Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin–Madison
On the Death of Professor Emerita Nancy E. Johnson

Nancy E. Johnson, Professor Emerita of Nutritional Sciences at University of Wisconsin-Madison died peacefully on May 18th, 2021 at the age of 95. Nancy was born in South Dakota and grew up in Fort Dodge, Iowa. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Iowa State University in 1947 and a Master of Science degree in Food and Nutrition in 1949. She then worked for 17 years as a college instructor, clinical and public health nutritionist, and research assistant in Chicago, Milwaukee, and Madison. In 1966, she began her Ph.D. training under the mentorship of Helen Linkswiler in the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and received her Ph.D. in 1969. Nancy was then hired as an Assistant Professor by the Department of Nutritional Sciences with a joint appointment in Extension in 1969 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 1973 and Professor in 1979. She left UW-Madison in 1986 to become Chair of the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at the University of Hawaii-Manoa, a position she held until her retirement in 1996.

During Nancy’s years on the UW-Madison faculty, she did excellent work on a wide range of contributions to the department including general outreach and also developing new knowledge through her research. She published 35 manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals and as chapters in books and fifteen MS students and two PhD students completed their degrees under her direction. There were two main foci to her research: dietary assessment methodologies and calcium requirements. She was one of the first to create a simple, computerized diet analysis tool. Nancy then improved epidemiological methods for assessing variation in dietary intake. Using these improved survey techniques, she and her graduate students published several of the early studies relating calcium intake to slowing bone loss and reducing hypertension in aging women. Nancy taught several courses in Nutritional Sciences including NS 232 Nutritional Science and NS 540 Nutrition and Society. She was a much loved instructor who had a profound impact on many of her students.

Also very active in her Extension role, Nancy’s outreach programs on the relationship between calcium, milk product consumption, and osteoporosis were among the first in the nation. Not only did these programs help women to improve their diets but also helped promote Wisconsin’s dairy industry. She chaired the Food Science and Human Nutrition Group, Family Living Education Programs for UW-Extension from 1984-86. She served the state and nation in a large variety of additional roles including being active on the Wisconsin Nutrition Council, on several Wisconsin Division of Aging and Wisconsin Division of Health committees, and committees of the American Dietetics Association, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the Food and Drug Administration.

Nancy played several international roles while on the faculty at UW-Madison, She served as a research consultant at the University of Brasilia, Brazil in 1978-79 and as Adjunct Professor at the Institut Agronomique et Veterinaire Hassan II in Rabat, Morocco starting in 1986 until her retirement in 1996. In 1982, she led Title XII Strengthening Programs to create connections with researchers in Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

Nancy relished the academic environment and the many years she spent with students and faculty. She traveled extensively throughout the world and enjoyed meeting colleagues with an interest in solving real-world problems of nutrition. She maintained a high level of intellectual
curiosity throughout her life and was an avid reader on many subjects. She participated in athletics during her earlier years and her favorite sport was golf. She lived in Hawaii for over 30 years and traveled back and forth to Wisconsin frequently. She appreciated the beauty of Hawaii, taking frequent walks and watching the magnificent sunsets. She loved music, the arts, and fine dining, especially desserts (her favorites were a Wisconsin turtle sundae and Hawaiian lava cake).

Memorial Committee
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