Memorial Resolution

EMERITUS PROFESSOR MARY-VIRGINIA RODIGAN (1895-1974)

Mary-Virginia Rodigan came to Milwaukee State Teachers College in 1925 as Director of the Department of Speech, a position she held until 1957, when the institution merged with the Milwaukee Extension Division of the University of Wisconsin. She continued to serve the University, subsequently in the Department of Theatre Arts, until her retirement in 1966.

Mary-Virginia Rodigan's career at the University spanned forty-one dedicated years. Under her leadership a comprehensive curriculum in Speech was developed, including such areas as Speech Improvement and Creative Dramatics for Children, Theatre, Radio and Television, and Speech Pathology, all of which today represent major professional programs within the University.

For twenty of the thirty-two years as head of the department she brought to life on the platform stage of Mitchell Hall the plays of Shakespeare, Shaw, Barrie, O'Neill, Pirandello and others, introducing to college audiences new playwrights and experimenting with new styles and techniques of production. Her leadership of "The Stock Company", the student theatre organization, made it one of the important student activities on the campus.

Born in Racine, Wisconsin, Mary-Virginia Rodigan graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1917. Her teaching career began at the Racine High School as Director of Speech, a position she held until 1925. In the late 1920's, shortly after assuming her teaching responsibilities at Milwaukee State Teacher's College, she introduced an innovative speech testing and therapy program. Her recognition and strong belief in the importance of good speech for future teachers and her perseverance in convincing the administration of that goal combined to bring about the support that led to the establishment of one of the strongest speech programs in the state.

Throughout her teaching career she traveled extensively, attending seminars, courses, festivals and theatre performances which took her to various parts of the world. In her words, "I went wherever I found material of worth." Her many honors included membership in Phi Beta Kappa, Psi Epsilon Delta (National Collegiate Players) and Sigma Alpha Eta (National Speech Therapy). She served with distinction on numerous university committees. She contributed articles to The Quarterly Journal of Speech, The English Journal, and an essay on "Children in Shakespeare" in Children in Classic Literature.

She will be remembered as a person of refinement and excellent taste, an astute critic of the arts, a devoted friend to her students and a dedicated colleague.

E. J. Dennis (Chairman)
William E. Donnelly
Lester Fuhrmann
Agnes Hofbauer
Charlotte Wollaeger