Be it resolved that on February 2, 2007, the faculty and staff of the College of Education at the University of Maryland honor the life and professional career and acknowledge the death of Dr. Ruth Garner, former professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

Ruth passed away in her sleep of complications related to cancer at the age of 61 on July 15, 2006, at her home in Chicago, Illinois. She is survived by her husband of 20 years, Mark Gillingham, her sister, Betty Harris Custer of Madison, Illinois, her brother, Bob Harris of San Carlos, California, a brother- and sister-in-law, nieces and nephews, and several friends and colleagues, including her former husband, Jim Garner of Madison. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ruth and Bob Harris.

Ruth was born January 17, 1945 in Rockford, Illinois. She attended school in Madison and always ranked at the top of her class from elementary through high school. After graduating with her bachelor’s degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ruth taught elementary and middle school in the Madison Public School system for eight years. She later returned to UW-Madison to earn her master’s and doctoral degrees.

Ruth joined the University of Maryland in 1977. She proved to be a remarkable scholar with one of the most creative minds in the educational psychology and reading education fields. A brilliant researcher, teacher, author and speaker, her department chair described her as “one of the rare persons who can do everything in higher education and do it with class and flair.” With a single well-crafted reading passage or deceptively simple experimental task, she put the seductive detail effect into the psychological vernacular, redefined strategy research, clarified the nature of metacognition, and initiated studies into on-line learning communities. A former student and colleague stated, “it was Ruth Garner who opened the universe of educational research to me, and I will be forever in her debt, as will generations of scholars to come.”

Ruth left the University of Maryland in 1989 to coordinate an innovative graduate program at the Vancouver campus of Washington State University. Her passion for literacy and learning was matched only by her zest for life. She was drawn to the natural beauty of the west coast where as Ruth put it, “the things I most enjoy are within easy reach: mountains, ocean, coffeehouses, bookstores, wine bars, and bike trails.” Eventually she moved on to leadership roles at Michigan State University and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Ever the avid scholar, even in her final weeks of life Ruth was sending out proposals for a new book.

The College of Education is thankful for the services rendered by Dr. Ruth Garner and extends its heartfelt condolences to her family, friends, and colleagues.

February 2, 2007