



## **Arthur S. Lieberman**

February 24, 1931 – July 9, 2016

Professor Emeritus Arthur S. Lieberman was born on February 24, 1931 in Brooklyn, New York. His parents were Dora and Sam Lieberman, a physician. He spent his childhood in New York City prior to coming to Cornell in 1948 for a BS in the department of Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture, enriched by summer practice experience at the New York Botanical Gardens. Upon graduation in 1952, he taught at the Charlotte High School in Rochester, then entered the Navy Reserve, on patrol aboard the USS Hoist off the coast of Newfoundland. He regarded himself as “a poor free-hand artist” at that time but felt sure that pursuing a career as a landscape architect—a long held dream—would give him a better footing in life. Unfortunately, Cornell’s landscape architecture degree was in decline, so he returned for the Master of Science degree in Floriculture with a focus on landscape design and a minor in education. During that time, he met Margot Rosbasch and after a brief courtship, they married in June 1956. Their family grew to include three daughters: Laurie, Amy, and Karen. Upon receiving his degree, he joined the Cornell faculty as an assistant professor with an appointment in Cooperative Extension and moved up through the ranks to full Professor. Recognized as a pioneer in landscape ecology, Prof. Lieberman published his seminal work, *Landscape Ecology, Theory and Application*, with longtime colleague Zev Naveh in 1984. After retiring as Professor Emeritus, he and Margot moved to Israel, where he continued to support Cornell as the Resident Director of the Cornell Abroad Program in Israel, then as Cornell Abroad Faculty Representative in Israel from 1994-1996. He died on July 9, 2016.

During his early years of outreach, Art became inspired by Cornell’s role as a Land Grant University. Charged with conveying and interpreting the results of horticultural and vegetation science research findings to professional and lay audiences, he became aware of the ecological implications of his work as he interacted with communities on the application of the research to

land management at a variety of scales of operation. His initial teaching and publications were devoted to conveying the insights afforded by research in this area.

Through this work, he became involved with landscape ecology. In a short unpublished memoir, he writes that he saw landscape ecology-based planning as a holistic and rational system for resource determination and management. Under his leadership, the Cornell Tree Crops (Agroforestry) Research Project (CTCRP) initiated investigation of the use and management of marginal landscapes, such as abandoned farmlands, in the eastern US. He understood the issues within a global framework, and over time, his teaching evolved to focus on problem-solving methodologies at the local, regional, national and global levels, stressing rational, sustainable land-use for human and societal advantage. His emphasis on the application of ecological principles to large scale landscape development resulted in collaboration across departments in CALS: Landscape Architecture, Natural Resources, Agronomy, City and Regional Planning, Resource Information Laboratory, and Remote Sensing Lab. This was rare in the late 1970s and 1980s.

This growing work in landscape ecology-based land and resource planning, and the role of landscape ecology in scientific and professional training, led him to move to the faculty of the Landscape Architecture Program, teaching courses in regional planning. Cornell was a crucible for the new field of landscape ecology in the mid-1980s. Peter Marks had arrived in the Department of Natural Resources, Zev Naveh spent his sabbatical working with Art, and Gary Barrett arrived as a student excited to work with this group of scientists. The group was active in the conferences nationally and internationally that led to the formation of landscape ecology as a discipline. In 1984, Zev Naveh and Art Lieberman published *Landscape Ecology: Theory and Application*, which distinguished itself from other publications on the subject by its focus on theories and methods of application, particularly in the integration of human processes in landscape ecology.

As a colleague, Art was particularly solicitous and interested in the development of the research of the faculty. Peter Trowbridge recalls how Art would take time each week to stop by for conversations and to learn of the latest developments in Peter's work. Art's thoughtful sharing of newspaper clippings, journal articles and references would become legendary among faculty and students alike. Another particular love of Art's was the Cornell campus itself. Although he had left the Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture program, he sought out the gardens of the campus, taking breaks to enjoy the seasonal changes of the Minns Garden.

On retirement, Art and Margot moved to Haifa, Israel, where Art continued his role as an educator with Cornell Abroad, as well as lecturing in the University of Haifa Geography Department and the Department of Overseas Students Program. His attentiveness and support of the students was greatly appreciated. OSP alumna, Sarah Wolfe, writes: *'Professor Lieberman' played such a huge and influential role in my life. He introduced me to the beauty of ecology, wrote reference letters for scholarships and doctoral studies, and was my academic mentor for many years. The packages of newspaper clippings he sent were always so welcome.*

During his retirement years, Professor Lieberman became involved in educational efforts in Israel to strengthen ecological and scientific understandings of the environment in the processes

of planning, policy-making, and resource management in Israel. In 1993, he and Zev Naveh published an updated edition of *Landscape Ecology, Theory and Application*. Translations in Chinese and Spanish (with additions by leading scientists in Latin America) followed in 2002.

Professor Lieberman remained devoted to Cornell until the end of his life. He kept the Cornell landscape architecture faculty up to date on developments in landscape ecology through letters filled with newspaper and journal clippings. Cornell faculty coming to Israel were warmly welcomed by Art and Margot at their home and with tours and contacts with Israeli colleagues. Alumna Elissa Rosenberg spoke warmly of her visits with him during her lectureships at the Technion, and Kathryn Gleason particularly remembers their hospitality and walking tours during her field projects at nearby Caesarea Maritima.

Art Lieberman's devotion to Cornell has been commemorated by the Landscape Architecture faculty with a bench in his memory in the Minns Gardens, placed there at a ceremony on September 23, 2016.

He is survived by his wife, Margot, his daughters Laurie Livshin, Amy (Yigal) Holzer, and Karen (David) Herbstman; and grandchildren Isaiah (Mirit) Livshin, Edan (Rony) Holzer, Yaniv Holzer, and Nadav Holzer, Jonathan Herbstman, and Michael Herbstman (currently a student at Cornell in engineering); and great-granddaughter Shira Livshin.

*Written by Kathryn Gleason and Peter Trowbridge*