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

ON THE DEATH OF INSTRUCTOR EMERITA ELLEN BERNICE GIBSON

Ellen Bernice Gibson, instructor-emerita, died on December 30, 2000. She was born on April 30, 1906 in Chicago, the daughter of Frank Willard Gibson and Nellie Mae Blakely Gibson. The family moved to Janesville, Wisconsin, in 1909, where she grew up. She graduated from Janesville High School in 1923, the valedictorian of her class, from Milton College in 1927, and from the Library School of the University of Wisconsin in 1929.

Bernice served the Library School (now the School of Library and Information Studies) from 1929 until her retirement in 1972 as instructor (with tenure). Her association with the school spanned the years when it was administered by the State Library Commission, focusing mainly on public libraries in Wisconsin, to the years when it had become a university graduate program with a national and international focus. She contributed to the school’s instructional program in cataloging and classification, initially as revisor and assistant, later as lecturer. Her service as the school’s librarian for many years provided valuable support to all its teaching, service, and research programs. As both an alumna of the school and a faculty member who had contact with most of its students for over four decades, Bernice played a key role in the school’s effort to stay in touch with its alumni. For example, she edited the alumni newsletter, Jottings, for some 20 years.

The affection with which generations of colleagues, alumni, and friends regarded Bernice is illustrated by the nickname, “Bunny,” which was bestowed upon her midway through her career and by which she was known to many. It reflects the warmth of her personality, but it does not do justice to her intellectual acumen and altruism. Bunny was an astute judge of character, and she could see through pretensions, but she was charitable in her dealings with others. She was a confidante of students and lent her ear to many, and she was a warm and supportive colleague to faculty and staff and mentor to young colleagues. While a shy and flexible person who tended to keep her own counsel, she could show great courage and determination when she felt they were needed.

Bernice was a member of the American Library Association, the Wisconsin Library Association, the Madison Civics Club, the Madison Area Retired Educators Association, the Wisconsin Retired Teachers Association, and the First Congregational Church of Madison. After her retirement from the faculty, Bunny’s special interest was dancing. She participated in dancing programs of the Arthur Murray Studio in Madison for many years. She also enjoyed traveling in this country and abroad.

E. Bernice Gibson is survived by two nephews, Ronald W. (Lucy) Gibson and Thomas A. (Donna) Gibson, a niece, Joan (Jerry) Branscombe, a grandniece, and two grandnephews. She was preceded in death by her very dear brother, Glenn Willard Gibson. Those who knew her will keep her in loving memory.

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