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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS ROBERT GEORGE PETZOLD

Robert G. Petzold, M.M. and Ph.D. died July 9, 1999 in Madison Wisconsin. For 35 years he served as a professor of music education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the School of Education and in the School of Music.

Born in September 25, 1917 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Professor Petzold received a bachelors degree from the Milwaukee State Teachers College in 1938. After teaching for two years, he entered the University of Wisconsin-Madison to begin graduate study. It was at this time that he met and married the former Elsbeth Dobbs on June 20, 1942. Six months later he joined the Army Air Force and served for four years in the World War II Pacific theater of operations.

Upon his discharge he reentered the UW Graduate School and completed a Master of Music Degree in 1947 and a Ph.D in Music Education in 1951. Professor Petzold joined the School of Education faculty in 1951, received promotion to full professor in 1961, and through his teaching, research, and service, he achieved a very distinguished career in the field of music education.

Dr. Petzold was a master teacher equally at home teaching either undergraduate or graduate courses. Whether teaching methods courses to music education majors or classroom techniques to elementary teaching majors, he brought a verve, energy, and enthusiasm to the task that both challenged and encouraged students. As a teacher of graduate students he encouraged them to consider a multiplicity of ideas and to consider varied interpretations for issues plaguing the profession. His broad experience, knowledge of the field and its influential individuals, and his involvement with major movements within music education caused students from all over the world to seek him out as an advisor for graduate study. A list of students that received graduate degrees under his tutelage reveals the names of many individuals who were influential in American and international elementary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities.

Robert Petzold is considered one of the most prestigious researchers in the field of music education. His US government-supported seminal study in auditory perception of music in children and the ensuing monograph and articles were highly respected in the research community and won him the admiration of colleagues all over the world. Additionally, he was one of the founders and an early editor of the major research organ of the music education researchers, the Journal of Research in Music Education, and an early participant in and research precentor for the international organization of music educators, the International Society for Music Education. Because of his renown as a researcher, lecturer, and teacher, he was included in the publication Who’s Who in America.

In the area of service to the profession and the University, Robert Petzold had an exemplary record. He was one of the founders and an early member of the National Research Council of the Music Educators National Conference and a frequent precentor at their state and national conventions. Upon his retirement he was honored by that organization as a researcher of renown and asked to present a historical overview of research efforts in music education from early efforts to 1986. That presentation was acknowledged by many as the most comprehensive and accurate report ever presented on the subject. On the state level, he appeared at many of the state conferences as a research precentor and was honored by the Wisconsin School Music Association as the music educator of the year in the mid-1980s. On the university level,

(continued)
Professor Petzold served as a member and chair of numerous School of Education and University-wide committees. Additionally, he served as Associate Dean of the School of Education in 1961, Director of Graduate Study for the Department of Curriculum and Instruction from 1971 to 1986 and, for many years, as the Chair of the Music Education area.

Robert George Petzold is remembered fondly by graduates and faculty from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and School of Music whose professional lives and careers he influenced. The authors of this Memorial Statement especially remember him as a mentor whose sage advice reflected his thorough understanding of the university and his profession. As well, he was respected for his teaching and research, and for his kind and considerate demeanor with colleagues and students. He was a personal and professional model for all who knew him and worked with him.

Memorial Resolution Committee

Anthony L. Barresi, Professor, School of Music and Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Gerald B. Olson, Professor, School of Music and Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Alan Lockwood, Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction