

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITA NELLIE ROSE McCANNON

Professor Emerita Nellie Rose McCannon was born on December 29, 1917 in Sugar Grove, Illinois, the only daughter of the late Benjamin and Bena McCannon. She passed away on Friday, March 11, 2011 at Wyndemere Retirement Center, where she moved in 1997 after an extensive residence in Madison, Wisconsin.

Professor McCannon served on the University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty for 37 years, including ten years at the Milwaukee County Extension Office. She earned a BS degree from Iowa State University and an MS from UW-Madison.

Her academic legacy was one of extraordinary leadership. She joined the Department of Life Sciences Communication (formerly known as agricultural journalism) to head its home economics major, a vibrant cross-college program in which faculty in Life Sciences Communication taught communication to students in the School of Human Ecology. She became president of the Wisconsin Home Economics Association, started a communication section, and served as its first chair. She led the Home Economics Press service. She initiated an annual workshop for women editors and reporters in the state. She became president of the Madison Chapter of Women in Communication. She was the first extension agent to use television as a learning tool. She was also the first person on campus to teach those same outreach learning principles to her students through the broadcast communication courses she developed.

McCannon worked extensively internationally, reaching out to locales in Mexico and Indonesia, for example, to empower communities to use radio and television to stimulate markets for agricultural produce and to build networks of women entrepreneurs. She was proud of having made professional contributions on all seven continents. When she retired, her first task was to travel around the world visiting her international students.

She became an extraordinary role model for students in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and the School of Human Ecology. Scheduled keynote speaker at the 2011 Wisconsin Alumni Association Convocation, Abdul Khan wrote, "I am deeply saddened to hear that Nellie is no more. She was not just a professor, but also a mentor to me. I am lost for words on this tragic loss. Her family and friends can be proud of what she accomplished in life. In her death, I have lost one of my mothers." Khan served as assistant general of communication for UNESCO for many years before becoming president of the Talal Abu Ghazaleh University of Business in Bahrain.

McCannon's impact continues to be felt strongly by UW-Madison students through the scholarships that she established in the Department of Life Sciences Communication in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and in the School of Human Ecology. The endowment that she established in life sciences communication in 1986 was the first scholarship endowment in the department and has supported about forty students to date. Eleven donors have since followed her lead, establishing critical sources of funding for both undergraduate and graduate students, including two full-tuition scholarships, an extraordinary level of support in a department of small size.

In the words of LSC doctoral candidate Jill Hopke, a 2011 McCannon Scholar: “It is a personal honor to be awarded a scholarship in the name of a path-breaking woman in academia. I feel indebted to women scholars like Professor McCannon, who pioneered using communication technologies for educational purposes, whose research and teaching led her around the world, and for making the way easier for younger women like myself to pursue a career in academia and conduct international research Learning about women like her make my own professional goals seem more obtainable.”

Professor McCannon is survived by her brother Ben McCannon, sister-in-law Vivian McCannon, eight nieces and nephews, and numerous great and great-great nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, brothers Frank, Willis and John McCannon, and nephews Michael, Dennis and David McCannon.

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