Memorial Resolution
Caren L. Wesson
(1951-1994)

Caren L. Wesson Ph.D., was Associate Professor in the Department of Exceptional Education in the School of Education at UWM. On September 27, 1994, she died at home in Bayside after a long and courageous battle with cancer. She was born in Mansfield, Connecticut on July 31, 1951. Caren was the wife of Dr. Robert King, whom she married in 1974. In addition to her husband, she is survived by her two sons, Austin and Travis King, her parents, her brother and nieces and nephews, her mother-in-law, and the many many friends and students who knew her and loved her.

Caren received her Bachelor's degree from Western Illinois University and her Master's degree from Western Michigan University. Her teaching career began in Milwaukee in 1973 where she taught in the Milwaukee Public Schools' program for learning disabilities at Morgandale Elementary School and was one of the first teachers in the field of learning disabilities in the MPS system. She continued teaching special education in school districts in Illinois and Michigan until 1978, when she entered the doctoral program in special education at the University of Minnesota. During her doctoral studies, she was actively involved in the Institute for Research on Learning Disabilities. In 1983 she received her Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, and before returning to Milwaukee in 1985 to take her position at UWM, Caren was an Assistant Professor of special education at Bowling Green State University in Ohio for one year.

At UWM her career was marked by her commitment to building bridges between teacher education and the improvement of schools. As UWM's faculty liaison to Oliver Wendell Homes Elementary School, one of five professional development schools, she provided new ideas, creative energy, and support for school restructuring. Caren was actively involved in the reform of special education practices, working directly with schools in several local districts to promote greater integration of students and disabilities. She took a leadership role in promoting similar integration in the teacher education program at UWM. She was an active participant in the Center for Teacher Education and worked closely with the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in UWM's initial attempts to integrate teacher preparation across special and general education.

Her research centered on alternative assessment strategies that strengthened the link between assessment and instruction. Her last work in this field was trying to understand the connections between curriculum-based measurement and new, alternative forms of performance-based assessment, including portfolios. She was the recipient of several federally funded grants to conduct this program of research, and her work has been published widely in national professional education journals. She was coeditor of the book Special Needs Students in the School Library-Media Center, which was published by Greenwood Press in 1995.
Caren was an active member in the Council for Learning Disabilities, where she edited the Collaboration column of the organization's journal, *Learning Disabilities Forum*. She was also an active member of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children. She was a regular field reviewer for *Teaching Exceptional Children*, one of the two major journals of the International Council for Exceptional Children.

When her illness forced her to retire from the university in 1993, the Caren Wesson Collaborative Team Award was established in her honor to recognize teams of general and special education teachers whose collaborative efforts improve educational opportunities for all students. This award is a fitting tribute not only to Caren's work, but also to the way she lived her personal life—her caring, her ability to share, her thoughtfulness, and her deep commitment to her friends and family.

Marleen Pugach, Maryann Fitzgerald, and The Department of Exceptional Education