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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS DONALD R. PETERSON

Donald R. Peterson, professor emeritus and former associate dean and program leader for agricultural and agribusiness programs of UW Extension died in Madison on August 8, 1998, at the age of 73.

Born April 17, 1925, Don Peterson was raised in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin and was a 1942 graduate of Lincoln High School. After serving in the US Navy during World War II, he returned to pursue studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. As an undergraduate, he rowed for the Wisconsin crew, a tradition begun by his father. Don Peterson earned B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in agronomy and soil science at the UW-Madison. Following two years as research agronomist at Washington State University, he joined the faculty of the Agronomy Department at UW-Madison’s College of Agriculture in 1954.

Peterson began his University of Wisconsin career as extension agronomist and later specialized in weed science at the start of an era of rapidly expanding weed management options for Wisconsin growers. He developed field demonstrations, prepared fact sheets, spoke at meetings throughout the state, and teamed with other College faculty to bring the latest in university crop production and weed management research to the agricultural community. In 1962 he was named director of the college’s Agricultural Research Stations. And in 1974 he became associate dean of extension and state extension program leader for agriculture and agribusiness programs. During the budgetary crunches of the 1980s, Peterson wisely used limited extension financial resources to maintain and improve programs that were essential to Wisconsin’s agricultural community. A tireless team builder, Peterson encouraged statewide interdisciplinary programming, bringing together community, business, and government representatives and UW System and extension experts to serve Wisconsin agriculture and agribusiness. Peterson’s long involvement with extension work in all corners of the state made him a well-known college faculty member.

Though he retired from the UW-Madison in 1990, Peterson maintained an active and abiding interest in Wisconsin agriculture. He served as chairman of the Wisconsin Agribusiness Council Board of Directors from 1995 to 1996, and also served as president and CEO for that organization. He was an organizer of the Consortium of Animal Agriculture Resource Development, and remained active in its operations. He was associated for many years with Wisconsin Farm Progress Days, Inc., as chairman of the board of directors, and most recently as its executive director and secretary/treasurer. He was also active with the Kiwanis, Torskeklubben, Babcock House, the Wisconsin Rowing Association, and several fishing groups. Peterson also served on the Bethany Lutheran College Board of Regents.

Peterson also assisted FFA and 4-H programs in the state, and served on many college, university, regional and national committees. His loyalty to Wisconsin athletics was evidenced by his 18 years of service on the UW athletic board and his unfailing attendance at Wisconsin football, basketball, and hockey events.

Survivors include Gloria Skuldt Peterson, whom he married on October 15, 1955, two daughters; Noreen Peterson of Geneva, Illinois and Kristin Peterson of Edgerton, a son; Paul (Danielle) Peterson and granddaughter, Kate, of Shoreview, Minnesota. Another son, Ralph (Christine) Peterson predeceased his father in 1995.

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Donald Peterson will be remembered by his family and friends for his integrity, selflessness, and commitment to God, family, work, and his fellow man.

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