

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS CAMDEN ARTHUR COBERLY

Camden Arthur Coberly, professor of chemical engineering, died suddenly on December 9, 2001. A memorial service was held at the First Baptist Church on December 14. His family and friends were surprised at losing him since he had not aged in the conventional sense. The spring in his step never left, his interests were widespread, he was physically very active and his mind and senses were keen. He treasured his family; he was loyal to his country, his faith, and the University of Wisconsin. As a dedicated engineer, he successfully took on many professional roles and activities during his lifetime.

Cam was born on December 21, 1922 in Elizabeth, West Virginia to J.G.B. and Edith Simpson Coberly, one of four children. He was married to Lenore McComas of Hamlin, West Virginia on June 14, 1946, a happy union resulting in close companionship for more than fifty-five years. He received his B.S. from West Virginia University (1944). He then served in the U.S. Navy as a radar officer (Lt, j.g.) during World War II before earning an M.S. from Carnegie Mellon (1947), and Ph.D. in chemical engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1949). He left Wisconsin to work at Mallinckrodt Chemical Works in St. Louis, Missouri where he eventually became chief engineer.

Cam returned to the university at Madison in 1964 as a professor of chemical engineering, chairing the department from 1968 to 1971. He became associate dean of the College of Engineering and executive director of the Engineering Experiment Station in 1971, positions he held for fifteen years. He returned to the department in 1986 as a professor with formal instructional duties.

As a teacher, Professor Coberly was conscientious, caring and approachable to students. He received the 1990-1991 Outstanding Instructor Award in chemical engineering from the student Polygon organization. At least one teaching assistant thanked him in his thesis for "teaching him how to teach". He retired to emeritus status in 1992, still maintaining ties to the department and an active life style. At that time, Chancellor Donna Shalala noted his dedicated service to UW-Madison and wrote "I commend you for your many accomplishments during your tenure here. Your commitment to higher education has benefited many students seeking expert knowledge and guidance."

As associate dean of the College of Engineering, Cam was occupied with many administrative duties including college research funding, research, and fledgling research centers as well as foreign program activities. He worked for years on the development program of the Institut Teknologi of Surabaya, Indonesia going there for months at a time. He was among the first to visit the People's Republic of China in 1979 and 1980 as a member of the UW delegation. He arranged numerous educational visits of foreign students to the College of Engineering, frequently entertaining them with other visitors from abroad in his home and members of the campus community. With his wife, he was an attentive and an engaging host able to discuss a wide range of topics, suited to the occasion and guests' interests.

Cam also traveled to Colombia, South America, the University of Ife in Nigeria; Monterrey Institute of Technology, Mexico; the Philippines, India, and Egypt in conjunction with technical missions. At the same time, he was busily engaged in broader university matters and worked part time in the associate chancellor's office for a few years.

Throughout his time in Madison, Cam remained an active church member doing good in his daily life through help, advice, and hospitality to all whom he encountered, including students, various visitors and colleagues. He was attentive to the sick and dying among colleagues and their families' needs, acting in these matters with grace and compassion.

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Dean Coberly's generosity was accompanied by high professional standards for himself and others. He wrote concise letters. After review of situations, he was willing to take a chance using flexible resources of his office to assist students, employees, and professors who needed help or encouragement. In university affairs, he could argue strongly for his views, but afterwards put professional action above personal concerns, and looked to the future rather than dwelling on the past. Not surprisingly, this resulted in a wide circle of friends from many disciplines and all walks of life. In small groups, he had a cheerful sense of humor and frequently a feeling for the ironic aspects of life.

Coberly was a broad range thinker who in action respected tradition, but could work from original points of view not considered by others. This made his counsel especially valuable to higher administration. Former Chancellor Irving Shain noted "Cam ... offered creative solutions to difficult and complex problems. He was a fantastic companion on trips on our missions to China and was an outstanding representative for the college and the university."

With his broad practical experience, Cam was a valued consultant for a number of industrial concerns. He belonged to the usual group of honorary societies into which good students are inducted. He stayed with Sigma Xi and as a good citizen, regularly attended Rotarian meetings in Madison. He was a Fellow of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and the American Association for Advancement of Science. He was frequently chairman or on the board of directors of organizations such as the American Society of Engineering Education or the Visiting Committee of his Alma Mater, West Virginia University. He was active in other professional societies resulting in appointments to many of their committees, actually too numerous to list here.

Cam was an enthusiastic supporter of his wife's, Lenore, work in writing and poetry particularly after his official retirement from the university. This was important because she maintains activities in these areas to this day. His children, Catherine, Elizabeth, Charles and Robert also received exemplary attention and strong support from early childhood to maturity, and later with spouses and his grandchildren.

Cam enjoyed spending time outdoors; beyond all kinds of yard work, he planted and nurtured flowers, vegetables and trees thoroughly enjoying the results and discussing their stages of development. He did fine work with wood, building furniture for children and friends, and did related carpentry in his house.

He could polish and work with precious stones. He baked excellent bread especially after retirement! He had a fine ear and enjoyed music as well as poetry readings, and the theater. He appreciated art, including that of his children. He did all of this while reading across a wide range of subjects, maintaining interests in technology and the civic concerns of Madisonians in all areas.

Without seeming to rush, and with unusual concern about the welfare of others, Camden Coberly filled the moments of his life "with sixty seconds worth of distance run" to the benefit and pleasure of many people and causes. This was all done with a gleam in his eye and a winning smile. Then, after a full life, he left us in a moment without giving many a chance to return favors in some way, or to thank him again for years of gracious service to the department, the university community, and Madison.

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