MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
for
HAZEL DEMAND OAKES

Hazel Irene Oakes (nee Demand), who died December 3, 1981, at the age of 87, was a member of the music school faculty during the transition from Milwaukee Normal School to Milwaukee State Teachers College. She graduated from North Division High School (Milwaukee) in 1912 and from Milwaukee Normal School in 1914. She was immediately assigned to teach at Ring Street Elementary School from which she had graduated. There she organized and conducted the first departmentalized music program in the Milwaukee Public Schools, a program in which a music specialist teaches all of the music in a grade school. Besides presenting the planned music courses throughout the school, she organized and conducted children's choirs, wrote and performed operettas and pageants and generally involved parents and faculty in the pupils' activities.

Upon learning that Jacob Moerschel (a former assistant to Theodore Leschetizky) was engaged to teach piano at Milwaukee Normal School, Hazel returned for three more years of concentrated music study, including master piano with Moerschel. Immediately upon graduation, she was invited to join the faculty to give courses in teaching techniques and materials, to organize and conduct performing groups and to teach piano to the prospective kindergarten teachers for whom she composed and compiled a much needed collection of materials that would enhance their teaching. Some of her materials are still in use.

As public service, Hazel gave piano recitals and conducted Milwaukee Normal's music performing groups in high schools, hospitals, homes for the aged and correctional institutions. She was also a favorite conductor of community singing at the summer concerts at Lake Park.

At another point in her career, Hazel was accompanist for Otto Semper, Baritone of the Berlin Opera Company, for his performances in Milwaukee and the state.

To organize and direct a music department for a relatively new school in the Milwaukee System, Girls' Trades and Technical High School, Hazel left the Normal School Faculty to accept the new challenge. There she built a music program that involved one third of the school's students. She introduced a four year music course that offered training, not only in performance, but also in harmony, orchestration and arranging, the first of its kind in a Wisconsin high school. She combined musical forces with Boys' Trade and Technical High School to form a mixed choir of 150 voices and an orchestra of 110 instrumentalists. Together, the schools presented concerts, musical shows and pageants of enviable quality.

Hazel was especially proud of her "Choir of Angels," as she referred to her select choir of 100 girls, who appeared in colorful evening gowns which they had designed and made themselves. They were favorites at all-city performances and at national conventions of the Music Educators National Conference before whom they appeared in Detroit, Chicago and Milwaukee. They gained national recognition for their part in the NBC Network broadcast of the pageant FREE MEN.
Hazel always trained students to be leaders, managers, accompanists, assistant directors, section leaders. She was a born teacher. She never knew a discipline problem. Even as a child, she organized her neighborhood playmates into a school and maintained a remarkable degree of order. Throughout her professional life, her high standards of perfection produced mutually satisfying results, and her honesty, sincerity and devotion to her students inspired a love between them - a love that was as beautiful as her music. The preparer of this resolution - having had the exceedingly good fortune of being one of Hazel Oakes' pupils - can personally attest to the positive puissant influence which Hazel had on the lives of her students.

As a further legacy, Hazel and her husband, J. Thomas Oakes (who also graduated from Milwaukee State Teachers College and was a valued guest lecturer in the UWM Department of Music for many summers) established a substantial scholarship fund with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Foundation for the benefit of future music students.

Hazel Demand Oakes, this purposeful, unique woman and teacher, will be affectionately and gratefully remembered by this writer and the countless others who were inspired and affected by her and in whom the overtones of her existence are propagated and will continue to vibrate.

Gregoria Karides Suchy