Emeritus Professor Willis Hagen

Willis Hagen died of complications of a stroke on Saturday November 6, 1993. He was born in Milwaukee on December 12, 1917. He is survived by his wife Bonnabelle, two daughters Valerie of Milwaukee and Diane Schmitt of Shorewood, and two sons Willis of Oshkosh and Mark of Milwaukee.

Will was an accomplished pianist at an early age and was an instructor in piano from 1933 to 1941. Later on he played piano professionally to support himself and his family while he did his undergraduate and graduate work.

He served in the Special Forces of the U.S. Army as a musician during World War II entertaining the troops across the country. At the end of the war he was eligible for the G.I. Education Bill and used those resources to finance his graduate education.

He completed a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting from UW-Madison in 1941 and on LLB from Marquette University in 1948 later renamed to a Juris Doctoris by Marquette. He qualified as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in 1951. He was employed as an accountant by Arthur Anderson and Co. in 1941.

Each year the Chairman of the Statistics Dept. at Madison selected two of the most outstanding students in statistics to work with him on grant supported research proposals. During Will's senior year he had the honor to be selected for this position.

Will began his teaching career as a part-time instructor in 1946 at the Department of Commerce of the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Extension. He also taught at Marquette University in 1948 as a part-time instructor. During this period he established a private law practice in which he continued as an active partner until 1961. In one landmark case he prepared and presented his client's case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

He progressed through the faculty ranks achieving the rank of Professor in 1965 in which capacity he served for 25 years until his retirement on July 1, 1990.

During his 44 years at UWM and its predecessor institution Will taught Accounting, Business Law, Legal Environment & Ethics to over 10,000 students. He was very proud of his teaching and was instrumental in the establishment of Chapters of Alpha Kappa Psi, the professional business fraternity, and of Beta Gamma Sigma, the honorary business fraternity.
Professor Hagen chaired the School's Executive Committee for eight years and served on 18 other committees in the School. When the School was formed in 1966 he was heavily involved in the design of the new Bachelor of Business Administration program by the Undergraduate Program Committee.

At the University level he served many years on the codification committee and was Parliamentarian of the Faculty and Faculty Senate in the 1970s.

Will coauthored Outlines of Business Law in 1960 with Professor Harry Schveck of UW Madison. He was a member of the Wisconsin Bar, US Tax Court Bar, U.S. Court of Appeals Bar and the U.S. Supreme Court Bar.

Professor Hagen was instrumental in advising and guiding his son Willis II to a career as a professor at UW-Oshkosh and so has perpetuated the contributions of the Hagen family to higher education in Wisconsin.

It will be a longtime before we will have another faculty member who devotes 44 years of service to the School. The Faculty and Staff are deeply appreciative of this measure of professional and collegial devotion and contribution.

Russell Fenske
Paul Fischer
William Kraus