PROFESSOR EDWARD D. HOLST

Memorial Resolution

Many of us in the UWM family experienced a sense of personal loss last spring upon learning of the death of Edward D. Holst in Santa Barbara, California, where he had been living for the past two decades. Ed retired as Professor of English on 1 September 1971 after service to the university and its predecessor institutions spanning thirty-six years. For the next four years, he was a valued presence among the advisors of the College of Letters and Science before he settled permanently in Santa Barbara. The character of his professional life at UWM over four decades was summed up well by Dean Halloran in a letter to Ed upon his leaving his final university assignment: "You have served many, many freshman and sophomore students with warm, personal, and solid advice about their academic programs, just as you served many generations of English majors before your retirement. Advising is an essential, though usually unheralded, form of teaching. By continuing to advise students, you have continued to teach; and the College is much the better for the instruction you have undertaken since your formal retirement."

Edward Dement Holst was born in Milwaukee on August 14, 1906. He attended the University of Wisconsin, achieving Phi Beta Kappa and receiving the B.A. in 1931. He received the masters degree from the University of Chicago in 1933 and the doctorate from Wisconsin in 1941. His life in teaching began at the University of Wisconsin Extension Division in 1934. In 1938, he transferred to the Milwaukee Extension Division, where he served as Assistant to the Director in 1944-45 and as Assistant Director in 1946-47. He was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in 1947-48 and to the rank of Professor in 1961-62. The latter promotion came to him at UWM, where he was a member of the original English faculty when the university was chartered in 1956. In the early years of this campus, Ed acted as Director of the Summer Session and as Assistant Director of the Evening School. For several years he edited the UWM Catalog, an intricately detailed document which, in the pre-computer era, defied all but the most painstakingly accurate editorial talents. Ed's gifts for achieving order and quiet leadership were admired in other settings as well. In a letter to the (then) Provost J. Martin Klotsche in 1957, George Winchester Stone, the Executive Secretary of the Modern Language Association, commented on Ed's volunteer contributions to the recent annual meeting at Madison: "Professor Holst organized and directed the Information Center for the 2200 who attended our meetings, and did the best job in that difficult situation that I have witnessed in my 25 years of attending MLA meetings. With calm effectiveness, patience, and good humor he operated a bureau which all too often at crowded conventions falls to pieces." Ed's tenure as Chair of the English Department at UWM, from 1961 to 1964, reflected the same qualities; it was a model of effective departmental governance at a crucial time in the history of this campus.
Edward D. Holst, Memorial Resolution, p. 2

It was characteristic of Ed Holst that, upon leaving the position of Chair of his department, he was willing to serve as Associate Chair when asked to do so by his successors. For seven years, he managed the English schedule of classes, advised and encouraged our undergraduate majors, and superintended the work of countless committees. During that decade the department was expanding rapidly in the number of faculty members and therefore in curricular and programmatic breadth. It was due in great part to Ed's human understanding, patience, and personal diplomacy that this departmental expansion came about harmoniously and effectively. In his own field of interest as a scholar-teacher, British Literature of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, the department hired within the space of two years three younger faculty members, among whom was the writer of this memorial. Ed's interest in the welfare of younger colleagues was sincere and very generous: he gave them ready access to all the courses in his field, many of which he had designed and loved to teach; he responded positively and helpfully to their ideas for course revision and innovation; he transmitted to them his own real commitment to building in Milwaukee the strongest and most resourceful English department possible. Many of those who joined the department before Ed Holst's retirement have spent their academic careers at UWM, carrying on the work which Ed and his contemporaries began. His own special accomplishments as a scholar-teacher, administrator, and advisor are a distinctive legacy of permanent importance in the history of this university.