Nelson Honored in Falcon Center Roadway Naming

October 9, 2015—UW-River Falls Chancellor Dean Van Galen announced today that the Falcon Center roadway will be named in honor of former faculty member Emogene Nelson. Nelson has long been remembered for her impact on UW-River Falls academics, athletics, and recreation, and her legacy will continue to be honored with the naming of Dr. Emogene Nelson Avenue. The roadway is a main access point for the Falcon Center and leads from South Main Street, through the Falcon Center site, to South Sixth Street.

Nelson earned her rural education degree in 1944 on the River Falls campus and went on to serve UW-River Falls in a long and impressive career. As a student, Nelson was an “R” winner in the Women’s Recreation Association, a predecessor to women’s intercollegiate athletics.

Nelson joined the faculty at River Falls in 1959 and served the university in many capacities until her death in 1984. She was the chair of the Physical Education Department from 1970-73 and assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs beginning in 1973. She was the first executive secretary of the Wisconsin Women’s Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and was instrumental in the introduction of women’s athletics to Wisconsin campuses.

In addition, Nelson served on several committees within the UW System, was president of the Wisconsin Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, served on the Faculty Senate for five years, and advised the Women’s Recreation Association. She also coached women’s basketball, track, and softball during her tenure at UW-River Falls.

Nelson was honored in 1976 as UW-River Falls Distinguished Teacher and received the Distinguished Alumna Award in 1982. In 1983, she was the first woman to be inducted to the UWRF Athletic Hall and in 2015, she was named to the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Hall of Fame.

The UWRF Faculty Senate wrote the resolution to name the Falcon Center roadway in honor of Nelson. The Senate’s resolution emphasized that the Falcon Center is a collaborative building project to support academics, athletics, and recreations, all tenants of Nelson’s long and distinguished career. The current Emogene Nelson Building on campus is scheduled to be demolished after completion of the Falcon Center.
Falcon Center construction began in the summer of 2014 and is expected to be completed in the fall of 2017. The facility will house UWRF’s health and human performance department, athletic and strength facilities, student wellness center, and dance studios. Thanks to fundraising efforts, a classroom within the Falcon Center is slated to be named after Nelson.

For more information, contact Executive Assistant to the Chancellor Beth Schommer at beth.schommer@uwrf.edu or 715-425-0662.

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