

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS HENRY L. AHLGREN

Henry L. Ahlgren, professor of agronomy and former chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Extension died in Madison on January 22, 2004 at the age of 95. Professor Ahlgren was widely recognized and respected for his teaching, as a pasture researcher, and as an extension administrator. He restructured UW-Extension for more effective outreach, making it a national model for the sharing of university knowledge.

Henry Ahlgren was born October 3, 1908 in the small town of Wyoming, Minnesota to parents who had immigrated from Sweden at the turn of the century. He grew up on a pioneer dairy farm in Polk county near Frederic, Wisconsin. He graduated from Frederic High School as valedictorian of his class and received a legislative scholarship to UW-Madison, thus beginning his long association with the University of Wisconsin. He graduated from the UW with a BSc in 1931, an MSc in 1933 and a PhD in Agronomy and Soil Science in 1935. Ahlgren then was awarded a 9-month fellowship by the American Cyanamid Company to study problems and improve pastures in the British Isles, the Scandinavian countries, and Western Europe. Upon his return, Ahlgren accepted an appointment in the Department of Agronomy. From then until 1952, his responsibilities included teaching the introductory course in Agronomy, the pasture improvement course, and a 3-week course on forage crops in the Farm Short Course program. He served as mentor to 18 PhD students during this period. Ahlgren had a great love for teaching, and former students to this day remember him as the best teacher they ever had.

Ahlgren's research included studies on management practices to increase productivity and quality of pastures in Wisconsin; testing the value of the German "Hohenheim" system of pasture management using milk cows and other livestock; with D. C. Smith, development of low prussic acid 'Piper' sundangrass which reduced the danger of hydrocyanic acid poisoning in grazing livestock; and the use of alfalfa, ladino clover, and smooth bromegrass as premier pasture crops. Along with classroom teaching and research activities, Ahlgren presented many talks and made many farm visits throughout the state. Ahlgren co-authored a book on field crops for high schools with R. J. Delorit of UW-River Falls, and co-authored with L.F. Graber a book used for the beginning Agronomy course.

Ahlgren served as chair of the Department of Agronomy from 1949 to 1952 when College of Agriculture Dean R. K. Froker appointed him associate director of Cooperative Extension. He was a strong advocate of interdisciplinary programming which enabled extension faculty to provide agricultural clientele with more comprehensive solutions to complex agricultural problems. This interdisciplinary approach also was initiated among research faculty of the college during his watch.

As associate director of Cooperative Extension, Ahlgren served on the national Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) and as chair for two years. Through ECOP he provided leadership in developing a national plan for improving the image and modernizing the programs of the Cooperative Extension Service. The committee published a report that serves as a blueprint for Extension organization nationwide.

Henry Ahlgren facilitated the implementation of a tenure review process for county faculty. Though they were members of the university faculty, tenure review had previously been unavailable to them. In a related effort, Ahlgren was instrumental in developing the National Agricultural Center for Advanced Study and Training for middle management leaders, supervisors, and programmers in Cooperative Extension at the university through a substantial grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Extension workers from many states including Wisconsin attended and were granted MSc and PhD degrees from

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the center. Ahlgren, working with Law School professors, developed legislation which was passed by the legislature giving County Agricultural Committees, with responsibility for extension programming, authority to negotiate as equals with state and federal partners.

In 1969, UW President Harrington selected Henry Ahlgren for the position of chancellor of the reorganized UW-Extension. Harrington stated that he chose Ahlgren because of his demonstrated leadership in broadening the university's outreach programs.

In 1970 and 71, Ahlgren served as President Nixon's Under-Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development. During his tenure, a Rural Development committee was established in every state. Ahlgren also served as a consultant to Secretary of Agriculture Hardin and represented him nationally on matters relating to Rural Development. Rural Development ultimately became an important area of funding and programming in the budgets of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In 1971, Ahlgren returned to his position as chancellor of UW-Extension, a position he held until his retirement in 1974.

Professor Ahlgren was the recipient of many awards during his lifetime, including the Distinguished Service Award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1960. A very special international award was his 1958 election as member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Agriculture and Forestry.

Many of "Hank's" friends and colleagues have gone ahead, but he will be missed by those who remain. Henry Ahlgren truly lived by the words: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Professor Henry Ahlgren is fondly remembered by his family, many friends, and former colleagues and students.

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