

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITA GERMAINE BRÉE

Germaine Brée, professor emerita of the Department of French and Italian and the Institute for Research in the Humanities, died on September 22, 2001 in Winston Salem, North Carolina. She was born on October 2, 1907 in France. She received the Licence from the University of Paris in 1930, the Diplôme d'Etudes supérieures in 1931 and the Agrégation in 1932. She was also a graduate student at Bryn Mawr, 1931-32. She taught in Algeria from 1932 until 1936 when she came to the United States. She was naturalized as a U.S. citizen in 1952.

Professor Brée taught at Bryn Mawr, 1936-52, was chairman of the Department of French, Washington Square College, New York University, 1953-1960, and was head of the Romance Language Department, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, New York University, 1954-60. She was selected as a member of the Institute for Research in the Humanities at UW-Madison in 1960 and served as Vilas Professor of French until her retirement in 1973. She served as Kenan Professor at Wake Forest University from 1973 until her death.

Germaine Brée was a gifted teacher who inspired generations of students and introduced them to the works of Albert Camus, André Gide, Marcel Proust, Jean-Paul Sartre, and other modern French writers. She was a prolific, world-famous scholar whose works remain both academic classics and best-selling studies: André Gide: l'insaisissable protégée (1953), Marcel Proust and the Deliverance from Time (1955, revised edition, 1969), An Age of Fiction (1957), Hier et Aujourd'hui (1958), Camus - A Collection of Critical Essays (1962), Twentieth Century French Literature (1962), Voix d'aujourd'hui (1963), The World of Marcel Proust (1966), Twentieth Century French Drama (1969), Defeat and Beyond, An Anthology of French Wartime Writing (1940-45), (1970), Camus and Sartre: Crisis and Commitment (1972), Women Writers in France (1973).

She was an authentic academic stateswoman. She was elected president of the Modern Language Association, and appointed to the Council of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities. She received over two dozen honorary doctorate degrees, including UW-Milwaukee in 1973 and UW Madison in 1981.

Even though Germaine was happily teaching at Bryn Mawr, she said, "It was insufferable to be French and be in America when one's country had been defeated." She felt she could not sit by while France was at war. She enlisted in the French army and served from 1943-1945. On a hot day in Rabat, Morocco in 1943 a seriously ill Senegalese soldier came to the Free French Army infirmary. Nurse Brée said "It looks like chicken pox to me." The doctor beside her said, "It looks like leprosy to me." Even though her diagnostic abilities were not the best, she was a valuable soldier, first as an ambulance driver and then as a member of an intelligence unit of the French army. It was while working in the French Resistance that she became a friend of Albert Camus. When World War II ended, she was a second lieutenant on the staff of an American general in Mannheim, Germany, helping to sort out and give some structure to the lives of thousands of displaced persons. She was decorated with the Bronze Star by the United States and the Citation à l'ordre de la Division, Chevalier of the Legion of Honor by France.

When the war was over, she said that she had no thought of staying in France; she wanted the greater freedom of America. She left New York because she said living in the city required a great deal of energy. At Wisconsin she found an "extraordinarily talented group of graduate students, supportive colleagues, and a library excellent for research." After she left the university, she was asked to hold two seminars for the National Endowment for the Humanities. She chose to hold the seminars in Madison

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because she felt it was a wonderful city for the participants. Her generous endowment to the Humanities Institute has made possible the Germaine Brée Memorial Lectures. She wholeheartedly embraced the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and we wholeheartedly embraced her.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Loretta Freiling

David Lindberg, Chair