The John C. Nye Graduate Fellowship Fund was established in 1999, dedicated to expanding the diversity of our Society. It was designed to encourage participation of underrepresented minority graduate students in ASABE and to aid minorities pursuing graduate degrees in agricultural engineering.

The idea behind the fund remained noble and appropriate—to grow diversity in our Society. Unfortunately, not strenuously championed, the fund languished well below an endowment level for many years. However, because of generous donations from John’s widow, Gloria, and an outreach effort to those who knew and respected John, we are thrilled to report that the fund is now endowed and will be awarded for the first time in 2019.

John Nye was born in 1945 and grew up on a Kansas wheat farm. He attended Kansas State University (BS) and then Purdue University (MS and PhD), where he joined the faculty in 1971. In 1984, he relocated to serve as head of the Department of Agricultural Engineering at Louisiana State University, and he relocated again in 1991 to become Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Delaware. After a decade in that position, John accepted the positions of Director of the Delaware Agricultural Experiment Station and Director of the Delaware Cooperative Extensive Service, where he was employed at the time of his sudden and unexpected death of a brain aneurysm in 2002.

John’s list of professional accomplishments is long. However, he considered his greatest achievements to be those forged from one-on-one relationships, where he could see the direct difference he made in the lives of others. He encouraged everyone he knew to accomplish great things.

We are thankful for all those who stepped up and contributed to the John C. Nye Graduate Fellowship Fund to provide fellowships for minority students pursuing PhDs in agricultural engineering. We would not have reached our endowment goal without the donations from colleagues, friends, and the Nye family, especially Gloria Nye. We believe no better legacy exists for John than to have fellowships awarded each year in his name. Fran Fevier, a long-time friend of the Nyes, eloquently summed up how many felt about John and the impact he had on hundreds of lives:

“Dr. John Nye was a rare and beautiful human being. He was an idealist able to translate his ideas into practical actions. He looked for the good and the promise in people, especially in his students. Whenever he glimpsed promise, John went all out to support and encourage its development.”

If you have an interest in supporting the ASABE Foundation and the work it does, please contact Mark Crossley, ASABE’s Director of Development, at 269-932-7002 or crossley@asabe.org to learn the many ways you can help.

ASABE Fellow John C. Nye, 1945-2002

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This is one in a series of articles from the Foundation Development Committee.

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