

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS RONALD L. GIESE

Ronald L. Giese, professor emeritus of forest and wildlife ecology, died October 18, 2009 at his home in Middleton at the age of 75. Professor Giese was born in Milwaukee on June 28, 1934. He completed his undergraduate degree in botany and zoology from the Wisconsin State University in Milwaukee in 1956. He went on to earn MS and PhD degrees in forest entomology from the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1958 and 1960, respectively.

In 1960 Dr. Giese joined the faculty of Purdue University as an assistant professor of forest entomology and environmental science. He quickly rose through the ranks and attained full professorship in 1967. In 1970, he was appointed director of the natural resources and environmental science program.

Ron was recruited to the University of Wisconsin-Madison as professor and chair of the Department of Forestry in 1975. He continued to serve as department chair for 23 years until his retirement in 1998, at which time he had the longest continuous tenure as a department chair within the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. During this time, Ron built the fledgling department into a national leader in forestry education and research.

Professor Giese's area of academic research was forest entomology, with an emphasis on ecology and population dynamics of insects that threaten forests. His early research focused on the Columbian timber beetle, a destructive pest of hardwood forests in the eastern U.S. His later research centered on understanding the dynamics and impacts of the gypsy moth. During his university tenure he published over 100 research papers, largely pertaining to population modeling and quantitative ecology of forest insects. He served as major advisor for 7 MS and 15 PhD students, many of whom currently serve in research and administrative positions at universities and government agencies. The American Association for the Advancement of Science recognized his scientific achievements by electing him a fellow in 1968.

Professor Giese was a key participant in federal and national forestry research and policymaking organizations. From 1990-95 he was an officer and member of the executive committee of the National Association of Professional Forestry Schools and Colleges; at the end of his three terms he received an award for his distinguished leadership. He served on the Cooperative Forestry Research Advisory Council, U.S. Department of Agriculture, from 1983-92 and was a member of the Science and Education National Research Initiative Advisory Committee, U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1992. In 1986-87, Dr. Giese was appointed as a program manager for the USDA Competitive Research Grants Office, a task he conducted while simultaneously chairing UW-Madison's Department of Forestry. USDA Secretary Madigan later appointed him to the National Research Initiative Advisory Council from 1992-94.

Ron Giese had a keen interest in genealogy and history and was able to pursue research in these areas during his retirement. He wrote two award winning books on family genealogy. While volunteering at Poplar Forest in Lynchburg, Virginia, he published five historical monographs on Thomas Jefferson's agricultural pursuits in tobacco. In addition he volunteered his time and expertise at the State of Wisconsin Historical Society and at the Waterloo Area Historical Society, and he published several monographs on the history of the Waterloo area.

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Ron Giese was a skilled mentor and sought-after advisor who will long be remembered with fondness by his faculty, staff and students. His greatest satisfaction was to see them succeed. He was also a dedicated administrator who led a new university department through a remarkable period of growth and development during his tenure as chairman. When he retired, the Department of Forest Ecology and Management was recognized nationally for the quality of its educational programs and for the productivity and research accomplishments of its faculty. He is survived by his wife, Renie, sons Ron, Jr. (Albuquerque, NM) and Greg (Madison, WI), and three grandchildren.

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