MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
PROFESSOR HELEN L. SWAIN

Helen Swain began the Fall, 1992, semester at the UWM School of Nursing as she had for the past 24 years: encouraging, directing, and meeting with students, faculty and staff to start the school year. She left her office at noon September 30 to take sick leave; she was diagnosed with cancer of the pancreas on October 15. She died at home on December 16th, 1992, in the company of her husband, son, daughter, and son-in-law.

A native of Milwaukee, Helen graduated from the Milwaukee County Hospital School of Nursing in 1957. She subsequently earned a BS in nursing (University of Wisconsin), an MS in Educational Psychology and rehabilitation counseling (UWM) and her PhD in Educational Psychology (Marquette University). Being well-educated was important to Helen. Members of her family all have advanced degrees; and each has at least one degree from UWM.

Helen joined the UWM School of Nursing in 1968 as a specialist. By 1978 she was a full professor. As deans came and went, it was Helen who provided the stability as she gently, yet forcefully, influenced faculty and deans alike. Her contributions were so numerous and many times so subtle that no one person knows them all. We know we miss her, though it may take years to realize the full extent of our loss.

Helen taught 13 different courses during her time at UWM. They included content in psychiatric-mental health nursing, growth and development, thanatology, and sexuality. She also offered a course on death and grief in the honors program. Graduate students consistently sought out Dr. Swain as their major advisor. She was proud to have been the major professor for two of the first three graduates of the School of Nursing's PhD program in December, 1988.

One of Helen's abiding values was the place of a professional school within a university. She worked within both the school and the university to assure an honorable place where faculty met expected standards.

Helen served at least one term on every committee in the school. For a total of 18 years, Helen served as chair of the all school Executive Committee (before departmentalization) or chair of the Foundations of Nursing Department (after departmentalization). In addition, she co-authored the grant proposals that established the Center for Nursing Research and Evaluation and the doctoral program.

Dr. Swain also was a contributing citizen of the University. She served on the UWM Committee on the Academic Status of Women, the Division of Professions Executive Committee, the Executive Committee of the School of Allied Health, the Honorary Degrees Committee and on innumerable ad hoc committees. She did not shirk addressing the difficult, unpopular problems, or situations with uncertain futures. She was a member of the Athletic Board and
chaired the Title IX sub-committee in the 1970's; she served as a member of the sexual harassment grievance committee in the early 80's; and chaired the Faculty Appeals and Grievances Committee in 1990-1991.

Helen was nationally known in the area of death and grief. Her early research investigated a child's conceptualization of death. This work received extensive coverage in the professional literature and the popular press. In 1982, she was invited to participate in the design of the certification process and examination for death educators. In addition to publications in the area of death and dying, she produced two award winning videotapes.

Outside the university, Helen's interests included gardening, cooking, hiking, skiing, needle work. She and her husband were instrumental in starting the Lakewood Cross Country Ski Club and organizing the annual Nicolet Nor Ski cross country ski races.

Dr. Swain's warm personality and the courage of her convictions were motivating forces as she interacted with individuals and groups. She created an environment that facilitated cooperation, energized the faculty, and fostered excellence. She was truly dedicated to the nursing profession and the UWM School of Nursing. She prioritized the School's and the profession's needs above her own as she gave of her time, energy, and expertise. She lent stability to an organization through her concern for people, her honesty, straight forwardness, creativity, and a marvelous sense of humor.

In 1991-1992, Helen was selected by the National Endowment for the Humanities as a fellow at an Institute for Humanities and Medicine. At the time of her death, she was developing an elective course on nursing and literature pursuant to this fellowship.

It is particularly fitting that Helen received the National League for Nursing Linda Richards Award for creativity and pioneering spirit in 1989. Richards was an early nursing leader who was thus described in classic nursing history text:

"(She) took charge; after ... vicissitudes she brought the school to a state of excellence and stability. Her name became greatly honored by those who knew her. Her great abilities were enhanced by a beautiful nature." (Dock & Stewart, 1938)

Those words also describe Helen Swain. She is fondly remembered and painfully missed.

L. Glass, E. Murphy, on behalf of the faculty of the School of Nursing.