Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin–Madison
On the Death of Professor Emerita Chère Campbell Gibson

Professor Emerita Chère Campbell Gibson died at the age of 75 on August 25, 2020. Chère was born on February 2, 1945 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. She attended MacDonald College of McGill University, Montréal, Québec, graduating with a BSc in Nutrition Science in 1966. She came to Madison with the hope of earning a degree in public health with a focus on adult education and learning. At this point, the School of Medicine and Public Health was still in the early stages of formation. As a consequence, she decided to focus on adult learning and enrolled in what was to become the Department of Continuing and Vocational Education, an interdisciplinary program across schools at UW-Madison. She finished her PhD in 1974 and joined the faculty of the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities.

She returned to Madison in 1982 and worked as an academic planner in University of Wisconsin System Administration designing and implementing time, pace, and place-flexible degree completion programs for adults. In 1984 she left administration and joined the faculty of the Department of Continuing and Vocational Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Family Living Program Area in University of Wisconsin-Extension.

For the past 40 years, Gibson has been a passionate “cheerleader” for quality distance education. She worked with faculty in Engineering, Nursing, and Veterinary Sciences, among others, to ensure adults working in these fields have access to graduate degrees and continuing professional development programs necessary to enhance their practice. She held joint appointments in the School of Engineering and the School of Nursing. She has reached far beyond the halls of academia and her home university to engage others through the development of organizations and conferences, not just in Wisconsin but around the globe, developing strong alliances with other distance education leaders, scholars and practitioners. Her work and that of her graduate students contributed significantly to the research-based practices used in other open and distance learning universities around the world today.

An author of many research articles and book chapters, she edited a book entitled *Distance Learners in Higher Education: Institutional Responses for Quality Outcomes* (1998) and co-edited a book *Flexible Pedagogy, Flexible Practice: Notes from the Trenches of Distance Education* (2011). Both books marry the learner-centered principles of adult and continuing education with emerging technological possibilities, and both received international recognition. Highlights of her published research include her work on persistence and cognition in distance education programs, group and gender dynamics in online learning contexts, and psychosocial factors associated with Internet use among enrollees in tribal colleges. Her body of work focuses on creating educational access for those (particularly women) struggling to complete educational programs while working, raising families, and contributing to local communities. She is particularly known for her learner-centered research and practice on culturally appropriate instructional strategies.

She was committed to providing non-credit opportunities for professionals to learn more about distance education and training. The Certificate of Professional Development in Distance Education, which she founded, and Annual Conference on Teaching and Learning at a Distance,
which she chaired for many years, exemplify her commitment to continuing professional education. Further, she provided guidance on the formation of the Great Plains IDEA online graduate degrees in human sciences, co-designed the Penn State Leadership workshop in distance education, and served on national panels developing distance education quality standards including the American Council on Education and the American Distance Education Consortium. Her international work on the use of distance education for development includes projects in the Leeward Islands of the Caribbean, Canada, Jamaica, Turkey, and Thailand. Her graduate students span the globe, as do her faculty mentees and her research and publication colleagues.

Over her many years of teaching and research on learners and learning at a distance she received national awards in distance education such as the Wedemeyer Award for Excellence in Distance Education Research and the Brock Prize in Education Innovation. She was inducted into the United States Distance Learning Association’s Hall of Fame, and the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame. On the UW-Madison campus she was selected as a Teaching Fellow and was the recipient of the Brenda Pfaehler Award of Excellence for her work with students. The National Science Foundation, United States Department of Agriculture, and Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, among other funders, supported her work in rural areas with Native American populations, migrant workers and new immigrants using appropriate technologies.

As a professor at the University of Wisconsin–Madison she engaged thousands of adults with limited educational choices and helped them move forward on their educational journey. She was passionate about serving self-directed learners and better understanding what they need to be successful.

After retirement from UW-Madison, she served at as External Evaluator for major programs supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and C-SPAN – The American Cable Television Industry.

Memorial Committee
Terry Gibson
Alan Knox
Jerry Apps
Boyd Rossing