

THE VISITOR

Devoted to the Interests of Agricultural Education in Minnesota Schools

Volume LIV

September 1966

No. 9

A PHILOSOPHY FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

by

MILO J. PETERSON

Professor and Chairman

Dept. of Agricultural Education, University of Minnesota

It is the test of the validity of any philosophy that it must apply under a variety of circumstances and in various sets of time and space. True, practices may, and indeed must vary according to the current situation, but practices and procedures are merely the vehicles for implementing a philosophy and applying principles. Thus one may test his own philosophy and principles by a backward glance over the years as a guide to future action.

From the early 1900's to midcentury the late Dr. A. M. Field, as Chairman of the department of agricultural education at the University of Minnesota, gave creative leadership to the form and structure of the community school philosophy. He was responsible for its implementation in every Minnesota community with a vocational agriculture program. Those fortunate enough to have observed at first hand his ability to inspire without rabble rousing, to lead without directing, to visualize without distortion received a rich heritage. His contribution to the enrichment of educational opportunity marks a milestone in the development of the community school philosophy.

A community school strives to serve all the people in its service area. Since the beginning of public education some schools have been responsive to the community, while others have been more or less isolated or restricted. Ideally, every school should be in close touch with the interests, needs and problems of the community it seeks to serve and from which it draws its support. The school should be part of, rather than apart from the life surrounding it.

Where it does exist, the community school is a result of this interrelationship between school and community. The ever-increasing educational needs of our population in this country have posed a challenge to public education to meet these requirements, and more and more schools must meet this challenge by becoming responsive to the total educational needs of the community. The community school places its resources at the disposal of all the people in the community. It is the opposite of the selective type of school which assumes educational responsi-

bility for only certain age groups or for those of particular scholastic aptitudes.

Whether or not a school is a community school will be determined by its objectives and by the methods it uses to achieve those objectives. Ezra Cornell breathed the essence of the community school philosophy into the university which bears his name by saying "I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any subject."

This passion for unrestricted educational opportunity is the cornerstone of community school philosophy. In modern practice the public school is or should be, the hub of all educational activity, and community-wide responsibility may properly be accepted as a prime characteristic of the community school. No school can claim to be a community school if adults and out-of-school youth are excluded from its program. The broadening of curricular offerings, without prejudice to college preparation for the minority, plus a deliberate effort to provide educational opportunity for adults and out-of-school youth as well as children, characterize the modern community school.

One need only look in on an "evening school" program to see an example of community-wide participation. Adult classes will be studying Spanish, economics, farm business management and home furnishing; in the farm shop a group of young farmers can be found practicing their skill at welding, while their city cousins, turning out book ends and cedar chests in the industrial arts shop, have replaced the seventh graders who made birdhouses earlier in the day.

The community school brings with it many possibilities for the improvement of public education. A community school will not be permitted to stand virtually idle for three months out of twelve. This is a luxury the public cannot afford. The traditional summer shutdown is a vestige of bygone days. Indeed, it would seem appropriate to suggest that the vocational agriculture program of year-round educational service might bear emulation. Why should not schools operate on a schedule of four ten-week attendance periods with two-week

THE VISITOR

Published quarterly during the calendar year in January, April, July, and October by the Department of Agricultural Education, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.

Entered at the Post Office in St. Paul as Second-Class Matter.

THE STAFF

HARRY KITTS	GORDON SWANSON
R. PAUL MARVIN	CLIFFORD NELSON
EDGAR PERSONS	MARTIN McMILLION
MILO J. PETERSON, <i>Editor</i>	

intervals in March, September and December plus a six-week midyear vacation in June and July for non-vocational teachers? In any case, the objective must be to improve educational opportunity for every individual in the community.

A twelve month schedule patterned after the vocational agriculture program will permit the school and community to join in expanded programs of several kinds. Critically needed vocational training, driver training, supervised recreation, reading improvement, and health education are illustrative of possibilities for school-community coordination. There is a need in every community for on-the-job upgrading of accountants, secretaries, clerks, mechanics, farmers and technicians. The community school can provide this training on an economical and efficient basis. Cooperation with other agencies in the community can also be vastly improved if the school, like the health service or the public library, stays on the job throughout the year. Certainly an increased investment in public education is a necessity; providing a high rate of return on this investment is the mission of the community school.

Thirty-four years ago Dr. A. M. Field laid down some guide-lines for making the community school philosophy a reality. In an address to Minnesota teachers of agriculture he suggested certain goals for teachers starting a new year. He said, in part, "If I were starting a New Year:

I would decide definitely to do my teaching and all other work better than any previous year.

