Lester V. (Les) Manderscheid
Obituary

Lester V. (Les) Manderscheid, East Lansing.

Born on a farm near Andrew, Iowa, October 9, 1930. Firstborn of Vincent J. and Alma (Sprank) Manderscheid. He was soon joined by two brothers and two sisters. He graduated from a one room rural school and Andrew High School. He enrolled at age 16 at Iowa State University. He was active in the Newman Club and other student organizations. In the interests of learning how to conduct efficient meetings, he learned formal parliamentary procedure.

He met Dorothy Varnum through the Newman Club and they were married August 29, 1953. Four children were born to them. After earning a Ph.D. at Stanford University in Agricultural Economics with a minor in statistics, he joined Michigan State University in 1956. He was recruited to work with faculty and graduate students to improve the statistical quality of the courses and research output. He was actively involved in mentoring students. Among the undergraduates he mentored were Gov. Engler, Lt. Gov. Posthumus, and MSU Trustees Breslin, Byrum, and Nugent. He also mentored many who became leaders in the agricultural and rural community.

Among the graduate students he mentored were future officers and presidents of the American Agricultural Economics Association and the International Association of Agricultural Economists. Others became leaders in government, business, and academia. He was honored with the Distinguished Teaching Award of the American Agricultural Economics Association. He was also elected as Director and President of the Association.

On campus he was an active faculty leader. Among other roles, he served on the University Athletic Council, University Committee on Curriculum, University Faculty Tenure Committee, University Educational Policies Committee, and culminating in service as Chair of the University Steering Committee.

In retirement he was asked to become a member of a five person Committee on Faculty Voice that was designed to reinvigorate faculty participation in academic governance. Other faculty roles included leadership as President of the MSU Chapter of Sigma Xi Honor Society and President of the MSU Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society (and three times Parliamentarian of the National Phi Kappa Phi Triennial Meeting). From 1973 to 1987 he was Associate Chair in
the Department of Agricultural Economics. In 1987 he was appointed Department Chair and served in that role until 1992.

The University offered faculty an opportunity to retire and return one day later on a part time basis. He chose to take to take a part time role in Agricultural Economics through 1996 and a part time position in the Graduate School. His initial assignment was to develop and implement the University Distinguished Fellowship Program. After that program was successfully launched he shifted to a role of working on special projects for the Dean of the Graduate School. In recognition of his many contributions to the department, college, and university, he was honored with the University Distinguished Faculty Award.

After the reduction of on campus duties he became active off campus. He volunteered in numerous roles at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church. In addition, he served as an officer of the Dream Lakes Condo Association and became active in other community organizations.

Survivors include Dorothy, wife of 59 years; children David (Susan Lawrence), Lincoln, NE; Paul, Okemos, MI; Laura (Steve) Pechacek, Norman, OK; and Jane (Fletcher Miller) Manderscheid, San Diego, CA; two grandchildren, Janell Pechacek, Edmund, OK and Dan Pechacek, Washington, D.C. Surviving siblings include Julian (Lorraine), Andrew, IA; Mark, Maquoketa, IA; Eileen (John) Robinson, Iowa City, IA. He was predeceased by his sister Madonna (Graham), Kettering, OH. He died on October 23, 2012 at the age of 82 from pancreatic cancer. His body has been donated to MSU.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 955 Alton Rd., East Lansing, MI 48823 or to MSU for the Agricultural Economics Dept. (AFRE) at MSU, 535 Chestnut Rd., Room 300, East Lansing, MI 48824-1005 (checks made out to MSU). Online condolences may be made at www.greatlansing.com.

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