

**MARGE
MILEY**
Milestones



**Economist
inducted
into hall
of fame**

The late George S. Wehrwein, noted land economist, and member of a pioneer Town of Newton family, was inducted April 20 into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in Stevens Point.

He was featured in an article in the March/April issue of "The Muir View," which also published biographies of the other 2002 inductees, Mrs. Ruth Chickering Clusen of Green Bay and Joe J. Hickey.

Wehrwein never went to high school, but had a doctorate from the University of Wisconsin. He was one of the authors of the nation's first textbooks on land economics. He died in 1945 at the age of 61.

In 2000 and 2001, George's son, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Austin C. Wehrwein of St. Paul, Minn., published the Wehrwein Web, a collection of Wehrwein family sketches and pictures.

Based on this family history book, I wrote a Milestones column in November 2000 about the Wehrweins.

Election to the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame, this latest honor for George Wehrwein, comes 57 years after his death.

The family book has two reproductions of newspaper stories about George's death in 1945, one from The New York Times and the other from The Milwaukee Journal.

The Associated Press story in The Times, stated, "Professor George S. Wehrwein, University of Wisconsin agricultural economist and nationally recognized authority on land use and zoning, died of a heart ailment last night at the Wisconsin General Hospital."

He had served on the UW faculty since 1928.

The Journal's story added, "Professor Wehrwein's work as a member of the state planning board since 1935, and the Midwest regional planning commission of the National Resources Planning Board since 1943, has won wide recognition.

He worked on various surveys covering both the recreational and economic use of land in Wisconsin."

But the George Wehrwein story I liked most was a resume he had written himself in 1933.

It starts, "I have had no high school education but went directly from the rural school (in Newton) to the Oshkosh Normal School which at that time admitted students of this type to a four-year course. It was necessary to do some preparatory work, which

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Wehrwein makes history

with much of the first two years, constituted a substitute for high school preparation."

Wehrwein attended the Oshkosh Normal School for three quarters in 1900 and 1901, and then taught in a rural school in Manitowoc County for three years. He returned to Oshkosh and finished his schooling there in 1908, coming back to Manitowoc County to be principal of the Mishicot Grade School from 1908 to 1910. It was there he met his wife Anna Ruby who was also teaching. They were married in 1914. She died in 1976 at age 90.

(My mother, Clara Schram Miley and her twin brother, Carl Schram, graduated from ninth grade at the Mishicot School in 1910. George Wehrwein, the principal, is included in their class picture.)

Wehrwein attended the University of Wisconsin from 1910 to 1913 when he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture. His first job was as an extension specialist in marketing and cooperation at the University of Texas.

His career path took him to the State College of Washington and Pennsylvania State College. He returned to the University of Wisconsin in 1919 to complete his graduate work. He received his Master of Science degree in 1922 and his doctorate in 1922. His thesis was "Land Ownership and Tenure in the United States."

Wehrwein was a research associate and professor of economics at Northwestern University for three years and then returned to the University of Wisconsin. He served as president of the American Farm Economics Association. His book, "Land Economics" was published in 1940.

His son Austin wrote about his father, "As soon as he could my father George Simon Wehrwein, left the farm. He was the oldest of five children without manual, mechanical or ath-

letic aptitudes. But he was born with great intellectual power and a gift for teaching."

He left the land in Newton, scaled the academic range and became a nationally known and recognized authority on land use and zoning. He became a mentor of the famous Aldo Leopold, colleague at the UW and worked for President Franklin D. Roosevelt as an adviser on land conversation projects.

In his article in The Muir View, Peter Muto writes, "Wehrwein applied his knowledge and skills to help solve the problems of the 'Northern Cutover,' the territory in Wisconsin that was denuded of timber. Almost a century later we can see in these areas that he had performed a great service for all of us."

The farm in Newton remained in the Wehrwein family until 1952, for 97 years after it was settled by Georg and Margarethe Wehrwein in 1855 after they arrived in this country from Germany.