



AN ESTEEMED ECONOMIST

MEET **HAROLD PASSER, PhD**, CLASS OF 1939, CHIEF GOVERNMENT ECONOMIST FOR THE COMMERCE DEPARTMENT, PROFESSOR AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, AND TREASURER FOR EASTMAN KODAK.

Harold Passer, PhD
(1921-1999)

An English teacher at Faribault High School recognized the great potential and rigorous work ethic in her student, Harold Passer, and encouraged him to apply to one of the nation's top schools, Harvard University. Following his graduation from FHS in 1939, Harold began a successful career at Harvard, graduating Summa Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa in 1943 with a bachelor's degree in Economics, and eventually going on to earn his master's degree and Ph.D., also in Economics. At Harvard, Harold was a scholarship student, earning his way with various jobs such as serving in the dining hall.

Throughout his life, Harold applied his interest and proficiency in economics in many ways: as a professor at Princeton, as treasurer at Eastman Kodak, as the chief economist for the Commerce Department, as liaison to the government Council of Economic Advisers, and in an advisory role for President Nixon. Even after his retirement from Eastman Kodak, his economic expertise was put to good use on many community boards, historical groups, and educational committees in his home of Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Harold certainly earned the admiration of his family. They respect the fact that he experienced great success in the East Coast world by using his grit, brains, and positive attitude. They recall that he was once

nicknamed "Happy Hal" because of the positive twist he put on things, even grim economic news of the time. Harold is remembered for taking an interest in everything and his skill in talking with anyone about their own interests: politics, sports, music, literature, or genealogy. He was a great conversationalist and a good listener. His curiosity led him to be a life-long learner. He encouraged and supported family members to aim high and complete college educations.

As a teenager, Harold left his home in Cannon City to face the challenges of competing in the Ivy League world of Harvard, but Minnesota always remained part of him. Harold's niece commented, "Uncle Harold never forgot his family in Minnesota or his Faribault roots. He was proud to be from Minnesota and would return at least once each year to visit his family." Harold was looking forward to coming back to Faribault for his class reunion in the fall of 1999; unfortunately, cancer prevented his return.

Another relative calls Harold "an embodiment of the American Dream" for his love of America and its promises, and she credits Harold's optimism and Faribault High School for nurturing his talents and preparing him for the successful life he enjoyed.