

RUFUS GUSTAVUS FELLERS

Rufus Gustavus Fellers crammed a lot of living into his one day short of eighty years. From September of 1920 until September of 2000 he experienced life and lived it with uncommon gusto. All who shared his life will remember this unusual man in a myriad of ways; some known and shared by all, and some known and shared by only a few. A complex man distinguished by achievement but also distinguished by relationships, by loyalty, and by devotion. Yes, his multi-faceted gem of a personality sparkled in many ways and, like most gems, needed to be seen in its best light to be most appreciated.

Rufus was born in Columbia, he died in Columbia, and he would have had it no other way. He was away from his beloved South Carolina to earn a Ph.D. in Engineering from Yale and he spent several years with the Office of Naval Research before returning to assume his rightful place on the faculty of the University of South Carolina in the middle nineteen fifties. He served as head of Electrical Engineering and Dean of the College of Engineering. He is the only former Dean to serve as Chair of the Faculty Senate, one more measure of his great sense of identity with this Faculty and this University.

He was a member and a leader in many organizations, far too many to enumerate. His willingness to work and his ability to produce good results made him a popular and successful choice. He was a good Engineer, a good teacher, and a good colleague. The beneficiaries of his labors are legion.

Each of us who knew Rufus could tell, and have told, stories of this colorful and bigger than life man. If the stories are sometimes embellished, take it as a sign of affection for a man who would himself enjoy the embellishments and even add to them.

Never was there a more handsome, elegant, dashing and believable Count Karpathy than when Rufus Fellers played that role in the Town Theater production of "My Fair Lady". Many amongst us have joined him in song. Most found it hard to equal his deep and powerful voice. He loved to sing "Gaudeamus Igitur" and he truly reflected the zest and love of life that the song celebrated. "The Whiffenpoof Song" was a favorite with those of us who shared his Yale heritage. But, most of all, he never missed a chance at the Alma Mater of his cherished Carolina. There was a special meaning when Rufus lifted his hand to once again offer "...here's a Health, Carolina, forever to thee".

From those of us still at Carolina, here's a Health, Rufus.

Madam Chair, I ask that these words be made a part of the minutes of this meeting and that a copy be sent to his beloved wife Jerri and to his children.

David Waugh, Dean Emeritus
College of Engineering

October, 2000