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**Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison  
On the Death of Professor Emeritus Norbert Lewis Schmitz**

Dr. Norbert Lewis Schmitz, Professor Emeritus of Electrical and Computer Engineering, died on April 3, 2017 at age 95. In his life, he wore many hats, electrical engineer, inventor, consultant, educator, sailor, conservationist, husband and father. He was most often referred to as “Norb” by his friends.

He was born on May 18, 1921 and lived most of his early life in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He earned all of his degrees, BS (1942), MS (1948) and Ph.D. (1951), in Electrical Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

As an Electrical Engineer he contributed to the World War II US effort with his work at Cutler Hammer Company in Milwaukee, developing military control systems and components for the Navy and Air Force. While in Milwaukee he also taught electrical engineering at Marquette University and Milwaukee Vocational School. After he received his Ph.D., he joined the Department of Electrical Engineering in 1951 as an Assistant Professor and retired as Professor Emeritus in 1983.

Professor Schmitz was an expert on almost all aspects of electrical machinery, motors and generators, and controls for this equipment. He was responsible for several undergraduate and graduate courses and developed the control systems laboratory. Most of his research focused on electric machine operation and control. Norb was one of the first academics to carry out research involving power electronic devices for control of electric machines; technology that now dominates the field of motor control. He cofounded an industrial consortium, WEMPEC, (Wisconsin Electric Machines and Power Electronics Consortium) that currently supports a major program in this technical area and is a living legacy of his influence on the evolution of the power electronics area at Wisconsin. Norb served as Major Professor and guided the research of many students, including 11 who earned the Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Most of his Ph.D. students became Professors at major schools. He also coauthored a textbook on electrical machinery with one of his Ph.D. students, who was also a UW-Madison Professor.

Norb loved sailing and owned several sailboats and ice boats. He raced his 19-foot Lightning Class sailboat, the “Coed”, at the Milwaukee Yacht Club, where he won the 1946 Lightning Class Season Championship. He returned to Madison in 1947, with “Coed” in tow, to pursue graduate studies. As a member of the UW Hoofers Sailing Club, he taught aspiring sailors the rudiments of sailing. As luck would have it, Ruth Yates, a fellow graduate student was among them. He persuaded Ruth to become his sailing partner, and they were married in 1950. They both completed their respective Ph.D. studies in 1951.

They later acquired a 30-foot sloop “Spray” and spent 18 idyllic summers in the beloved “Spray” sailing Green Bay, Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, and Lake Huron. In 2003, “Spray” was donated to the UW Hoofers Sailing Club where she still sails as a teaching craft for aspiring keelboat sailors. Norb was also no stranger to sailing among the Caribbean islands and off the coasts of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland provinces of Canada. For 25 years, Norb taught US Power Squadron navigation courses and was awarded a lifetime membership in recognition of his service.

In 1960 Norb and Ruth bought a woodland farm in the Baraboo Hills. Their love of the area inspired them to become active conservationists and led to their Founding Directorship of the Baraboo Range Preservation Association.

Norb and Ruth and their growing family lived for many years in a lakefront house on the south shore of Lake Monona, and in later years in a lakefront house on the northwest shore of Lake Mendota. He loved to take people (Landlubbers), particularly those who had never heard of iceboats, sailing on the ice of Lake Mendota and Lake Monona.

His wife, Dr. Ruth (Yates) Schmitz, died on May 23, 2015. Norb is survived by a son, Lawrence, and three daughters, Karen, Kathleen, and Wendy; eight grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Memorial Resolution Committee  
Donald Novotny  
Ted Bernstein  
James Skiles