

AS I SAW THEM: MY CONTEMPORARIES

FOUNDERS of KAPPA STATE

**BY
BERYL HENRY
1958**

MISS BERYL HENRY

Miss Beryl Henry received her A. B. degree at Henderson-Brown College, Arkadelphia. Later she attended Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Virginia, and obtained her M. A. degree at Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee. She also did graduate work at the University of Chicago.

Her first classroom teaching assignment was at Rogers High School. After one year she transferred to Bentonville and was promoted from teacher to superintendent – the later position she held for six years. Following that assignment, she became principal of the Hope High School, and after a few years became superintendent. She held the office of superintendent of Hope Public Schools until her retirement from teaching. Beryl Henry was an outstanding teacher and administrator, and is held in high esteem by her former students and associates. In her professional work she holds life memberships in the NEA, AEA, and the National PTA. She is a former member of the Arkansas State Board of Education.

Miss Henry is still an active and helpful citizen of Arkansas. She has a wide social and business acquaintance. She takes an active part in the Methodist Church, the PEO, DAR, B&PW, and other organizations. She teaches a Sunday School class, and is a member of the Commission on Higher Education of the Methodist Church Board.

At the present time she resides at Benton, with a sister and has a position with the State Welfare Department.

MISS ANNIE GRIFFEY

For many years "Miss Annie" enjoyed the distinction of being the only woman elected to the presidency of Arkansas Education Association. She was the assistant superintendent of the state's largest school system, the Little Rock Public Schools. She was endowed with many gifts, but especially one of understanding the problem of those who were her subordinates – in turn her subordinates were deeply loyal and painstakingly minute in carrying out every detail of her directive. I am told that when she stepped into a classroom, she immediately took over and carried through any suggestion she had previously made to the teacher for improving her technique of teaching. In turn, the bonds of respect and loyalty were welded between supervisor and teacher by a simple

object lesson shown by “Miss Annie” by actual work on the job. Miss Griffey was an administrator of unusual talent. She came up through the ranks and studied as she went so that she had an answer for every problem the young and inexperienced teacher might have. Miss Griffey passed away in 1944.

DR. FLORA GILLENLINE

Dr. Gillentine, who was an adopted daughter of Arkansas, came to us from Tennessee as an instructor in the field of education. She received her Doctorate at Peabody the year I received my Master’s there. She attracted much attention to the education department at Henderson by revamping her courses in education and by her thorough training of future teachers. Characteristically, she instilled into those students much love for teaching because of her own high conception of the attributes that teachers should possess and her genuine love for the profession. She thought that teachers should make their personal appearances as pleasing as possible for psychological effect upon students – this she exemplified in her own appearances. When her untimely death terminated the teaching of this Founder, many young teachers who came under her teaching felt the loss as a personal one. At the same time, they breathed a prayer of gratitude for her exemplification of the highest ideals of teaching.

MISS WILLIE A. LAWSON

Willie Lawson touched more teachers throughout Arkansas through her profession than any other Founder of the Society. Her actual classroom teaching included the towns of Jonesboro, Crossett, Warren, and Fordyce. She was drafted into the State Department of Education as Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction in charge of the Opportunity Schools. These schools were organized for those citizens who had no opportunity to receive the fundamentals in education. These schools were modeled after the Moonlight Schools of Kentucky for which Cora Wilson Stewart became famous. After this venture, she was elected county superintendent of Mississippi County and served there six years. During that time she received her Master’s Degree from Peabody College. Her previous training was at the Flora McDonald College in North Carolina where she earned her A. B. Degree. Her thesis for the Master’s Degree was the elaboration of her work in the Opportunity Schools. Because this was the first written record of research done in this field, this thesis was filed in the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C.

From the position of county superintendent, her next work was that of Executive Secretary of the teacher’s own organization, Arkansas Education Association. She was the first woman in the nation to be elected as executive secretary to a state’s association. Her talent as a public speaker was in demand from sections of the country, and today she counts her audiences varying in number of 10,000 at the National Education Association to 10 down at the Cross-Roads. In 1951 she was voted the Arkansas Woman of the Year. In 1952 she was appointed a member of the Arkansas Highway Commission – the only woman in the nation to hold a similar position. Today, she is in business in Little Rock and vice-president of the company with which she is associated. In addition, she does much church work at the Second Presbyterian Church.

