

Mildred Carney

November 12, 1882 — November 21, 1966

Mildred Carney, born in Carney, Maryland, began her professional career of teaching in 1909 in the public schools of Maryland. At Teachers College, Columbia University, in New York City she received the B.S. degree in 1925 and M.S. degree in 1926. She came to the New York State College of Home Economics, Cornell University, in July 1926 as Extension Assistant Professor and retired July 1950 as Associate Professor, Emeritus.

As a specialist in the Cooperative Extension Service, Mildred Carney was particularly successful because she accepted the women she taught with all their abilities and their limitations. She set high standards of achievement which these women could attain intellectually, aesthetically, and economically in their home environment. She was unusually gifted in instilling in them a confidence in their own abilities and in making clear to them the responsibility for sharing with others what they had learned.

As a representative of the College and of the University, she demonstrated to the women of the state a recognizable concern for their welfare and a direct response to their desire for personal development. Her own forthrightness and integrity, her rejection of ostentation, and her practical approach to adult education made her a respected friend, teacher, and adviser to thousands of women.

In the much less affluent era of the 1930's, Mildred Carney's success as a teacher was highly respected by administrators, co-workers, and students because of her ability to help people make use of what they had, conserve it to the utmost, and enjoy the whole process. Still later she was persuasive in her teaching because she believed that all homemakers could participate in the war by conserving resources, working to protect the health and morale of the family, and making a concerted effort to contribute to the total national effort. She was called to Washington during World War II to work on textiles and clothing projects on a national level. Her publications of extension bulletins during the 1930's and 1940's were a result of working with specialists in the country to give needed information to her students and co-workers.

A scholar at heart, she spent periods of time at the University of Minnesota and the University of Chicago taking additional study in the areas of psychology, anthropology, economics, mental hygiene, and English, French, and Russian literature. She was an avid reader and had an insatiable thirst for knowledge. She never traveled on her extension trips without books under her arm. She treasured her books, shared them generously, but guarded them assiduously. Woe to the careless friend who forgot to return one.

As an extensive traveler in this country and abroad she sought to know and understand the people of the countries she visited, their way of life, and their art works. In her own country and abroad she cherished the works of artists and artisans whatever their art or trade. Her teaching at all times reflected her search for knowledge and the wisdom she gained in understanding a wide world of people.

After her retirement Mildred Carney was an active and enthusiastic worker with the Senior Citizens organization of Ithaca. Her preparation for meetings with this group was as well-organized and thorough as had been her preparations for extension meetings with women in the state of New York. She was as well a most enthusiastic babysitter for a young Ithaca family. The young family moved to Baltimore, Miss Carney's home. She, too, moved home to Baltimore and continued her devotion to this family of seven. The parents of these five young children have written of Mildred Carney's influence. "She has given our children such a thirst for knowledge, a hunger for learning, and a great love of books. She read to each and every one of them from their infancy on. But the most important thing she gave to them was her love, which they returned a hundred fold. She gave unstintedly of her time, listened to all their problems, and was their confidante. I feel that her immortality will be right here in our lives, and in all of those people who were fortunate enough for their paths to have crossed hers. Mildred has had a profound influence on our family. I hope that whoever reads her books next will derive as much wisdom from them as she did."

Mildred Carney will be remembered by her many friends of all ages for her serenity, her witticisms and wisdom, but most of all for her sharing with others her knowledge, experience, and wisdom.

Orrilla Butts, Doris T. Wood, Margaret Humphrey