

Former Agricultural Economics Faculty

D. WOODS THOMAS (1925-1993)

Dr. D. Woods Thomas was reared on a Pennsylvania farm, served in the Navy in Asia during World War II, and then completed undergraduate and graduate programs at Pennsylvania State University, receiving his doctorate in 1954. He started his 39-year Purdue career as a teacher and researcher in Agricultural Economics. By his retirement in 1992, Woods had been both Associate Dean of Agriculture and the University Dean of International Programs.

Woods had substantial influence on international agricultural-development policy over the past two decades. He gained great satisfaction from the successful university development program at Vicosa, Brazil, which he helped develop and lead. His two years in Vicosa (1960-61) resulted in a lifelong dedication to Brazil by the whole Thomas family, which the Brazilians recognized by making him an honorary professor.

As Purdue's first Director of International Programs in Agriculture, he developed one of the nation's strong centers for development assistance. As the first Executive Director of the Board for International Food and Agriculture Development in Washington (1977-79 while on leave from Purdue), he was instrumental in creating USAID's highly successful collaborative research support program. This program, involving U.S. universities and overseas partners, continues to be regarded as one of the nation's important development undertakings.

