MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

Professor Virginia M. Burke (1916-1978)

Virginia M. Burke, Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, died April 7, 1978, apparently of a heart attack. Born in Hopedale, Massachusetts, she taught in Milwaukee for almost thirty-one years.

Miss Burke received three degrees: B.S. in Education from Worcester State Teachers College, Massachusetts, in 1938, with double majors in French and Latin; M.A. in English from Boston University, 1942; Ed.D. from Columbia University, 1956, where she was successively a Grace Dodge and an Adelaide Ayer Fellow. In 1946, after eight years of teaching in Massachusetts secondary schools, she joined the faculty of Wisconsin State Teachers College, Milwaukee. In 1956, at the time of the merger with the University of Wisconsin, she was accorded the rank of Associate Professor of English and in 1960 was promoted to Professor.

Virginia's approach to both her profession and her specific discipline was consistently innovative and creative. The quicksilver of her personality eluded categories and stereotypes: she always welcomed change as a challenging opportunity for growth. During the summers of 1966 and 1967 she directed two NDEA institutes at UW-M for in-service teachers, focusing the emphasis of curricula and staffs upon quality education for blacks, both Southern and Northern. In 1976-77 she worked to revitalize the English Department's graduate program in language and rhetoric for teachers, successfully offering the first English Graduate Institute in the summer of 1977 and laying plans for the Institute which she was to conduct in the summer of 1978. Throughout her long tenure as an English professor in Milwaukee, Virginia served on many curriculum committees and built up a
number of new courses. She is most recently remembered for her courses in
Black Literature, a rhetoric course in Non-Fiction Writing for Publication,
and a thematic course entitled Images of the Alcoholic in Literature.
Virginia's restless, witty, and synthesizing intellect often helped colleagues
and students to see aspects of rhetoric and literature in new relationships
and to build new structures to reflect the dramatic changes in the culture
beyond the campus and academia.

Professor Burke's participation in professional organizations, both state
and national, was continuous and distinguished. One of the organizers of the
Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, she held successively the posts of
second vice president, first vice president, and president of the Council,
was for five years a member of its Board of Directors, and served on numerous
committees. In the National Council of Teachers of English, she was a
Director at Large. She inaugurated and for three successive years edited the
NCTE Convention Newsletter, a service for which the Executive Committee of
the Council accorded her the highest praise. Professor Burke also consistently
took an active part in professional conventions by reading papers and serving
as panelist and consultant.

Professor Burke's book-length publications include: *Newsletter Writing and
Publishing* (Columbia University Bureau of Publications, 1956); *The New Century
Composition-Rhetoric*, ed. with Edward P. J. Corbett (Bobbs-Merrill, 1970); *The
Paragraph in Context* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1969); *Black Americans: Images in Conflict,*
ed. with Phyllis Banks (Bobbs-Merrill, 1970); and *A Various Language:
Perspectives on American Dialects*, ed. with Juanita V. Williamson (Holt,
Rinehart, and Winston, 1971). Her publications also include numerous articles
and reviews in journals such as *Wisconsin English Journal*, *NEA Journal*, *CLA*
Journal, English Education, Library Journal (for which she was recently reviewer in Black Literature), Black American Literature Forum, and College Composition and Communication; for the last two publications, she served for a number of years on the editorial boards.

In recognition of her academic and professional achievements, Virginia Burke was awarded many honors. She was elected to three honor societies: Kappa Delta Pi, Pi Lambda Theta, and Phi Kappa Phi. She is listed in numerous directories of persons distinguished in their respective fields: The Directory of American Scholars, Leaders in Education, Who's Who in American Education, Who's Who of American Women, Who's Who in the Midwest, Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans. In 1977 she was an invited member of The United States English Literature Goodwill People-to-People Delegation, composed of college English teachers, which visited five European nations.

Virginia Burke's activities during the last year, including attendance at a professional convention in Denver the week before her death, and the total list of her distinctive achievements are evidence of her success in attaining her goal, to be an active, creative, thoroughly professional teacher and scholar. Heeding the advice of physicians, Virginia conserved her energies for important professional activities and personal relationships. She transcended physical frailty by self-discipline and often, as a calculated risk, chose rewarding and stimulating experiences rather than extending her life by making it less worth living.

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE

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