

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITA MARGARET A. WILLIAMS

Professor Margaret Aasterud Williams, Ph.D., R.N., died on May 6, 2007, after a brief illness. Professor Williams began her career as a rural elementary school teacher but soon realized her desire to pursue a career in nursing. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota, a master's degree from UCLA, and a doctorate in anthropology and sociology of education from the University of California, Berkeley. She began her clinical practice at Minneapolis General Hospital, moved into a series of clinical leadership positions, and then to a position as an assistant professor and co-director of an NIH-funded investigative unit at the University of Nevada. She then joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin in 1976 and remained here until her retirement in 1991. Professor Williams had an impressively rich and productive career as a scholar and had a very significant leadership role with a positive impact on the School of Nursing at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Professor Williams was an outstanding scholar. She was among the first wave of leaders in nursing research. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, she conducted a series of studies examining women's experiences of surgical procedures, including studies of cultural patterning of the feminine role and its influence on responses to hysterectomy. This early focus on culture, on women's issues, and on a critically important health care experience is emblematic of the way Professor Williams approached her scholarship. The work that was most dear to her heart, and that many would consider to be her finest scholarship, involved acute confusional states (delirium) in elders recovering from hip fracture surgery. Funded by major NIH grants, Professor Williams conducted a careful sequence of studies that moved from first describing the predictors of delirium to then testing an intervention designed to reduce the incidence of this potentially life threatening condition. Her studies in this and other related areas resulted in her being considered the preeminent scholar of the effects of the physical environment on patient care, with particular recognition for her expertise in understanding the impact of the hospital environment on the frail elderly.

Professor Williams was a superb teacher. Her excellence was demonstrated regularly in the classroom. One of her most important contributions to the University of Wisconsin is that she was a driving force in the establishment of the doctoral program in the School of Nursing. She worked diligently to establish, build, and teach in the newly approved (1984) doctoral program. As a role model NIH funded researcher, she was an inspiration and mentor of doctoral students until her retirement.

Professor Williams made ongoing, consistent, and outstanding service contributions to the profession, to the University of Wisconsin, and to the School of Nursing. Of her many fine contributions, perhaps the most significant was her editorship of the journal, *Research in Nursing & Health (RINAH)*. During her tenure at the helm of this journal (from 1983 to 1991), she guided it into the position of being one of the profession's most respected research forums. As the leader of that journal, she was steadfast in demanding rigor and relevance in the papers she accepted for publication while also expecting that reviewers would be carefully critical yet encouraging to those who submitted their work. Many a young scholar's efforts to disseminate research were enhanced by the attention that Professor Williams gave to work submitted to the journal. In addition to her devotion to *RINAH*, Professor Williams was generous in supporting professional organizations including the American Nurses Association Council of Nurse Researchers, the Western Society for Research in Nursing, and the Midwest Nursing Research Society. Within the university, Professor Williams was a committed faculty leader, serving on the Biological Sciences Divisional Executive Committee, the Committee on Honorary Degrees, and the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities. Her service within the School of Nursing exemplified wise leadership and strong commitments to faculty colleagues and students.

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Professor Williams made significant contributions to the nursing profession and to nursing research. She was deeply respected, highly admired, much enjoyed, and we sorely miss her.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

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