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

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS ROBERT P. MOSER

Dr. Robert P. Moser, emeritus professor of educational administration, was born on April 26, 1917 and died on January 22, 2000 at the age of 83. Bob devoted fifteen years at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he became professor of educational administration and was granted emeritus status upon his retirement in June of 1982.

Robert P. Moser earned his B.S. in history from the University of Wisconsin in 1939; an M.S. in educational administration and guidance from the University of Wisconsin in 1940; and a certificate in Chinese languages from Yale in 1944. As a Kellogg Foundation Fellow was granted a Ph.D. in educational administration from the University of Chicago in 1957. Professor Moser served on the Marian College Board of Trustees for many years and was its president from 1971-1975. In 1991 he received Marian College’s highest honor, the Magnificat, as a tribute to his leadership.

Professor Moser began his educational career as a teacher and high school principal in Chilton, Wisconsin. It was not surprising that Bob became a teacher and public school administrator since his father and uncle were school administrators and three of his four children became teachers. Alice, his wife and love of his life, was a teacher at Chilton when Bob met her during his first year of teaching. With the outbreak of WWII Bob enlisted in the Army. In 1942 Bob was assigned to Officer Candidate School and became, as he often remarked with his remarkable sense of humor, a “90-Day Wonder.” He remained a teacher and educational administrator while in the Army since his assignments were training commands, including a final assignment in the Far East as a training officer with the Chinese army. Bob left the Army in 1946 as a Major.

After WWII Bob resumed his career in educational administration in Wisconsin as superintendent of schools in Chilton (1946-49), Columbus (1949-1955), Hales Corners-Whitnall (1957-61) and Fond du Lac (1961-1967) before joining the faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as associate director of the Wisconsin Improvement Program in 1967 and shortly thereafter as professor of educational administration. Upon leaving Fond du Lac his leadership was memorialized as follows:

[Dr. Moser] has stimulated the initiation of a substantial number of research and experimental programs and has supervised a thorough going curricular revision while, at the same time, enlisting community-wide support of the schools, improving the financial condition of the district, achieving improvements in school facilities, and enhancing the morale of the teaching staff. These accomplishments have been realized despite severe political, social, and economic problems in the Fond du Lac area.”

During his service in all four Wisconsin communities Bob was a leader both in local YMCA, Lions, and Kiwanis clubs and statewide in the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators and the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators. These professional linkages proved invaluable during his tenure as professor of educational administration at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and helped establish and maintain the close ties with the field of educational practitioners that the University of Wisconsin, School of Education, and Department of Educational Administration enjoys today.

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As professor of educational administration at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Bob served as the director of the Wisconsin Improvement Program, chair of the North Central Association of Wisconsin Schools, director of the Wisconsin School Evaluation Consortium, and coordinator of the Administrator Internship Program. The common theme underlying Bob’s leadership of these programs was educational excellence through program, curriculum, and instructional improvement that is facilitated by staff development and leadership training. Colleagues in the Department of Educational Administration remember him as bright, confident, hardworking, feisty, outgoing, and friendly.

Professor Moser’s publications, programs and teaching fostered the integration of theory and practice. Bob published widely on the subjects of leadership, management and administrator training. Superintendents and principals remember him as “superbly training a whole generation of school administrators in Wisconsin.” Others recall his “Eggheads and Hardhats” speech in which he dismissed the artificial dichotomy of theory and practice and championed the interdependence of the field of practice with the intellectual grounding of the academy. School administrators throughout Wisconsin so respected and valued his personal and professional counsel that they established a memorial fund to commemorate his leadership and contributions.

Within a year of Professor Moser’s retirement tragedy struck. Bob and Alice were hit head-on by a drunk driver on the wrong side of a state highway. Alice was killed immediately, and Bob was critically injured. It took nearly eight years for him to partially recover from the physical and psychological scars of that collision. The significance of this tragedy is not so much the curtailment of a well-deserved retirement but that life, family, and values were so much a part of Bob Moser the man -- as expressed in Bob’s Thanksgiving Day prayer in 1990:

    Please God, help us be constantly mindful that the basic ingredients of life, any life, any place or any time are faith and family. Neither comes first because they are both essential and inseparable.

Bob Moser is survived by his children, Mary of Middleton, Wisconsin, Bob of Anchorage, Alaska, Tom of Barrington, Illinois, and Tim of Denver, Colorado and many grandchildren.

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