Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison
On the Death of Professor Emeritus Francis W. “Frank” Groves

Francis W. “Frank” Groves, professor emeritus of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, died peacefully on Friday, August 4, 2017, at Fern Glen Farm Lodi, Wisconsin, which has been the Groves family home since the 1860’s. Professor Groves was nationally and internationally recognized for his work in cooperatives, dairy marketing and dairy policy.

Professor Groves was born June 16, 1925 in Madison, Wisconsin. He had a hard-working but joyful childhood on the farm in Lodi. He graduated from Lodi High School in 1943. He joined the U.S. Army in 1946 and served in Occupied Japan. Upon his discharge in 1947, he enrolled as an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He earned a B.S. degree in Dairy Industry in 1951. While attending the University he met the love of his life, Shirley Jeffery. At that time he was president of a fraternity and Shirley was president of a sorority. They were married on August 16, 1952. They raised three children, William “Bill”, Richard “Dick”, and Ann.

After receiving his B.S. degree Professor Groves spent several years working in the dairy industry as a salesman for a dairy company, a milk products inspector for USDA, a superintendent for milk bottling plant and working in a milk plant. He returned to University of Wisconsin-Madison the fall of 1958 as a graduate student in the Department of Agricultural Economics (now the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics). He earned his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics in 1961 and immediately joined the faculty in the Department as an assistant professor. His responsibilities included teaching, research and extension in dairy marketing, dairy policy and cooperatives. He taught the undergraduate course in cooperatives and a dairy marketing class in the Farm and Industry Short Course. He soon became well known for his work and expertise in dairy marketing and dairy policy.

Professor Groves was promoted to associate professor in 1965. From November, 1965 to June, 1966 he was head of a Dairy Marketing project for the National Commission on Food Marketing in Washington D.C., after which he returned to the Department of Agricultural Economics at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Professor Groves was promoted to full professor in 1967. He was named Director of the newly formed University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives (UWCC) in 1971, a position he held until his retirement in 1989. UWCC was formed to develop and offer educational programs for cooperatives. When Director of UWCC Professor Groves continued teaching in the Department and doing extension work in dairy marketing and dairy policy.

Professor Groves developed and taught in workshops for directors of cooperatives as well as workshops for managers and employees of cooperatives. Through these workshops professor Groves educated hundreds of cooperative directors as to their duties and responsibilities. He became very well-known and liked by not only cooperatives in Wisconsin but nationally for his expertise in cooperatives. He was frequently called upon to facilitate strategic planning sessions for cooperatives, assisted with cooperative mergers and consolidations, to review articles and bylaws and helping to organize new cooperatives. Professor Groves was the founding member and on the founding Board of Directors for Group Health Cooperative, Madison, Wisconsin.

Professor Groves developed extensive teaching materials on various topics on cooperatives to be used for workshops. Cooperative educators across the country drew heavily upon these materials. He also published numerous case studies and research reports on cooperatives. Professor Groves came well known as an expert in cooperatives not only by directors, managers and employees of cooperatives but also university researchers, and state and federal legislatures.

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For several years the UWCC offered a 13 week training program on cooperatives for international visitors interested in the cooperative business model. In this program Professor Grove’s passion for the power of economic democracy led him to teach people around the world how to create their own cooperatives and improve their financial stability and potential.

Throughout his career Professor Groves won numerous awards for work with cooperatives and being a leader in cooperative education nationally and internationally. After retirement he was frequently called upon and he accepted to teach in director workshops and to provide assistance to cooperatives.

Professor Groves and his wife Shirley were active in the Lodi, Wisconsin community. From 1976 to 1984 they owned and operated a flower shop in Lodi. They were active in the Chamber of Commerce and proud supporters of other local enterprises. Professor Groves abiding love for the citizens of Lodi and giving back to the community made him a constant presence, whether at Optimist fundraising events or for coffee at the local restaurant. He also served on the ambulance commission and was active in the United Methodist Church.

Professor Groves loved Fern Glen Farm. He was the 4th generation to live in the house on the farm. He said “I was born here and hope to die here. This house and land are my home and my legacy, and this is where I belong.” Grateful for his childhood home, and recognizing what a beautiful and enduring legacy Fern Glen Farm could be he placed most of the land into a conservation easement with the Ice Age Trail Alliance in 2011, thus ensuring that the land would be preserved in perpetuity for all to enjoy.

Professor Groves is survived by his sons, Bill (Donna Riemer), and Dick (Kim Zak) Groves; and his daughter, Ann (Ron Lloyd) Groves Lloyd; grandchildren, Jeremy Lloyd, Jonathon Groves, and Chad and Michael Riemer. He is further survived by his brother-in-law, Donald (Chari) Jeffery; nieces, Shelly Kassem and Julie Smith, and nephew, Scott (Stephanie) Jeffery, along with countless cousins.

Memorial Resolution Committee
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