

Memorial Resolution – Mercile J. Lee**December 25, 1930 – October 25, 2018**

It is with sadness that I submit the following resolution for my respected friend and colleague, Mercile J. Lee. Mercile passed away on October 25, 2018 after a long illness. She unquestionably has left a legacy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and an indelible mark on the greater Madison community.

Growing up in the segregated south, Mercile's parents instilled in her the values of service to others and education. She pursued her bachelor of arts degree in education and philosophy at Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia followed by her master of arts and doctoral degrees from Hartford Seminary Foundation in Hartford, Connecticut. Before coming to Wisconsin, Mercile worked as an advisor at Virginia Union University; a student services administrator at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia; and as a professor of Psychology and Counseling at Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kansas. Additionally, Mercile served on the Board of Trustees at Ottawa University. Her impact was so profound that upon retirement she was given the status of Life Member of their Board of Trustees.

Mercile served in several capacities at UW-Madison, from assistant dean of students to assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs. During that time, she saw first-hand the frustration and isolation felt by students from underrepresented groups on campus. She knew that with nurturing and support, these promising students could realize their potential and excel on campus. By collaborating with others across campus, she began a strategic campaign to win the support of the university's senior leadership. Eventually her vision came into fruition with the creation of the Chancellor's Scholarship Program in 1984. Five years later, to address the growing number of academically promising ethnic minority and underrepresented students applying to UW-Madison, she founded the Powers-Knapp Scholarship Program. Both programs were, and continue to be, imbued with the philosophy of "excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service." Starting with just six students in the first Chancellor's Scholars and 33 in the first Powers-Knapp cohorts, the two programs now have more than 542 Scholars enrolled at UW-Madison. As of 2018, more than 2,600 students have benefitted from the programs. The programs will now fall under a new umbrella, aptly named The Mercile J. Lee Scholars Program.

Off campus, Mercile's engagement in the community included work on the boards of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dane County, the Urban League of Greater Madison and the Housing Ministries of American Baptists in Wisconsin. She also co-founded the Madison/Dane County Martin Luther King Jr. Coalition. For her leadership and service, Mercile received numerous awards including the Rotary Club of Madison's Manfred E. Swarsensky Humanitarian Award, the YWCA Madison Women of Distinction Leadership Award, the UW-Madison Outstanding Woman of Color Award and the City-County Humanitarian Award in honor Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

A celebration of life was held in Mercile's honor at the Edgewater hotel on November 29, 2018. In addition to friends, colleagues and family members who attended the event, more than 150 Mercile J. Lee Scholars who are currently enrolled at UW-Madison came to pay their respects. Dr. Mercile J. Lee stood as a giant in vision, education, and service. Her extraordinary life's work left a giant footprint in the lives of students, colleagues, neighbors, friends and family. This impact will remain in the hearts and minds of all who knew and loved her.

Respectfully submitted by Gloria V. Hawkins, Ph.D., Assistant Vice Provost and Director of The Mercile J. Lee Scholars Program and Deputy Vice Chancellor Patrick J. Sims