

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

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS JAMES L. CLAPP**

Professor Emeritus James L. Clapp passed away at age 74 on March 31, 2007. Professor Clapp was a Wisconsin native, a world-renowned thinker and educator, an innovator who spurned traditional approaches and entrenched institutional arrangements and hierarchies, a humorist who could not resist telling stories and peppering his listeners with puns, and a person who felt deeply about his principles, his ideas, his students, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Jim Clapp received a B.S. in Naval Science and B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Immediately after receiving his Ph.D. degree, he accepted a tenure-track position on the UW-Madison civil engineering faculty. By the time he became a full professor, the department had evolved into the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and the Institute for Environmental Studies had come into being. Professor Clapp, with his fervent dedication to interdisciplinary studies and research, played a significant role in the early, formative years of IES (now the Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies), serving as the director of the Environmental Monitoring and Data Acquisition Group. Earlier, Professor Clapp led a multidisciplinary team conducting ice-flow studies in Antarctica. Under Jim's direction, the team was the first to apply satellite geodesy (using a precursor to the Global Positioning System) to ice flow problems. He received the Congressional Medal for Antarctic Service for this work.

Professor Clapp's research and graduate students during the 1970s focused upon concepts and methods for reorganization, improvement, and (ultimately) automation of land information at the local level of government. He was instrumental in development and promotion of the notion of a multipurpose cadastre, leading to a series of National Research Council reports, and helping to provide the basis for today's rich environment of information about land as both a resource and a precious treasure.

In 1978, Jim became dean of the College of Engineering and Science at the University of Maine in Orono. UMO continues today as one of the nation's premier centers of learning in geospatial information science and engineering. In 1984, Professor Clapp returned to the CEE faculty at UW-Madison and became director of the Center for Land Information Studies within IES. He was appointed by the governor as chair of the Wisconsin Land Records Committee which formulated and began implementing a plan for the Wisconsin Land Records Program. This program includes an innovative local / state government arrangement by which revenues collected at the local level are aggregated up to the State Land Information Board which, in turn, redistributes the revenues to the local level in response to proposals to improve the quality and accessibility of land information. Another component of the program is the Wisconsin Land Information Association, a professional organization that later designated Professor Clapp as a "Friend of Land Records."

Professor Clapp was chair of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering from 1986 to 1990. During this same time period he served as president of the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping. His love of teaching and interaction with students drove him to insist on teaching his most-beloved required undergraduate course every semester during this time when his commitments to service were greatest. These characteristics were exemplary of Jim Clapp and will cause his students and his colleagues to regard him with fondness, admiration, and deep respect far into the future.

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