

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS WILLIAM H. PATCH

William H. Patch, professor emeritus of the General Library, died September 7, 2006 in a local nursing home, three weeks shy of his 87th birthday.

He was born September 28, 1919 in Abington, Pennsylvania, the son of Ralph and Mary (Halloway) Patch. His secondary education was at the Plainfield, New Jersey High School and George School, Newton, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Amherst College with an A.B. in 1942 and then served from 1942 to 1946 in the United States Army. His Army service took him to Africa and Italy. In Pisa, Italy, he met Rosanna Michelassi, whom he married November 15, 1945.

Following Bill's military service, he earned a B.S. in library science at Drexel Institute in Philadelphia (later Drexel University). His first library position was as catalog librarian at the McKissick Memorial Library at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. He then attended the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor where he received his M.A. in library science in 1951. From October 1951 to January 1953 he was a cataloger at the Public Library in Flint, Michigan.

Bill came to the University of Wisconsin-Madison Library in February, 1953 as its first documents librarian. He supervised the organization of the Government Documents Collection upon the move of the library collections from the Wisconsin Historical Society building to the new Memorial Library. In addition to his responsibilities for the Documents Collection, he was in charge of the reclassification of the library's book collection from the Cutter Classification to the Library of Congress Classification.

In July 1965 he became chief of the Circulation Department, a position he held for over thirteen years. His last position at Memorial Library was that of collection maintenance officer. At that time the library began to address the problem of deterioration of books printed on acidic paper. Bill developed policies and procedures for preserving the text of these books, if not the actual book. Because computer digitization of text had not yet been developed, the only options for preservation were microfilming or photocopying (on acid-free paper) a book which was literally crumbling away. Two laboratories were founded under Bill's direction: a microfilming laboratory and a hand bookbinding & repair laboratory.

After Bill's retirement in 1985 he, with his wife, Rosanna, volunteered in the Department of Special Collections, helping maintain files of holdings by place and by date of publication. Bill was also involved in reporting UW holdings for titles in the 18th Century Short Title Catalog and answering queries from the office maintaining these records.

Outside of his professional life, Bill was skilled in home construction, transforming the shell of a new house into a home for his family. He was an avid target rifle and trap shooter and belonged to the Winnequah and Middleton Gun Clubs. For years he gathered entries for a bibliography on gun books; sadly, it was never published. Bill was a keen student of British history, reading widely in the field and telling stories from this reading to his family around the dinner table. Bill also enjoyed telling stories about past days in the UW libraries to younger staff members over coffee and lunch.

Bill is survived by sons, James (Barbara), of Sun Prairie, and Charles (Iris), of New Orleans, and daughter, Sarah (Larry) Westby, of Madison, three grandchildren, and three step-grandchildren.

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