

**John Hernandez**, NMSU Professor Emeritus, has been associated with the New Mexico WRRRI for many years, most recently as a consultant on several projects. John received a B.S. in civil engineering from UNM, an M.S. in sanitary engineering from Purdue University, an M.S. in environmental engineering from Harvard University, and a Ph.D. in 1965 in water resources from Harvard University. John was a faculty member at NMSU from 1965 to 1999, including service as the Dean of Engineering in the late 1970s. John has broad experience regionally, nationally, and internationally in water resources issues and has published extensively. He received many awards throughout his career including the prestigious Donald C. Roush Excellence in Teaching Award from New Mexico State University in 1990, and the Civil Engineering building at NMSU is now named Hernandez Hall in his honor. This fall John was elevated to the rank of honorary member in the American Society of Civil Engineers.



**Bobby J. Creel** has been with the WRRRI since 1986. He has served as Assistant Director, Acting Director, and Associate Director at the Institute. He came to NMSU as a student in 1964 and received his bachelor's degree in agriculture in 1968, a master's degree in agricultural economics in 1971, and a Ph.D. in resource economics from UNM in 1986. He has over 150 journal articles, research reports, special reports, book chapters, and conference proceedings publications and abstracts, mainly in the areas of natural resource economics, water resource planning, allocation and use of the water resources in the various basins of the state and southwest U.S. Most of these incorporate various quantitative assessment methods such as geographic information systems, input-output analysis, cost-benefit analysis, linear programming, cost and returns analysis, assessments for water quality protection programs using geographic information systems, feasibility of developing saline water resources, geothermal water resources, large-scale irrigation projects, and energy development impacts on agriculture. In 2002 he received the Fort Bliss Federal Credit Union Research Award for his many years of research in the areas of water and natural resources.



## HOMAGE TO H. RALPH STUCKY

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The New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute is now 40 years old, and the annual water conference is 50 years old. Ralph Stucky would be a hundred today, if he were still with us. And in many ways, he still is. Ralph hasn't been the director of the WRRRI for over 30 years, but his organizational ideas are still very much a part of the style and format of the annual water conference, and his concepts of involvement in state and national water resources issues still provide strong direction for the Institute, an involvement in real world water problems that has lasted a half century.

What was it about Ralph Stucky—his family background, his education, his work experience—that has led to his lasting impact on water resources planning, education and research, particularly here in New Mexico? Was it his Ph.D. in Ag. Economics? I don't think so. Was it his 70+ publications? I don't think so. Was it his name on the WRRRI building—dedicated to Ralph in 1970? I don't think so. Well, what was it? Let's spend a few minutes reviewing his life and see if we can find the Stucky magic—and tell others how to prevail in the way that Stucky's ideas have. Much of what I will tell you comes from a thick, unpublished text that Ralph wrote in 1994 called *My First Ninety Years*. An interesting title. Did Ralph expect to live another ninety years? Maybe. He did live another five years, dying in 1999 at the age of 94.

This water resources pioneer came from pioneer stock—Grandfather Gottlieb Stucky, born in Switzerland, came to America in 1855 at age 10, and Grandmother Mary Hess, also Swiss, was born on a ship on the Atlantic in route here. Like many mid-1800 European emigrants, Gottlieb Stucky found himself in the Union Army during the Civil War. Ralph's grandparents were married in Denver, Missouri in 1871 and headed for Montana by wagon in 1879, but the railroad arrived in Montana soon thereafter and some of the family and their freight arrived by rail. I tell you about Gottlieb Stucky as Ralph, born December 14, 1904, near Bozeman, Montana, had the opportunity to talk to his grandfather about Gottlieb's childhood in Switzerland.

Ralph mentions his talks with his grandfather in his book; those talks were clearly important to him.

Ralph came from a large family; that is, lots of kids. His mother was Nellie and his father was John Stucky. He grew up on a farm, and at an early age, he learned all about the hard work associated with farming. He learned how to milk cows, how to feed hogs and sheep, and how to pick rocks. Yes, how to pick rocks. His father's farm was in a glacial valley, and as the land was plowed each year, more and more rocks came to the surface and someone had to pick them up. Strangely enough, Ralph liked farm life.

Ralph's childhood was not atypical from that of many of us. He learned that crime does not pay at age seven when he was caught stealing apples. He learned not to wise off at teachers in the 4th grade in a time when corporal punishment was still allowed. "Ouch!" In his book, Ralph says that once it took him two days to get over being sick from swallowing a wad of chewing tobacco. He was not a stellar high school student, but he enjoyed his ag-related classes. He was involved in livestock judging, and he learned how to cull non-laying hens. In his book he tells of how you pick up a hen and by doing something related to her bottom tell if she is a non-layer and is headed for the stew-pot. I told you, Ralph really liked that ag stuff.

