

Phyllis E. Stout

December 16, 1922 — June 1, 2006

Professor Emeritus Phyllis E. Stout invested her professional and personal life in the development of others—particularly young people. She worked at George Jr. Republic School for six years following her graduation from the College of Home Economics at Cornell in 1944. She received her M.S. degree from the University of Wisconsin. She excelled in her 4-H Youth Development work with Cornell Cooperative Extension for over 32 years. A member of the 4-H staff at Cornell, she was the liaison with youth program areas in the College of Human Ecology. Phyllis also served as the CCE Director's representative to county CCE Boards of Directors. She was committed to having new staff in counties prepared to meet the challenges of their work with youth, providing sound orientation and ongoing support to them. Phyllis also developed extensive educational materials for 4-H volunteers to enable them to share their talents and achieve the goals of the 4-H programs. In special assignments, she often provided leadership for CCE 4-H participation in the National 4-H Congress, Capital Days, NYS Fair, and NYS 4-H Club Congress. She was influential in defining the future of the 4-H Youth Development program across New York State. Phyllis was an active member of the National Association of 4-H Extension Agents.

Phyllis believed that ordinary people can do extraordinary work in their local communities. And she invested much time and effort herself in community building, particularly in her retirement. She served on the Hangar Theater Board of Directors 1985-95 and the Tompkins County Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Advisory Committee 1988-93, and the Board of Directors 1989-91. While she lived at Longview, she was a member of the Independent Residents Council in 2001-2002 helping to identify problems and solutions for the operation of the new facility. As a Longview resident, she attended classes at Ithaca College and for several years was interviewed by Ithaca College students for their class projects.

Phyllis loved sports. She attended Cornell football games for decades. Lake Placid figure skating practices and performances were special for her, and she loved to play golf. When she could no longer play the golf greens herself, she continued to express her love of the game by sponsoring a green for the annual Cornell 4-H Open Golf Tournament.

Over several years, Phyllis gradually lost her eyesight. She fought this in many ways—seeking the best medical care traveling by bus to and from Rochester, using magnifying equipment with her computer, organizing her living

space at Longview, accessing books on tape and CDs. She used the Gadabout Service to travel to appointments. Though finally legally blind, she continued to volunteer as a way of coping with her difficulties and to be an example to others with handicaps so that they might also decide to volunteer. In recognition of this, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging selected Phyllis as the recipient of the “Outstanding Contribution by a Senior Citizen” Award in 2004.

Phyllis infected others with her curiosity to learn and her love of travel. One of her favorite New York State sites was Lake Placid, particularly for its simplicity in the beauty of nature. She was a strong resource for her siblings, many nieces and nephews, great nieces and great nephews, and friends. She was always ready to help a friend by listening and, if asked, offering advice.

Though Phyllis respected the past, and liked the “tried and true,” she was always interested in current Cornell Cooperative Extension programs while she continued to look to the future.

Ann Mathews, George Preston, Harold Sweet, Jane McGonigal