

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS GERHARD BJARNE LEE

Gerhard Bjarne Lee, emeritus professor of soil science since 1988, died on February 19, 2006, in Madison, Wisconsin. He was born November 27, 1917, on the family dairy farm near Deerfield, Wisconsin. He attended Liberty Prairie School, served in the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1937 and graduated from Deerfield High School in 1938. From 1938 to 1942, he managed the family farm and from 1942 to 1946 served as an engineer in the 730th Engineering Company in New Guinea and the Philippines. He received his B.S. degree in agriculture with a major in soil science in 1948 and an M.S. in soil science in 1949 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. After serving as assistant agronomist at South Dakota State from 1949 to 1951, he returned to Madison and received his Ph.D. in soil science in 1955. During this time he was also an instructor in the Department of Soil Science and worked for both the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey and the Soil Conservation Service of the USDA. He was appointed assistant professor in 1956 and promoted to associate professor in 1960. In 1974 he became professor of soil science and environmental studies.

G.B. Lee, as he was popularly known, was a superb teacher and interpreter of soil. He skillfully connected hands-on experience in the field with landscape elements and geological landforms. He was a kind, soft-spoken mentor, had great rapport with students who often sought him out through his always open door. In 1955 he began teaching Soil Morphology, and in 1973 initiated a popular class titled Soils and Land Use Planning that was also expanded into a senior seminar. Since 1962 he was an undergraduate student advisor for many soil science majors and advised numerous students in the Institute for Environmental Studies. Dr. Lee was major professor to 16 Ph.D. and 34 M.S. degree candidates. He served on the committee that organized the Land Resources graduate program and served as chair for 6 years after the program became part of IES helping it to grow to more than 75 graduate students. His teaching was recognized with the Atwood Excellence in Teaching Award in 1978 and the Outstanding Advising Award in 1979.

Throughout his career, Dr. Lee was dedicated to teaching the principles of soil and land use and extending basic concepts to the wider community. He gave numerous public lectures and published many bulletins, fact sheets and commentaries on prudent land use. He was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and regularly promoted the profession of soil science. From 1974 to 1981 he was a leader in the American Society of Agronomy committee that initiated the National Committee for Certification of soil scientists, known as the American Registry of Certified Professionals in Agronomy, Crops and Soils (ARCPACS). He was a member of and held leadership positions in the Soil Conservation Society of America and the Wisconsin Society of Professional Soil Scientists.

His research in soil genesis, morphology and classification led to numerous publications. He was particularly well known for his work with wetlands and Histosols, the soils of marshes and wet places. He studied soil erosion, use of remote sensing methods to assess the extent of soil losses from croplands, and he conducted some of the earliest work on floodplain delineation. He cooperated with other researchers defining the soil and soil characteristics important to their research, including some early work with organochlorine and organophosphate pesticides.

Since retirement Dr. Lee practiced principles from his teaching for the improvement and management of his farm near Cambridge and by volunteering as a master gardener at Olbrich Gardens in Madison.

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Professor Lee was married to Mildred, his loving wife of 57 years. He is survived by his wife, Mildred, four daughters, Susan (Jim) Conant of Fairfax Station, Virginia, Rebecca Lee (Jack Theel) of Madison, Nancy (Fred) Stratan of Dodgeville and Judith Lee of Madison, their families, and two sisters and two brothers. He is preceded in death by a brother and by his parents.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

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