MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

VINTON W. BACON

Vinton Bacon died on July 6, 1997, at his home in Mill Creek, Washington, at the age of 80. He served as Professor of Civil Engineering at UWM from 1970 to 1983.

He is survived by his wife, Margaret, three sons and a daughter.

Vinton was born and raised in Estelline, South Dakota. He graduated from the University of California-Berkeley with a B. S. degree in civil engineering (sanitary option) and headed his class in 1940.

Vinton had a meritorious career as a professional engineer prior to joining the faculty of the UWM. He worked with a variety of agencies, all with a concern for a clean environment. He worked in California for the Los Angeles County Sanitation District, the Orange County Sanitation District, and the East Bay Municipal Utility District. For six years he was head of the water pollution control program in the State of California, and for six years he worked on the air and water pollution control problems of the pulp and paper industry in the states of Oregon and Washington. He headed one of the largest pollution control agencies in the world for seven years as the General Superintendent of the Metropolitan Sanitary District of Greater Chicago. He played a major role in the development of the deep tunnel concept for dealing with sewer overflow problems and the pollution of Lake Michigan. This concept has been implemented in Chicago and Milwaukee and led to a significant improvement in the quality of Lake Michigan waters. The Chicago project was named the Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement of 1986 by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

He left Chicago to join the faculty of Civil Engineering at UWM in 1970 and stayed until his retirement in 1983. He played a major role in the development of environmental engineering programs at UWM and in the promotion of environmental quality in Milwaukee and the State of Wisconsin.

In 1957 Vinton was given the Research Prize for wastewater reclamation by the American Society of Civil engineers. In 1967 he was given the Civil Government Award by the American Society of Civil Engineers. In 1966 he was named Construction’s Man of the Year by Engineering News-Record; and in 1969 he was elected to a member of the National Academy of Engineering. In 1976 he was elected as the second Honorary Member of the Institute of Water Resources in the American Public Works Association. His professional papers exceed eighty in number.

Between 1971 and 1976, Vinton served as Chairman of the Wisconsin Governor’s Solid Waste Recycling Task Force and served as one of the seven members of the newly created Wisconsin Solid Waste Recycling Authority between 1974 and 1976.
In 1982, he was appointed a Commissioner to the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage Commission, representing seventeen suburban areas, and in 1983 he was reappointed for a three-year term. In 1983 he was appointed by the International Joint Commission (Canada and the United States) as Chairman of the U. S. Section of the Science Advisory Board for a three year term.

In 1985 the American Academy of Environmental Engineers presented to him the Gordon Maskew Fair Award, describing Vinton as "one of the world’s most distinguished educators and inspiring leaders in the environmental field.”

He was a Fellow in the American Society of Civil Engineers, a Diplomat in the American Academy of Environmental Engineers, and he has served as chairman of the Environmental Engineering Intersociety Board. Additionally, he held membership in some ten professional and technical societies. He was a registered engineer in the states of California, Illinois, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin, and Iowa.

Faculty and students at UWM knew Vinton as an approachable mentor, friend, and colleague, who possessed a heroic set of ethical principles, a strong dedication to a clean environment, and a great love for teaching. He also provided students with a sense of professionalism and inspired them towards a commitment to use their engineering skills to help create a clean environment. Although Vinton spent only the latter part of his career at UWM, he made a lasting contribution to UWM’s programs and reputation in civil engineering.

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