

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

ON THE DEATH OF DEAN AND PROFESSOR EMERITUS ORRIN L. HELSTAD

Orrin L. Helstad, dean and professor emeritus of the University of Wisconsin Law School, passed away at age 87 on September 11, 2009.

Helstad, born in 1922 in Blair, Wisconsin, graduated from the UW Law School in 1950. During the next eleven years, he served on the staff of the Wisconsin Legislative Council. There, with co-worker Margo Melli (now professor emerita of law at UW), he helped shape important legislation. He participated in the revision of the Criminal Code and the Motor Vehicle Code, the state version of the Uniform Commercial Code and the state's administrative rule making procedure.

He joined the law faculty in 1961 where he taught courses and seminars on no less than nine subjects. He created a new course entitled "Financial Aspects of Estate and Business Planning" in which students invested up to \$100,000 in the stock market under the guidance of Helstad and the donor of the funds. During this time, he published a treatise on the Wisconsin Uniform Commercial Code, among other works.

In 1972, he began eleven years of service as an administrator in the Law School. He was the associate dean for three years, then acting dean for one year and dean for the next seven years. The financial straits of the school during those years were considerably ameliorated by his development of the school's alumni as a source of funding. These projects could not have been undertaken except at the expense of cut-backs in other programs of the school.

The institution of summer funding for faculty research from the Law School itself was one of Orrin's many accomplishments as dean. He emphasized alumni relations and arranged frequent alumni dinners and luncheons throughout the state. He attended virtually every meeting of the Wisconsin Bar Board of Governors during his deanship. He encouraged law faculty to participate in law extension programs and activities. His service on a host of federal and state commissions and committees was part of his commitment to public service and to alumni relations. He oversaw the construction of a library addition to the school in 1978, an action that was a precursor to a substantial renovation of the school in the next decade. He was able to reduce the school's student-faculty ratio and to restructure the school's administration for increased efficiency. Following his deanship, he continued as a professor at the school until his retirement. He received the school's Distinguished Service Award in 1991.

Orrin Helstad did not allow his congenital visual impairment to impede his achievements. His most amazing quality was his genuine modesty – an attribute rare in both lawyers and professors, let alone law professors! He enjoyed square dancing (he met his wife Charlotte at a square dance), bowling, and both serious and humorous activities related to his Norwegian heritage. He enjoyed life but was always ready to support a good cause with his physical labor as well as his dollars. He embodied "old-fashioned" virtues in a way that made them seem not only natural but modern. He was a gentleman in the best and truest sense of that word. His service to the Law School, the university and the state embodied the Wisconsin Idea.

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