Memorial Resolution
Marilyn Jean Greenlee Church

Be it resolved that on February 3, 2006, the faculty and staff of the College of Education at the University of Maryland honor the life and professional career and acknowledge the death on June 9, 2005, of Dr. Marilyn Jean Greenlee Church, a member of the faculty in the departments of Human Development and Curriculum and Instruction, and a former director of the Center for Young Children.

Marilyn Jean Greenlee Church was born and raised in Iowa. Between 1945 and 1954, she taught kindergarten at several public schools in Iowa and Nebraska. She then served as Head Teacher at a nursery school in Mason City, Iowa, until she entered Indiana University in 1959. She received her B.S. in elementary education in 1962 and earned her M.S. the following year. In 1969, she received her Ed.D. in educational psychology, also from Indiana University. Throughout her graduate studies she continued teaching, serving as an instructor at both Indiana University and Central Missouri State University.

She joined the faculty at the University of Maryland in 1969. She was an assistant and associate professor in the Department of Early Childhood-Elementary Education and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education, served in the Head Start Regional Office, and was a former Director of the Center for Young Children.

During her tenure at the university, Dr. Church’s research focused on early childhood education. She will be remembered for her particular interest in and advocacy for the valuable role that the parent-child relationship holds in the successful education and development of young children. One of her particular research interests early in her career focused on child health and nutrition. She worked on a grant-funded research project which studied nutrition awareness in young children. Dr. Church valued the practical application of research and in this particular study, the research showed that very young children who were educated about the nutritional value of foods would make healthier choices. As an administrator, former staff members admired her because she supported them in difficult situations.

In 1988, Dr. Church donated historical documents, artifacts, books, and films to the University of Maryland Archives. The Marilyn J. Church Collection relates to various aspects of early childhood education and in particular, the teaching career of Esther G. Crist. The collection also includes information on film projects that were the result of collaboration with her colleague, Dr. James L. Hymes. The archived objects date from 1909 to approximately 1960 and include scrapbooks, notebooks, a vintage toy and a photograph of an early kindergarten class.

Known as an avid gardener and expert bird watcher, friends recall that her flower-filled yard was home to dozens of bird feeders. She also enjoyed traveling, volunteer work, and being with her family, especially enjoying visits to their home in the mountains of Virginia.

A memorial service for Dr. Church was on held June 18 at the National City Christian Church in Washington, D.C. She is survived by her three children, Steven Church, Hagerstown, Maryland; Susan Bixby, Manassas, Virginia; Kendall Church, Charlottesville, Virginia; and eight grandchildren.

The College of Education extends its condolences to her family, friends, and colleagues.

February 3, 2006