

Memorial Resolution – Susan (Susie) French Brandscheid**December 25, 1930 – October 25, 2018**

I submit before this body the following memorial resolution for my esteemed colleague and friend, Susie Brandscheid, who passed away this past September 11th after a long illness. Susie was a strong and active catalyst for the ‘community’ within the School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC), where she served in various capacities for more than 30 years, mostly as the department administrator and graduate student coordinator, beginning in 1969. All of us in this room can relate to this comment from UW-Madison journalism professor Lew Friedland “People (like Brandscheid) are the unsung heroes of UW. Without them, simply nothing would get done.”

It is gratifying to have the opportunity to commemorate her many contributions to the UW-Madison community because so much of what she did was behind-the-scenes, in service of no less than 8 department directors. Although Susie did have defined job duties, former director Jim Hoyt recalls that “during my ten years as Director...she was always so willing to take on additional tasks...(t)hey seemed to grow exponentially during those ten years, from 1981 to 1991.” Susie’s responsibilities ranged ‘(f)rom overseeing the office, the Timetable, assisting the Director, staffing the graduate committee, advising graduate students, assigning TAs, managing UW Foundation accounts, dealing with facility issues (to) cutting through bureaucracy with the College and the Graduate School, etc., etc.’ He went on to say that “when I began to notice how many nights and Sundays she was spending at the office, I would occasionally ask which of her jobs she would like to assign to someone else, to give her a little more time. She always refused, saying she enjoyed what she was doing and would let me know if and when it became too much. I joked on a number of occasions that whenever she retired it would be impossible to write her position description because she seemed to simply do whatever was needed.” In fact, Susie’s responsibilities were divided between two full-time positions when she retired.

Susie was invaluable to the department because she knew how to navigate the university’s ever-evolving and sometimes byzantine procedures and requirements. Former SJMC director Robert Drechsel remembers that “Susie was an amazing behind-the-scenes trouble shooter and problem solver — smart, shrewd, tenacious and possessing an astonishing capacity for work. In that role she helped incalculable numbers of students, staff and faculty as well as directors and the School as an administrative entity.” Another former director, Sharon Dunwoody, flatly states that “she was THE institutional memory for the front office for many years, making her indispensable to directors and staff.”

Faculty Associate Deb Pierce observes that Susie was “an instrumental and integral part of our entire department. Not only did she play significant roles for the graduate program and the director, she felt it was part of her personal mission to champion the contributions of the administrative and academic staff to others in our department and within university administration. She successfully navigated the ins and outs of university regulations and leveraged her long-time relationships with key university administrators to help position SJMC for success.” Pierce went on to say, “She was a friend of the university, our school and those in our department. She is missed and lovingly remembered by many.”

Journalism Associate Professor Katy Culver recalls that “grad students often spoke of Susie’s open door and the interest she showed in their lives, both academic and personal. She helped many through difficult times and was always the first in line to celebrate their achievements.” She was also an avid fan of good food who worked at sharpening her skills as a chef and a baker. She could be counted on to bring a Kringle into the office at least once per month and to make huge meals for graduate student

orientations and parties. Culver recalls that her “go-to dish was called “Chicken Chorale.” When she was trying out a new cake or cookie recipe, she would bring her practice rounds to the 5th floor lounge and use everyone as her test kitchen.”

Susie’s Memorial service was held in September. Colleagues, family and friends from across the state and beyond travelled to Madison to show their respects. She would have been shocked by the turnout, and at the impact she’d made on people. Her quiet competence, engagement, compassion and generosity had a profound effect on countless others. As an academic staff member, Susie epitomized the principles associated with this role. She worked daily to contribute to our essential duties and wholly embraced the academic mission. Our academic community was honorably served by Susie, and we’re decidedly poorer in her absence. May our memories of her help to reinforce what’s positive in our shared mission.

Respectfully submitted by Dave Black, Administrative Program Manager III, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin - Madison