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

ON THE DEATH OF EMERITUS PROFESSOR ROBERT H. SCHACHT

For almost a half a century, Robert Schacht was a professor of adult education who specialized in foreign travel and international seminars. His classrooms included not only conference centers in Wisconsin, but also canal boats in Venice, pagodas in Mandala, American embassies in Moscow and Peking, and batik factories in Indonesia.

Bob Schacht was born in 1915 in Racine, Wisconsin, and received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Wisconsin. After receiving his doctorate in adult education in 1957, he joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, serving as director of international seminars. In 1985 Bob became a faculty member in the Department of Liberal Studies at the UW-Madison specializing in leading educational tours all over the globe and in organizing weekend seminars to bring together UW faculty and an adult public hungry for knowledge. Bob’s enthusiasm for international travel and cultural programming led to his appointment to the Governor’s Commission on the United Nations. Awards he received include recognition for Leadership in Education from the Wisconsin Association for Adult and Continuing Education and a Paul Harris Fellowship from the Rotary Club of Madison for contributions to international understanding.

Colleagues of Bob Schacht remember his energy, vitality, and optimism; his unfailing interest in all subjects; his cheerful outlook on life. From the foreign stickers on his well-worn briefcase to the miniature flags in his office, Bob was a walking United Nations, an international educator who helped so many Americans discover a wider world. A “Know Your Madisonian” column in the Wisconsin State Journal noted in 1975 that Bob had already logged more miles than Henry Kissinger, and that was a full 26 years before Bob would stop traveling! Through his international travel tours, weekend seminars at St. Benedict’s, and many other programs, Bob helped thousands of adults expand their definition of humanity. At gatherings in his home, Bob’s guests often were clad in saris and turbans. Bob’s rule: talk to someone you don’t know. This seemed a variation on one of his rules for prospective travelers thinking of accompanying him on one of his foreign adventures: if you can’t accept people of different colors as equal or if you think Americans have all the answers, don’t go.

Bob’s spirit perhaps is best captured in a line from one of his handouts for foreign travelers: “If in doubt, take that picture, buy that souvenir, listen to that lecture, eat that strange food. You may never pass this way again.” Thousands of Wisconsin residents are glad Bob Schacht passed their way, as are his many colleagues in adult education and liberal studies.

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