



Alan Martin Cooperative Management Training Program Endowment

When auditing, Licensed Public Accountant Alan Martin was both a hard taskmaster and a patient teacher. He insisted that financial records be complete and accurate. However, when record-keeping problems turned up, Alan Martin was always intent on helping managers get to the root of the problem and fix it.

Alan worked with Farmers Union Central Exchange for sixty years and served on its board of directors. His territory covered a one-hundred-mile radius of Devils Lake. His passionate belief in cooperatives and the significance of “family farms” was formed during childhood, rooted in his father’s work establishing strong local cooperatives throughout North Dakota.

Alan Charles Martin was born July 29, 1927, in his family home in Chaffee, North Dakota, the second of eight children born to William and Ada (Hacke) Martin. He graduated from Chaffee High School in 1944 at

the tender age of sixteen. Following his education, he stayed home and worked for two years on the farm. In the fall of 1946, he enrolled at Dakota Business College in Fargo completing his degree in two years.

He met Doris Ann Liddle, daughter of William A. and Mary (Ramsey) Liddle, in 1951 on a blind date and promptly fell in love. After a memorable courtship, the “Liddle” girl from Park River and this charming man with his infectious smile were united in marriage in September of 1953. The couple made their home in Devils Lake. There they raised their children—Ann, Nancy, Karen, Daniel, and John—and were eventually blessed with eleven grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren. Their love story lasted fifty-five years and continues to be the best example of a well-maintained marriage.

In the early years, Alan traveled on gravel roads to local co-ops. Because he was “on

the road” so often, he was fortunate to establish life-long friendships with bookkeepers, managers, and members of the boards of directors of local co-ops as well as local business owners. He worked tirelessly training bookkeepers which produced incredible results. In his words, *“I felt I had the best bookkeepers in the state in my territory.”* In 1992, Alan retired, eventually turning his business over to his son, John, who had worked with him for twelve years.

Even after he retired, however, Alan couldn’t stop thinking about ways to strengthen North Dakota’s cooperative businesses. He worried that many managers were approaching retirement age and knew that North Dakota’s cooperatives would need to be able to draw on a fresh pool of new management talent. To create such a pool, Alan worked with a group of senior managers and Lake Region State College to develop a sustainable cooperative management training scholarship program. In recognition of Mr. Martin’s vision and leadership, the managers attached his name to the program, creating the Alan Martin Cooperative Management Training Scholarship program. Building and renewing the mana-

gerial talent pool for North Dakota’s cooperative businesses was its goal. Many area cooperatives joined forces to fund this scholarship pool believing that cooperative businesses have much to offer.

In his role as auditor, Alan devoted his career to strengthening cooperative businesses throughout North Dakota. He helped cooperative businesses implement good management practices and make business decisions built upon solid information. From early on he aimed to serve, to leave things a little better than he found them, and to always do his very best. He was impeccable with his word and held himself and his family to a higher standard. He truly loved people, seeing the best in them, and respecting their individuality.

As a tribute to Alan’s exemplary skills and caring leadership, the New Rockford-Fessenden Co-op Transport Association established this endowment after Alan’s death on April 19, 2013. This permanent endowment will provide earnings which will be used annually to strengthen the cooperative management training services of the Dakota Precision Agriculture Center at Lake Region State College. ●

