



Mary A. Morrison

September 18, 1921 – January 10, 2017

Mary Alice Morrison, Professor Emerita in the Division of Nutritional Sciences, died on January 10, 2017 at the age of 95 at her home in Kendal at Ithaca. She was born in Tofield, Alberta, Canada and later moved with her family to Calgary. She attended a teacher training school (Normal School) and from 1940 to 1943 she was an elementary school teacher in Salmon Arm, British Columbia. In 1943, she joined in the Royal Canadian Air Force and served until 1946. After her Air Force service, Mary received a B.S. degree from the University of Alberta in 1949, and an M.S. in Food and Nutrition from Washington State College in 1951. She was an assistant Professor at the University of Washington from 1951-1955 before enrolling at the University of Wisconsin for a Ph.D. degree in biochemistry/nutrition, which she received in 1960.

Mary joined the Cornell faculty as an assistant professor in the Department of Food and Nutrition in the College of Home Economics in 1960. Mary's research interests involved protein and amino acids and she taught courses on these subjects throughout her Cornell career. She was also interested in involving undergraduate students in research and, for more than 20 years, she provided leadership to the Honors programs for undergraduates, first in the Department of Human Nutrition and Food and later in the Division of Nutritional Sciences. She became a member of the American Institute of Nutrition in 1963.

In 1969, the Federal Extension Service established the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). This program used paraprofessionals drawn from the

community to provide food and nutrition education to low-income families. Mary was director of a Multidisciplinary Research-Action project in East Harlem, New York, from 1969- 1976 that was an early evaluation of the EFNEP program. The project assessed the effectiveness of nutrition paraprofessional EFNEP aides working with physicians, nurses, and nutritionists in a program of service and education. The project provided an early research base for the new EFNEP program which is still carried out by Land Grant Universities, including Cornell. From 1963 to 1968 she chaired the USDA Northeast Regional Technical Committee, which coordinated the research of faculty in 10 universities.

Mary was acting Chair of the Department of Food and Nutrition, in the College of Human Ecology in 1973-74, when the department was joined with the Graduate School of Nutrition to form the Division of Nutritional Sciences. She was active in the deliberations on the campus that led up to the formation of the division.

In addition to her contributions to Nutritional Sciences on the campus, Mary was an active University citizen. She served on the campus animal welfare committee and served as committee chair for several years. Mary was active in the Faculty Council of Representatives, the forerunner of the University Faculty Senate. She served on the executive committee of the Council and chaired it in 1979-1980. Mary was also a member of the University Council on Physical Education and Athletics for years and served on the Title IX subcommittee.

In the semester before Mary retired in 1988, she was elected Secretary of the University Faculty. This was for a five-year term, so she continued these duties in her retirement. In 1990, federal laws eliminated mandatory retirement rules for University Faculty, so retirement issues for faculty were a major concern. Mary was involved with assessing faculty concerns about retirement and she was concerned that university policies on retirement benefits for faculty be clarified. Through her efforts the university administration provided clarification as to the benefits available to retired faculty. Mary also was active on retirement issues as she served as an active member of the Cornell Association of Professors Emeriti (CAPE). As part of her activities with CAPE, she helped to launch a special library workshop series for retired faculty at Mann Library in the mid-1990s. This collaboration resulted in the founding of the Mary Morrison Public Education Fund, which continues to make book talks, exhibits and other programs available at Mann Library for the Cornell campus community and the public. Her interest in retirement issues led to her participation in the Founding Advisory Committee that was involved in the establishment of Kendal at Ithaca, a continuing care retirement community in Ithaca. She was an active member of the Kendal community, where she was living at the time of her death.

Mary never forgot her Canadian roots and she spent time each summer in Salmon Arm, British Columbia, where she is buried.

Written by Christina Stark, Malden Nesheim and Kathleen Rasmussen