

Memorial Resolution of the Academic Staff Assembly of the University of Wisconsin-Madison

On the death of Evelyn Mitchell Howe, Lecturer College of Letters & Science University of Wisconsin-Madison

On July 1, 2010, at the age of 94, Evelyn Mitchell Howe passed away. Remarkable to the many who knew her was that she died a mere two days after her husband, Herbert Howe, passed away at the age of 98. For decades, Eve and Herb were two of the best-known and best loved teachers and “characters” on the UW-Madison campus. Although they were together in life and death, Eve’s contributions were distinctive from his, and she is warmly remembered both for who she was and for what she contributed to the lives of her students.

Evelyn was born in England in 1915. She received both her B.A. and M.A. from the University of London and then her Ph.D. from the UW-Madison in 1946. As a faculty wife, Eve was never allowed to be on tenure track. As reported in Wisconsin Week, “she began teaching at a time when few universities, including UW-Madison, offered positions to faculty spouses.”

Not to be stopped in her scholarly pursuits, Eve had a long and productive career as a lecturer in the Integrated Liberal Studies Program. She taught interdisciplinary courses on ancient art and archeology and also led seminars on satire and on the British poets. Up until her retirement in 1982, she played a second influential role in the ILS Program as well, serving as the advisor to those students earning a certificate in the program.

The students and advisees of Evelyn Howe thought the world of her! With little prompting, many can still relate stories about Eve. For example, a former student of hers, now a professor on campus, still loves to quote what Evelyn wrote on his paper in response to his answer on a test: "Vague, but a valiant attempt to veil ignorance." Now as a teacher himself, he still quotes this all-time favorite comment.

Eve lived and taught by example, and this continued to have a great effect on her students in the later years of her life. After she and Herb retired, the two of them were still often seen around the ILS Meiklejohn House. They sometimes showed up to collect great bags of aluminum cans to take away for recycling, doing this at a time when recycling was not nearly as convenient as it is today. Because she and her husband choose to live with no car, walking or bicycling everywhere, they were role models to many. They sought to live a simple lifestyle and were strong supporters of several conservation groups.

Eve is survived by her three children, Evelyn (Charles) Payson, Herbert M. Howe Jr. and Emily Howe (Richard) Wilson; five grandchildren, Lavinia (David) Klein, William Payson (Melissa Luck), John (Lisa) Payson, Abigail Wilson and Christopher Wilson; and seven great-grandchildren, Brandon, Rebecca and Ethan Klein and Nathan, Ben, Callie and Charlie Payson.

Eve is warmly remembered by many on campus, but especially by those of us in the ILS Program who knew her, worked side-by-side with her, and appreciated her dedication, keen wit, and amazingly diverse talents.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Middlecamp, Chair, Integrated Liberal Studies Program