Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison
On the Death of Professor Emeritus Louis James Maher, Jr.

Longtime Geoscience Department faculty member and Quaternary palynologist Lou Maher died on August 22, 2018, after a long illness. Lou was born in Iowa City on December 18, 1933, and grew up there, attending University High School from 1948 to 1952. He did his undergraduate studies in geology at the University of Iowa, where he received several awards, including a Danforth Fellowship, and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. Lou married Elizabeth Jane Crawford in 1956, and they ultimately had 3 children.

After finishing his MS degree at the University of Iowa, Lou was drafted and trained as a clerk in the Counter Intelligence Corps. He and Jane spent much of his military career in La Rochelle, France. He then studied palynology with Professor H.E. Wright, Jr. at the University of Minnesota for his Ph.D.

Lou and Jane moved to the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1962 following a NATO-supported post-doctoral year in Cambridge, England. At UW, Lou began a long career of lecturing in Introductory Geology classes (usually Geology 101) in which he taught thousands of students. This class was the introduction for geology majors, and there are many of our majors who were attracted to the field by Lou’s dynamic lectures. He also regularly taught Quaternary Palynology, his primary field of interest. He was especially intrigued by methods of data analysis and embraced personal computers very early. He purchased one well before many other faculty members took the plunge into using primitive computers.

Lou served on several campus committees, including many in the College of Letters & Science, including the Planning Council. On the campus level, he served on the Library Committee and the Campus Planning Committee. He was President of the Wisconsin Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in the mid-1970s.

He gave lectures illustrated with breathtaking geologic scenery, and that was an important component of his popular class. Many of these photos he took on a Western U.S flying expedition with grad student Charles Mansfield in 1966. Lou had started flying when he was 15, but didn’t get his pilot’s license until 1964. Lou earned his license in a University of Wisconsin-owned Cessna 170 that had been purchased by the geophysics group to fly aeromagnetism surveys. The story of the western flight in 1966 with some photos can be viewed at: http://geoscience.wisc.edu/~maher/air/gedbl.htm. A map of the route and more photos with explanations are at: http://geoscience.wisc.edu/~maher/air/air00.htm.

Lou was active with many professional societies in Geology, Botany, and Ecology. He was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Geological Society of America. He was a member of the American Association of Stratigraphic Palynologists, the American Quaternary Association, the Ecological Society of America, the Paleobotanical Section of the Botanical Society of America; Sigma Xi, and the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. He was a member of the Editorial Board of *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology* from 1985-1991. He served on the Advisory Board of the North American Pollen Database beginning in 1990 and worked on the Global Pollen Database beginning in 1999. He also served on the Board of the International Quaternary Association (INQUA) Holocene Sub-commission Working Group on Data-Handling Methods from 1987 to 2002 and was editor from 1990 to 1997.
Lou is most remembered by Quaternary colleagues for his work on mathematical methods for estimating uncertainty in pollen assemblages, for his generosity in sharing programs he wrote for data analysis through the INQUA file boutique, and for his contributions to the Quaternary history of Colorado, New Mexico, and the Great Lakes region, including his classic study of the Holocene history of Devil’s Lake, Wisconsin. His research often employed innovative and creative approaches, including using *Ephedra* pollen to document long-distance dispersal and analyzing pollen in deposits of bat guano in caves.

Lou served on the building committee for the original Weeks Hall, which was completed in 1974. That committee was responsible for the building design that features a courtyard, trees, and a fountain that Lou continued to maintain until his retirement. He chaired the building committee during the development of Weeks II and Weeks III additions. He had a great ability to pay attention to detail, which was essential for the building committee duties, as it was for interpretation of paleo environments. It was also essential to piloting a small plane most of his adult life without serious mishap! We are fortunate that he recorded the history of Weeks Hall and much of the UW Madison campus from the air: http://geoscience.wisc.edu/~maher/deptpix/UWpix.htm

After his retirement he co-authored *Geology of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail* (2011) with David Mickelson and Susan Simpson. Lou is remembered as a great friend as well as scientist by his colleagues. Even after his retirement in 2003, Lou’s cheerful attention to detail and ready laugh continued to remind us that we are lucky to have known him and worked with him.

**Memorial Committee:**
David Mickelson (Chair)  
Sara Hotchkiss  
Charles Byers