

**Vicki Bier:** The next speaker is Betty Smith. Betty has had a long and successful career as a realtor in Madison, Wisconsin, but also a life-long role as a political activist in Wisconsin. She was responsible in large part for the quality daycare that we now have in Madison, and was a close friend and mentor of Denice's during her years here, and very instrumental in helping her resolve her own tenure struggle. So Betty?

**Betty Walker Smith:** I went swimming a lot with Denice – we were exercising. You know, all the time she was telling me I should make my plans, and so on. I was selling real estate, I had been in politics and I found it nice getting money and not a lot of complaints like you do in politics. Anyway, after much talk and telling about the nematodes she dealt with, she kept telling me how awful it was that she didn't get tenure. Finally, she got to me and I got my gang together, which is various women's groups – League of Women Voters, and so on and so forth – and we finally, after meeting every Tuesday for a while, we had a project, and we had "How to get tenure: Don't get mad; get smart." And nine full professors talked, we had a hundred people come, and it was a lot of fun. And of course, all this time we keep on with our exercising, and she's discussing the difficulties, in the department, that she has. The next thing that happened, though, in April of 1992, she got tenure. So here I have an invitation to go to the hotel, and there she was – I wish you could all see the picture, she was a little cowboy from Texas, and you can't help loving it – and she sang that song loudly, and of course she soon, then, got living as she wanted to live, and was always a good example. And I kept on, thank goodness, selling real estate and not working so hard in my political life. But now I want to do something, I want to give you some challenges. Because we need you.

As you already know, we have some faults with our university. There are a lot of people picking on us, and the worst is the legislature not doing right by us, and I think we still need to get people to run for office or help, work with them, and go to them and explain what's going on and why we need this and why we need that. But one of the most wonderful things that happened – it was open yesterday – was this new child hospital on campus. American Family Hospital. And it's beautiful. It's out on Highland Avenue and you should go see it. And then, I think you people are all smart, you aren't yet on the committees there, and help them set it up. And then maybe we can have a building and a place where we could take children when they're sick, when they need extra care, and just generally make it a place where it really takes of what we need.

The other thing I wanted to talk about is this group which is the interest group University League, which is an old group at Madison, it's actually mostly faculty wives, and they have parties, put on nice parties, they have interest groups. They're wonderful at entertaining. Now we all miss Denice because we're not having those parties. But this group has it, and I will leave some folders for you. And I think you would enjoy it, and I hope that you'll get to do it. I could go on about Denice – we were all horrified,

**Denice D. Denton Memorial Symposium July 30, 2007**  
**Panel Presentation by Betty Walker Smith**

---

of course, and we have to go on without her, in some ways we have to be happy and cheerful and fun like she was, and help each other. Thank you.

*[Applause]*

**Vicki Bier:** I feel the need to chime in here and, again, also, I think Betty was too modest about her role in improving the tenure situation here at Wisconsin. If you listen to Jeanne's talk where somebody could be denied tenure, it could later be found that that denial was inappropriate and in fact in violation of the laws. Originally there was no mechanism in the University of Wisconsin System to grant tenure, except by referring that case back to the same original department that had acted egregiously in the first place. There was a law enacted to change that so that an alternative group could be empowered to grant tenure in cases where it was clear that tenure was appropriate, but the originating department was not willing to vote for it. And, if my memory is correct, which, it's now a number of years ago, after that was passed by the legislature it languished on the governor's desk for quite some period of time before Betty figured out that, well, the way to get this thing signed is you have to call up the governor's secretary and explain to that person that this is really important to a lot of people, and it should go a little higher up the governor's priority list. So, thank you from all of us, Betty.

*[Applause]*