

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

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS H. EDWIN YOUNG**

H. Edwin Young, our esteemed colleague and leader, died on January 2, 2012 in Madison at age 94. He was born in Bonne Bay, Newfoundland, Canada on May 3, 1917 and grew up in Maine. He received his BS and MS degrees from the University of Maine in 1940 and 1942. He came to UW-Madison as a graduate student in 1945, received his PhD in economics in 1950, and was appointed assistant professor in the Department of Economics that same year. He was quickly promoted to associate professor in 1952 and to full professor in 1955.

Young's talents as an administrator were recognized early in his career. In 1951, he was appointed director of the School for Workers. He then served as chair of the Department of Economics from 1953 through 1955 and again from 1956 through 1961. He spent the 1955-1956 academic year in Belgium while holding a Ford Foundation Faculty Fellowship. On his return, he became a member of the University Committee and its chair in 1959-1960. After spending the 1961-1962 year in Pakistan advising on economic development, he was appointed dean of the College of Letters and Science, a position he held until 1965.

As department chair, Young helped transform the department away from its concentration in the declining field of institutional economics. He played a major role in hiring a core of well-known economists and highly promising new PhDs, thus creating an eclectic department with nationally recognized strengths in econometrics, economic development, economic history, labor economics, and public finance. He took the lead in hiring Guy Orcutt from Harvard University, which coincided with the establishment of the interdepartmental Social Systems Research Institute in 1960. From 1952 to 1962, the department's roster of tenure and tenure-track faculty increased from 18 to 40, and the department's national ranking improved dramatically. He also believed the university's mission should include assisting universities in developing nations. He developed a particularly strong relationship with Gadjah Mada University in Indonesia.

In 1965, Young resigned as dean to become president of the University of Maine. He returned to Madison three years later as vice-president of the University of Wisconsin and professor of economics. In September 1968, he became UW-Madison's chancellor at a time of pervasive campus unrest, with wide-spread protests against the war in Vietnam. In this period, Young successfully kept the campus open for students and for sustaining teaching and research, despite violence and the tragic 1970 bombing of Sterling Hall. On several occasions, he felt forced to rely on support from the governor, who supplied security using the Wisconsin National Guard. Acts of violence declined after the Sterling Hall bombing, but tensions remained.

Young faced two additional challenges as chancellor. One was coping with the strike by the graduate student teaching assistants in Fall 1970. In a controversial decision, Young had recently recognized the Teaching Assistant Association (TAA) as a labor union. The other was protecting Madison's role in the merger, finalized in October 1971, between the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin State University System.

In 1977, Young was appointed president of the University of Wisconsin System, a position he held until January 1980. He was then named Oscar Rennebohm Professor of Economics and taught in the Center for Development, a master's degree program for students from developing countries. He retired in 1987, although he continued to be active in the center for some years. In 2000, Young was honored at the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the economics faculty at Gadjah Mada University.

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Many people marveled at Young's leadership and administrative skills. He had clearly thought-out goals. When opportunities presented themselves, he knew which way to move. In fact, he often helped create these opportunities. He listened carefully to all parties and regularly consulted faculty members for their advice. When unsure about that advice, he asked key members of the faculty and staff not normally involved to carry out an independent study of the situation. With his keen insight, he understood the nuances of problems brought to him and the motives of the advocates.

He also possessed an unusual ability to find capable people to work with him. He constantly watched for potential leaders among the faculty and staff and then appointed these people to important committees to learn more about their effectiveness. He also foresaw the need to plan for the future of the Medical School and UW Hospital, taking important steps to move the medical organizations to their present location at the west end of the campus.

Though sometimes criticized for delaying a decision, Young always felt it better to be slow and right than hasty and wrong. When pressed to respond to a letter from an irate faculty member, Young always advised, "Write in haste, mail in leisure." When asked to define his leadership style, his standard comment, accompanied by a sly smile, was, "I find out which way the crowd is going, and then I run real fast to get in front of them."

The story is told about Young's response to an invitation to play table-stakes poker with a group of economics faculty members and graduate students. He declined saying, "This is what I do all day long, and I don't consider it recreation!" He knew when to bluff and was able to discern when others were bluffing. His approach was disarming. He could come up with a remark that was sometimes elliptic, an apt statement about the subject under discussion, or a mischievous comment that would be humorous and a means of reducing tension. Department chairmen and deans often came to him with a request of one kind or another. Young would listen carefully, acknowledge what had been said, and then launch into a tangential story about a Maine farmer. Distracted, his visitor would usually emerge from the meeting wondering what had happened—had his request registered or not? Young was known for playing with his cards close to his chest.

Throughout his career, Young was an advocate for public higher education. He argued strongly for maintaining a low tuition policy, with broad access for Wisconsin students. He believed that adopting a more meritocratic, higher-tuition strategy to solve the financial problems of American public higher education would undermine the basic function of a public university. The state, he felt, should recognize the many benefits that accrue to it through the financial support it provides to the university.

Young's extraordinary record of distinctive contributions to this university and its governance is unlikely to be matched. The University of Wisconsin-Madison owes Young a great measure of thanks for his dedicated and inspired leadership.

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