

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS DAVID P. DICKSON

David P. Dickson, professor emeritus of dairy science, passed away Friday, July 9, 2010, in Madison after a determined battle against cancer. Professor Dickson was born in Everson, Washington on February 26, 1939, and graduated from Meridian High School as class valedictorian. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in dairy science from Washington State University in 1961. He continued his education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he completed the MS in 1963 and PhD in 1966. Dickson was appointed to a newly created position in the dairy science department in 1966 with responsibilities in extension and teaching. He was promoted to associate professor in 1971, professor in 1976, and retired in 1996.

During the early years of his career, Dr. Dickson led statewide efforts in 4-H dairy project development. He was active in training adult leaders of local 4-H clubs, providing technical expertise and project activities. He conducted many workshops for youth as well. He initiated and led a north-central U.S. effort to develop new 4-H dairy project literature that were widely adopted by 4-H programs throughout the country. The Wisconsin 4-H Foundation awarded him their Friend of 4-H Award in 1987.

Dr. Dickson was instrumental in working with Wisconsin dairy breed associations to develop programming for juniors. These programs have provided excellent opportunities for young members to develop leadership and social skills while learning about dairy cattle management and biology. The dairy quiz bowl activity, developed early in his career, is popular throughout the state and engages youth in developing their knowledge of the dairy industry and cattle. After 1978, the youth activities were carried out by academic staff. Regardless, he continued his involvement in youth development programs and served as a mentor to those who assumed primary responsibility for those activities.

From 1978 until his retirement in 1996, Dr. Dickson assumed extension responsibility for the National Cooperative Dairy Herd Improvement Program (DHI) in Wisconsin. With over 14,000 members, DHI was the largest farmer membership organization in the state. DHI underwent substantial change during that time, and extension's role in DHI also evolved. Extension formerly provided many services to the DHI program in the form of promotion, technician training, verification of records, and organizational development. Those functions were transferred to the Wisconsin DHI Cooperative. David worked effectively with DHI management and boards of directors at state and local levels to make a smooth transition of activities from extension to DHI. The one role extension continued to play in the Wisconsin DHI program was education: David worked effectively with county extension agents in providing educational programs on use of dairy herd records. He was an exceptional communicator with producer and urban audiences, often drawing illustrations and cartoons on a flip chart as he spoke. The WDHIC recognized Dr. Dickson's contributions to DHI in 1989 with their Friend of DHI Award.

Throughout his career, Professor Dickson was a skilled instructor of dairy cattle selection courses for undergraduates and the Farm and Industry Short Course (FISC) program. The animal evaluation, decision making and speaking skills he taught were highly valued by dairy industry employers, and Dickson actively sought to connect students with prospective employers. For several years, he also led the senior seminar course. He was honored as a teacher by the FISC in 1979, CALS in 1993, and the American Dairy Science Association in 1996.

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“Dr. Dave,” as the students affectionately called him, was the founding advisor to UW-Madison’s Badger Dairy Club and served as faculty advisor to the Midwest and national student affiliate divisions of the American Dairy Science Association. Also, he was a long-time chapter advisor for UW-Madison’s Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity and fervent supporter of Madison’s Association of Women in Agriculture (AWA), agricultural professional-social organizations for young men and women. AWA awarded him honorary membership in 1988, and in 2005 he was honored as an Alpha Gamma Rho “Brother of the Century” during the national organization’s centennial celebration.

During Professor Dickson’s term as department chair (1984 to 1990), the department underwent an unprecedented period of faculty transition. Among the department’s 15 tenure-track faculty, seven of its most distinguished faculty retired, and one advanced to the CALS dean’s office. All eight of these positions were filled by probationary faculty during his time as chair. It was a period of exceptional renewal for the department; all of the individuals hired were subsequently promoted with tenure. He initiated and successfully accomplished replacement of the civil service labor staff at the campus dairy cattle center with a student labor force. It constitutes a large employment opportunity and provides excellent learning and leadership opportunities for students. The program maintains a mix of non-majors with majors and students with both farm and non-farm backgrounds. This continues as one of Dr. Dickson’s most significant and enduring contributions to the instructional mission of the department.

One of the foremost authorities on dairy cattle judging, David Dickson judged more national shows (13 total) at World Dairy Expo than any other official. In addition, he placed dairy cattle in over 20 countries and served on the all-American selection committees for all seven recognized dairy breeds.

For 46 years, Dickson served as a teacher and mentor to students on the dairy cattle judging team. Through intensive study and practice, students in this activity learn to apply a standard of perfection for dairy cattle evaluation to a practical situation where they are asked to rank classes of four animals. Student contestants take detailed notes about the animals, which they use later to make a defense of their decisions. They learn to present their defense without the assistance of notes in a convincing, articulate and well-organized discussion of the class. Accuracy of the argument is weighted most heavily in scoring their presentations, but persuasiveness, emphasis, grammar and speaking skills are also graded. During his career as the University of Wisconsin-Madison Dairy Cattle Judging Coach, Dickson led teams to five national championships at the National Intercollegiate Dairy Cattle Judging Contest. Perhaps more impressive, his teams won 12 team reasons titles at the national contest.

Always an educator, Dickson helped to produce over 20 videos on oral reasons. Additionally, his dairy cattle judging brochure, “Dairy Cattle Judging Made Easy,” has been translated into Italian and Spanish.

Professor Dickson is survived by his sisters, Bonnie (Tom) Garnett and Linda (Ralph) Sorstokke, and brother Dale (Robin) Dickson, and several nieces and nephews.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE
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