

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS FRANCIS D. HOLE

On Tuesday, 15 January 2002, Francis D. Hole gently slipped away from us, aged 88 years, leaving the world richer for his passage through it. Emeritus professor of soil science and geography at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he was one of the great American pedologists and one of the greatest teachers of pedologists. His passion for soil led him to become the premier "ambassador of soils" and, with his spiritual, soulful, and artistic nature, certainly the undisputed poet-laureate-of-soils.

By sense of touch the feet assess
The nature of the wilderness
Of earth beneath. Yet human speech
Cannot express what feet can teach.
-- *Francis Hole*

Francis Doan Hole was born August 25, 1913, in Muncie, Indiana. He received a B.A. in geology and biology from Earlham College in 1933, an M.A. in French from Haverford College in 1934. He spent several years teaching in preparatory schools in the Philadelphia area before coming to the University of Wisconsin, where he earned a Ph.D. in soil science and geography in 1943.

Raised as a Quaker, Dr. Hole was a conscientious objector and was conscripted by the U.S. government during World War II, serving in civilian public service camps in 1944-46. Hole remained devoted to nonviolence throughout his life and actively promoted peace, non-violence, civil rights, social justice and preservation of the environment.

Dr. Hole joined the UW faculty in 1946 as assistant professor in the Department of Soil Science and became the state geologist with the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey. In 1967, he also joined the Department of Geography.

He published widely, including over 50 technical publications and numerous Wisconsin county soil surveys. He co-authored a standard textbook "Soil Genesis and Classification," still in use in its fourth edition. He published another widely used text, "Soils of Wisconsin," accompanied by a statewide map of Wisconsin soils.

Dr. Hole's proudest accomplishment was the enactment of legislation in 1983 designating Antigo silt loam as the Wisconsin State Soil, the culmination of a long and sometimes difficult campaign.

In 1974, Dr. Hole received the Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Teaching – the university's top teaching award. Two particularly popular courses he taught were "Geography of Wisconsin" and "Soils of the World." He retired in June 1983 but remained active in education. As an emeritus professor, he lectured to any interested audience, from preschoolers to academics to retirees, about humanity's stake in the soil, usually accompanying himself with poetry, soils songs, and classical music on his violin.

Dr. Hole was a life-long Quaker who took his diagnosis of prostate cancer in 1996 as a spiritual signal: "It's a love letter from the Divine," he told a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reporter. "And I turn to the Divine and I say, 'It's about time I paid attention to You.'" He had for years appended the honorary title, "TNS – temporarily not soil" to his name, a sign of a bond that ties us all.

(continued)

A New Psalm (inspired by Psalm 19)

The earth beneath the feet of all runners and walkers
Declares the glory of God, our Cherisher!
The roots of trees and grasses, the mole
And all organisms in the rich realm of darkness...
These are God's handiwork.
Our life in the realm of sunlight
Is upheld by the vital earth. God made it so.
All creatures that live on the land
 depend on the soil,
Which is like a strong parent,
Providing for all peoples and
All creatures that live above the waters.
Praise be to the holy ground that is softly under
 our feet;
Praise be to God who has blessed the living carpet
That He has spread for our walking,
In the days of our living in the flesh,
And into which our rich residues will return.
-- *Francis Hole, TNS*

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