I would try to recognize my points of weakness and to devise ways of improvements.

I would try harder to consider my job the greatest job in the world and would apologize for it to no one.

I would learn how to get more real joy and personal satisfaction from my work.

I would expect some grief and disappointments, but I would learn to capitalize on these as bases for new courage and greater effort.

I would spend some time every day in thoughtful consideration of teaching problems and how to make improvements in my teaching.

I would learn to smile in the face of adversity and discouragement.

I would be interested in all worthwhile community improvement activities.

I would not select activities on the basis of selfish interest or from selfish motives.

I would try to realize that dreams are useless unless they find expression in realities.

I would recognize that in the long run it is the quality of a man's work that counts most.

I would realize that there is no substitute for hard work.

I would aim at progress and not at perfection.

I would have faith in myself, in my work, in my fellow beings, and in the possibilities of the future.

I would not leave for tomorrow that which should be done today.

I would try to do more than is expected of me.

I would cooperate with my colleagues and others in all worthwhile activities.

I would try always to make good my promises and try not to offer excuses.

I would become well acquainted with my students and be ready to share their joys and troubles.

I would be loyal to the school in which I teach and to its traditions.

I would cultivate the personal friendships and confidence of the parents of my high school students.

I would try to master the technique of being liked and of getting along well with people.

I would try always to be honest and fair in my dealings with others.

I would make and cultivate new friendships with worthwhile people.

I would cultivate wholesome, altruistic attitudes toward life and toward my fellow beings.

I would read a carefully selected number of professional books and magazines to insure my professional interest.

I would base my teaching content selection on the farming programs and the recognized vocational needs of my students.

I would set up definite objectives for each unit of instruction and for each lesson I teach.

I would make careful daily preparation for all of my teaching.

I would learn to know my community and the people who comprise it as intimately as possible.

I would develop as strong and as effective a program of supervised farming practice as possible.

I would do everything necessary to keep physically fit and in good health.

I would find some time each day for wholesome recreation and I would develop at least one important hobby.

I would continue a definite, systematic plan of saving a part of each month's salary.

I would be complete and accurate in all my reporting and would make my reports on time."

A community school with teachers observing these precepts will never be in jeopardy of becoming an isolated outpost of "culture" where the chosen few are prepared for separation from the community. A community school does not lock its doors at four in the afternoon to prevent wear and tear on the gymnasium floor and to keep people from disturbing the library. The community school enters the main stream of community life in partnership with all the people of the community and becomes a school where "any person can find instruction in any subject."

INTRODUCING . . .

Three new assistant professorships augment the faculty of agricultural education at the University of Minnesota for 1966-67. The necessity of increasing the staff has been recognized for several years; the launching of the agricultural education project in Brazil gave further emphasis to this critical need. The Visitor is proud to present to its readers the men who will share major responsibility for program development in agricultural education in the immediate future.

Dr. Martin B. McMillion was born and reared in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. He was graduated from Renick High School in 1950. He attended Potomac State College two years prior to entering West Virginia University in 1952. In 1954, he received the B.S. Degree in Agricultural Education and was employed as teacher of agriculture at Frankford High School in West Virginia. He served in the U.S. Army from 1955 to 1957 when he was discharged with the rank of First Lieutenant. After returning from the service, he was a graduate assistant at Penn State while earning the Master's Degree. He spent one year as a Fulbright Scholar at Canterbury Agricultural College in New Zealand doing research concerning the adoption of recommended farm practices.

From 1960 to 1963 he taught vocational agriculture at Annville, Pennsylvania. He served as a research assistant in Agricul-



tural Education from 1963 to 1965 while doing graduate work at the University of Illinois. During the 1965-66 school year he served as principal investigator under a USOE research contract at the University of Illinois. He received his Ph.D. in 1966.

Dr. McMillion is a member of Phi Delta Kappa, Gamma Sigma Delta, Alpha Zeta, Alpha Tau Alpha, Kappa Delta Pi, the American Vocational Association and other professional organizations.

