

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS EDWARD JAMES BLAKELY, JR.

Edward James Blakely, professor emeritus, School of Business, was known universally as Jim. He grew up in rural southwest Iowa. His grandfather had immigrated from North Ireland, County Fernanagh, and settled the farm in 1878 where, fifty years later, Jim lived as a boy. These basic facts are important in understanding Jim Blakely. His abundant common sense, gentle impatience with self-serving nonsense and quiet industry all derive from the early farm experience. His humor, at times so subtle that it was lost on his listeners, arose from his ethnic background. His skill, and abiding interest, in sports, had roots that go back to the Randolph, Iowa High School basketball and baseball teams and the Fremont County free throw shooting contest.

He was born in Omaha, Nebraska on December 2, 1923, son of Edward James and Hulda (Focht) Blakely. He died in Madison, Wisconsin on February 7, 2001. The intervening seventy-seven years were marked by the Great Depression, World War II, the cold war and the social movements of the past one-half century. Jim Blakely took part in all of it.

He graduated from Randolph High School in 1941. After working in a Douglas Aircraft war plant, he served in the Navy V-12 program from 1943 to 1946. The V-12 program sent him first to the Case School of Applied Science, Cleveland, Ohio and then to Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Following his naval service, he studied at Denver University where he earned his bachelor's degree in 1948 and master's degree in 1949. In May 1948 he passed the Certified Public Accountant examination and in 1949 he was appointed assistant professor of accounting at Notre Dame University. In the fall of 1952 he became an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, serving under the School of Business founding dean, Faye Elwell. During a leave for fifteen months in 1954 and 1955, he completed the course work for a Ph.D. degree at the University of Texas, Austin. The degree was awarded in 1961. In 1967, the second dean, School of Business, Erwin Gaumnitz asked Jim to become associate dean. He held this position until his retirement in 1991. During this remarkable period of service, he also served two academic years and one semester as acting dean. He also served with Deans Bock, Hickman and Policano in the associate dean position.

Jim's accounting background contributed to his acumen in budgetary matters. Beyond that, some of the achievements of which he was most proud were the increases in the enrollment of women and ethnic minority students in the School of Business.

During his years as associate dean, he always had a regular teaching assignment. He introduced innumerable undergraduate students to the complexities of cost accounting and helped many graduate students deepen their understanding of financial accounting theory and practice. Students sensed Jim's commitment to teaching excellence and enjoyed their learning experiences with him.

Because of his long service, few Madison faculty members have touched the lives of so many Wisconsin students. In that long line of students stretching back almost fifty years there are many who benefitted from his instruction, a word of encouragement in moments of disappointment, or a dose of Blakely realism when sunk in self-pity. These students, now alumni, recall vividly these life-changing encounters. They became invaluable friends of the School of Business as it expanded its alumni and fund raising activities.

The competitive streak in Jim Blakely, evident at Randolph High School, appeared later when he played golf and bridge. He was a life master of the American Contract Bridge League.

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To Jim Blakely business was not just an academic subject. During the many years he lived in Madison, he almost continually had a consulting or financial interest in a local enterprise. In recent years he was active in developing biotech firms, organized to realize the commercial potential of scientific advances.

On September 8, 1946 Jim and Eleanor Larson were married in Ayrshire, Iowa. They shared fifty-four years. Their son Jeffrey Alan Blakely is an archaeologist who works in the middle east and North America. He teaches an annual course on biblical archaeology in the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies. Eleanor continues to live in Madison.

A host of colleagues and former students join in saying thank you, Jim Blakely.

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