CHANCELLOR AND PROFESSOR EMERITUS MARTIN J. KLOTSCHE  
(November 28, 1907—February 4, 1995)  

Johannes Martin Klotsche died at his home in Oostburg, Wisconsin, on February 4, 1995. "Joe," as he was known to his many friends, devoted most of his life to the service of UWM, and played a vital part in its establishment as a university. Joe was born in Scribner, Nebraska, the son of a Lutheran minister. His father was on the faculty of Midland College in Fremont, Nebraska, and Joe entered that college at the age of 13. He received his A.B. at 17, and after obtaining an M.A. from the University of Nebraska, began doctoral work in history at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1928. He received his Ph.D. in 1931, and took up a position as a history instructor at Milwaukee State Teachers College. Joe was an enthusiastic teacher, and he became active in the general Milwaukee community, showing a particular interest in questions relating to international understanding, world peace, and Latin America.

Joe’s distinguished administrative career began in 1944, when he was appointed Dean of Instruction at the Milwaukee State Teachers College. Two years later, he became its president, and he continued in the same position when it became Wisconsin State College, Milwaukee, in 1951. Joe’s success as an administrator, and his increasing visibility in the public life of Milwaukee, was recognized in 1956 when, on the merger of Wisconsin State College and the Milwaukee Extension Center of the University of Wisconsin, he was appointed Provost (the chief administrative officer) of the new University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. His title was changed to Chancellor in 1965.

Between 1956 and his retirement as chancellor in 1973, Joe successfully presided over the transformation of what had been the small campus of the Wisconsin State College. The area of the campus was extended, an extensive new building program was begun, and, by the time Joe retired, he presided over a major university, with nearly 25,000 students, some 700 faculty members, and a variety of new buildings on its 90 acre campus. Stressing the distinctive ways in which an urban university could serve both its students and the community, Joe demonstrated an ability to adapt to a whole new academic environment. He provided leadership in a period of tumultuous growth, and weathered the controversies that beset most university campuses in the late 1960s. Through all of this he kept a balanced approach and a sense of humor while contending with multifarious campus and community interests.

Joe’s service extended well-beyond the bounds of the campus. His civic activities in Milwaukee and Wisconsin were numerous,
and he was active on community commissions appointed both by the governor of the state and the mayor of Milwaukee. His educational service included a term as president of the Association of Urban Universities, and for several years he was a member of the National Commission on Accrediting. But, in addition to his service on a variety of educational and planning committees, Joe always demonstrated a personal interest in organizations and movements that tried to promote understanding between individuals and between nations. For three years, he chaired the Program Committee of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and from 1949 to 1953 chaired its Educational Commission; in 1949, he was state chairman for the American Brotherhood Week; he served as director of Institutes of World Affairs in Geneva, Paris, and Connecticut; and he was active in Rotary International. His frequent international travel included extended assignments for the U.S. Office of Education in Germany, and for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Brazil.

Joe also found time to lecture widely, appear on radio and television as a moderator and commentator, and to write. From early in his career, he contributed articles on general questions of education and matters of public interest, and he published several books, including The Urban University and the Future of Our Cities (1966), The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee--An Urban University (1972), and Confessions of an Educator (1985). He was coauthor of The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee: A Historical Profile, 1885-1892 (1992). Among his many honors, Joe received honorary degrees from Midland College, Carthage College, Northland College, the University of Nebraska, the University of Missouri, and UWM. In 1978, the new UWM physical education center was named after him, and became known as the Klotsche Center.

Joe’s good sense and dedication to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee were never better demonstrated than in the years after his retirement from the position of chancellor. Until 1978, he taught enthusiastically in the Department of History, and in his last years, while in declining health, he continued to write. He also kept his optimism and his sense of humor, and retained his devotion to the university—giving his ardent support but never trying to interfere.

Joe’s wife Roberta, who for half a century was his constant companion and ally in his work, died in 1988. He is survived by his three sons; Allan, Charles, and John.

Chancellor John Schroeder
Professor Emeritus Frederick Olson
Distinguished Professor Reginald Horsman
Professor Walter Trattner