

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

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITA FRANCES Z. CUMBEE**

Frances Cumbee, emerita professor of physical education, died on Thursday, March 3, 2005 in Madison, Wisconsin a few days short of her 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. She passed away peacefully at her home in the presence of her nieces from Alabama, Judy Cumbee and Nan Rucks, and Nancy Prine and Barbara Bauer, her devoted elder care companions. Frances Cumbee was known as “Fran” and “Frankie” by her many friends and colleagues at Wisconsin.

Frances Cumbee was born on March 6, 1917 in Five Points, Alabama, and she spent her early years on Hillview Farms in Fredonia, Alabama. She received her diploma from Five Points High School in 1934, and went on to receive the B.S. degree in physical education from Alabama College (now Montevallo University) in 1938. She taught physical education at Pell City High School in Pell City, Alabama from 1938 to 1940, and received the M.S. degree in physical education from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1941.

Following the completion of her master’s degree at UW-Madison in 1941, Fran accepted a position at Beaver College in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania where she remained until 1945. Her initial appointment at Beaver College was instructor in the Department of Physical Education, and she was promoted to assistant and then associate professor. Fran also served as Head of the Department of Physical Education during her final two years at Beaver College. She returned to the University of Wisconsin in 1945 to pursue advanced study in educational measurement. Her pioneering dissertation research dealt with a factorial analysis of motor co-ordination, and her mentor was Emeritus Professor T.L. Torgerson. Fran credited him with guiding her through her graduate work. Another member of her dissertation committee was Professor Chester W. Harris, and Fran always recognized him for his expert statistical advice, especially with regard to the factor analytic method. Fran was one of the first researchers in the field of physical education to employ factor analysis in the study of human motor behavior. Since computer programs to carry out factor analyses had not been written at that time, she calculated a principal components analysis on her data using a Monroe desk-top calculator. She received her Ph.D. degree in 1952, and her dissertation research was published in the Research Quarterly of the American Association of Health and Physical Education in 1954.

Fran served as an instructor in the former Department of Physical Education for Women while working on her doctorate from 1945 to 1951. She also chaired the University of Wisconsin Summer Sports Session from 1946 to 1948. Following the completion of her Ph.D. degree, Fran served as a counselor in the School of Education at UW-Madison from 1951 to 1964. She served as a student personnel specialist in the School of Education and associate professor in the former Department of Physical Education for Men from 1964 to 1969. Fran was promoted to professor of physical education in 1969, and remained in this position until her retirement as emerita professor in 1987.

Fran maintained membership in a number of professional organizations during her career at Wisconsin, and these included: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (AAHPER); Wisconsin Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation; Association for Higher Education; American Educational Research Association; International Society for Sport Psychology; Kappa Delta Pi; Lambda Theta; North American Society of Sports History; and the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity. She served as the chair of the Research Section of AAHPER from 1968 to 1971, and she served as an associate editor for the Research Quarterly, published by AAHPER, from 1958 to 1970. She also served on the advisory committee for the Research Quarterly from 1962 to 1969. She published original research papers in the Research Quarterly.

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Wisconsin Journal of Education, and she authored chapters and papers in Research Methods in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, Proceedings of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Sport Psychology, Contemporary Psychology of Sport, and the Encyclopedia of Sports Medicine.

Professor Cumbee received a citation award from the Wisconsin Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation in recognition of her significant contributions to the advancement of the profession. She was also named Alumna of the Year in 1997 by the University of Montevallo. A member of the Madison women's civic organization, ALTRUSA, Fran's Alabama yellow tomato preserves were always a hit at the organization's annual fund raiser. Colleagues and friends greatly appreciated her delicious baked breads. In addition to being an outstanding baker, Fran was an accomplished gardener, golfer, and knitter.

Fran was a generous donor to UW Athletics in general, and was a devoted fan of UW women's basketball in particular. She was a season ticket holder, sitting directly behind "her girls" at home basketball games. She also was a generous donor to other units of UW-Madison including the School of Education, School of Medicine, and the University Preservation and Restoration Fund.

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