

IN TRIBUTE TO ASHLEY SCHIFF

John S. Toll
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Ashley Schiff was a uniquely vital man. His energy, humanity and breadth of concern touched virtually every person and every corner of this campus in the years he gave to us. All of us have been deeply affected by his death, especially in our sympathy for his family in their great loss. We ask their permission today to speak of our loss, because Ashley's dedication and work here made us all members of his family.

To build a university is to form a community. It is a situation full of challenges and opportunities for a faculty person. Ashley has set a measure for us of what an individual can achieve here.

All his activities were illuminated and given substance by his dedication to scholarship and by the requirements he set upon himself. His inquiries grew out of his passionate concern with the natural world, which led him to become a naturalist, a conservationist and an ecologist, as well as a political scientist. His studies reflected his conviction that governmental actions must be analyzed and understood in terms of the social and individual values that underlie them.

His scholarly vigor and convictions were fully transmitted in his teaching. No member of this faculty has been more consistently singled out for honor as a teacher by the student

body. His expectations of his students were high. His courses were demanding. But the rewards of studying with him were immediate and greatly sought. No student fortunate enough to work with him will forget either the experience or the substance.

Ashley recognized instantly that the great problem in Stony Brook's growth lies in preserving the human scale of the student experience. He threw enormous energy and creativity into the Mastership of Cardozo College. His success in creating a community there based on commitment to educational values is an exemplar to us all.

Ashley's concern with the quality of the University's environment extended to the whole campus: From the preservation of the beauty we found when we came here, to the creation -- with his own hands and his own resources -- of new beauty where the old had been destroyed.

We are a young campus, new to such losses. How can we memorialize this extraordinary man? The students closest to him have supplied the answer. Where we stand now was, a decade ago, a lovely wilderness. We will be followed by generations here who will have no opportunity to know such a place unless we preserve it for them now. This fall the long-range land utilization plan for the campus is being prepared by the campus-planning architects. Ashley himself had been active in the

preparations for this work. An objective of that plan will be to preserve sections of the campus in their natural state, for instruction and for enjoyment. This must be carefully planned, because such a preserve must be protected from the other life of the campus if it is to survive. We are assured that this can be done; our ecologists and Ashley's student associates will be involved in this planning. The University will recommend the dedication of a wilderness preserve to the memory of Ashley Schiff, where future generations at Stony Brook can learn to share his appreciation of nature. Of all the tributes we might pay him, I believe this is the one that would have touched him most, and best carries forward his special contributions to Stony Brook.

If I may add a thought to the President's: In salute to Ashley, I cannot improve on the tribute of Adlai Stevenson to another remarkable person:

"He had rather light a candle than curse the darkness."

T. Alexander Pond