

Lola Tingley Dudgeon

September 25, 1898 — October 2, 1992

Lola Dudgeon, emeritus professor of foods and nutrition, died on October 2, 1992, in Pocatello, Idaho after an extended illness. She was born in Rockford, Ohio and attended public schools there. After attending Bowling Green State Normal School she taught in rural schools in Ohio for several years. In 1934, she obtained a B.S. degree in home economics at Purdue University and in the same year entered Cornell obtaining an M.S. degree in foods and nutrition in 1938. During this period she worked as a research assistant to Professor Marion Pfund. Lola was then appointed as a country home demonstration agent at Michigan State College and in 1941 as extension nutrition specialist at the University of Arizona.

In 1943, Lola returned to Cornell as an assistant professor and extension specialist in the Department of Foods and Nutrition in the New York State College of Home Economics and became associate professor in 1948.

As an extension specialist she worked consistently and in different ways to increase public understanding of current research as it related to diet and health. She frequently consulted with research faculty in her department and experimented on her own to translate laboratory to home conditions. She was adept at motivating people to change through “how-to-do-it” demonstrations which incorporated not only the principles of food preparation and good food buying but also current research information.

She had a special interest in the bacteriological aspects of food as they related to short term food storage and the preservation of perishable foods in the home. She prepared individually and with others many extension bulletins in a variety of areas, always urging the importance of “plenty of meat” in the content. Some of these contained such useful information they are still in current use. She worked closely with the staff in food marketing particularly in the activities of the Potato Commodity Committee of the College of Agriculture. Another activity was to prepare materials on home reserves of food for the State Civil Defense Commission.

Lola was seen as a stimulating mentor to young extension staff as well as a creative co-worker in the many cooperative projects she undertook. Keenly aware of public concerns, conceptions and misconceptions and of consumer practices, her suggestions for enriching programs for consumers were sound and timely. One example from her work on the Potato Committee was her suggestion of instituting a potato peeling contest at the annual Potato Field Day. Each contestant came with a favorite knife, well sharpened, to compete in producing a batch of potatoes in the least time with the lowest weight of peelings and the fewest blemishes left on the potato. This

proved a popular activity as did her ideas for cartoon style leaflets and exhibits used at state and county fairs and other consumer events. Her understanding of consumers and their needs made her a popular figure at training meetings where her lessons were keyed to practical home conditions yet contained sound information and were a source of enjoyment as well.

Following her retirement in 1960, Lola taught courses in nutrition and food preparation to Peace Corps volunteers training for service overseas. With her experience in teaching many different kinds of people, many of whom had very limited knowledge in this area, she was invaluable in helping the volunteers to think through the essentials for them to try to teach and the importance of simple illustration to accompany new information.

Lola's Ithaca home, planned by herself to suit her needs, and her garden were a constant source of pleasure to her and to the many others who visited there. She delighted in hospitable gatherings of colleagues, students and other friends and was famous for her Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. She remained active for many years working with Foreign Student Aid, Girls Youth Ranch and Handicapables among several other organizations. She was also a deaconess of the Presbyterian Church for many years both in Ithaca and Sun City. She was a member of several professional honor societies including Omicron Nu, Phi Kappa Phi, and Sigma Delta Epsilon; she was also a member of the American Home Economics Association, and the American Dietetic Association.

When she moved to Sun City, Arizona after retirement, she lived close to former Cornell colleagues and this congenial ground was a welcome focus for visiting friends. While in Arizona she gradually lost her vision; Cornell neighbors, especially Leola Cooper, became her "eyes" making it possible for her to continue living independently. After the onset of Alzheimer's disease she moved to a nursing home facility with special provision for Alzheimer's patients in the community in Idaho where her daughter lives.

Survived by her daughter, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, her relationship with her family was one of Lola's greatest joys as she grew older. She will be remembered by Cornell friends and colleagues not only as a kind and loyal friend but as an able teacher with a keen perception of people's needs and interests.

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