MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
for
Associate Professor Emeritus Donald K. Gehrz

Donald K. Gehrz, Emeritus Associate Professor of Botany passed away on February 27, 1993 at the age of 78. He was preceded in death by his wife Helen "Dollie" (nee Hinkley) and is survived by his children Douglas and Diane, six grandchildren and other relatives.

Professor Gehrz received his Baccalaureate degree in 1935 and a Master’s degree in 1936, in Horticulture and Landscape Planning, from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. From 1936-1942 he was employed as a landscape designer and gardener with a local nursery and the U.S. Housing Authority on the Greendale and Parklawn Housing projects. He served at the rank of Captain in the U.S. Army Transportation Corps, 1942-1946. In 1946 he joined the staff of the UW Extension Center in Milwaukee as an instructor for introductory botany courses. After the establishment of the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, he continued teaching botany courses and served as Acting Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds during the initial merger period. In 1964 he was appointed Landscape Consultant for the University and also became Assistant Professor in the Department of Botany. He was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in Botany in 1972 and continued both teaching and landscape consulting until his retirement in 1979. After retirement he continued to serve on the Campus Beautification Sub-Committee until his health no longer allowed him to attend meetings.

As the Landscape Architect, Don Gehrz left a lasting imprint on the physical appearance of the UW-Milwaukee campus. He was responsible for the landscape design and planting plans for the campus. As buildings were added they were incorporated into his plans. Professor Gehrz believed that the nature of the campus suggested an informal design with an emphasis on native plant species. As a teacher he was also concerned that the campus include a diverse assemblage of trees and shrubs that would be valuable for visual impact and beauty as well as for instruction. The campus now supports over 100 species of trees and many different kinds of shrubs. In placing new trees he was always careful to consider both the ecological requirements and the aesthetic value of each species.
The less hardy were placed along the southern exposures of buildings and in the courtyard north of the Fine Arts Building. His plantings have included a number of species from southeastern and western United States as well as many unusual ornamental species from Europe and Asia.

Teaching about plants occupied the other 50% of his time. He introduced undergraduate students to plant science with applications to the urban environment. Students received practical experiences in horticulture, landscape planning and cultivation techniques, information that they would use throughout their lives, whether as a hobby or as a vocation. During his 34 years on the faculty he taught 10 different courses, most of them emphasizing relationships between plants and human wellbeing. Many persons with whom Professor Gehrz worked praised him highly for his cooperation, enthusiasm and excellence in teaching. Student testimonials were a contributing factor to his receiving an AMOCO Teaching Award in 1972.

Professor Gehrz also served the wider university and urban communities. He developed five extension courses, gave many outside lectures and served in various advisory capacities, thus enhancing the image of the University. He also assisted in the establishment of a landscaping program at the UW-Waukesha and in landscaping the UW-Sheboygan Center campus. During the course of his work he received numerous letters of commendation.

To his relatives, Professor Gehrz’s colleagues, associates and friends at UW-Milwaukee extend sincere sympathy and their appreciation for his services to this University.

Peter Salamun, Chairperson
John Blum
Leonard Skodinski