

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS JOHN R. SCHMIDT

Professor Emeritus John R. Schmidt, age 76, died on Monday, January 30, 2006. He was born in Madison on July 3, 1929 and raised near Arcadia on his family's farm where he discovered his love for the values and traditions of his Norwegian-Swiss heritage and his Norwegian-Polish community. John inherited his mother's spirit and love for music and his father's intellect and strong work ethic. His passion for education and the advancement of agricultural sciences resulted in a lifetime of professional achievement in university teaching, research and extension. He had a long and distinguished association with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and citizens of Wisconsin and the nation.

John Schmidt received his bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural economics from the University of Wisconsin in 1951 and 1952, respectively. After spending two years in the U.S. Army, he completed his Ph.D. in agricultural economics at the University of Minnesota in 1956. He then joined the agricultural economics faculty at the UW-Madison as an assistant professor and was promoted to professor in 1965.

Professor Schmidt's career was characterized by pioneering work in the application of management science and information technology concepts to farm decision making. His work was interdisciplinary, connecting university-based dairy scientists, agronomists, economists, accountants, management scientists, and legal scholars with those working in the farming, agribusiness and local government sectors. He understood the implications of rapidly evolving information technology for improving business operations and management and took his understanding beyond the "Ivory Tower."

John designed and developed the Wisconsin Electronic Farm Records Project that involved the Department of Agricultural Economics, two farm management associations, and the Agricultural Records Cooperative. This successful project reduced the clerical burden associated with farm record keeping and increased the value of the records for decision making as well as farm management research. John conducted studies of the cost of milk production for Wisconsin dairy herds during the mid-1960s that clarified cost savings achieved with larger dairy herds.

John was elected chair of the Department of Agricultural Economics in 1966, a post from which he led the department in developing a stronger emphasis on resource economics, the industrial organization of the food sector and encouraging the participation of department personnel in international agricultural development programs. He was a skilled mentor to young faculty members and offered sage counsel to Cooperative Extension colleagues throughout the state.

John served as a member of the Wisconsin Governor's Advisory Committee on Agricultural Marketing and several U.S. Department of Agriculture national committees on the use of electronic data processing in farm management. He consulted with the American Farm Bureau Federation, the World Bank, Banco de Mexico and the Agricultural Development Bank of Iran on rural credit and farm management questions.

His work on data processing in farm management led to a major W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant to UW-Madison in 1981 to create North Central Computer Institute (NCCI). His ground-breaking work with NCCI that integrated computers into the world of agribusiness resulted in wide acclaim across the land grant colleges in the north central region and led to invitations to lecture internationally at the Salzburg Seminars.

Upon his retirement from UW-Madison in 1995, John established JRS Computing Services and created the Wisconsin Town Accounting Records software program. Developed in cooperation with the Wisconsin Towns Association, the program was used by hundreds of town clerks throughout the state of Wisconsin.

John Schmidt was a distinguished public citizen whose contributions and service to the community included president of the University of Wisconsin Credit Union board, president of the Madison West Rotary Club, and council president of Luther Memorial Church.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Rosemary; three children, Janet, Deborah and Allen; and his fraternal twin sister, Dorothy Jean Mertsching. His family and colleagues miss him very much.

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