

Archivist Combs dies at age 82

"I never knew a person who accomplished so much with so little fuss," a faculty member once said of Dean William Combs.

Indeed, Dr. Combs was a gentle intellectual giant who served Michigan State for 41 years, including the last ten as director of the University Archives and Historical Collections.

Dr. Combs died on April 6 at the age of 82.

He came to MSU in 1938 and joined the faculty of the history and political science department. He was administrative assistant to former President Hannah from 1947 to 1956. In 1949 he was named dean of University services and became secretary of the faculty in 1959. Dr. Combs was also appointed assistant dean for continuing education in the college of Arts and Letters in 1970.

He was a 1924 graduate of Indiana University, (M.A. 1926) and received his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1933. Before coming to MSU, he had been a teacher and an administrator in Indiana public schools. He also taught at Berea College and the University of Tennessee.

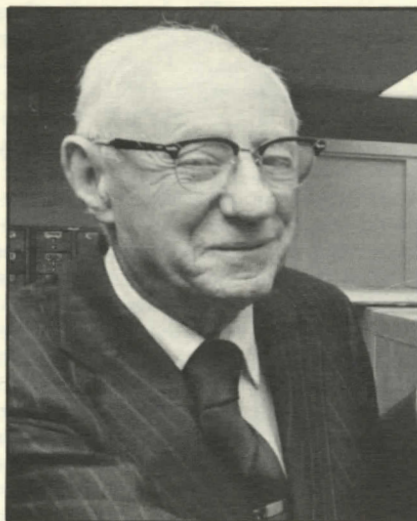
In tribute to Dean Combs, MSU Executive Vice President Jack Breslin and Dr. Herman King, director of academic services, wrote:

"When President Hannah decided, at the close of World War II, that it was time for Michigan State College to become a university, he assigned to Bill Combs the complex and difficult task of helping academic units to plan and implement the recruiting of a faculty that would command the respect of academicians everywhere. Bill's success in this endeavor is now history.

"When, in the late Fifties, it became obvious that a constitutional convention was needed, there were many persons who had ideas about laws that should be revised, but almost no one except Bill Combs knew the procedures that were required to make the revisions legal.

"As study director for the Governor's Constitutional Convention Preparatory Commission and later as co-director of research and drafting for the Michigan Constitutional Convention in 1961-62, Bill Combs guided the convention from the planning stage to the final printing of the Constitution. In the 17 years since that time, no one has questioned either the legality or the propriety of the Convention procedures."

During the past decade, however —



Combs: A gentle intellectual giant

ever since his retirement in 1968 as professor and Dean Emeritus of University services — Dean Combs' efforts were directed to his beloved Archives, even though the collection was tucked in an overcrowded basement corner of the Library.

His tiny staff, which included himself, an assistant director and a half-time specialist, plus two to four part-time students, was able to process about 300 cubic feet of material a year, while 2,500 cubic feet of material awaits attention.

Included in the collection are the personal and professional records, diaries, records, letters and other documents of the people who, over a period of nearly

125 years, built Michigan State University. Also contained are records of the passage of the Morrill Act and the growth of the Land Grant system as well as diaries and letters depicting rural Michigan in the 19th Century, plus about 500 collections of material of state and national historical interest.

In a rare display of exasperation a few years ago, he exclaimed to the MSU ALUMNI MAGAZINE: "What's the use in preserving the records unless you can use them?"

His solution was also his dream — an Archives building, similar to facilities constructed over the past five years at the University of Michigan and Wayne State University.

"The first thing I'd like to see in a new building is a decent place where people can work," he declared.

His old friend Jack Breslin has not been unsympathetic to these needs, but he has responded, "You have to remember that there are so many unmet needs on this campus. The question is, 'Which comes first?'"

"That's why we don't publicize ourselves too much," Dean Combs used to say. "With such a small staff and so little room to work, we can barely handle the requests we get now."

Then he would relent. "But Lordy, if people do have something that might interest us, I surely wish they'd call."

Lordy, yes. And maybe someday, Dean Combs' building will be more than a dedicated old man's dream. Something to be accomplished with a minimum of fuss. ■

Loub leaves MSU for Kansas State

Art Loub, MSU's director of development for the past ten years, has been appointed executive vice president of the



Loub

Kansas State University Foundation. He assumed the new position in early June.

Meanwhile, Robert Schneider, director of annual giving, was named acting director of development as of May 7.

Schneider has been director of annual giving since 1975, and was director of special projects for the Development Fund from 1971 to 1975. Previously, he was assistant director of MSU Placement Services.

Under Loub's direction, contributions to the Development Fund increased an-

nually from just over \$1 million in 1969 to more than \$4.5 million in 1978. Membership in the Presidents Club has grown from 61 to 800, while total donors have increased from 17,186 to 29,174.

"This did not come about because of the efforts of one person," admits Loub. "It was the resultant effort of many: Volunteer leaders, Development Council members, Development Fund staff, students and administrators."

In his new position at K-State, Loub is chief operating officer of the Foundation, an independent, non-profit corporation organized to raise private contributions.

Before coming to MSU, Loub was with the American Cancer Society which he joined in 1957 as assistant director of personnel at the society's national office. Later, he served as national field representative, director of field services for the Ohio Division, associate vice president of the Michigan Division and director of fundraising for the Society's Midwest area. ■