MEMORIAL RESOLUTIONS OF THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN--MILWAUKEE
ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR OLIVE JACOB THOMAS

Olive J. Thomas, Professor of Geography, died August 16, 1958, upon returning to Milwaukee from a vacation with her sister, Mrs. Clarence E. Wise of Detroit, Michigan, her only survivor.

Miss Thomas was born in Chicago on August 15, 1891. In 1913 she was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree by the University of Chicago, where she was graduated with honors and with special honors in geography, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Xi, honorary science fraternities. At the University of Wisconsin she received a Master of Science degree in 1924 and later completed most of the work toward a doctorate.

Miss Thomas began teaching in 1913 in the Hillside Home School at Spring Green, Wisconsin, a private boarding school which was conducted by Ellen and Jane Lloyd-Jones, aunts of the well-known architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. She taught in Milwaukee-Downer Seminary from 1915-1918, in Milwaukee-Downer College from 1918-1926, and in the University of Rochester, New York, from 1926-1931. She was a graduate fellow and assistant in geography at the University of Wisconsin from 1931-1934. From 1934-1943 she taught in Whitewater, Wisconsin, State Teachers College. In 1943 Miss Thomas came to Milwaukee State Teachers College, where she remained a highly valued member of the Department of Geography and of the faculty until her death. She was sponsor of the sophomore class, president of the Faculty Women's Club, and a member of numerous college committees. In 1951-1952 Miss Thomas taught in Pursedown College, University of London, under a Fulbright exchange grant.

Professor Thomas had an outstanding career as a teacher of geography. From her extensive travel she brought a first-hand knowledge of geography to her classes. She was a pioneer in the use of the airplane as a class laboratory for reconnaissance field work. To her teaching she brought sound scholarship. "The Geographic Factor", a book which she wrote in collaboration with the late Professor R. H. Whitbeck of the University of Wisconsin, was a milestone in geographic thought. Her name appears in "Who's Who in American Education", "American Men of Science", "American Women of Science", and "The International List of Geographers".

Professor Thomas was also widely known for her contributions to local, state, and national professional organizations. She was a member of the Wisconsin Council for Geographic Education, the National Council for Geographic Education, the Association of American Geographers, and of Delta Kappa Gamma, national honorary education fraternity. She served the community beyond the classroom as a member of the Air Education Council of Milwaukee and of the City Club.

Professor Thomas' vital teaching and sincere interest in her work inspired many of her students to make geography their career. Her high standards of professional accomplishment set a worthy goal for both her students and her colleagues.

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