

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

ON THE DEATH OF ASSISTANT PROFESSOR EMERITUS WILLIAM C. BUNCE

William C. Bunce, former director of the Kohler Art Library who worked for UW-Madison Libraries for four decades, died at his home unexpectedly on February 23, 2002. He was 65 years old.

He was born in Mattawan, Michigan in 1936 and moved with his parents to Madison, Wisconsin before his second birthday. Bill graduated from Madison West High School. He received three degrees from the UW-Madison, Bachelor of Arts in 1958, Master of Science in Philosophy in 1959, and Master of Arts in Library Science in 1965. He taught for one year in Iowa before returning to Madison to begin his career with the UW-Madison libraries.

His first professional assignment with the university libraries was to head the Music Library, a position that eventually included responsibility for buying art collections. In 1970 when the Kohler Art Library opened in the newly constructed Elvehjem Museum of Art, Bill was named its first director and served in this capacity until his retirement in 1999.

Bill Bunce had a major role in designing the Kohler Library and was the first librarian on campus to demonstrate the workability and advantages of compact shelving. He built the Kohler Library from a modest working collection of 11,000 volumes to a nationally recognized resource of over 100,000 volumes. He said that his goal was “to build a premier university art library in which no topic is, in some degree, unresearchable and where inspiration as well as information was the daily fare.” In this he succeeded mightily.

Building on one of the strengths of the UW-Madison Art Department, he created a distinguished collection of artist books that served as a hands-on laboratory for students in the graphic arts. The collection includes representative works from the nation’s leading book artists and is an invaluable resource for information on papermaking, typography, bookmaking, and design.

Known to many students, faculty, and alumni as “Sweet Ol’ Bill” he was enormously influential as a friend, mentor, and teacher. He was “out” as a gay man during a time when his acknowledged sexual orientation involved substantial social and career risks. Perhaps unintentionally, his courage and self-honesty were greatly reassuring to gay and straight colleagues alike.

Bill Bunce is survived by his life partner Gordie Morey and two golden retrievers (Elsabeth and Ananda). Gordie aptly described Bill as a “man who could tell and weave a story, keeping those around him captivated by his knowledge and his presence.” He is greatly missed by all who knew him.

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