

## **Former UWO Alumni Director Jean Nelson to be remembered Tuesday**

**by Natalie Johnson - Saturday, April 23, 2011**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/11256/former-uwo-alumni-director-jean-nelson-to-be-remembered-tuesday/>

A funeral service for Jean C. (Goodwin) Nelson '49, former University of Wisconsin Oshkosh alumni director and dedicated champion of the University, has been set for noon on Tuesday, April 26, at Most Blessed Sacrament Church, 449 High Ave., Oshkosh.

Visitation at the church (the former St. Peter's) will be from 10 a.m to noon.

Nelson died Tuesday, April 19, at Mercy Medical Center in Oshkosh.

“The entire UW Oshkosh community joins me in mourning the loss of Jean Nelson,” said UWO Alumni Director Christine Gantner. “As a UW Oshkosh alumna and employee, Jean’s contributions to our institution were immeasurable. She is remembered fondly by so many alumni and friends. We will continue to proudly build upon the solid Alumni Relations program she established. She will be greatly missed.”

In 1949, Nelson earned a bachelor’s degree from UW Oshkosh in English, with a secondary education major. As a student, she was a member of Kappa Delta Pi.

Nelson led the UW Oshkosh Alumni Relations Office from 1968 until 1991, overseeing the move to Pollock Alumni House in 1971. She worked alongside Alumni Association board members to personally paint, wallpaper and refurbish the house for campus and alumni use.

During her tenure, Nelson expanded alumni services and added programs, including a University Day for Women. She was famous for knowing the names and graduation years of alumni by heart.

In a 2008 *Alumni News* interview, Nelson said, “I was fortunate to be able to work with people of all ages, from many decades. I was continually astonished and impressed with the range and value of the alumni I met.”

Nelson’s commitment to UW Oshkosh was honored in 1985, with an Outstanding Service Award. In 1997, then Chancellor John E. Kerrigan presented Nelson, along with her late husband Philip Nelson, with the University's most prestigious award, the Honorary Doctorate.

In 1996, the couple served as honorary co-chairs of UWO’s 125th anniversary celebration.

After her retirement, Nelson continued to stay active on campus through Homecoming, music, theatre and athletic events and Learning in Retirement (LIR) offerings. She served as the leader and coordinator of two LIR classes — Reader’s Choice and Currently Speaking.

“It inspires me to never stop learning,” Nelson noted. “It is fun to continually discover, learn and share with the LIR members.”

In the Oshkosh community, Nelson served on the board of directors of the Winnebago County Historical Society, for which she was a founding member. She tirelessly advocated for the furnishing of the society's stately historic homebase, the Morgan House. She also was involved with the Oshkosh Public Library, serving as president of Friends of the Oshkosh Public Library. For many years, she was also active in American Field Service (AFS).

Nelson's legacy continues through the Philip and Jean C. Nelson Alumni Scholarship, which was established in 1991, for incoming UWO freshmen whose parents or grandparents are graduates of the University. During the ensuing years, more than three dozen students have benefited from the scholarship fund.

In honor of Nelson's exemplary service, the UWO Alumni Association Board of Directors will match alumni contributions to the Nelson scholarship fund up to \$5,000. Gifts should be directed to the [UW Oshkosh Foundation](#), 800 Algoma Boulevard, Oshkosh, WI 54901.

Nelson's many UWO colleagues and friends are invited to share a remembrance by adding a comment to this story.

Read more:

- [Jean C. Nelson, Oshkosh Northwestern obituary](#)