Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin–Madison
On the Death of Professor Emeritus Donald McCarty

Dr. Donald McCarty, emeritus professor and former dean of the School of Education, served for nine years as Dean of the School of Education and dedicated another 18 years to the department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis (known then as the Department of Educational Administration) at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. His work focused in particular on teacher education and the politics of education. Additionally, he served on numerous university committees and state and national commissions and boards, including playing an instrumental role in establishing UW-Madison’s first Committee on Equity. With his significant contributions and passionate mentorship of students, Dr. McCarty left a significant legacy in the department, the School of Education, and education leadership community.

Dr. McCarty’s work highlights his passion for teacher education. McCarty worked for North Central Association, aiming to improve teacher education programs through the association’s accreditation process. He also served as Executive Director of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration and was involved with several oversees teacher education projects. Dr. McCarty was remembered as a quietly effective leader whose steady hand through the turbulent late 1960s and early 1970s laid the foundation for the nationally recognized program the School of Education is today.

McCarty was born in Sheshequin, Pennsylvania. He joined the Army Air Corps in 1938, serving through World War II until he was honorably discharged as a Major in 1946. He completed his Bachelor of Science in History at Columbia University in 1949. He continued on at Teachers College, Columbia University, earning an MA in the teaching of social studies in 1950. Donald taught middle school and high school history in Brookings, South Dakota and Tom’s River, New Jersey before becoming Superintendent of Schools in Colman, South Dakota. While he coached football, basketball in Tom’s River, the state-winning debate teams in Brookings and Colman were a particular point of pride for him. McCarty earned his PhD in educational administration from the University of Chicago in 1959 and became a professor and chair of educational administration at Cornell University.

In 1966, McCarty was hired as just the fourth dean of UW-Madison’s School of Education. He served in this role until 1975 and then returned to his role as a professor in what is now known as the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis until 1993. After retiring from UW-Madison, McCarty became director of doctoral studies at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, where he remained into the mid-2000s.

Beyond his work at UW-Madison, he loved Madison and was deeply involved in a wide variety of community activities and boards. In particular, he was a devoted fan of Badger football and men’s and women’s basketball, tended to the Shorewood Hills Community Garden, delighted in live theatre, and took courses on literature well into his 80s.

The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis extends our sincerest condolences to his family and friends.

Respectfully submitted by Dr. Jerlando F. L. Jackson,
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Department Chair – Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis,
and Director & Chief Research Scientist - Wisconsin’s Equity & Inclusion Laboratory.