

### Memorial Resolution for Ralph Hanson

A gentle man, a gentleman; a police officer and an accomplished visual artist; a man with compassion and concern but with the ability and strength to be tough and tenacious when circumstances so dictated; a most private person whose chosen profession and the vagaries of history placed him in one of the most public of positions...

Ralph Hanson, Director of Police and Security for the University of Wisconsin-Madison, died on January 21, 1996 at the age of 67. He was born September 25, 1928 in Houlton, Maine. Prior to his assuming the position of Chief of Police for the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he served for ten years as a member of the Maine State Police where he was Director of the Traffic Bureau, and he served for three years as Ground Safety Director for the United States Air Force at Truax Field in Madison. In 1965, he was appointed to the position of Chief of Police for the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

This man from Maine brought with him an array of wonderful qualities that would continue to hold him in good stead in his new position... tolerant and flexible, warm and caring, easy going, a gentle sense of humor, along with the ability to laugh, even at himself, supportive, unpretentious, unconditional in his loyalty, committed to what we know as the simple life, family centered, and, most importantly, possessing an unlimited reservoir of good common sense.

During the tumultuous years of the anti-war protests, his extraordinarily difficult duty was to preserve the peace as well as honor the rights of the protesters. It was a fine line, and still is. But Ralph Hanson fulfilled these responsibilities with dignity and resolve. He was well informed on social issues, thoroughly committed to free speech, and equally committed to reducing the levels of conflict. He understood the role of dissent in a democratic society.

In 1970, showing a level of sensitivity and insight not yet shown by many, Ralph Hanson, in a speech before a civic group in Madison, reminded his audience that colleges and universities must become more relevant to current issues of the day,---peace, war, social progress, and discrimination. He spoke eloquently of the need for more faculty, staff, and students to become involved in the University decision-making process. He encouraged those in the community who had been silent to speak out and be heard.

He accepted his fallibility, and always remained open to suggestion and criticism. He once said that "criticism for

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me is a good thing." He was always looking for ways to learn and to improve. He was not content to simply resort to the traditional police response of investigation, arrest, and prosecution. He took full advantage of the University's resources, seeking out experts or spending time in the library in search of studies that would better inform him about the nature of the problems so that he might deal with these problems before they developed. He was committed to correcting rather than simply punishing misconduct. At heart, Ralph was a teacher, although his venue was not the traditional classroom.

In 1989, Ralph Hanson fulfilled one of his dreams,--the design and construction of a new modern police facility for his staff and program. The new facility was lovingly called "the house that Ralph built."

In 1991, Ralph Hanson was granted Emeritus status by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Chancellor, noting in her letter of recognition that, "you have provided over 25 years of extraordinary service to the institution."

Shortly after his death, state flags were ordered to be flown at half-mast by the Governor of Wisconsin "as a mark of respect for Ralph Hanson."

In addition to his many friends, Ralph Hanson is survived by his wife, Lucile, and three sons and one daughter.

With characteristic humility and modesty, Ralph Hanson, at the time of his retirement, said, "There is a time to come, and a time to go. I would like to believe that in my tenure, I have in some small way made a difference."

Ralph Hanson did indeed make a difference, and is sorely missed by his many friends and colleagues.

#### Memorial Committee

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