

Daniel Trainer

When College of Natural Resources Dean Emeritus Daniel Trainer died in 2007 at age 81, he was remembered for his positive and inspirational influence on the education of more than 5,000 natural resource professionals in the United States and across the globe.

One of Wisconsin's most recognized and respected conservationists, Trainer had been honored earlier that year when the CNR building was named for him.

The Daniel O. Trainer Natural Resources Building bears the name of a man who, as dean from 1971 to 1988, is recognized for making the college the premier undergraduate institution of its kind in the nation. He helped establish hands-on field experiences for students at Treehaven, Central Wisconsin Environmental Station and Schmeckle Reserve, and developed opportunities for students to travel overseas for international experiences.

For many students and colleagues, Trainer was a mentor and a friend.

"Dan's greatest contribution was his teaching and mentoring of students, faculty, citizens and resource professionals through five decades of involvement in Wisconsin conservation," said Christine Thomas, current CNR dean and a former student of Trainer's. "He took his place in the line of great conservationists. He led by example. He remembered his roots. He inspired others to be their best and contribute however they could. He approached life with enthusiasm and good humor. He was part of the flow...and he has prepared each of us to take our turn."

Trainer saw his own accomplishments through the lives of those students, who fanned out across the country and beyond after their education in Stevens Point.

"In many ways, my impact on the environment was through the students," he said. "We prepared them to go out and work on the front lines. Those students were able to go anywhere, and we took great pride in helping them to get through school. They're like extended family. I never met one who wasn't proud to be a Point graduate."

His work in conservation continued after he retired from UWSP, as he helped develop the nationally acclaimed Green Circle Trail in Stevens Point and protected the Plover River watershed. He was a founding member of Intra-State Recycling, a pioneer recycling group in Stevens Point. He also served numerous state and local boards, including the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board. He won the William C. Hansen Distinguished Service Award from UWSP in 2007.

A Princeton native, he served in the U.S. Navy at the close and after World War II. He earned degrees at Ripon College and UW-Madison and served as the chief

pathologist for the Department of Natural Resources while pursuing a Ph.D. Before coming to UWSP, he was already known as an international expert in wildlife diseases for his work on the veterinary faculty at UW-Madison from 1960 until 1971. His many accomplishments were recognized when, in 2006, Trainer was inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame.

Looking back on a distinguished career, Trainer said, "I've always had the best job in the world – natural resources and young people, and all in the state of Wisconsin."