Always ask questions, always fight for what you believe in, and always encourage children to read and learn, and tell them repeatedly they can do anything they set their minds to,” was the mantra of Susan Jones Sears, professor emeritus of counselor education at The Ohio State University. She died Feb. 28, 2012, after a long illness.

An education and career consultant, she specialized in career counseling, program design grant writing and leadership development. Her energy and dedication was legendary. She excelled in all three areas of faculty excellence: teaching, research and service.

She focused on career development of college students, program development and school and college counseling. She was co-author of Building Your Career: A Guide to Your Future, now in its fourth edition, and 2010’s Selecting a College Major. She also wrote Contextual Teaching and Learning: A Primer for Effective Instruction (2002). In 2003, she was central to achieving a $1.2 million federal grant to establish full-time counseling services in eight Columbus Public elementary schools and to provide professional development for the counselors.

She also was instrumental in writing and pushing to get passed the legislation that created the regulation of licensed counselors, clinical counselors and social workers in Ohio. She served as the first chair of the Ohio Counselor and Social Worker Board (appointed by then Gov. Richard Celeste in 1984) and continued as a board member until 1990. She also served several state counseling associations.

Her numerous honors include Ohio State’s Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching in 1982-83, the Governor’s Special Recognition Award for Leadership in 1986 and the American School Counselor Association’s Counselor Educator of the Year honor in 2003. In 2011, the Ohio Counseling Association honored her with its first-ever Lifetime Achievement Award. At the same award ceremony, the State of Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board declared her a “Board Member in Perpetuity.”

She was instrumental in Ohio State’s participation in the Transforming School Counseling Initiative and its selection by the Education Trust as one of six pioneering counselor education programs in higher education. The School of Physical Activity and Educational Services counselor education program has recognized her contributions to curriculum and student achievement with the establishment of the Susan Sears Distinguished Alumni Award.

She retired after 25 years on the counselor education faculty, having also served as an associate dean of the College of Education.

She was a two-time alumna of Ohio State, having received a B.S. in education and a Ph.D. in teaching and learning, educational foundations and research. Before becoming the first Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor in Ohio, Dr. Sears taught social studies and was a counselor in the Columbus, Gahanna, Zanesville and Maysville school districts.
She is survived by her husband, Dennis Sears, and daughter, Tanya, who asks that memorial donations be made to the Celiac Disease Foundation (www.celiac.org), and The Wilds. No funeral will be held.

To share memories or condolences, please visit www.schoedinger.com