MEMORIAL RESOLUTION FOR PROFESSOR ERNEST A. BELLIS

Professor Ernest Bellis entered this world on August 31, 1908, at Liverpool, England and departed on May 4, 1996, when he succumbed to the ravages of cancer. Of the 87 years and 8 months that Professor Bellis lived on this planet, he was associated with UWM or its predecessor institution a total of 63 years. He graduated from Wisconsin State College (merged with UW-system in 1956) as president of the graduating class. After teaching for two years in Hartland, Wisconsin public schools, he returned to his Alma Mater, serving as Chairman of the Chemistry Department from 1951 to 1956.

Professor Bellis served as a member of the "Committee of 30" which organized UWM from the merger of the Wisconsin State College and Milwaukee Extension of the UW system. As a member of the much expanded Chemistry Department of UWM, he was instrumental in its development into one of the strongest and most vital departments in the University. During the nineteen years "Ernie" professed chemistry in the new department, he taught thousands of students in a variety of courses. However, the course which was of most interest and concern to him was Chemistry 100. This course was originally taught for elementary education students but became so popular that he was asked to open it to L&S students. Upon doing this, the course quickly expanded to one of the largest courses in the Department, enrolling over 500 students per semester. Since Ernie had taught in the public secondary schools, he was sympathetic to poorly prepared freshmen who were not ready for General Chemistry, and Chemistry 100 was recognized as the course which provided the foundation necessary for success in further study of chemistry. Ernie was especially proud of his Chemistry 100 students who went on to major in chemistry. Ernie was always willing to give fully of his time, energy and knowledge to his students. His devotion and vision of the future was instrumental in the success of his students.

Beyond the Department, Professor Bellis will be remembered for his role in determining the present shape and character of the campus. As chairman of a number of building committees, Ernie was instrumental in the planning of many of our academic buildings. He also played a leadership role on the Physical Environment Committee in making sure that the individual parts fitted into the total unit.

A former Dean described Ernie's manner during the decades in which the volume and rate of construction on the campus was explosive as "quiet, but firm." These words, "quiet, but firm", describe Ernie's method of operation. This was true in his relations with students, faculty, administration or anyone else. That this modus operandi was eminently successful for Ernie was attested to by his success in helping other people with their problems, whether the problem was academic, financial, personal or something else. Ernie was always available, and frequently there was a line of people at his office door.

Finally, no memorial resolution would be complete without mentioning Ernie's sincere patriotism. Although he was born in England and reared in western Canada, Ernie loved his adopted country intensely. During World War II, he volunteered his services to the U.S. Navy and spent several years teaching chemical warfare at a number of eastern universities, including Harvard.

The University and the country have lost a sincere and honorable man. May his memory long remain embedded in the hearts of his colleagues, friends and descendants. Certainly he will not be forgotten by the writers of the resolution.

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