MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

CHARLOTTE A. WOLLAEGER

Charlotte A. Wollaeger who served as Dean of Women for 20 years at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and predecessor institutions, died on December 15, 1995 at age 88.

Charlotte was a Milwaukee native, born on March 14, 1907, and was the oldest of five children. Her parents spoke German in their home so that the children developed proficiency in both English and German. As a child, she attended the "Experimental School" which later became the Campus Elementary School, now the Kunkle Center housing the UWM Child Care Center. She graduated from Milwaukee University School in 1928.

Charlotte received her baccalaureate degree from the University of Wisconsin--Madison where she was a drama major and had minors in both English and German. At Madison she was elected to Mortar Board and Phi Kappa Phi and served the senior women's society, Blue Dragon. Following her university graduation, she taught at high schools in Wausau, Wisconsin; Downers Grove, Illinois; and Haverford, Pennsylvania before returning to Shorewood High School to teach English, speech and drama. She left Shorewood to pursue a master's degree at Teachers College-Columbia University, and received her degree in student personnel and guidance in 1941. She was then tapped by Lawrence College (now Lawrence University) to become their Dean of Women, and she served there from 1942 to 1948. Nathan Pusey, later Harvard's president, was the President of Lawrence College during Charlotte's tenure there. In 1948, President J. Martin Klotsche persuaded Charlotte to join Milwaukee State Teachers College and attend to the needs of the 1400 students, mostly young women, preparing for the teaching profession.

When Charlotte left the deanship 20 years later, UWM had experienced its greatest growth spurt with the number of students more than ten times the student body that awaited Charlotte on her arrival. Her focus always was the social and residential life of the campus, and campus dorms, sororities and a calendar replete with social events were her primary venues. She truly enjoyed working with students and treasured her associations with faculty and professional colleagues as well. In a speech to sorority advisors in 1962, Charlotte revealed her view of the rewards of her chosen profession. She said, "Observing the changes for the better that occur in individuals is one of the greatest rewards in working with young people. When a girl develops from an awkward, sometimes defiant, aloof individual into a friendly self-assured, gracious, well-groomed, thoughtful person, one has a feeling that perhaps...you personally may have had a tiny role to play in bringing about this result".

Charlotte was a grand lady when that was still a status to which women aspired. Barbara Michaels, one of her former students, with whom she had a 40 year friendship and who is a past president of the UWM Alumni Association, described Charlotte as a person with charm, grace, a positive attitude, and interest in others.
Charlotte was active in the Milwaukee community, serving on the boards of the YWCA, Zonta and the Milwaukee Alumni Club of Mortar Board. Mortar Board had a special status in Charlotte's affections. She served as district representative for this region, and almost singlehandedly carried on the arduous work to establish a senior women's honor society at UWM, named Honoratae, and have it accepted as a full chapter of Mortar Board at UWM in 1975. Charlotte recalled that her Dean of Women predecessor had a note waiting when she arrived in 1948. The note detailed unfinished business for Charlotte to tackle, and establishing a Mortar Board chapter topped the list. Twenty-seven years later, that goal was achieved and only because of Charlotte's determination to make it happen. For the past 21 years, several hundred of UWM's best and brightest students have received this prestigious national recognition thanks to Charlotte's efforts.

Upon leaving her Dean of Women post in 1968, Charlotte co-founded with former Registrar Irene Bozak, a student help office. Together they were able to utilize their many years of knowledge and experience at UWM to assist individual students with the knotty problems they faced in the now large and less personal university.

Charlotte Wollaeger was one of the most universally revered members of the university community. When she retired in 1972, she was named Professor Emerita by the Board of Regents. The UWM honor society of Phi Kappa Phi began to award its scholarships in her name. In 1958, Lawrence College conferred on her an honorary master's degree with the following citation:

"Yours has been a very special gift - to advise without domination and to discipline without tyranny. You have made their lives stronger, more effective, more civilized. You have brought order and measure to the house of learning."

This was her legacy to UWM as well. She was a person whose professional standards and personal demeanor were worthy of emulation, and she was a superb role model for students before that was a popular concept. She personified dignity, grace, compassion, sincerity, and her imprint was on all who had the privilege of being touched by her.

Carmen Witt