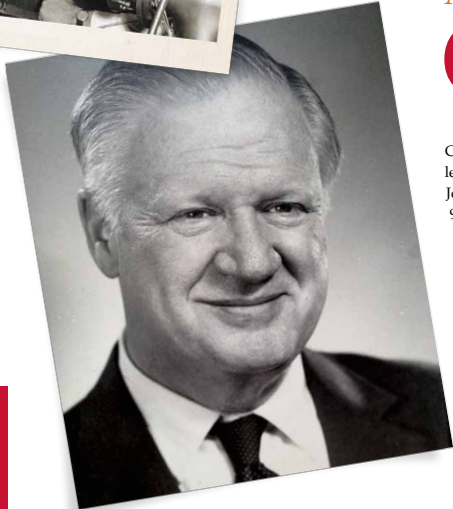




Left photo, L to R.: D. Kerr, S. Y. Narayan and L.F. Eastman



Right photo, L to R: C. Dalman, L. F. Eastman and unknown.



A Fond Farewell to One of Cornell's Finest

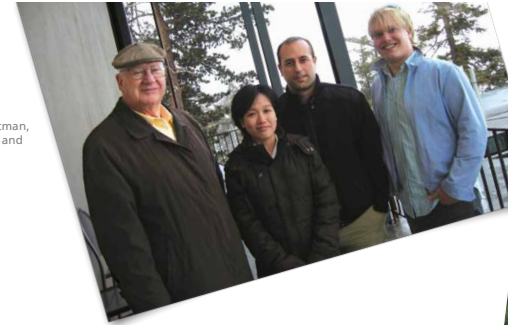
By Laurie Eastman Veal

Cornell, and engineering science, truly has lost a one-of-a-kind leader and teacher. Lester F. Eastman B.S./M.S. '53 and Ph.D. '57 John L. Given Professor of Engineering, emeritus died on August 9, 2013 at the age of 85. Since then, there has been an outpouring of condolences, as well as appreciation from his vast community of scientists, engineers, educators, industrial colleagues, and friends from around the world for a great educator, mentor, scientist, and friend.

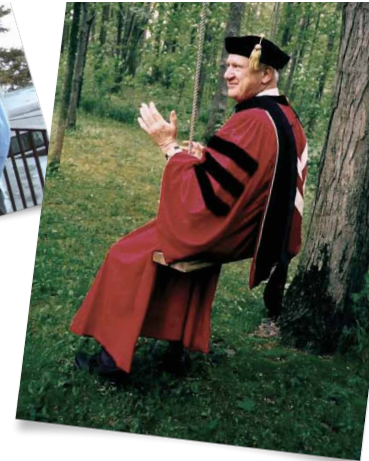
Eastman began his 63 year career at Cornell as an undergraduate in 1948, quickly establishing himself as an impeccable researcher and a scientific trend-setter. Starting in the 1960s, his group helped make Cornell a world-leader in micro-electronic devices, through his research on compound semiconductor materials, high speed devices, and circuits. His pioneering use of Gallium Arsenide devices yielded unheard of results and won accolades and international awards. A tireless advocate for his cutting-edge research,

he enthusiastically tapped into industry and government funding sources, with a winning combination of a can-do attitude, a reputation for delivering results, and absolute integrity. His focus on applied science with practical applications made a profound impact in a wide variety of industries, including cellular technology and communications.

As his reputation grew, so too did his research group—by 2011 he had graduated 125 Ph.D students who affectionately refer to themselves “by number.” They flocked to him for his academic renown and his uncanny ability to bring out the best in everyone who crossed his path. With Les as mentor, they built their scientific knowledge and chops, while he helped them build confidence and interpersonal skills. It was his practice to have them present conference papers so they could win recognition and exposure. He taught them that teamwork is the key to getting great results. He served as a role model by shrugging off all the impediments that were thrown his way, teaching them to forge ahead and focus on the positive. His personal commitment to each student helped Les Eastman students become leaders in scientific research, academia, and industry.



L to R: L.F. Eastman, J. Shi, B. Aslan, and J. Felbinger



Through his selflessness, openness to new ideas, and generosity, Les forged lifelong bonds with academic colleagues around the world. Hiroyuki Sakaki, University of Tokyo (Professor Emeritus) wrote, “Les has been truly an exceptional professor, since he built up not only an outstanding research group at Cornell that made enormous contributions for the advancements of high-speed compound semiconductors devices, but he also created a global network of scientists and engineers, in which long lasting friendships have evolved, promoting not only academic collaborations and partnerships, but, more importantly, a deep sense of belonging to the family-like community around him. I am truly grateful for being one of its members.”

Prof. Michael Shur, Patricia W. and C. Sheldon Roberts Professor of Solid State Electronics Professor, Electrical, Computer, and Systems Engineering and Physics, Applied Physics, and Astronomy Director, RPI wrote, “In 1976 when I was a stateless refugee with no documents and no money he sent airline tickets for me, my wife, and our two little girls, so that we could fly to Ithaca, N.Y. We came to Cornell, all four of us, and, in a way, I have never left. Our last joint publication was a paper presented at MRS in 2011. Professor Eastman literally changed my life, as he did for so many. He was my mentor and my role model for over 35 years. He was a great man and we will always remember him.”

Perhaps the greatest testament to Les's extraordinary accomplishments is best expressed in reading just a few of the letters of fond farewell from his former students. Here are just a few excerpts from the many that were sent to acknowledge his passing:

From Prof. Sandip Tiwari (#20), Ph.D. '80, Charles N. Mellowes Professor in Engineering, Cornell University, ECE, “Les has been a supernova in the lives of many. He lives on through all the people, family and the lives he changed, and the course of science he influenced.”

From Prof. Wen I. Weng (#29), Ph.D. '81, Thayer Lindsley Professor of EE, Columbia University, “Les was a great person, mentor, and wonderful friend to all his students. Les will be forever in

my heart and dearly missed.”

From Dr. Hai Lu (#114) Ph.D. '03, Nanjing University, China, “It is my lifetime honor to be Les's student and a member of the honorary group.”

From Dr. Junxia Shi (#123) Ph.D. '10, Assistant Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Illinois at Chicago, and recipient of the Lester Eastman Fellowship at Cornell, “During my years at Cornell, you showed me there is no difficult problem that cannot be solved. Ever since then, that became my motto in life.”



J. Shi and L.F. Eastman