

He was married to Margaret Gleason Skromme, a graduate of Iowa State in home economics, for 73 years, and they shared passions for birds, gardening, antiques, and family life. In addition to antique furniture and household goods, Mr. Skromme was interested in antique wrought iron, farm implement seats, and agricultural paper memorabilia. He donated the latter to Iowa State University, where it is freely available online (www.lib.iastate.edu/arch/rgrp/21-7-227.pdf).

He and his wife also traveled together to many countries as part of his interest in food production in developing nations. Several trips included visits to his family homestead in the Hardangerfjord region of Norway and he was proud to pass on customs of his Norwegian heritage to his family.

After his retirement he spent many happy hours fishing, playing baseball, and growing sweet corn with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Despite his basic attitude of humility rising from his Iowa roots, he never lost his competitive spirit at the family game table whether playing bridge or Spinner.

He is survived by his wife; daughters Cherlyn S. Granrose, PhD, Inga Baird Hill, PhD (Jerry), and Hon. Karen Nash Sequino (Anthony); grandchildren Jonathan Granrose, Karen Friend, Kristin Nicola, Beth Henderson, Caitlin Teague, Jay Nash, Wendy Moyal, and Lawrence Sequino; 14 great-grandchildren; and brother Robert Skromme. He was preceded in death by brothers Arnold and Austin Skromme, sisters Glendora, Judith Beaty, and Margaret Thompson, and granddaughter Kathleen Granrose Rodriguez Thorne.