

Elizabeth Loring Keyes Burckmyer

December 8, 1900 — January 30, 1985

Elizabeth Loring Keyes Burckmyer was born in San Diego, California, and spent her childhood on a small ranch in Claremont, California. After graduation from Pomona College in 1922 with a Bachelor of Arts degree, she secured an assistantship at Cornell. She received the Master of Science degree in 1924. From 1924 to 1925 she taught biology at West Virginia Wesleyan College. She was a member of Sigma Xi, Sigma Kappa, and Sigma Delta Epsilon. In 1925 she married Lawrence A. Burckmyer, who was an instructor in electrical engineering at Cornell, and took up permanent residence in Ithaca.

She felt it was her early training as a biologist and her interest and skill in making drawings from the microscope that led to her development as a scientific illustrator. While raising her family of two boys, she did illustrations for many types of publications; among them were fish drawings for the United States Geological Survey, Rural School Leaflets, textbooks, and most of the plant drawings for E. Laurence Palmer's *Fieldbook of Natural History*. Among her finest early works were the watercolor paintings for Liberty Hyde Bailey's *Garden of the Bellflowers*. She furthered her art training under the tutelage of Professor Kenneth Washburn.

In 1946 Elizabeth Burckmyer joined the Cornell staff as an instructor and assistant to Professor Clara Garrett, who taught the drawing courses offered by the Department of Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture in the New York State College of Agriculture. At the time of Professor Garrett's retirement in 1949 she was promoted to assistant professor, and in 1954 she became an associate professor of freehand drawing. From 1949 until her retirement in 1962 she had responsibility for the planning and teaching of the drawing courses. Professor Burckmyer continued to do illustrations for publications, among which were the drawings for Mary Geisler Phillips's book, *Makers of Honey*.

On her sabbatical leave in 1956 she traveled through Europe to sketch and paint. She came back with a portfolio of watercolors and drawings from France, Spain, Italy, Sicily, Lebanon, and Jordan. Of particular interest to her were the architecture and colorful costumes of busy marketplaces.

Although she came from a California ranch as an accomplished horse-woman and delighted Ithaca friends by instructing them in the art of western-style riding, it was Cayuga Lake and boating that were to become a source of enjoyment during the Ithaca years. The June 1929 issue of *Motorboating* carried as its lead article her account of a

thousand-mile trip she and her husband made in a twenty-one-foot open launch from Ithaca across Lake Ontario to Ottawa and back by way of the St. Lawrence River, Lake Champlain, and the New York State barge canals.

After both she and her husband, Professor Emeritus Lawrence A. Burckmyer, Jr., retired in 1962, they moved aboard a large motor sailboat with the idea of cruising for a while before settling down. It was to be their home for the next twenty years, as they followed the seasons along the inland waterway, moving north to Massachusetts in summer and south to Florida as winter came on. Professor Burckmyer kept a lively interest in sketching life along the waterways, filling sketchbooks and letters to friends with ink sketches of people, boats, harbors, and wildlife.

Those who had the privilege of knowing and working with Betty Burckmyer will remember her vitality and warmth and her excellence and dedication as a teacher. She always made time to be available to students and demonstrated a caring for their work. Her love of art, her strong feeling for its craft, and the need to acquire skills was communicated to all her students and other members of the various art study groups in which she participated, not only through her ability to teach, but also by the example of her finely crafted artwork.

Even though the years after retirement were spent mostly away from Ithaca, she maintained her contact with Ithacans and activities at Cornell.

She is survived by her husband and two sons, Lawrence L. Burckmyer and Peter Burckmyer, and four grandchildren.

Raymond T. Fox, Robert G. Mower, Robert J. Lambert, Jr.