



Carl A. Newport

1924- 2014

Carl A. Newport, Ph.D., played a pivotal role in bringing the highest level of economics expertise to Northwest timber management. Working in the private and public sectors, Carl combined his knowledge of forestry and economics to help manage timberlands and guide the formation of sound public policy for forest management.

Born on March 9, 1924, in Logansport, Indiana, Carl was the youngest of Lillie (née Alspaugh) and Tom Newport's seven children. A general contractor, Tom Newport struggled to make ends meet during the depression. The family maintained a large vegetable garden, and as a boy, Carl went door-to-door selling vegetables.

As a youth, Carl became good friends with Jim Cotner, whose father was a local and affluent manufacturer. The two young men fueled each other's interest in the outdoors. They hiked, camped, and learned to identify trees and other plants. In high school, with encouragement from a biology teacher, Carl set his sights on becoming a forester.

Carl graduated from Logansport High School in 1941, but his family lacked the funds to finance a college education. In addition, his father opposed Carl's attending college and hoped to see his son learn a skilled trade.

Carl, however, was determined to follow his friend Jim to the University of Michigan's School of Forestry. Jim's father offered financial assistance, which Carl refused. His academic record, however, impressed the University, which not only admitted him, but helped him find employment and housing with Mrs. Junius E. Beal, the wealthy widow of a University Regent. Carl recalls wearing a butler's uniform and also serving as a chauffeur. At the Beal household, Carl benefited immensely from access to visiting scholars and the household library.

In February 1942, just months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Carl enlisted in the United States Army Air Force (which later became the USAF). Because he was color blind, Carl could not fly, so he chose to become a meteorologist. After boot camp in Mississippi, Carl attended the University of Iowa for two years of training in meteorology.

In February 1944, Carl was assigned to an air base in Ainsworth, Nebraska, where he worked as a weather forecaster. "The land was so flat," Carl quipped, "that you didn't need to know how to predict weather since you could see as far as tomorrow."

On his twentieth birthday—March 9, 1944—Carl met his future wife, Gwen Remington, at the Ainsworth USO, where her father served as director. It just so happened that it was also Gwen's birthday, her sixteenth. Carl soon became a regular fixture at the Remington household, but he was transferred to a base in Grand Island, Nebraska, a few months later.

Carl often hitchhiked back to Ainsworth to visit Gwen. These visits came to end, however, when the Air Force sent Carl to Harvard University to learn electrical engineering—primarily to build, operate, and repair radio equipment—with the intention of stationing him in China. Meanwhile, Carl and Gwen—now a student at the University of Nebraska—continued their courtship by mail.

Before Carl could be sent abroad, the war ended. In the fall of 1946, he was back at the University of Michigan, carrying credits from Harvard and the University of Iowa. As part of his membership in the Society of Les Voyageurs—a still active organization that promotes interest in the outdoors and enjoyment of nature—Carl lived for a time in a log cabin located near campus. On September 7, 1947, Carl and Gwen were married. Carl received his B.S. in Forest Management, with distinction, in the spring of 1948.

Without even waiting for the graduation ceremony, Carl headed west to begin his career as a forester. He had received the top grade in the U.S. Forest Service exam and was hired as an Assistant District Ranger in Gunnison, Colorado. His duties included marking timber and counting sheep in various parts of the southwest Rockies.

On May 11, 1949, Carl and Gwen welcomed the arrival of their first son, Charles T. "Chuck" Newport. It was an exciting time, but life could be challenging—and cold!—in the isolated areas of southern Colorado.

In the fall of 1950, the Newport family relocated to Corvallis, Oregon, where Carl pursued his M.S. in Forest Management and Logging Engineering. Carl completed his degree in the spring of 1951 and returned to Colorado for a short stint with the U.S. Forest Service. In the fall of 1951, he enrolled in the New York State College of Forestry in Syracuse (now the State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Science and Forestry) to begin work on his Ph.D. in Forest Economics.

Carl finished his coursework within a year and began the research for his thesis. He focused on the interaction between the U.S. Forest Service and the timber industry in the Black Hills area of South Dakota. His research brought him to South Dakota for a time, but in the fall of 1952, he was back in Colorado, teaching Forest Economics at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. A second son, James R. "Jim" Newport, was born in Fort Collins on March 11, 1954. Two days earlier, Gwen had finished typing Carl's thesis, and he was awarded his Ph.D. in May.

In 1957, Carl rejoined the U.S. Forest Service at the Rocky Mountain Forest Experiment Station, though he initially continued to fulfill some teaching duties at Colorado State. He soon transferred to the Pacific Southwest Forest Experiment Station in Berkeley, California. For two years, Carl led a nationwide task force that developed a uniform log-grading system for the entire country. Until then, foresters and lumbermen relied on a patchwork of grading systems that varied from region to region. To better measure and manage timber supplies, Carl's system distinguished portions of a tree economically. The unified system also helped improve communications, so that a forester in one area could better understand and evaluate a description of timberland that he had not visited.

Carl completed this project after he had moved to Portland, Oregon, to take up duties at the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station in 1959. He served as Chief of the Division of Forest Economics Research and later became the Assistant Station Director. He oversaw a wide variety of research projects, covering forest inventory, timber marketing, inventory

techniques, and more.

In the nearly eight years that Carl spent at the Station, he built his unit from a handful of people to several dozen employees. Though Carl managed a large office, Tom Hamilton, a researcher whom Carl recruited in 1964, fondly recalled Carl's management style. "Carl was the kind of guy who worked right with you. He was a hands-on person who built collegial relationships rather than working as supervisor and employee."

Hamilton also remembered that Carl made sure that all his employees had a good work experience and a good social experience. Carl and Gwen instituted an annual crab feast, which became the social highlight of the year for members of Carl's unit and their families.

During his time with the Forest Service in Portland, Carl developed friendships with people throughout the forestry community in the Northwest. With the urging of one friend, Gwynne Sharrer, Carl took what was a natural step into private consultancy. In December 1966, he resigned from the Forest Service and early the next year became a partner with Mason, Bruce & Girard, one of the nation's leading forestry consulting firms.

Carl maintained his affiliation with MB&G for more than three decades. During that time, he served dozens of clients, including owners of forest tracts, industry associations, and government agencies. He also traveled frequently to Washington, D.C., to meet with legislators to discuss forest policy issues. In addition, from 1984 to 1995, he served on the Oregon Governor's Council of Economic Advisors, under two Governors.

While at MB&G, Carl took on the management of 147,000 acres of timberland belonging to the Hill family, who were headquartered in Minnesota. He continued his oversight of these holdings for more than a dozen years, until he cut back his activities with MB&G in the mid-1990s.

One of Carl's large projects as a consultant was assisting the Times Mirror Corporation in the mid-1980s with the sale of its Oregon and southern Washington timberlands—more than 250,000 acres. "Carl was a great guy who did a great job," said Jack E. Meadows, then a Senior Vice President of Times Mirror and President of the Publishers Paper Company.

Carl's publications and honors are many. A member of the Society of American Foresters since 1948, Carl was elected a Fellow of the organization in 1988. In 1994, at the age of 70, Carl relinquished his standing as an officer of MB&G, but he continued to provide services to clients. He also remained active as a member of the Board of Directors of the World Forestry Center.

For all his professional achievements, Carl has always been an outdoorsman at heart. From his days as a young man hiking in Indiana to skiing and whitewater rafting in Oregon to photographing desert landscapes in Arizona at the age of 80, Carl sought to enjoy life by venturing into the natural world. He brought this same spirit to work as well. "If your work isn't fun," said Carl, "get out of it." Fortunately for his colleagues, Carl made work fun, too.