

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

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITA MARY LARENE KELLER, PhD, RN**

Professor Mary Larene Keller died on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at age 56. Professor Keller began her career as an undergraduate at the College of Saint Teresa in Winona, Minnesota where she earned a bachelor's degree in nursing in 1972. She began her practice in cardiac intensive care but soon shifted to psychiatric/mental health nursing. Her clinical practice was characterized by patience, compassion, clear-eyed practicality and an abiding respect for the humanity in every one of her patients. She returned to the UW-Madison School of Nursing to earn a M.S. in nursing in 1978 and went on to become a clinical teacher of nursing at Marquette University in Milwaukee. In 1982, she returned to UW-Madison to become the first student in the newly approved joint doctoral program in nursing and psychology. Upon conferral of the joint doctorate in 1986, Dr. Keller joined the faculty of the School of Nursing where she remained until her untimely death. Professor Keller had a rich and productive career as a scholar and an enormous and positive impact on the School of Nursing at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Professor Keller was an outstanding scholar. She engaged in early, pioneering work that extended the theoretical and empirical understanding of illness cognition, and stress and coping to the study of risky sexual behavior and sexually transmitted infections. Some of her most important contributions were in explicating the long-term effects of illness cognitions on patients' relationships with their intimate partners and on their own psychological well-being. The rigor of her scholarship has been recognized widely, including by the National Institute of Health in their funding of her research. She published in and reviewed for numerous interdisciplinary and nursing journals, and served as a consultant to new investigators as they developed their programs of research. She inspired her doctoral students to become creative investigators; and many of them are now carrying on the research tradition that she so highly valued.

Professor Keller was a beloved master teacher who made an extraordinary impact on the lives of her students. She exemplified genuine excellence in teaching. This excellence was recognized over the years by the thousands of students who gave her outstanding teaching evaluations and by the Teaching Academy of the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she was inducted as a Fellow in 1998. Among her many contributions to the teaching mission of the school were her leadership in the development of the Honors Program in the School of Nursing, her mentoring of numerous students in writing for publication, her coordination of the school's contributions to the yearly undergraduate research symposium, her work in revising the research component of the masters and doctoral programs, and the careful mentoring that she provided to students of all levels who joined her research group and learned to become diligent and productive scholars. In a less public contribution to the school, Professor Keller served to counsel and guide other teachers who sought her sensitive, tactful yet critical assistance in improving their teaching skills.

Professor Keller made ongoing, consistent, and outstanding service contributions to the profession, to the University of Wisconsin, and most particularly to the School of Nursing. She devoted years of service to Sigma Theta Tau, the Honor Society in nursing, serving as chair of the Dissertation Judging Committee, as well as treasurer and then president of the Beta-eta-at-large chapter. By her leadership and her warm presence she encouraged many young scholars to actively support this prestigious organization. In the university and in the School of Nursing Dr. Keller served for many years as a faculty senator, as a member of the Health Sciences Institutional Review Board, and as a member of numerous other committees that worked to advance the mission of the school. Her abilities as a skillful, logical thinker and writer were always in demand and she was universally called upon to assist in endeavors such as

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preparing tenure cases, making award nominations, and guiding young faculty to become productive investigators. Professor Keller's service contributions extended to the community where she worked tirelessly to upgrade curricula to educate young persons about sexually transmitted diseases, to provide guidance on sexual health to community groups, and to engage school and church leaders in efforts to provide creative, engaging sexual health promotion programs to area youth. Professor Keller thus linked seamlessly her innovative research with creative concrete service to the young people of our state.

Dr. Keller died much too young and is sorely missed by students, faculty and staff in the School of Nursing.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

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