Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison
On the Death of Professor Emerita Dorothy Jutton Pringle

Dorothy Jutton Pringle died at the age of 97 on October 3, 2016 at Oakwood Village University Woods. After graduating from Shorewood High School in 1936, Dorothy obtained a bachelor’s degree in Foods and Nutrition from the University of Illinois in 1940 and became a dietitian after completing an internship at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Dorothy earned a Masters in food and nutrition in 1951 and a doctorate in nutrition and biochemistry with a minor in medical physiology from UW-Madison in 1956. Her graduate advisors were Helen Parsons, who did early research on B vitamins and Conrad Elvehjem who identified niacin and later became the university’s president. After joining the university’s food and nutrition faculty, she was instrumental in establishing and strengthening the UW degree program in Dietetics. She conducted research on the social and economic influences on food choices and studied nutrition quality among minority families, including African Americans in Milwaukee, Native Americans in northern Wisconsin and impoverished children in Colombia and Nicaragua. She documented the metabolic advantages of small, frequent meals. Her studies of sugar metabolism in obese rats contributed to our current understanding of diabetes in obese individuals. Her exemplary service as a mentor to undergraduate students, graduate students, and junior faculty members was recognized by the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences in the form of an Advisor Award of Merit. At a recent 30-year reunion of former dietetics and nutrition students, current professionals expressed their common appreciation of Dr. Pringle’s impact on their careers, especially her emphasis on continued study to update their practice to accommodate new research findings. After retiring from the university in 1985, Dorothy volunteered at the UW Arboretum and Meals on Wheels.

Following are some of the personal tributes that have been submitted for this Memorial Resolution by Dr. Pringle’s former students and colleagues at UW-Madison.

A Professor of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University:

My undergraduate and graduate education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison were greatly enhanced by Professor Dorothy J. Pringle. As an undergraduate in Experimental Foods, I was required to take a beginning-level nutrition course which, at the time, was taught by Dr. Pringle. A friend who was a year ahead of me told me to try to sit in the front row. The course had assigned seats, but I was fortunate to get a seat near the front. In addition to being an excellent teacher, Dr. Pringle was very funny. She’d make comments throughout the lecture in a “semi-under-her breath” tone of voice that not only added to the lecture, but were hilarious. This course sparked my lifelong interest in nutrition.

After working briefly in the food industry, I returned to the UW-Madison as a graduate student with an interest in community nutrition and nutrition education. Dr. Pringle was my major professor for both my masters and doctoral degrees. My research focused on diabetes and obesity in Native American communities in Northern Wisconsin and was conducted in collaboration with Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council. These research projects would not have been possible without Dr. Pringle’s untiring intellectual and material support and her enthusiasm for our adventures “up north”. Dorothy was also a very skillful editor. She made me a better academic writer. Dr. Pringle was a very generous mentor and made many different professional opportunities available to me when I was a doctoral student, including talking with
Senator William Proxmire about dietary supplements and testifying before a US Senate Committee about our research. I am forever grateful for having her as a teacher and mentor. (Christine Olson)

A fellow faculty member in Nutritional Sciences:
Dorothy was the initiating presence in the development of the Coordinated Undergraduate Program in Dietetics and, with Annette Gormicon, the training program leading masters degree in Nutritional Sciences for dietitians operative in the mid/early 70. Some of the enrollees participated in research projects, others submitted literature reviews.

Dorothy was an early investigator of the effects of eating frequency on metabolic parameters in humans, specifically the effects of the consumption of isocaloric diets in 2 and 6 meal patterns, the latter being most beneficial. She was also an early investigator of the nutritional status of Native Americans and of impact of the WIC program. Dorothy was a committed mentor not only of dietetics students, and grad students studying the "social aspects" of nutrition but also of “newbie” faculty hires, my grateful self included. (Charles Elson)

Fellow Dietetics Instructors:
Dorothy Pringle has been my exemplar for my entire academic career. She was bright, quick-witted and completely approachable. She interacted with students with kindness and support in ways that very few others were capable of. As a student she made me want to live up to the high standards she expected – I didn’t want to disappoint her. She was a scholar, an educator and an extraordinary human being. (Julie Poh Thurlow)

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Dorothy Pringle was held in incredibly high esteem by her students. Even at a 30-year reunion, her former students repeatedly spoke of the positive impact she had on their professional lives. They valued how she had emphasized the need for continued study and making sure their clinical practice aligned with the latest research. Dorothy had taught them the most important lesson: That their education did not end when they became professional dietitians. (Sally Gleason)