

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

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS RICHARD G. LAWSON**

Professor Emeritus of Communication Arts Richard G. Lawson died on November 18, 2008. He was survived by his wife Joanne Lawson, by sons David and Rick and daughter Carol Lawson Barth, and by three grandchildren.

Richard Lawson was educated at Washington State University (BA, 1951), Yale University (MFA, 1957), and the University of Illinois (PhD, 1964). Before joining the Wisconsin faculty, he served as assistant professor of radio-television-film at UCLA.

Dr. Lawson was professor of broadcast studies in the Department of Communication Arts at UW-Madison from 1966 until 1984. From 1984 until 1986, Dr. Lawson split his appointment between communication arts and UW-Extension, where he served as director of television and station manager at WHA-TV. He moved to WHA full-time in 1986. He retired from university service and was granted emeritus status in 1990. In his 24 years of service to UW-Madison and UW-Extension, Dr. Lawson was an innovative teacher of mass media studies and a tireless and successful advocate on behalf of public service television.

Dr. Lawson's lasting contribution to the Department of Communication Arts centered on the work he did in creating a full program of instruction in television production and integrating that into the department's liberal arts curriculum. He designed and taught courses in beginning and advanced television production, screenwriting and film direction, and he instilled in his students his own belief that a broad liberal arts education is the principal source of excellence among television professionals. He pursued this theme in his own scholarly inquiries through papers and articles on the place of television studies in the liberal arts tradition. He used his influence within the community of professional broadcasters to start scores of UW students on productive careers in television production and management.

Dr. Lawson lent his creative skills, either as scriptwriter, script supervisor, or executive producer, to several television productions that were shown on WHA and other public stations. Such work was honored with four major awards, including the Chicago International Film Festival Gold Plaque for his NOVA documentary *The Great Violin Mystery*. Dr. Lawson continued his commitment to excellence in public broadcasting during the last phase of his UW career, when he took over as director of television at WHA, and in that capacity, he helped sustain WHA's proud tradition of public service television.

Richard Lawson dedicated his career to excellence in broadcasting. That vision was communicated in the classroom and it was realized in his own creative efforts.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Vance Kepley

Susan Zaeske, chair