

E. Elizabeth Hester

December 6, 1918 — July 3, 1979

E. Elizabeth Hester was a professor in the Division of Nutritional Sciences at the time of her death on July 3, 1979, at her home in Ithaca. Professor Hester's affiliation with Cornell had begun some thirty-five years earlier when she arrived to enter the graduate program in food in the Department of Food and Nutrition and continued through her appointment as a full professor and a seven-year term as chairman of that department.

Professor Hester was born in Cookville, Tennessee, on December 6, 1918, and received her undergraduate degree from Memphis State University in Memphis, Tennessee. Arriving at Cornell in 1945, she completed her master's degree two years later and was appointed an instructor and then an assistant professor in the Department of Food and Nutrition. It was highly unusual for an individual to receive a professorial appointment with only a master's degree and that Professor Hester was given this distinction only serves to illustrate the regard with which she was held within the department even as a young faculty member. In 1952 she received her doctoral degree in food science from Cornell and left to accept a research and teaching position at Pennsylvania State University. In 1959 Professor Hester returned to Cornell, the university to which she was deeply devoted, to rejoin the faculty of the Department of Food and Nutrition.

Professor Hester's area of interest was in the physicochemical properties of food, both as a researcher and as a teacher. Her research was centered on cereal grains and her publications appeared primarily in *Cereal Chemistry*. She taught courses on both the undergraduate and graduate level, always establishing high standards for students to attain while at the same time maintaining warmth and rapport. She had a deep Personal commitment to teaching and always endeavored to guide her students to an understanding and appreciation of the research base of her field.

In 1964 Miss Hester became a full professor in the Department of Food and Nutrition and in 1966 she was appointed chairman of that department. Under her leadership the department grew, not only in undergraduate and graduate student numbers, but also in program dimensions. Her patience and wisdom were instrumental in redefining the college's mission and in the reorganization of academic departments at the time the college changed from the New York State College of

Home Economics to the New York State College of Human Ecology. The smooth incorporation of the Department of Institutional Management into the Department of Food and Nutrition was due in large measure to the careful

planning of Dr. Hester. During this time the number of students pursuing the requirements for membership in the American Dietetic Association grew rapidly, an emphasis that has continued to the present.

She was also instrumental in the development of an undergraduate honors program in food and nutrition and for several years conducted seminars with students accepted into the honors program. In addition, while she chaired the department, the program responsibilities in the extension area of food and nutrition were also expanded to include involvement in programs such as the federally funded Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). This program brought new dimensions to the extension area and included research into food intake, food habits, and nutritional status that have continued and expanded.

In 1973 Dr. Hester stepped down from the chairmanship of the department and took a study leave. During her absence the Department of Human Nutrition and Food and the Graduate School of Nutrition merged to form the Division of Nutritional Sciences. On her return, Dr. Hester continued teaching and became the graduate field representative for the Field of Nutrition. With the merger of the Department of Human Nutrition and the Graduate School of Nutrition, this was now a greatly expanded field encompassing all of the nutrition programs on campus. She was still active in this assignment at the time of her death.

During her years at Cornell, Dr. Hester served on most of the major committees in the college and department, including the Educational Policies Committee, Admission Committee, and petition committees. She also served on the University Budget Committee and the ROTC Committee; her interest in the latter committee emerged from her service as a lieutenant in the United States Navy during World War II.

Professor Hester was a member of the Society of Sigma Xi and president of the local chapter in 1968-69. She was also a member of the American Home Economics Association, the American Association of Cereal Chemists, the Institute of Food Technology, Omicron Nu, Phi Kappa Phi, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Dr. Hester will be remembered for many things. She was totally committed to the Cornell tradition of freedom with responsibility, and her dedication was reflected in the dignity and pride with which she served the University. Her students will remember her as an individual with high standards of performance in the laboratory, in the classroom, and in her writing. As a teacher she always maintained a continuing interest in the progress of her former students as they moved to various positions both in this country and abroad. She continually inspired both current and former students to develop their talents and abilities to the maximum level.

As an administrator, she will be remembered for her leadership during a difficult period of controversy, change, and growth in the department and in the college. Her wisdom, lack of bias, and sense of fair play inspired her colleagues and made the implementation of new ideas and programs far less traumatic for all concerned than they would have been without her counsel and direction.

Her colleagues will remember her kindness and total lack of selfishness to all persons, both within the University and those family members and friends who often called upon her resources when they found themselves in need in places far from Cornell. Her warm counsel was continually available; her energies seemingly endless in providing compassion, solace, and wisdom. They will also remember her total sense of responsibility as a teacher.

All of those who knew her will remember the charming trace of a southern accent still apparent even after thirty-five years in the northeast. Nor can anyone ever forget her unfailing sense of humor, an instant twinkle in the eye when she was amused, and the deep, throaty chuckle when amusement was about to expand into laughter.

E. Elizabeth Hester will be missed by all who knew her. She will be missed for the contributions she made to the university she loved. Most of all, however, she will be missed for herself.

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