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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS JAMES KENNETH LITTLE

Dr. James Kenneth Little, emeritus professor of educational administration, died on March 12, 2000, at the age of ninety-three.

Born in Alden, Kansas on September 1, 1906, Ken Little, as he was best known to his friends and associates, spent thirty-seven years at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he rose to become a professor and vice president of the institution. His distinguished career was devoted to teaching, research, and public service in the field of education. What set him apart was his equal devotion to all three specific targets; he never wavered in his commitment to each one of them as his career advanced.

James Kenneth Little earned an A.B. degree from Sterling College (Kansas) in 1928, a M.S. degree from Emporia State University (Kansas) in 1931, and a Ph.D. degree from The Ohio State University in 1934. In 1950, Sterling College awarded him an honorary LL.D. degree.

Ken began his educational career as a high school teacher in Pawnee Rock, Kansas in 1928; he moved to Roosevelt Junior High School in Emporia, Kansas in 1930. Later, from 1931 to 1934, he served as an instructor in Educational Psychology at The Ohio State University.

Professor Little’s long-time professional association with the University of Wisconsin-Madison began in 1934 when he was appointed an assistant professor of educational psychology in the School of Education. Always willing to assume tasks that needed to be done, Professor Little undertook over the years a litany of responsibilities including director, Field Services in Education, University Extension Division; chairman, Department of Education; registrar and director, Student Personnel Services; acting dean of men, and acting director, Public Service. These leadership activities culminated in his appointment as vice president for student affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison, a post he held from 1950 to 1957.

In 1954-55, while on leave from university duties, Dr. Little served as U.S. deputy commissioner of education under the then Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. He returned to federal government service in 1960-61, to direct a research project on federal programs in higher education that had been authorized by the United States Congress as a part of the National Defense Education Act. Dr. Little was also appointed to task forces named by the United States Department of Defense to review and make recommendations on their education-related programs. These assignments took him to stations in Europe, Ethiopia, and South Vietnam.

In Wisconsin, he pursued a number of important ventures. Professor Little was appointed by the governor to the staffs of the Coordinating Council on Higher Education, and the Governor’s Commission on Education known as the Kellett Commission. This latter activity produced an impressive document which led to significant reform in the Wisconsin educational enterprise. Moreover, Professor Little served on the Community Welfare Council of the City of Madison, and as chairman of its Committee on Needs and Priorities. He was president of the American Association of Higher Education in 1951-52.

In addition, Ken was the faculty representative of the University of Wisconsin to the Big Ten Athletic Conference, and participated in the arrangements for the Rose Bowl Pact with the Pacific Athletic Conference (Pac-10). He was president of the University of Wisconsin YMCA Board of Directors, and was co-director of the Center for Studies in Vocational Education. Immediately before his retirement in 1971, he was senior fellow at the American College Testing Program, Iowa City, Iowa.

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Ken Little had a long and impressive list of accomplishments. During his career he published extensively in journals and books. He possessed the true humility of a master teacher; mild-mannered in approach, he took the time to work intimately with his graduate students. He was a colleague who spoke his mind but never threatened those with whom he interacted. A gentleman scholar is the way he will be remembered. His leadership on so many important university panels and committees testifies to his willingness to serve others. He never sought fame or special attention.

He is survived by his wife, Faye, to whom he was married for 69 years; a son, Phillip of DeForest; a daughter, Connie Sebek of Vancouver, Washington; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a son, Ken, of Auburn, California.

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