



Harold W. Harpster

November 26, 1949 - July 29, 2018

Harold "Hop" "Doc" William Harpster, widely recognized as a humble, charismatic, warm-hearted, animal-loving, nature-adoring, hard-working, forever-learning, value-centered mentor, confidant, friend and teacher to so many, passed on to a peaceful existence the morning of Sunday, July 29, 2018 at a hospice facility where he had spent only two nights after an extended stay at UPMC Montefiore in Pittsburgh, PA., bringing his four-year battle with liver cancer to a close.

Born and raised by Marshall and Marie Harpster in Greater Metropolitan Tadpole (aka Pennsylvania Furnace), he met his life-long partner, Dawn L. Gilligan at the Grange Fair, pursued a B.S. in Animal Science and M.S. in Animal Nutrition at Penn State when tuition was the cost of a cheap pair of shoes, and after getting hitched, moved to East Lansing, MI to pursue a PhD in Ruminant Nutrition from Michigan State University while Dawn worked as a nurse at the local hospital. He then accepted a Professor position at Penn State University in Dairy and Animal Science (a 38-year career) so they returned to build (with family and friends) their forever home on his home farm-- his favorite spot on earth. While raising their children, HH's passions were the outdoors, hunting often from his treasured Buckeye Hunting Camp, undertaking projects, nurturing cherished friendships and teaching his beloved students at Penn State. A winner of various honors and teaching awards, long-time advisor of the Block and Bridle Club, participant on various department and college-level committees, PA Livestock Hall of Fame

inductee, researcher of byproduct feed utilization and ruminant nutrition, author of monthly articles for the American Agriculturalist, his legacy lives on in many.

He had a lifelong love affair with anything chocolate-peanut butter, strong coffee, and medium-rare steaks. We are forever grateful for his creative ideas, memorable one-liners, contagious sense of humor, Paul Bunyan- strength, and ultimate humility; we smile when we think of his intolerance for the lazy, know-it-alls, phonies, materialistic, unreliable or rude folks of the world. He is a tough act to follow!

Penn State Colleagues will remember his overflowing office; students will remember his engaging lectures; friends will remember his dedication and loyalty; family will remember his love and strength. Everyone will remember his relentless work ethic, inability to say NO to anything, amazing hugs, and that twinkle in his eye. His spirit is carried on by his loving, caregiving wife, Dawn L. Harpster, his fashion-encouraging daughter, Lisa M. Harpster, his clone-of-a-son, Matthew S. Harpster, older brother Larry Harpster (Suzanne and Jayson Harpster, Brianne Nadeau, Zoe Harpster) and younger brother Kevin Harpster (Brenda, Colton, and Kristen Harpster) along with a cherished extended family of relations, friends, students and colleagues near and far. HH would tell us to spend no more time or money on writing something for his "sorry carcass" and so we'll bring this to a close. In lieu of flowers, please reach out to someone you love-- perform an unsolicited act of service or kindness for some unfortunate soul in his name or take a day off work to do something you enjoy while you can! We never know what tomorrow may bring.

A service will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 12, 2018 at the State College Presbyterian Church at 132 West Beaver Ave, State College, PA. 16801. Following the service, friends and family are welcome to join us at the Mountain View Country Club, 310 Elk's Club Rd, Boalsburg, PA. 16827 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for a Celebration of Life.

Gifts can be made to the Harold Harpster Fund with checks payable to the Pennsylvania State University. Mailing address:

The College of Agricultural Science
Development Office
240 Ag Administration Building
University Park, PA. 16802

Tribute Wall



“ *Harold W. Harpster*

January 13, 2023 at 04:43 PM



“ *Our deep sympathy to Dawn and family. We have wonderful memories of our time in State College (Tusseyville !) and at Penn State. Harold was a great mentor/friend to Dan .Laurie and Dan Loy Ames , IA*

Laurel Loy - August 06, 2018 at 11:45 AM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Harold W. Harpster.*



August 06, 2018 at 10:24 AM



“ *Charlotte Severcool lit a candle in memory of Harold W. Harpster*



Charlotte Severcool - August 04, 2018 at 10:34 PM

“ Celebrating ‘Doc’ Harpster’s life and legacy
(Soon to be published in *American Agriculturist*)

BY John Vogel

Harold Harpster – devoted family man, teacher, judging team coach, mentor, Angus cow-calf producer, livestock industry leader – went home to be with the Lord on Sunday, July 29, 2018. There was no other place for him to go.

Many of you knew Harold through his monthly “Stock Notes” column that ran nationally for nearly 24 years. He loved writing it, and it showed through his large devoted following. His common sense and ability to relate to all came through to all, and naturally made Penn State University Professor Emeritus Harold Harpster a trusted livestock industry source and friend.

Close to two years ago, Harold and I sat and talked over coffee about his long struggle with liver cancer and transplant rejection. He affirmed his resolve to hang tough with his faith in God.

While still writing his monthly “Stock Notes” column, he emailed me about my column that stressed keeping first things first in life. He said: “The farmer’s reluctance to ‘let go of the rope’ doesn’t have to cause him great pain . . . not when what should be most important remains most important.” Harold successfully communicated that truth and lived it.

Ultimate ag role model

As a student advisor and mentor, “Doc” Harold passed that ability to keep first things first onto many Penn State students. That helped many under his tutorage excel in their coming careers.

“Doc cared deeply for every student that crossed his path,” warmly recalls Darlene Livingston, executive director of Pennsylvania Farm Link and co-owner of Mahoning Creek Farm at Smicksburg, Pa.

“His door was open. He always had time to talk, even though I was a Horticulture major.

“I still marvel that Doc and Dawn (wife) hosted a Block and Bridle student picnic on Mother’s Day, even though they had a young family. They both gave of themselves for the sake of young, crazy, college students finding their way in life. A great example to all.

Doc’s genuine caring nature, laughter and smile will not be

forgotten,” adds Darlene.

Darlene’s husband Bob was the Animal Science student that drew her to Harpster’s office. “As I think back over the years, the life lessons from Doc mattered the most – not what he said, but the life he lived,” reflects Bob. “Always be in the moment. Have as much fun as possible while being responsible, dependable, respectable. We saw in Doc the men we needed to become.”

More recent students also gave him high marks: One unidentified student said: “Probably the best prof I’ve ever had! His energy and dedication are [were] amazing!!!” Another noted: “Great prof! His tests are [were] a little on the hard side, but not impossible. His energy made classes interesting.”

Terry Etherton, head of Penn State’s Animal Science Department, adds: “Harold was totally committed to his students and to agriculture. He was both a motivator and an inspiration to many, many of our students, always encouraging them to achieve their best. He really did so much for so many.”

While at Penn State, Doc Harpster received many teaching, research and leadership awards. The greatest honor was for those who knew Harold Harpster as a friend, confidant, teacher, mentor and advisor.

John Vogel

John Vogel - August 03, 2018 at 09:36 AM