MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

Assistant Professor Ralph Tillema

Members of the Music Department, friends from the University and the Milwaukee community were saddened by the passing of Ralph Tillema on August 20, 1985, at the age of 93.

A precocious youngster, he studied piano first with his mother and then with Hans Bruening. In 1912, Josef Lhevinne heard the young Tillema perform and was so impressed that he took him to Europe, where he studied first with Lhevinne's wife, Rosina, and then with Lhevinne himself. In addition to his work with the Lhevinnes, he also studied harmony and counterpoint with Wilhelm Klatte, a leading Berlin music critic. In 1915, following his return to the United States, Ralph Tillema was invited to teach piano at the Milwaukee Normal School by Otto Hiebsner, Head of the Department of Music. However, at times, Mr. Tillema had to leave his teaching career as he was sorely needed to run the family business, Tillema's Candies - in those days the place to go after the theatre and concerts. As this pressure eased, he was able to resume his teaching, not only at the Normal School, but at the Wisconsin Conservatory and the original Wisconsin College of Music. For several years, he was a music critic for the Chicago American and the old Wisconsin News. Additionally, he was very proud of his membership in the Milwaukee Press Club which made him a Knight of Bchemia in 1978.

Ralph Tillema was always interested in athletics, both as a spectator and a participant. While he was teaching at what had become the Milwaukee State Teachers College, he was appointed by President J. Martin Klotsche to serve as faculty representative to the athletic conference of the State Teachers Colleges. He not only was active in this capacity for a number of years, but also served as an advisor to the MSTC athletic fraternity.

Ralph Tillema continued performing and teaching for many years, through many changes in the School. A genial, friendly man who also liked to write poetry and to compose music, he shared many interests with his pupils. He was known for his kindness and concern and often helped students find jobs when necessary. Ralph Tillema became acquainted with many famous performers who came to Milwaukee. He was frequently asked to turn pages at their recitals which were usually played at the Pabst Theatre or the Milwaukee Auditorium.

After his retirement, Professor Tillema became active in the Retired Teachers Association and he frequently performed for the group. Up until the last few years of his life, he also presented recitals for the Scholarship Fund of the Music Department.

Professor Ralph Tillema enjoyed a long, active life and will be pleasantly remembered by all those who knew him and experienced his perceptive views and wit. His survivors include three sons, Ralph Jr., Peter, Dirk; one daughter, Kathryn Sweeney; as well as seven grandchildren.

Jane Heinemann
Gregoria Karides Suchy