Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison
On the Death of Professor Emeritus William P. Weidanz

William “Bill” P. Weidanz, Professor Emeritus and former Chair of Medical Microbiology and Immunology, died at the age of 82 on November 21, 2017 at home in Roseville, California, surrounded by family. He was born in Jackson Heights, New York in 1935. Bill served in the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserves from 1955 to 1963. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmacy from Rutgers University in 1956, a Master of Science degree in Bacteriology from the University of Rhode Island under the direction of Philip Carpenter in 1958, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Microbiology from Tulane University under the direction of Morris Shaffer in 1961.

He was awarded a National Institutes of Health Postdoctoral Fellowship in Immunology, training for three years under the direction of Maurice Landy in the Laboratory of Clinical Pharmacology and Laboratory of Immunology. He then served on the faculty of Louisiana State University for two years as Assistant Professor of Bacteriology. In 1966 Bill joined the faculty of Hahnemann Medical College, later Hahnemann University School of Medicine, in the Department of Microbiology, later Microbiology and Immunology, where he remained for 24 years. He rose through the academic ranks of Assistant Professor (1966), Associate Professor (1970), and Professor (1977), and also served as departmental Vice Chair and Acting Chair and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Hahnemann.

In 1990, Bill joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison as Professor and Chair of the Department of Medical Microbiology and Immunology in the Medical School, later School of Medicine and Public Health. He served as departmental Chair until 2000 and remained with the department until his retirement in 2011, when he became Professor Emeritus at age 76. Notable activities in the Department of Medical Microbiology and Immunology during Bill’s ten-year tenure as Chair included: 1) expansion of the undergraduate major degree program administered through the College of Letters and Science from 25 students to more than 250 students, one of the largest biological sciences majors on campus at the time; 2) merger of the doctoral degree program with that of the Department of Bacteriology in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences to form the Microbiology Doctoral Training Program, which is highly ranked nationally and one of the largest and strongest biological sciences graduate programs on campus; and 3) initial planning of the Microbial Sciences Building shared with Bacteriology. During Bill’s time in Madison, he also served as Adjunct Professor of Medicine at the University of Alabama-Birmingham, Adjunct Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at Drexel University, and Adjunct Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Texas Tech University. He previously held Visiting Scientist appointments at Fibiger Laboratory in Copenhagen, Denmark and the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences in Bangkok, Thailand.

Bill was passionate about scientific research. His innovative and seminal studies on immune responses to malaria earned national and international recognition in the fields of parasitology and immunology. Through his scholarly research activities, Bill made significant contributions to the understanding of the role of T lymphocyte-mediated immunity in resistance to malaria. For 35 years, Dr. Weidanz’s research program was funded by the National Institutes of Health and generated over 100 publications including classic reports in high-impact general-interest journals, such as “Immunity to Plasmodium chabaudi adami in the B cell-deficient mouse” (Grun JL and WP Weidanz, 1981, Nature 290: 143-145). For a decade after returning to his beloved laboratory following his service as departmental Chair, Bill continued his important
work with cell-mediated immunity, cytokine responses, and gd T lymphocytes in malaria as well as initiating innovative collaborative work on *Plasmodium* infection in “humanized mice” with engrafted immune cells.

Bill was also passionate about teaching. As chair, he served as champion and cheerleader for departmental medical school, graduate, and undergraduate teaching missions. He faced considerable administrative, organizational, and funding challenges for the very rare phenomenon of an undergraduate major in a medical school department, particularly one experiencing burgeoning interest and enrollment. The graduate program was simultaneously developing and expanding into the Microbiology Doctoral Training Program. Bill was also personally very dedicated to classroom instruction and laboratory mentoring. He continually participated in undergraduate classroom instruction during his time at UW, including the core course MMI 341, Immunology, required for students in the MMI major and also with considerable enrollment from students in other majors. Additionally, he was innovative in developing new courses at the forefront of biological research as well as timely for current events in society, including MMI 554, Emerging Infectious Diseases and Bioterrorism, and MMI 555, Vaccines: Practical Issues for a Global Society. As well as a teacher in the classroom, Bill was a dedicated and much sought-after mentor in the laboratory for more than 50 undergraduate students doing research projects and 14 PhD, one MD/PhD, and 14 MS students doing thesis research. He loved working in his lab and opened it to any student who shared his passion for research and learning. Bill provided his students a foundation for success in their careers and in life, teaching them to think and question critically, guiding their research, encouraging them through difficult times, and sharing the joy of their accomplishments. He valued his students, and they in turn stayed in touch with him throughout his life. About three weeks before his death, Bill indicated his one regret in retirement: he hated missing the students.

Outside of the laboratory and the classroom, Bill was an avid gardener and fisherman, ever in search of the perfect tomato or the big fish that got away. Conversations in his office would shift seamlessly between the intricacies and challenges of inbred mouse strains and those of favorite fishing spots. He had a love for travel, books - especially history or historical fiction - and movies, to which his children and grandchildren, when visiting, accompanied him in exchange for pizza dinners and pearls of wisdom. Despite his move to California, Bill remained a loyal supporter of the Green Bay Packers and the UW Badgers, much to the dismay of his Vikings-fan grandson and namesake. Bill will be remembered as a loving husband, father, and grandfather; a trusted friend and respected colleague; a strong mentor and inspiration to others who stayed true to the academic mission and showed passion and enthusiasm for science and research throughout his career; and for his faith, humor, wisdom, and integrity. He is survived by Barbara, his wife of 57 years, their five daughters and a son, and twelve grandchildren. He is remembered, honored, and missed.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE
Curtis Brandt
Ron Schell
Jon Woods (chair)