

TEACHING, SERVING AND GIVING FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS

By Barbara McBreen

When the 9/11 tragedy unfolded, Harold Crawford was visiting faculty at Sitting Bull Tribal College in the middle of southern North Dakota. It was a warm, clear day when Ron His Horse Is Thunder, the college's president, stopped in the dean's office to tell Crawford he wasn't going anywhere and invited him to stay at his home.

Crawford, an emeritus professor of agricultural education and studies, vividly recalls that day. Like many across the nation, Crawford paused to reflect on the events at hand. He also reflected on the purpose of his visit to a college located on the northern plains.

Crawford says his work to help tribal colleges is one of the highlights of his nearly 50-year career at Iowa State University. The programs were funded through a U.S. Department of Agriculture Initiative and brought in more than \$4 million to enhance natural resource education at four tribal colleges in Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.

He came to Iowa State as a transfer student in 1946, after serving in WWII. After graduation, Crawford ('50 agricultural education, MS '55, PhD '59) taught high school agriculture before becoming an instructor at Iowa State in 1965. He



Linda Hugelen, Sitting Bull College project coordinator, and Harold Crawford, an emeritus professor of agricultural education and studies, greet powwow dancers at Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

soon became a professor and head of the department of agricultural education.

In 1983 he became the associate dean of international programs and put his innovative technological ideas to work. He developed a mobile microcomputer lab for off-campus instruction. He and two instructors loaded a dozen large suitcase-sized microcomputers in a mobile lab and traveled throughout Iowa.

Wade Miller, chair of agricultural education and studies and the first director of the Brenton Center for Agricultural Instruction and Technology Transfer, describes Crawford as a visionary, who believes in outreach and is dedicated to agricultural education.

"Lots of people have good ideas, what distinguishes Harold is that he acts on his ideas," Miller says. "The Mobile Microcomputer Van helped teachers learn the 'new' technology of computers."

Crawford saw the need to provide distance education and understood the importance of making classes available to potential students who couldn't make it to campus. Today, distance education is seen

as an essential service and the college provides classes for students working on both bachelor's and master's degrees.

"Dr. Crawford has done everything at every level," says Robert Martin, professor of agricultural education and studies. "Throughout his career he's always had the best interest of each student in the forefront."

Crawford continued his focus on educational technology after he became associate dean and director of international agriculture programs in 1989. He retired in 2007, after collaborations brought in nearly \$17 million in funding for various projects. He currently keeps an office in Curtiss Hall and continues to write proposals for grants and work on historical projects.

Crawford and his wife Rachel continue to support agricultural education and studies programs and students. Their support helped renovate a suite of Curtiss Hall classrooms—the same classrooms in which Harold both learned as a student and taught as a professor. ■

Harold Crawford, emeritus professor of agricultural education and studies, and his wife Rachel hold teaching and students close to heart. Crawford's motto: "Teaching is to serve, serving is to give and giving is to live."

Photo: Barbara McBreen