MRS. BESS MOORE

Bess Boehm Moore began her rise to the heights in Stone County as a county supervisor. From there she went to Jefferson County in the same capacity. She was drafted by Pulaski County as county supervisor which position she held until the state department called her in to supervise nursing schools for four years. Bess Moore received her training at the University of Colorado and University of Arkansas. In 1928 she married a businessman, Merlin Moore, but continued her active interest in educational affairs and has received possibly as much national recognition as any woman in the country. Her real love has been with libraries, and Arkansas will always be under obligations to her long-range vision of this work. She was appointed on the State Library Commission some fourteen years ago. She has served on the commission through the administration of seven governors, which is in itself, an unusual incident. She has served as chairman of the commission since 1953. In 1952, she was selected as Arkansas Woman of the Year. Today, she serves on an Educational Advisory Council to the President of the United States. This council includes H. J. Heinz of the Heinz Products, Inc., Chester Bowles, and Dorothy Shaver, President of Lord and Taylor. She is the standing Commissioner of the United States Commission on Unicef and is the only woman on this commission from California to Virginia. She was cited as the outstanding Library Trustee of the nation in 1954. Today, she is Chairman of American Association of Library Trustees. In addition to this strenuous public service which takes her from coast to coast, she owns her own business in Little Rock.

MISS CONSTANCE MITCHELL

Constance Mitchell came to Arkansas State Teachers College as an English instructor and taught there—lo! these many years. In fact State Teachers College and Constance Mitchell were synonymous. She was a power while teaching there both in English and Library Science. To many freshmen she was the panacea of all trouble regardless of where it was. No hour was too late nor too early for Constance to give attention to any student who wished it – and her life and influence on campus life were a benediction. Her training was received at Illinois Wesleyan College and Peabody College. Her degree in Library Science was received from University of Illinois. She now resides in Conway and has retired from teaching, but continues her interest in education through various clubs and organizations.

MISS PEARL WILLIAMSON

Pearl Williamson for 30 or more years was superintendent of schools in the little city which she called home. To be an administrator of a school system in your own home town is in itself a marvelous benediction – it bespeaks what strength of character and cultivation of brain power which she had to offer to her state. Miss Williamson taught at the summer schools of University of Arkansas and Henderson many years. She is an A. B. graduate of Henderson and has her Master's Degree from Columbia University.

At the termination of her administration, DeQueen declared a Pearl Williamson Day which brought to town that day not only top brass from the state's educational field, but also the little woman who lived down the creek and whose children had learned to live better with each other. She has touched many lives in Sevier County who have seen the light because Miss Williamson carried the torch. Today, she is a member of the State Library Commission taking a very active interest in all of its manifold interests. She resides in DeQueen and continues her active community work through her church, study clubs, and other organizations.

MISS ALMA KEYS

A native of Arkansas taking her training at the Oklahoma State University (A & M) and the University of Tennessee, Alma Keys has been at the helm of the homemaking department of the state department of education for many years. It was she, who through her vision of what homemaking should mean to the girls of any community, first began to plan special cottages on the school grounds where girls and boys, eventually, could have their own home atmosphere; and in which very exact and definite training in home maintenance and organization could be given under supervision. By this method, this training is reflected in the improvement of home standards throughout our rural and urban communities. Alma Keys' work has been invaluable to our state and she is still giving unstinted service and thoughtful planning as of this day.

MISS FRANCES BAILEY

Receiving her A. B. Degree from University of Arkansas and her Master's Degree from the University of Chicago, Frances Bailey has been ably equipped to give yeoman service to the schools of her native state. Associated with Miss Keys in the Home Economics Department at the State Department, the combination has been unusually effective in strengthening and maintaining an interesting program. Miss Bailey is quite gifted in her ability to "show" instructors of the state the weaknesses of their program and, better still, to apply remedial measures to further strengthen them. Her visits are always constructive and teachers throughout the state regard her as a "real trouble shooter" for any problem they have. She is continuing her fine work and is an able member on the staff of the state education department, and in addition, is state advisor to 15,000 Future Home-Makers of America!

MISS EDNA RUDOLPH

Edna Rudolph was and is from Arkadelphia. She is a graduate of Henderson and received her Master's Degree from Peabody College, and taught English in several high schools in Texas as well as Arkansas for many years. Her teaching experience also included Arkansas College and College of the Ozarks.

