

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

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS CHARLES C. CENTER**

Charles C. Center, age 90, died on May 30, 2001. His wife, Mary Eagan Tollaksen Center and her five children survive him. His first wife Elizabeth "Libby" Center preceded him in death in 1983. Together, over 53 years of marriage, they raised five children, Dick (Joanne) of Eagle River, Alaska, Karen McGrath of Santa Fe, New Mexico, Don (Karen) of Westport, Connecticut, Charles (Sue) of Madison, and John (Barbara) of Madison. In addition he had 12 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Charles was born in Quincy, Illinois on October 11, 1910. He attended Quincy Senior High School. He received his B.S. degree from Knox College in 1932, where he served as captain of the football team, and earned advanced degrees at the University of Wisconsin, receiving his M.A. in 1938 and his Ph.D. in 1941. He was a member of Beta Theta Pi and Delta Sigma Pi. In 1948 he earned a Chartered Life Underwriter designation.

Dr. Center taught at Quincy Senior High School from 1932-37 and was an assistant professor of economics at the University of Missouri from 1941-42. Dr. Center served as an economist for the Regional Office of Price Stabilization in Dallas, Texas, for two years and was director of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in New York City from 1944-46. He joined the University of Wisconsin faculty in 1946 where he became a full professor in 1949. He helped organize and for 25 years he served as president of the University of Wisconsin Faculty Association (currently the University Insurance Association), possibly the best term life insurance program in the world for university faculty and staff.

An authority in the fields of insurance and finance, Dr. Center was editor of the McGraw-Hill Insurance Series and published numerous articles in professional and trade journals. Dr. Center, in 1957, was president of the American Risk and Insurance Association (then the American Association of University Teachers of Insurance). As chair for many years, he helped build the Risk Management and Insurance Department at Wisconsin into one of the top programs in the U.S. He organized in 1948 and was faculty advisor to the Risk Management and Insurance Society (then the Insurance Society), the oldest student organization in risk and insurance in the U.S. He was named emeritus professor in 1973 after retiring in 1972 from the University of Wisconsin.

In addition, Charles should be remembered for his concern and empathy for his students. Not only did he attend student and alumni weddings, he would take selected students hunting and/or fishing at his lake cottage and entertain his graduate students in his home on a regular basis. Charles was not only a fine teacher but also a true gentleman and friend to all, especially to his students. He will be remembered by many for his generous acts and concern for his students during their years at the University of Wisconsin, a lasting legacy that will not be soon forgotten.

Even in his retirement Charles assisted the risk and insurance department in fund raising. He played a major role in establishing the Leslie P. Schultz Professorship in Risk Management and Insurance, the first endowed departmental professorship. Les Schultz, a former student of Charles and lifelong friend, became an extremely successful insurance company CEO of USLICO Corporation which funded the professorship.

Dr. Center was active in a variety of professional and community organizations. For example, he was a member of the Management Board of the S.S. Huebner Foundation for Insurance Education, co-director of the annual Wisconsin Seminars in Advanced Life Underwriting, and a director of the American Public Life Insurance Company.

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Charles also served as president of the Rotary Club of Madison; district governor, Rotary International; chairman, National Wage Stabilization Board Committee on Insurance Compensation; and president, Madison Chapter of Chartered Life Underwriters. He was an honorary member of the National Association of Insurance Management and the senior member of the Board of Directors, National Guardian Life Insurance Company.

Charles was on several local boards including St. Mary's Hospital, Shorewood Hills, Board of Estimates and the American Cancer Society. Until his later years he enjoyed gardening, golf, travel, hunting, and fishing.

In School of Business lore, Dr. Center is known as the professor who sponsored a motion to limit the amount of time the dean could speak at faculty meetings. At first opportunity he invoked the rule to cut off then Dean Erv Gaumnitz who was in the middle of one of his eloquent, albeit rambling discourses on the state of the Business School and the university. If you knew Charles as we did, you know that this story is absolutely true and completely consistent with his character.

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