

## MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

### WILLIAM O. JONES (1910 – 1993)

William O. (Bill) Jones, Professor Emeritus and former Director of the Food Research Institute, died on June 17, 1993, in Palo Alto. He was 82. Jones was an authority on African marketing and farming systems. His specialty was manioc, also known as cassava, a root crop that forms a major part of the food economies of West and Central Africa, Southeast Asia, and Brazil. His book, *Manioc in Africa*, was published in 1959 and still remains the classic in its field.

Jones was a pioneer in African economic studies. Perhaps his single most important article was "Economic Man in Africa." This essay helped change the way an entire profession thought about smallholder farmers in Africa. His views on the rationality and price responsiveness of African farmers were radical in 1960; 30 years later, his views had become the conventional wisdom.

Jones was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1910. He received his B.A. in Anthropology at the University of Nebraska in 1932. After graduating he spent several years in industry and was a preflight instructor for the Army Air Corps during World War II. In 1947, he earned his doctorate in Economics from Stanford and joined the Food Research Institute. From its inception in 1921, the Institute has described itself as "a body of cooperating scholars" engaged in the study of worldwide problems of food supply, distribution, and consumption. As scholar, teacher, and administrator, Jones contributed immensely to making that description a reality.

Jones served as executive secretary of the Institute between 1955 and 1962 and became Director in 1964. He was the architect of the transformation of the Institute from its low point in the mid-1960s. During the eight years of his directorship he refocused the Institute to deal with emerging international challenges—specifically the problems of agriculture, trade, population, and development in the Third World.

He recruited new faculty to continue the long Institute tradition of applied economic research and policy analysis. He also relocated the Institute to its permanent home in Encina Hall. He was, in short, a builder of ideas, of faculty, and of facilities.

Jones taught well in the classroom, but he was exceptional as a mentor. He believed deeply in the apprentice system for training scholars in applied economic research. Care, integrity, thoroughness, and clarity—plus the idea that research is not research until it is published—were some of the qualities he passed on to younger faculty and to his students.

But more than anything in his professional life, Jones was a writer and an editor. He set the standard in the agricultural economics profession for clarity of written communication. He was a great promoter of the Institute's journal, *Food Research Institute Studies*, which first appeared in 1960. Jones saw the journal as a natural outlet for Institute research and as a working and

learning tool for young staff. New researchers and writers were given the opportunity to organize their work for publication under the keen scrutiny and tutelage of an experienced editorial staff. The second issue of *Studies* opened with Jones' article, "Food and Agricultural Economies of Tropical Africa." The journal was to include a number of his finely written articles over the years, among them "Environment, Technical Knowledge, and Economic Development in Tropical Africa," and "Turnips, the Seventh Day Adventist Principle, and Management Bias." From 1970 to 1975, he served as editor of *Studies*. Thereafter, he was an always-eager consultant to the journal, offering sage advice on matters ranging from substance to form to commas. As an editor and writer, Jones was simply the best. The final issue of the journal, which ceases publication in 1993, is dedicated to him.

Jones received many awards and acknowledgments for his contributions to the profession. Among others, he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, was Stanford's representative to the governing body of the International African Institute in London, and served terms as President of the African Studies Association and the Western Economic Association. He received a Sc.D. degree (*honoris causa*) from the University of Nebraska in 1965. Jones also served as a consultant to the World Bank, the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Jones and his wife Kay had a long and happy married life on the Stanford campus with their three sons – Stephen, Peter and Brian – all of whom survive him. They were remarkable parents who helped develop their sons' abilities, breadth of views, and love of nature and the outdoors.

Jones will be missed sorely by his family, by his friends and colleagues at the Food Research Institute, and by development economists all over the world.

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