She was a very thorough teacher, meticulous in every assignment. There was no compromise in her vocabulary and for that reason, her students could stand any acid test in English; consequently, every student she had was extremely well grounded in English

courses, which extended far beyond the high school level. She lives in Little Rock with her sister, Mildred, who was also a teacher.

MISS ROSA WALKER

Rosa Walker received her B. S. Degree from Florida State College for Women and her M. S. Degree from the University of Tennessee. She came to Arkansas as head of the Home Economics at Fort Smith High School. In the thrifty (to live) thirties she became state supervisor in clothing. This involved much traveling and many contacts throughout the state to which Rosa Walker so ably adapted herself. From this position, she went to Arkansas State Teachers College where she remained for nine years in charge of student teachers. Later she became field supervisor of student teachers throughout the state, and was associated with the state department of education as clothing specialist. Rosa Walker was outstanding in her field and many young teachers had their professional road made smoother because Rosa Walker traveled ahead and threw out the boulders. She is a resident of Little Rock living with her sister in beautiful Broadmoor.

MRS. OPAL ALLBRIGHT HERRINGTON

Opal Allbright Herrington received her training for teaching at the University of Arkansas and Peabody College at Nashville, Tennessee. For years she was at the head of the English department at Little Rock High School, and a very, very good one at that! Her thorough teaching in her chosen major was reflected in the excellent rating achieved by her students in the standard tests when entering colleges and universities. Her students had wholesome respect for her ability and regarded her unexcelled in drilling her students in English fundamentals. One of them probably expressed the opinion of all when he said, "If you don't know English when Miss Allbright gets through with you, Brother, you won't ever know it!" Opal Allbright married a businessman in Little Rock and now she spends her time following her hobby, flower arrangements. For this, she grows her own flowers, "just for the fun of fooling with them," she says.

AND THERE WAS LELIA CONTE

For many years she was the very popular principal of Jones School in Hot Springs. Her students and their parents felt that they had a friend in Lelia Conte – true, trustworthy, and dependable. Lelia Conte served her profession and her state with all the enthusiasm that her fine ideals and standards could muster. She was ably fitted for her work by training, A. B. and M. A. Degrees at University of Arkansas, and that innate desire for service to youth. She gave long and hard hours and had a conception of her obligation to teaching that few had. I think we can say of this founder that she came to the profession to "give life and that more abundantly." No doubt her star shines brilliantly in the vast meadows of heaven as the forget-me-not of the Angels. Lelia Conte passed away in 1956.

NOW TO TEACHING:

The greatest compensation that any can possibly bring is classroom teaching. Into your hands come raw material . . . out of your hands and hearts go the scintillating, brilliant product. The Founders, every one of them, have many counsels, and many of them have collected vast amount of dividends in the priceless knowledge that they, and they alone, were collecting on that constant association with youth. YOUTH with its exuberance, its joys, its daring, its high hopes, aspirations and ambitions . . . and its eternal look to the future! It is difficult to grow old while that association exists.

Each child is like a rare jewel, a diamond with as many facets as the craftsman will cut. The teacher must be the craftsman for in children's minds is the richest treasure, the rarest find. It is soul-welling and heart warming to see the spark of learning flicker – then with much gentle blowing, develop into a brightly burning fire. This challenge of teaching should kindle the finest effort any teacher can offer.

There should never be a time in which there is even a suggestion of the idea, half apologetic explanation, of being “just a teacher,” but rather a boast that into the two hands of a teacher rests the responsibility for helping to create something precious . . . the character of an individual.

I am a member of the most challenging, most responsible, most stimulating, most satisfying profession in the whole wide universe . . . for I am a school teacher! The material entrusted to my care is more plastic than the potter's clay, more valuable than the miser's gold, more powerful than the scientists' atomic bomb . . . that is, the body, mind, heart, and soul of a child. Since my task is such a sacred one, it behooves me to do everything in my power to keep myself worthy of my profession.

Unless that teacher has proved that she subscribes to these goals of distinctive teacherhood, she is not worthy to accept the high honor of becoming a member of Delta Kappa Gamma. Hold high the standard, and these will strengthen the bonds of the Society. Remember always

- I am a Teacher – one by choice
- I am a Teacher – a vital force of my profession
- I am a Teacher – reaping rich rewards
- I am a Teacher – proud to teach!