Memorial service for Morris D. Hayes scheduled

A memorial service for Morris D. Hayes, UW-Eau Claire professor emeritus of music and theatre arts, is scheduled for 1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 26, at First Congregational Church in Eau Claire.

Hayes, an inspirational conductor and professor whose choral program at UW-Eau Claire attracted international recognition and produced graduates with the highest musical standards, died Thursday, June 15, in Oceanside, Calif., at the age of 87. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, June 24, at First Presbyterian Church in Oceanside.

When Hayes joined the UW-Eau Claire faculty in 1966 as director of choral organizations, the university had one choir. He soon developed a men’s chorus, then a women’s. By 1975 he was conducting the Concert Choir, Oratorio Society, Singing Statesmen and Women’s Chorus — a total of 600 students weekly.

Three of the groups performed at the national convention of the American Choral Directors Association, the only school in the country to have done that at the time. His groups also worked with conductors Roger Wagner and Robert Shaw and performed with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra.

Hayes was national president of the ACDA from 1972-74 and served on the choral panel of the National Endowment for the Arts from 1976-81. He was named outstanding music educator by the Wisconsin School Music Association in 1980 and received an award for distinguished service and leadership from the ACDA in 1985. Hayes also conducted the People to People Youth Chorale on tours of several East Asian countries and led UW-Eau Claire’s Concert Choir on several tours of Europe. In 1982 the Wisconsin Choral Directors Association established the Morris D. Hayes Award for the year’s most distinguished director.

Hayes retired from UW-Eau Claire in 1987 and subsequently served in interim appointments at the University of Iowa, Florida State University, Murray State University and Hamline University. He received the Honorary Alumnus Award from the UW-Eau Claire Alumni Association in 1992.
The Wisconsin Center for Music Education, a WSMA facility providing music teachers, students and community members with innovative music education programs and resources, last year named one of its libraries after Hayes.

He earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and received that school’s Alumni Achievement Award in 2000. Prior to coming to Eau Claire, he held faculty positions at Kansas State University and UW-Madison.

Survivors include his wife, Gladys, of Oceanside, Calif.; daughter Mary Hayes of Greenville; son Doug (Julie) Hayes of Eau Claire; and many grandchildren.

The family requests that memorials be directed to the Morris D. Hayes Scholarship Fund in care of the UW-Eau Claire Foundation.