

## A Notable Woman – Pauline Isaacson



Pauline Isaacson made her mark on the institution as an innovator.

She was the first chair of the speech department when it was organized in 1958 and she sought to diversify the program by hiring experts and developing specialized programs in the fields of theatre arts, mass communication and communicative disorders.

A decade later, she presented an idea to Lee Dreyfus, then a new president of the school, about internationalizing the curriculum by offering ongoing overseas programs. In 1969 UWSP sent its first Semester Abroad contingent to England. Within a few years, groups were going concurrently to all corners of the globe.

The travel opportunities stemmed from her attitude as a teacher: "If you don't have it, then you take them (students) to it."

Isaacson, a native of Spring Valley, began her career as a teacher following her graduation from University of Wisconsin- River Falls. She served on faculties at Glenwood City and Madison and Austin, Minn., conducting courses in the social sciences and French.

During World War II, she served as a head recreation worker for the American Red Cross in hospitals in Oklahoma.

Isaacson was serving as a publicist for the State Historical Society of Wisconsin when she was hired in 1946 to join the UWSP faculty as a teacher of modern European history and speech. She remained here for 36 years, in key roles throughout the period and in the meantime, became one of the first women on campus to earn a Ph.D.

She held the title of professor and director of International Programs at the time of her retirement in 1982.