He had decided to take school seriously by the time he headed for the University of Idaho. He picked Moscow, Idaho because of recommendations from a high school ag teacher who had gone there. Ralph became active in 4-H clubs, and he never looked back from a life in agricultural education. He majored in animal husbandry and got a BS degree from the University of Idaho in 1927.

His first job was as a vocational ag teacher in Filer Rural High school in rural Idaho. He had 50 students in classes, took care of the 4-H club, trained and lead the high school judging teams, was the local Scout Master, and had time to court a young woman. He had a room in the Wilson house in Filer, and when she wasn't off teaching school in another nearby rural community, Frances Wilson lived there. She was the future Mrs.

Ralph Stucky, and they were married on July first 1930. They had two children Creta, now Mrs. Robert McGuire of Calgary, Canada and John now of White Bear, Minnesota.

His next job, 1929 to 1933, was as the 4-H club agent in Bannock County Idaho. From 1933 to 1935, he was County Agricultural Agent in Power County, Idaho. This was at the start of the depression and tough years to find a job and hold it. Banks closed and farm prices fell to 10 percent of 1930 levels. In a decision on who got paid to print ag reports for the county, Ralph got into trouble with a newspaper owner who called for his resignation in an editorial saying that "Ralph Stucky has ruined his usefulness here in Power County unless he is a better politician than we think." Ralph was lucky. Just prior to the Power County dust-up, he had applied for and gotten a job as the County Agent in Fergus County, Montana. When he got to Montana, he got a copy of a letter from the Power County Commissioners to the newspaper, commending Ralph for the great job he had done. Ralph was really a pretty good politician. No. He was a very good politician.

Ralph was the Ag County Extension Agent in Fergus County, Montana from 1935 to 1941, and he and Frances and their two kids lived in Lewiston, Montana. Ralph was always scheduling a meeting of some kind or traveling off into the hinterlands of Montana for a meeting. Stucky had all the thrills of trying to get somewhere in a winter blizzard and to get somewhere else in the sea of mud that followed in the spring. But Ralph stayed the course through mud and snow. He always said he liked it in Montana.

In September 1941, Ralph went off to the University of Minnesota to get an M.S. in Agricultural Economics. On graduation in 1942, Ralph had to make the choice: buy 1,000 sheep at \$10 apiece and become a rancher, or accept a job with the Soil Conservation Service in Glendive in northeastern Montana. He picked right: half the crop of new lambs from the bunch he could have bought died that winter. Ralph was with the SCS till 1947 when he was offered an associate professor's post in Ag Economics at Montana State. He stayed with his teaching, and through hard work and perseverance he managed to work on a Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota, which he received in 1954.

Shortly after that he came to NMSU as head of the Ag. Econ. Department. It was a new department and when it started there were no ag econ students, none, zero, zip, nada. Ralph persisted and soon made

the Department one of the biggest and best in the Ag College.

During the spring semester 1955, Ralph decided to teach a course in water resources economics to 15 students. He invited a number of the important water leaders in the state to talk to his class. Steve Reynolds was one. People heard about these talks and wanted to come. So Ralph asked his speakers to come back for a two-day conference, the First Annual Water Conference, and over 100 came to take part. A huge success! And the next forty-nine water conferences have been as successful: state and federal officials, legislators, governors, U.S. congressman and senators, and lots of interested folks have come together over the years to share their common interest in water. Senator Clinton Anderson attended the 1957 Water Conference. In 1962, Senator Anderson sponsored a bill to create a center for water resources research in every state. In 1965, New Mexico became the first state to have a federally funded center and Ralph Stucky became the director. He was followed by some notable successors and pioneers in New Mexico water resources: John Clark, Garrey Caruthers, Tom Bahr, Bobby Creel, and Karl Wood.

How did Stucky do it? How did he pull it off? Through the water conference, he had developed a large cadre of supporters who were concerned about New Mexico's future, its future water supply. Somehow Ralph could bring people together to listen to each other and to talk about something they would normally fight about—water! Ralph Stucky made his greatest contribution to water resources, not through his research, but through his ability to get people to come and work together, and this because of his stick-to-itiveness, or was it stucky-to-itiveness? Yes, when Ralph wanted to get some thing done, he stuck to it. Stucky's lasting impact has come about because always, "Stucky-stuck"!

Bobby and I both worked for Ralph Stucky on research teams. And while he expected a lot and got a lot, we both prize our years of being with him. A personal note: I will always be in debt to Ralph Stucky for making the last 16 years of my parents' lives better. Through typical Stucky perseverance, he created the Good Samaritan Village, a senior living center, and my folks were the beneficiaries of his good works. Thank you Ralph.