

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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS WILLIAM E. SAUPE

Professor Emeritus William Edward “Bill” Saupe, age 85, died on Sunday, March 17, 2013. Bill was born on a farm near Sheldon, Iowa, on January 23, 1928. He received a BS degree in agricultural education from Iowa State University in 1951. After farming with his father for several years and service in the U.S. Marine Corps, Bill returned to Iowa State to obtain his MS degree (1961) in agricultural education and PhD (1965) in agricultural economics. He joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Agricultural Economics (now Agricultural and Applied Economics) as an assistant professor in 1965 and was promoted to associate professor in 1967 and to professor in 1973. Bill retired in 1995.

Professor Saupe was a dedicated and conscientious teacher, a beloved and effective extension specialist, a pioneering researcher, and a truly outstanding departmental citizen. His 30-year career at the University of Wisconsin-Madison involved an integrated program of research, extension, and classroom teaching emphasizing the well-being of farm families and rural communities. Although primarily Midwest and USA in orientation, this work led to professional endeavors in ten other countries on six continents plus shorter professional activities and travel in the agricultural areas of an additional 15 countries.

Professor Saupe was author or co-author of over 70 research publications, including 20 Research Division reports published by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, 12 refereed journal articles, 11 reports published by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and eight chapters in books. He regularly presented papers and participated in the annual meetings of the American Agricultural Economics Association. His analyses of farm and rural poverty, the unequal treatment of farm families under some federal assistance programs, and the limited health insurance coverage of farm children helped draw public attention to those issues.

Reflecting his farm roots, much of his extension work was directed at assisting low-income and beginning farmers become financially successful. His research was focused on the incidence, causes, and consequences of rural poverty in Wisconsin. In collaboration with the USDA’s Economic Research Service, Bill directed and coordinated a major innovative research project that tracked the fate of Wisconsin farmers displaced by the farm financial crisis of the mid-1980s. Bill later became interested in quantifying the economic importance of agriculture to rural communities. Working with University of Wisconsin-Extension county agents, he generated and periodically updated agricultural sector monetary contribution for every Wisconsin county. This was foundational work that spawned subsequent research related to measuring economic impact.

Professor Saupe and his family lived in southern Brazil for two years (1971 and 1972) while he participated in a University of Wisconsin-Madison/U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) institution building program at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. There he helped develop and teach courses, assisted faculty and graduate students in farm research, and co-authored a provisional text on the economics of agricultural production. This experience led to involvement in additional Portuguese speaking countries.

Bill understood the importance of the department collectively engaging in outreach beyond the formal programs of extension specialists. For many years, he edited *Economic Issues*, a periodical with 1,800 readers nationwide that offered a lay perspective on the gamut of research issues being addressed by faculty. He also edited *Managing the Farm*, a periodical that focused on farm business and financial

(continued)

management topics and had readers in all 50 states. His ability to gently persuade faculty to contribute to the periodicals was uncanny. Bill was a quiet, unassuming man with dry sense of humor—qualities that made him a de facto mentor to new faculty and a friend and counselor to all faculty.

His classroom teaching included post-high school rural youth in farm short courses, undergraduate students, and graduate students. He served on graduate thesis committees for students from many countries and in several departments including agricultural economics, continuing and vocational education, economics, and agronomy. One of his graduate advisees became a distinguished professor at Cornell University. Others became faculty members at Iowa State University, Ohio State University, Milwaukee Technical College, University of Zulia (Venezuela), and the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil).

Professor Saupe's impressive career was recognized on June 30, 1995, when he was inducted into the Prairie Museum Hall of Fame in his home town of Sheldon, Iowa—the 22nd person to be so honored in 35 years.

Upon his retirement from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Bill engaged in volunteer work including for several years the daily filling of his van with surplus produce and other items from local food stores, bakeries and farmers market for delivery to food pantries. He also continued to participate in marathons, something he began after reaching age 50. Bill was a devoted member of Asbury United Methodist Church for 47 years and served in many leadership roles.

Bill is survived by Lorna, his wife of 60 years, daughters Rebecca (David) Luther and Barbara (Barry) Hein, daughter-in-law Nancy Sweitzer, and seven grandchildren. His son, Kurt W. Saupe, associate professor of medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, died in 2012.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Philip E. Harris

Edward V. Jesse, chair