

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS JOSEPH T. LAWTON**

Joseph Lawton, Professor Emeritus of Child and Family Studies (now Human Development and Family Studies) died peacefully at his Madison home on May 7, 2014, at the age of 79.

Professor Lawton was born and educated in England, receiving his Teaching Diploma from the London School of Education in 1957, his M.Ed. from Manchester University in 1969 and his Ph.D. from Leeds University in 1974, where he also was a Senior Lecturer in Early Education.

In the fall of 1973, while on his first visit to the United States, Professor Lawton stopped in Madison to visit a professional acquaintance, Professor Herbert Klausmeier, Director of the Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Cognitive Learning. During the visit, Professor Lawton had the good fortune of meeting Professor Frank Hooper from the Child and Family Studies Program. This chance meeting led to an interview for a faculty position in the Child and Family Studies program. Professor Lawton was offered the position and joined the UW faculty in the fall of 1974 as an Assistant Professor of Child Development in what was then known as the Child and Family Studies Program Area of the School of Family Resources and Consumer Sciences. He served on the faculty for 23 years, until his retirement in 1997.

Professor Lawton served 3 terms (1978-81, 1983-85 and 1987-89) as chair of the Child and Family Studies program, providing leadership and guidance through several critical periods in the department's evolution, including the development and approval of a doctoral degree program. In 1974, only two weeks after joining the UW faculty, Professor Lawton was asked to serve as the Director of the University of Wisconsin Preschool Laboratory. He held this position for the next 12 years. Under his leadership the program grew in size and quality and eventually became a financially independent unit. It gained a reputation not only as an excellent program for young children and for training future teachers, but as a site for significant research.

Professor Lawton's teaching focused on undergraduate and graduate courses in early childhood education and child development. He was instrumental in developing and obtaining approval for an undergraduate major leading to the Wisconsin preschool/kindergarten teaching credential. During the course of his career he developed a reputation as an excellent teacher and his classes were always popular. Over the years he taught and influenced the development of hundreds of undergraduate early childhood education students, many of whom went on to teaching careers and who in turn positively guided the development of thousands of children. Professor Lawton also successfully mentored dozens of graduate students, many of whom went on to their own distinguished careers here and abroad.

Professor Lawton authored two well-received textbooks on child development and child care and early childhood education. His *Introduction to Child Development* (1982) was unique in its emphasis on children's learning while his second text, *Introduction to Child Care and Early Childhood Education* (1988), was in part based on experiences and research conducted in the University's Preschool Laboratory.

Professor Lawton's research focused on the educational and familial factors that can promote young children's development. This work ranged from the effects of early childhood curriculum models to the potential fade-out of effects for children's development and achievement following the transition from Head Start to kindergarten. One of Professor Lawton's earliest projects was a series of experimental tests of the educational and developmental effects of three preschool program models. Children enrolled in preschool programs based on Ausubelian, Piagetian and eclectic curriculum models were compared over a two year period. These studies were among the first comparative studies of curriculum models for preschool education and established Professor Lawton as a national authority on evaluating the efficacy of preschool education models.

A second major line of research involved children's concept learning. The cornerstone of this work was an educational intervention in which children ages 6-10 were taught various strategies for approaching the learning of concepts. One of the articles from this project, published in the *American Educational Research Journal*, won the 1981 *Palmer O. Johnson Memorial Award for Outstanding Research* from the American Educational Research Association.

During the last decade of his career, Professor Lawton was involved in a national evaluation of Head Start children. Funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, this multi-year evaluation examined the child, community and teacher characteristics that can facilitate school success for disadvantaged children.

For nearly a quarter century Professor Lawton was a highly regarded and valued member of his department, college and the university. He is fondly remembered as warm, conscientious, and committed scholar and colleague.

Professor Lawton is survived by his wife, Pauline; their five children, Sarah Lawton-Sprecher, John, Gerard, Matthew and Andrew Lawton; grandchildren, Jacob and Brielle Sprecher, and Thomas and Lindsey Lawton; and foster son, Peter (Deirbhle) Newhall and children, Freya and Saibh.

Respectfully submitted by the Memorial Resolution Committee:
Professor Stephen Small, (Chair)
Professor Karen Bogenschneider
Professor Dave Riley