Remembering Friends

John W. Malone, Jr., former professor, died Oct. 29, 2008 at the age of 78. Born in Connecticut on Oct. 5, 1930, he served as a cryptographer and communications specialist in the U.S. Air Force before commencing his university studies at the University of Connecticut where he received his bachelor’s in business administration in 1956, followed by a masters in agricultural economics in 1958. He went on to receive his doctorate in agricultural economics from Oklahoma State University in 1963. He joined the faculty at the University of Nevada, Reno in 1962, where he served eventually as acting associate dean and director of Agricultural Experiment Station, and professor and chairman of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. He later worked at Pennsylvania State University in 1975 as professor of agricultural economics and head of the department. He undertook extension and research activities in agricultural marketing in the Bahamas, Iran and Swaziland. In addition to being a past president of the Northeast Agricultural and Resource Economics Association, he was a member of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association, Western Agricultural Economics Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Society of Sigma Chi and Gamma Sigma Delta. Malone stepped down as head in 1984 to pursue his research and teaching interests in agricultural marketing. He retired in 1992.

Robert Cicero Weems, Jr., founding dean of the College of Business Administration, died April 11, 2009. Born to Robert Cicero Weems and Susan Nunnery Vaughan, in Meridian, Miss., on July 22, 1910, Weems graduated from Shubuta High School in 1927 and enrolled at Mississippi A&M. He graduated with a business degree in 1931, obtained a master’s of business administration from Northwestern University. Later he accepted a position as instructor at Mississippi State, where he developed expertise in stocks, bonds and investment trusts.

By age 29, Weems was acting dean of Mississippi State’s School of Business and Industry, the youngest business dean in the nation. Weems also earned a doctorate in economics from Columbia University in 1951, and continued as business dean at Mississippi State until 1956 when he was recruited by the University of Nevada to lead its new College of Business Administration. During his 21 years as dean, he presided over the college’s growth and created and directed the Bureau of Business and Economic Research. Under his leadership, the college gained full accreditation in 1961, and its graduate program was accredited in 1971.


Weems lived since 1957 in the house a mile west of the University of Nevada, Reno campus that he and his wife, Frances, moved into after arriving in Reno. They met at Mississippi State, where Frances was one of the young professor’s students. Their daughter, Susan, attended the University and graduated from the School of Medicine in 1983. In 2005, Frances passed, but Weems remained active.

In 2004 he was named a Distinguished Nevadan by the state’s university system board of regents. In 2006, as founding dean and dean emeritus, he attended festivities marking the 50th anniversary of the College of Business Administration.

Weems was preceded in death by sisters Alice and Mary. He is survived by a sister, Phyllis; eight grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; numerous cousins and many good friends. His parents and three brothers, Peter, Stanley and Norman, preceded him in death.

Leonard Alton Anker ‘43 (agriculture) passed away on Sept. 22, 2008 at the age of 87. He was a third generation Nevadan born in Lovelock on June 13, 1921 to James Phillip and Myrtle (Talcott) Anker. Leonard grew up on the family ranch in Lovelock and graduated from Pershing County High School. He attended the University of Nevada and received a bachelor’s in agriculture. Two days following graduation, Leonard entered the Army and became a commissioned officer. He was sent to England to join the American 29th Infantry Division and on June 6, 1944, led a platoon on Omaha Beach on D-Day. For his service, Lt. General Omar N. Bradley presented Leonard with the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest U.S. medal for valor. During his service, Leonard was also decorated with three Purple Hearts and three Bronze Stars. Captain Anker was honorably discharged in May of 1946.

Following the war, Leonard married his college sweetheart, France Helen Burke, on June 10, 1946. He worked for the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Service in Reno for a short time and then transferred to the Minden office. Within a few years, Leonard joined the USDA Soil Conservation Service and spent many years working with Carson Valley ranchers. He retired from general service in 1975 and continued on to be a successful businessman and rancher. Leonard served on the Gardnerville Town Water Board for 10 years and on the Minden-Gardnerville Sanitation Board for 20 years. He was a life-long member of Carson Valley Masonic Lodge #33 and belonged to numerous other service organizations, including Kiwanis, Rotary, 20-30 Club and Toastmasters.

Leonard is survived by his loving wife of 62 years and his children: daughters, Beverly (Mark), Shirley, and Claudia (Duncan); and son, Alton (Sue). He is also survived by a sister, Phyllis; eight grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; numerous cousins and many good friends. His parents and three brothers, Peter, Stanley and Norman, preceded him in death.