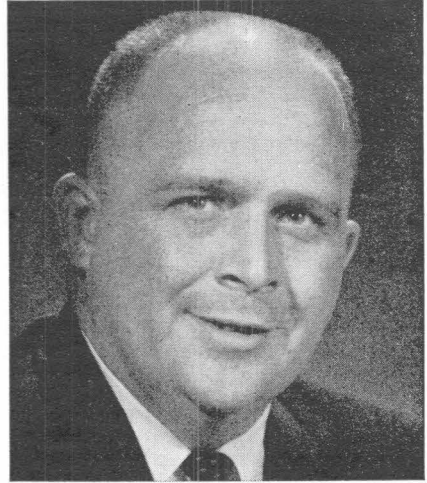
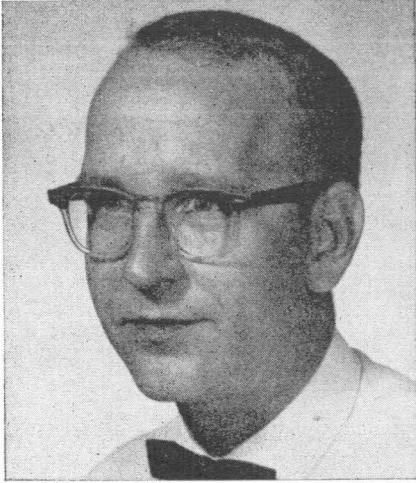
He is married to the former Mary Jane Brown of Renick, West Virginia. They have one three year old daughter, Teanna.

Dr. Edgar Allen Persons is a native Minnesotan having been born and raised on a farm at Clarissa, Minnesota. Ed attended the Clarissa High School where in his senior year he served as president of Clarissa's first FFA chapter.

The University of Minnesota served as the initial training ground where Ed received his B.S. degree in agricultural education in 1953. He taught the following year at New Richland, Minnesota in the veterans' training program. The draft called a halt to teaching in 1954 and he spent the next two years in an army guided missile unit.

Upon returning from the service in 1956, he opened the vocational agriculture department in the Hoffman School. During the eight years in that position he began one of the first successful one-quarter time adult programs in a single man department. It remains a model for others to follow.

Ed returned to the University of Minnesota in 1964 to continue graduate study and serve as a research assistant. He received his M.A. degree in 1965 and his Ph.D. in June of 1966. While engaged in graduate study, three projects of major scope were completed or developed. A U.S. Office of Edu-



education project entitled "Educational Restrictions to Agricultural Success and the Relationship of Education to Income Among Farmers" was completed in 1966. Ed also cooperated with several area vocational-technical schools to perfect a system of electronic analysis of farm records.

The most recent project is titled "An Economic Study of the Investment Effects of Education on Agriculture" and is an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the Minnesota farm management programs.

Dr. Persons' immediate responsibility will be teaching the courses in adult and young farmer education formerly taught by Dr. Marvin. In addition he will serve as advisor to undergraduate and graduate students. He is currently serving as advisor for the newly formed collegiate chapter of Future Farmers of America.

Ed and his wife, Lois, reside in St. Anthony Park with their four children.

Dr. Clifford L. Nelson received a Ph.D. specializing in Agricultural Education and Mass Communications in June 1966. He joined the staff at the University in 1963 as Residence Counselor of Bailey Hall and Instructor in Agricultural Education.

He was born and raised in the state of Washington. A 1952 high school and 1954 Junior College graduate, he received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in 1957 and 1962 respectively from Washington State University. He comes from a long tradition of vocational agriculture. His father, an active vo-ag teacher at Mount Vernon, Washington, was his FFA advisor when Nelson was awarded the State Farmer Degree.

While in junior college Nelson played varsity baseball, edited the college annual, was a member of the student council, vice president of men students and president of Delta Psi Omega, a college drama honorary. At Washington State University he was a member of the varsity football team, college poultry judging team, senior class advisory council, college daily newspaper staff and participated in 5 all-college plays.

Following college graduation Nelson taught vocational agriculture at Sultan and Stanwood high schools in Washington for 6 years. While at Stanwood he coached a silver medal FFA dairy judging team at the National Dairy Congress and the champion Pacific International Livestock Exposition FFA dairy judging team. The 1966 Western Regional Star Farmer of America and the 1965 Western Regional Star Dairy Farmer of America took his first three years of vocational agriculture from Dr. Nelson.

He is a member of numerous honorary and professional organizations which include Alpha Tau Alpha, Alpha Zeta, Gamma Sigma Delta, Phi Delta Kappa, American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture, AVA, MVA, NVATA, MVAIA and the National Society for the Study of Education. He has been a frequent contributor to the *Ag Man* and the *Visitor* since coming to Minnesota.

Nelson's major research interests have been concerned with the financial support of vocational education in Minnesota, factors that influence first enrollment in vocational agriculture and Agricultural Education graduate student performance.

The *Visitor* welcomes these men to the staff and extends its best wishes for continued success.