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# UNH Dedicates Dairy Center in Honor of Tom Fairchild

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DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire recognized one of its most distinguished professors by dedicating the center he helped to build in his honor.



*Tom Fairchild*

UNH named its dairy center the Thomas P. Fairchild Dairy Teaching and Research Center at a dedication ceremony this week. About 300 people from the university community and the state's dairy industry came to celebrate the man who has been called the "conscience of the state's 4-H network" and "a New Hampshire agricultural icon."

Fairchild was saluted by several people who came to the podium to cite his accomplishments. The words "passionate," "dedicated," "self-less" and "fun" were spoken over and over again.

"This is a special occasion and a wonderful opportunity for me to be part of a tradition that preceded me," UNH President Ann Weaver Hart said. "You know someone has made a tremendous impact in the community when you've heard his name so many times and learned so much about him that, when you meet him, you feel like you already know him. That's how it was with Tom."

Fairchild, a 1959 UNH graduate, has spent his career at the university as both a member of the faculty and administration. Over the years he has served as a Dairy Extension specialist, professor, chairperson of the Department of Animal and Nutritional Sciences, dean of the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture, and interim UNH president.

He was instrumental in leading the fundraising effort to build the \$1.6 million dairy teaching and research center, and oversaw the planning of Rudman Hall, a \$30-million teaching and research center for the biological sciences.

It was as a teacher, however, that those present at the ceremony said Tom made his biggest impact.

"Our farm is eight miles down the road from UNH, and we have a close relationship with the university and its students," said Lorraine Merrill, University System of New Hampshire trustee

and a former student of Fairchild's. "I have never known a teacher who has had such a long-term impact on people's lives -- no one who has had a greater 'tear factor' on students. He has always set high expectations, he's touched us with his enthusiasm and infected us with his love."

After his tenure as interim president ended in 1995, Fairchild returned to the UNH faculty and co-founded the university's nationally recognized CREAM (Cooperative for Real Education in Agricultural Management) Program. As a result, 20 students every year, most with no prior experience, are responsible for the university's 26-cow milking herd.

In addition to his university responsibilities, Fairchild has served as chair of the Teaching Committee of the New England Regional Dairy Program, and served as trustee of the 4-H Foundation of New Hampshire.

UNH has honored him for his achievements with the Alumni Affairs Award for Excellence in Public Service, and the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture's Teaching Excellence Award. He also was presented the 2001 Distinguished Service Award by the Northeastern Section of the American Society of Animal Sciences.

"I'm overwhelmed by the folks who have come here today," Fairchild said. "I didn't accomplish anything on my own, and there are so many people whose names should be on that building along with mine. The primary reason I do this is because of the students and the wonderful people who make up the dairy industry."

Fairchild recognized many people, including his UNH colleague Charles Schwab, his fraternity brothers at Alpha Gamma Rho, members of the state's dairy industry, friends and family. He especially thanked his wife Joanne, "my rock."

**Editors: A photo of Thomas P. Fairchild is available at <http://unhinfo.unh.edu/news/img/ag/fairchild300.jpg>.**

- 30 -