

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

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS JAMES AUBREY DUNCAN**

The University of Wisconsin-Madison and University of Wisconsin-Extension lost a passionate practitioner and scholar with the passing of James A. Duncan in July, 2005. Jim served in World War II, in the European Theater, and was a POW for several months. He was awarded the Purple Heart and Silver Star for bravery. His education included a bachelor of science degree from North Carolina State University in 1944. Jim completed his master's degree in 1952 and his PhD in 1953 both from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

His first appointment after completing his bachelor's degree was as an assistant county agent with an emphasis on 4-H Youth Development with the University of Maryland Extension Service. It was his work with rural youth that was the inspiration for his return to school after the war to complete his PhD in education and rural sociology. Following his PhD, he joined the faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg Virginia, but three years later, in 1956, he returned to the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he joined the faculty as an assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education (later becoming part of the inter-college Department of Continuing and Vocational Education). Jim spent 1964-1966 teaching and doing research at the University of Rio Grande Do Sul in Brazil

Throughout his 30 year career at University of Wisconsin-Madison, he had a joint appointment with University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service in the Office of Program and Staff Development. Here Jim combined his love of teaching, research and educational outreach with an emphasis on individual growth and development. From his early days as a youth development agent through his faculty days conducting research, teaching and advising master's and PhD students through their studies and his work training Cooperative Extension agents, Jim was a passionate educator. No problem was too great to overcome when learning was at stake. And distance was often a problem with international students struggling with data collection, analysis and writing in far off lands and extension agents scattered throughout Wisconsin in need of assistance with program development, teaching- learning and/or evaluation. Through letters, phone calls and the development of independent learning materials, learner needs were met. Jim personified the Wisconsin Idea in action.

A special Duncan Scholarship for Extension Youth Agents was established by a man from Maryland who was profoundly influenced by Jim when he worked as a 4-H and youth agent in that state early in his career.

Jim was an active member of many professional and fraternal organizations dedicated to advancing the fields of adult and extension education. His memberships included the Adult Education Association and Epsilon Sigma Phi, an extension fraternity, where he was most active. Several organizations also honored his contributions to education, agriculture and the development of individuals and communities in rural areas. These included Phi Delta Kappa, an honorary education fraternity, Gamma Sigma Delta, an honorary agricultural fraternity that recognized his outstanding contributions to the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and the Rural Sociology Society.

Not only did he give to his students and professional organizations, he was also an active member of the community. His work for the local Veterans Affairs hospital was recognized in 2005 with the placing of a plaque in his honor in the Hall of Heroes at the VA Hospital. He was also awarded the Paul Harris Fellow Award by the Madison Rotary.

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James Aubrey Duncan was a scholar whose commitment to the personal growth and development of all peoples, regardless of age or nationality, knew no bounds. His work with 4-H youth and their volunteer learners, with graduate students from around the world and as well as with members of the community, was a labor of love. His boundless energy, in spite of lingering war wounds, positive thinking, and wry sense of humor carried many through difficult times to fruitful ends. His was a life of service and his legacy continues in the lives of those he touched, both here and abroad.

He is sorely missed by his faculty colleagues, friends and family, including his son James Jr., his daughter Carol and his two brothers and two sisters

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