

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS GEORGE NELSON WRIGHT

George Nelson Wright, professor emeritus of rehabilitation psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, died in Madison on May 18, 2004 at the age of 82. Professor Wright was widely recognized as a staunch advocate for vocational rehabilitation and the profession of rehabilitation counseling. His most active professional years were the thirty years he spent at UW-Madison from 1962 when he joined the faculty until 1992 when he retired.

George Wright was born on December 10, 1921 in Earlington, Kentucky. He spent his youth and attended school in Hope, Indiana until high school graduation in 1940. He earned his bachelor's degree in 1947 from the Department of Social Work at Indiana University. He worked as a rehabilitation counselor for the Indiana Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in West Lafayette from 1947-1958. While working as a rehabilitation counselor, he completed his graduate work (M.S. in 1954 and Ph.D. 1959) at Purdue University. Professor Wright was the national director of programs for the National Epilepsy League in Chicago from 1959-1962 and then joined the faculty of the UW-Madison Department of Counseling and Behavioral Studies in 1962, where he directed the university's Rehabilitation Counselor Education Program. He spent the majority of his career in what is now the Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education.

Few people have contributed as much to the organizational development of the rehabilitation counseling profession as Professor Wright. In the early 1970s, he was instrumental in developing the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE), the accrediting agency for rehabilitation counselor education programs. CORE accreditation standards are based on many years of research analysis of rehabilitation counselor competencies led by Professor Wright and others. Professor Wright was a leader in several professional organizations, including a term as the president of the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association from 1974-75 and as president of the American Psychological Association Division 22 (Rehabilitation Psychology) from 1983-84. In addition, he served on the executive board of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (now the American Counseling Association). Professor Wright also held leadership positions at UW-Madison, including director of the Rehabilitation Counselor Education Program from 1962-74 and director of the Regional Rehabilitation Research Institute from 1963-1987. He was a member of the UW Faculty Senate from 1979-81 and from 1990-91.

One of Professor Wright's proudest accomplishments was the publication of his book *Total Rehabilitation*, which was published in 1980 and reprinted for several years thereafter. This book provided a comprehensive overview of the field of rehabilitation and was adopted as a primary text at many universities. Professor Wright was also very involved with epilepsy rehabilitation and edited a book on the topic in 1975. His collaborative research efforts resulted in the development of several psychometric instruments for analyzing rehabilitation gains and rehabilitation counselor skills and competencies. Professor Wright was an active consultant throughout his career with a number of agencies serving persons with disabilities, including the Social Security Administration, the Veterans Administration, and the United Cerebral Palsy Association.

Professor Wright greatly enjoyed his Ph.D. students and took considerable pride in their achievements. He was an enthusiastic advocate for rehabilitation, which was contagious to others. He shared that enthusiasm with students and colleagues. In addition, he often provided consultation to rehabilitation programs that were established throughout the United States and abroad (including Israel, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Nigeria, and Japan). He was an advisor for the World Rehabilitation Fund and the World Institute on Disability. He received commendations from the Philippine Foundation for the Disabled and the Israel Government Silver Medal of Honor for help with rehabilitation programming. His

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international interest and efforts played a large part in establishing the UW-Madison rehabilitation psychology program as a leader in preparing international students as rehabilitation counseling researchers and teachers throughout the world. To this day, the UW-Madison program in rehabilitation psychology has a substantial impact internationally.

For his career accomplishments, Professor Wright was honored with several national awards. Among these awards were the Arthur A. Hitchcock Distinguished Professional Service Award from the American Association for Counseling and Development, the Distinguished Career in Rehabilitation Counseling Research award from the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association, the Distinguished Senior Contributor to Counseling Psychology Award from the American Psychological Association's Counseling Psychology Division, and the Distinguished Career Contributions to Rehabilitation Psychology Award from the American Psychological Association's Rehabilitation Psychology Division. His collaborative research work with graduate students and other colleagues received special recognition from the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association on five different occasions.

His family meant the world to him. He married Patricia Gilmer on June 8, 1952 and together they raised four children: John, Betsy, Bob and Jim. His wife Pat preceded him in death in 1997.

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