MEMORIAL RESOLUTION FOR PROFESSOR ROBERT C. EIDT

Professor Robert C. Eidt was killed instantly, as was his wife, Rosemarie, while attempting an instrument landing in his Piper aircraft at Milwaukee's General Mitchell International Airport under unfavorable conditions on June 21, 1987.

Professor Eidt had a distinguished career in several distinct but inter-related and overlapping fields, all of which were related to Geography.

He was born at Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, on January 20, 1923, graduated from high school at Menomonee, Michigan, and was a student of chemical engineering at Michigan Technological University, on a State scholarship. During World War II he served in the Pacific Theater as a Lieutenant and meteorologist in the Weather Service of the U.S. Army Air Corps. In 1947 he received an A.B. in Meteorology from the University of California Los Angeles. After extensive field work in Columbia, South America, he was awarded the M.A. in 1951 and the Ph.D. in 1954, both from UCLA. Subsequently he served on the Geography faculties at the University of Minnesota, California State University Los Angeles, and in Peru as a Fulbright exchange professor. He joined the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee as Professor of Geography in 1967. During his twenty years at UWM he received numerous research grants and awards for work in the fields of South American settlement geography, including both pioneer and abandoned settlements, prehistoric settlements in the Middle East, and in the analysis of soils. He was recognized in each of these fields as a world authority. Professor Eidt's eminent stature throughout Latin America was of decisive importance in securing annual federal grants to support the research and instructional activities of UWM's Center for Latin America. He was a major contributor to the interdisciplinary programs of the Center and served on its Faculty Advisory Committee since 1975. During his last years at UWM he collaborated in the teaching of courses on the Geography of Wisconsin, and also on the Geography of Air Transportation. Concurrently he was the Organizer and Director of the State Soils Laboratory in Sabin Hall, specializing in analysis of urban soils. At the time of his death the local Milwaukee newspapers were running a series of feature articles (based upon his research), on the serious public health risks associated with lead contamination of local soils.

Professor Eidt's work was noteworthy in that it combined numerous interests, both professional and avocational. He was fully licensed as a commercial flight instructor and was a member of several official and unofficial aviation groups. He was also an enthusiastic licensed amateur radio operator, with a transmitter in his home enabling him to keep in frequent contact with his professional colleagues and friends in South America and elsewhere. As an example of his interdisciplinary interests and activities, he would fly - commonly in his own aircraft - over a relatively inaccessible area, as in South America and the Middle
East, recognize features from the air which could not easily be
detected on the ground but which indicated the possible existence
of abandoned settlements. He would then conduct expeditions to
the sites, transport soil samples from there for analysis in the
Sabin Hall laboratory, and thereby reconstruct the geography of
the abandoned settlements.

Professor Eidt took special pride in the accomplishments of
his students, many of whom are pursuing successful careers in
directions which he inspired. He was always ready and anxious
to be helpful, and was known for the personal interest which he
manifested in his students and colleagues, both at UWM and world-
wide.

The diversity of his geographically-related interests is
demonstrated by his last two writings, both of which are being
published posthumously. One is a basic article on Argentina for
an encyclopedia; the other a paper on the geographic aspects of
the annual experimental aviation meet - the world's most heavily
attended aviation event - in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, appearing in the
Proceedings of the Annual Applied Geography Conference.

Among his avocational interests were participation in
numerous community and religious activities. His religious
convictions were demonstrated by his frequent assertions that
his professional activities would result in benefits to humanity,
as, indeed, is the case in actuality.

He is survived by two sons, Emil of Milwaukee and Eric of
San Jose, California, and a sister, Arlene Rodriguez of Tucson,
Arizona.

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