

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

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS RICHARD “DICK” VOWLES (1917-2013)**

Dick Vowles died December 19, 2013 at the age of 96. A Madisonian for more than 50 years, Dick was a faculty member in the University of Wisconsin Scandinavian Studies Department from 1960-1985.

An internationally respected Strindberg scholar, editor of a 16 volume Nordic Translation Series for UW, Dick was lauded by Chancellor Irving Shain, in a 1985 letter conferring emeritus status, for his “consistently high quality teaching,” achievement as a “twice distinguished Fulbright scholar,” “administrative and leadership roles,” and “spirit and energy.” Dick replied cheekily that he had provided his department with a copy to be used, “with a little editing, as my obituary when the time comes.”

An irrepressibly egalitarian humanist, Dick was born in Fargo, North Dakota, the only child of Guy and Ella (Beckman) Vowles. In 1925, when he was eight, the family moved to North Carolina, where Guy Vowles joined the Davidson College faculty as a professor of German. Dick earned a B.S. in biochemistry from Davidson in 1938. Ranging from the sciences to the humanities, he took graduate courses at nearby University of North Carolina, 1938-39, and at the University of Stockholm, 1939-40, before earning an M.A. in English from Yale in 1942. From 1941-44, during World War II, he worked as a chemical engineer and for the War Department, then served as a Vice Consul in Gothenburg, Sweden, 1945-46.

Fortuitously rejected by the newly-formed CIA, Dick returned to literary studies, acquiring a Ph.D. in English from Yale in 1950, while teaching, 1948-1960, at a succession of universities, including Southwestern University in Memphis, Queens University in NYC, and the University of Florida, along with a 1955-56 stint as a Fulbright fellow in Copenhagen. After joining the UW Scandinavian Studies faculty, Dick was a Strindberg fellow in Stockholm (1973), a Norwegian government fellow (1978), and a visiting professor at NYU, the University of Helsinki, and Stockholm University.