

## **Mildred Davis**

Mildred Davis was a unique woman who contributed much to the culture of UWSP. As a young girl, she had traveled throughout Europe and North America with her mother and during her travels, she gained insight into different cultures and became passionate about art.

“When we use our hands effectively, our hearts are most at peace,” was a credo followed by Davis all her life. She completed two degrees at the University of Iowa, attended school at Middlebury College in Vermont and received a degree at the Sorbonne in Paris.

After teaching high school and junior college, as well as at the University of Iowa, Davis came to UWSP in 1928 when the school was called Central Teachers College. She stayed on campus for the next 56 years, first as a French professor and later as an adviser. Her 44-year tenure was one of the longest teaching records in the history of the institution. Her teaching career ended in 1972 and In 1979 the foreign language laboratory was named for her.

After her retirement, Davis continued to be a prominent figure on campus. She took classes under a program for senior citizens and she rarely missed a day at the University Center where she could be found every morning eating breakfast.

Various items Davis created can still be seen around campus. She sketched the picture of Old Main that is printed on diploma covers. For many years she also lettered the names of graduates on their diplomas. Davis also enjoyed needlework, oil painting, rosemailing, paper tole and chip carving. She created the chip-carved screen and trunk that is now part of the Historic Preservation Collection.

Davis died of cancer in 1984, when she was 85 years old.

“Surely, Miss Davis must be viewed as the epitome of the dedicated teacher of her era. Through her devotion to education and her deep concern for the university, she has earned a special place in the heart and history of UWSP,” said the late John Ellery, a former vice chancellor and acting chancellor.