

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS OVA B. COMBS

Professor Emeritus Ova B. Combs, age 95, passed away on November 10, 2004. He was survived by his wife, Barbara, sons James (Beverly) of Manitowish Waters, and Robert (Ann) of Madison; daughter Mary Jane of Madison; seven grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Mabel, and son, Thomas.

“O.B.,” as he was known by his colleagues and many friends, was born in Emmalena, Kentucky, on November 12, 1908. He received a BS degree in horticulture from the College of Agriculture, Purdue University, in 1930. He joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison as an assistant horticulturist and graduate student that same year. He earned an MS degree in horticulture in 1932.

He became an assistant professor in 1939, an associate professor in 1942, and full professor in 1949. He was named chairman of the department in 1949, a position which he held for the next 17 years. Under his leadership, the department made highly significant gains in staff size and academic stature, both nationally and internationally.

During his long career, O.B. served in all three of the university academic areas: instruction, research, and extension. He taught a course in vegetable crops from 1953 to 1964. His research was devoted largely to the improvement of vegetable crops. He developed a number of important cultivars, including such long-time popular gardening favorites as “Early Scarlet” tomato and “Wisconsin Lakes” pepper. His extension work dealt primarily with home and 4-H club project vegetable production, accomplished through conducting countless meetings and radio programs and preparing numerous extension publications. During World War II, O.B. led the statewide “Wisconsin Victory Garden” Extension Program, activated in every county of the state.

From 1965 to 1968, O.B. served as the chief of party of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) program, establishing a new campus in the Western State of Nigeria at the University of Nigeria at Ife. He held numerous positions of leadership in professional organizations. He was elected as an honorary fellow in the American Society for Horticultural Science in 1971.

O.B. Combs left a most impressive legacy of many inspired students and countless assisted growers of vegetable crops. He guided many young staff members and colleagues during his long and dedicated career at UW-Madison. He shunned personal recognition in favor of having others succeed through his efforts and guidance. He will be long remembered and respected for all he accomplished in academia.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE
John A. Schoenemann