

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS LEROY J. PETERSON

LeRoy J. "Pete" Peterson, professor emeritus of educational leadership and policy analysis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, died at Bothell, WA on May 12, 2007 at the age of 101. He is survived by his two daughters, Alene (Patterson) and Karen (McFadden), three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

LeRoy Peterson was born Nov. 11, 1905 in Munden, KS where he spent his childhood on the family farm and graduated from Narka High School in 1924 and received a silver cup for being the outstanding senior. He attended Hastings College where he received his baccalaureate degree in 1928. After serving for one year as a high school teacher and principal at Daykin, NE, he entered the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he received his Ph.D. degree in 1932. Pete was a skilled horseman and, since jobs were hard to find in 1932, while waiting for employment Pete and his brother broke and sold wild horses to earn some money. Later in 1932 he accepted the position of research director for the Wisconsin Education Association (WEA), arriving in Madison with a ruptured spleen and a couple of broken ribs after being thrown and trampled by a horse he was breaking. He remained with the WEA until 1948 with the exception of 1944 and 1945 when he served as a consultant to the U.S. Office of Education supervising federal grants to schools in defense areas in thirteen states.

Pete joined the faculty of the UW School of Education in 1948 where he specialized in school law and school finance until his retirement in 1972. He was an excellent teacher and invariably received excellent ratings from his students. Pete was respected by his colleagues for his cheerful demeanor, rational judgment, and his calm, objective approach to discussions about ideas. He also served University Extension and was associate dean for the Milwaukee area from 1958–60.

Professor Peterson was very active professionally, serving as a state delegate to the 1955 White House Conference on Education, as president of the Wisconsin Education Association in 1957, and as an active member of several professional associations. He also was active as a consultant on issues of school finance, both nationally and internationally, serving as a consultant to the National Education Association (NEA), the U.S. Department of Education, the World Bank, the Korean Ministry of Education, and the states of Oregon, New Jersey, Colorado and Arizona. He spent two years in Nigeria (1964-66) as consultant to the Ministry of Education of Northern Nigeria as part of the Northern Nigeria Teacher Education Project funded by the Ford Foundation.

Professor Peterson's scholarly interests were primarily in the fields of school finance and school law. His book *Law and Public School Operation* (co-authored with Richard Rossmiller and Marlin Volz) was a standard in the field for many years. He directed a number of research projects on school finance while with the NEA and received a major grant from the U.S. Office of Education to study the economic impact of state support models on educational finance. He authored many book chapters and journal articles on topics in school finance and school law. (He also wrote many poems during his lifetime.)

On August 12, 1935, he married Florence Fenske, a teacher and counselor who was the love of his life. Pete and Florence had the first house built in Crestwood, a cooperative neighborhood on the west side of Madison, where they lived for many years. Florence accompanied him to Nigeria, and they traveled twice

(continued)

around the world in connection with this assignment. After retirement they settled in Bothell, WA to be near their children and grandchildren, and Pete renewed his interest in horses, particularly Arabian horses. They traveled to Ireland, Russia, Scandinavia and South America and enjoyed 56 years together prior to Florence's passing in 1991.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

B. Dean Bowles

Marvin J. Fruth

Donald N. McIsaac

Richard A. Rossmiller, chair