Erich Helfert ’54 (business administration) died March 21, 2009. Erich, of San Mateo, Calif., was born in the Sudentenland May 29, 1932. He lived there through World War II and in the immediate aftermath until 1950 when he moved to the United States with his mother. He embarked on a highly successful academic and business career. He received an MBA and doctorate from Harvard Business School and taught as part of the finance faculty.

A management career at Crown Zellerbach Corporation in San Francisco followed, where he rose to vice president of corporate planning. Upon leaving Crown Zellerbach, he was engaged in senior level consulting with many well-known companies. Later he became co-founder and chairman of Modernsoft, Inc., creating an advanced financial modeling software program. His extensive writing career included the best-selling financial management book Techniques of Financial Analysis. This book appeared in 11 editions, was translated into 10 languages and sold more than 500,000
copies. He also wrote an autobiographical novel Valley of the Shadow, which depicted his family’s experience during the tragic depopulation of the Sudetenland by Czechoslovakia. The book contributed to a deeper understanding of one of World War II’s lesser-recorded consequences. He called for forgiveness and breaking the unending cycle of retribution. Erich was a guest lecturer at leading universities, made presentations at the Commonwealth and Bohemian clubs, and was a regular speaker at the San Francisco Literary Society. He was an active member of the Cogers, an Anglo-American debating society at the University Club in San Francisco. In 1983, he married Anne Langley, a native of England and a gifted artist and flower designer. He is survived by Anne, whom he affectionately referred to as “Queen Anne,” her two daughters, Claire and Amanda, and a lively grandson, Alexander.

Phyllis Kaiser ’78 (social services corrections) died Feb. 28, 2009. Phyllis graduated from Stephens College in Columbia, Mo., with an associate’s degree in arts in 1943. She became a nurse cadet and graduated from the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing in 1946. She then graduated from the University of Nevada, Reno in 1978.

Phyllis worked as a registered nurse first in Baltimore, Md., with the public health service, then at Washoe Medical Center and the Veteran’s Administration Hospital in Reno. She then worked for Headstart at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, and later with the Gypsy Program for pregnant teenagers at theYWCA. She served eight years as the director of Community Welfare, a nonprofit agency that provided food, lodging and fuel to those in need. From 1975-1985 Phyllis served as the Nevada state director of refugee resettlement for Church World Service. In her retirement she wrote voluminous poems and was a member of the National Association of American Pen Women.

In her lifetime she received various awards for her amazing volunteer efforts including: the Committee to Aid Abused Women’s Hannah Humanitarian Award (1984), Sertoma District Award for Service to Mankind (1985), City of Sparks Commendation For Improving Human Services (1985), Reno Optimist Club Service Club Person of the Year (1986), Distinguished Nevada, Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents (1990) and The National Conference of Christians and Jews Humanitarian Award (1991).

Phyllis was preceded in death by her parents, Charles and Pearl, as well as her husband, John. She was also preceded in death by her sons Michael, John and Kha. Surviving are her sister, Betty, and nephew, Jim. Also surviving are sons Phillip (Susan) and Gia (Van) and daughters, Joni (Tom), Janell (Denzel) and Dawn Joan (Sam). Surviving grandchildren include, Rachel, Stefan, Nathan, Michael, Daniel, Karla, Terry, Greg, Sheri and Randy.

Chuck Jack ’61 (civil engineering) died Jan. 5, 2009 at age 75. Chuck was born on Aug. 1, 1933 in Crooked Lake, Ind. He went on to earn his bachelor’s degree in engineering from the University of Nevada, Reno in 1961. He was also in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict. Chuck would later work as a civil engineer with the City of Los Angeles for 32 years.

From the City of Angels came his mentor, Al Liff, who convinced Chuck to begin working for the city as an assistant engineer in sewer design in the East San Fernando Valley, Calif. After seven years of learning and accomplishment with East San Fernando Valley, Chuck was promoted to full civil engineer, where in 1968 he moved to street design. Chuck was key in the effort to help rebuild East San Fernando Valley streets after the 1971 and 1973 earthquakes.

He enjoyed his life, knowing that he “struck gold” because of his contributions to his family and his career. He was a devoted traveler for all his years, most recently during retirement, journeying to Europe and touring the United States in his 5th-wheel trailer with his wife.

Chuck is survived by his wife of 54 years, Dorothy, daughter Linda (Dennis), brothers Doug (Deanne), Steve (Clara); sister Sharon; and two grandchildren, Evan (Amanda), and Leah.