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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS HERMAN H. BROCKHAUS

Herman H. “Brock” Brockhaus, emeritus professor of communication arts and university extension, died at the Meriter Center in Madison on June 9, 1999 at age 92.

He was born at Antigo, Wisconsin in 1907 and attended schools in Hartford, Lake Mills and Appleton, all in Wisconsin. He earned a bachelor’s degree (1929) at North Central College, Naperville, Illinois. From 1929 to 1938 he taught speech and English and directed the drama, debate and speech activities at New London High School, New London, Wisconsin. By attending summer sessions, Brock earned his master’s degree in speech at the University of Wisconsin in 1938.

From 1938 to 1941, he was a one-person speech department at Pacific University, Forest Grove, Oregon. Here he taught all the speech courses in the catalog and directed the drama and inter-school competitive speech programs. He then taught a year at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, after which he entered the Army and served from 1942 to 1945 in the medical corps and in the Army’s information and education section.

Following his discharge, Brock returned to graduate study at the University of Wisconsin where he earned his Ph.D. in speech in 1949. His doctoral dissertation was a history of the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association.

Throughout his life, Brock was involved in speech activities both as a student as an educator. In a humorous note (1967) to communication arts chairperson Frederick Haberman, Brock described his first success when as a sixth grader he upheld the negative in a debate on the proposition “Resolved: That Washington is more famous than Lincoln.” The affirmative speaker maintained that Washington is more famous because his picture is on all dollar bills. But young Brockhaus won the debate when he countered that Lincoln’s picture is on all the pennies.

Professor Brockhaus held faculty appointments at the University of Wisconsin from 1947 until his retirement in 1972. He was professor and chair of the Department of Communication Arts in UW-Extension and in the University Center System. He was also a member of the Department of Communication Arts within the College of Letters and Science. For a number of years he served as UW-Madison faculty senate parliamentarian. As well, he played an important administrative and educational role as executive secretary of the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association. He had a special talent and passion for teaching oral communication skills to adults in such fields as business, education, labor, and government. His work in university extension, epitomizing the Wisconsin Idea, improved the lives of hundreds of adult learners.

Brock will be remembered by his colleagues and friends as an extremely kind and gracious man. His remarkable tactfulness, unfailing reliability and uncanny attention to detail made him truly delightful to work with and to know.

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