

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS CHARLES A. RANOUS

Emeritus Professor Charles A. Ranous was born on July 18, 1912 in Ann Arbor, Michigan and died on September 3, 1998 in Cora, Wyoming. He is survived by his wife Dorothy and was predeceased by his only son Karl who died on March 17, 1997. He received his A.B. in English from the University of Michigan in 1936 and an M.A. in English in 1938 also from the University of Michigan. He also attended the University of North Carolina during 1941-42 and did graduate work related to teaching English at Columbia University from 1950 to 1953.

After leaving the University of Michigan in 1938, Professor Ranous taught English at a number of universities including the University of Tennessee, Memphis State College, the University of Oregon, Drake University, Northern Illinois State College and Fairleigh Dickenson College where he spent four years and headed the Freshman English Program. In 1953 he left academia for a position as a technical writer with IT&T and in 1958 moved to Burroughs Corporation to become a technical editor. He joined the faculty of the Electrical (and Computer) Engineering Department in 1960 as a visiting associate professor and was given an appointment as associate professor in 1961. He was promoted to professor in 1977.

Professor Ranous was hired specifically to organize and teach a senior required course in technical communication. The course he created (ECE 350) has survived, without substantial changes in objectives or structure, every curriculum revision since his original proposal was adopted. The course entails all forms of technical communication including simple written and oral reports, technical proposal preparation, instruction book writing and technical paper writing. While taking the course most students were inclined to complain it was too hard, took too much time or was not relevant to their career plans. However, as any of the many ECE chairmen who served while Professor Ranous was teaching the course will testify, the number of past students who wrote to explain their changed attitude about the importance of ECE 350 and to encourage current students to recognize this importance was far greater than for any other course in the curriculum. Professor Ranous also created a freshman/sophomore course intended to provide an introduction to the field of electrical and computer engineering while providing instruction in writing and speaking skills.

Professor Ranous' scholarly interests were in interpersonal communication, chiefly technical and chiefly linguistic. He was the author of two nationally published books; one specifically directed toward teaching technical communication entitled "Communication for Engineers," the other entitled "Learning our Language." A quote from the former illustrates Professor Ranous' philosophy of technical communication. Speaking of what is expected of young engineers, "They want them broadly adaptable and incredibly specialized, fired with zeal and cool in calculation, creative and well-disciplined..... This dilemma conditions the content and treatment of material in this book." (The young engineer) "must become articulate before all men as he is now articulate with fellow engineers..... In short, he must have standards for communication and individuality for expression." His classes stressed this two-sided mission.

He also authored four locally published books, three on communication subjects and one describing personal experiences hiking in the West entitled "The Inner Zone". He authored a number of articles on teaching technical communication in journals such as the IEEE Transactions on Education and the Journal of Business Communication and was a senior member of IEEE.

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He and his wife Dorothy enjoyed spending their summers in the Wind River mountains of Wyoming, and engaging in backpacking adventures carefully recorded on film. They purchased property near Pinedale, Wyoming and following his retirement in 1982 spent summers at the Pinedale property and winters in New Mexico.

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