

Mabel Doremus

October 19, 1905 — October 9, 1988

A native of Nebraska, Mabel Doremus was graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1928 with a Bachelor of Science degree in home economics. In 1937, she received the Master of Arts degree also in home economics from Columbia University.

Education was highly valued in the Doremus family. Mabel's mother was the first woman to graduate from Middlebury College in Vermont. She taught school in New Hampshire and then in Nebraska. Mabel's father was widely known in educational circles in Nebraska, and of the five children in the family, four followed professional careers in education.

Mabel began her career as a teacher in the Nebraska public schools, starting immediately upon graduating from high school with a year as an elementary school teacher. Upon graduation from the university, she spent eight years as a high school home economics teacher before joining the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service. There she served as a specialist in food and nutrition, a position she held for 14 years.

Mabel Doremus joined the Department of Food and Nutrition in the New York State College of Home Economics at Cornell University in 1950 as an assistant professor and cooperative extension specialist. She was promoted to the rank of associate professor in 1953. When she retired in 1966, she was named professor emerita.

Mabel made many contributions through her publications on foods and nutrition. One area in which she excelled was food preservation. During the World War II years in Nebraska, Mabel wrote bulletins, leaflets, lessons and articles on the subject. While at Cornell, she co-authored the "Handbook For Freezing Foods," a comprehensive 60-page bulletin that continues to be widely used in New York State and nationally. She also authored numerous consumer information publications on nutritionally important foods.

In New York, Mabel served on the governor's committee on emergency preparedness, contributing especially in the area of emergency feeding. During a sabbatical leave, she conducted a pilot study of young homemakers in Onondaga County to learn about the special interests of this audience of cooperative extension programs.

Mabel had high standards of workmanship in the handling and preparation of foods, which she stressed in her teaching. She was eager to have the leaders and agents she taught become good teachers, and she was confident that the subject matter was worthwhile. She was an effective department extension leader, a member of Epsilon Sigma

Phi, Extension's honorary fraternity, an active member of the New York State and American Dietetics and Home Economics Associations, and of the American Association of University Professors.

Mabel imparted her positive attitude, cheerfulness and zest for life to her colleagues and to the homemakers with whom she worked throughout the state. Her keen sense of humor enriched many departmental and college functions. "Good company" describes Mabel, whether you were a colleague sharing a long trip to a county in the corner of the state, a partner or competitor in solving a word puzzle, or one of the Friday night out-to-dinner group. Friends delight in recalling her recitations of childhood verses or citations from the classics. Her yarns of her Nebraska childhood, her travel, or her teaching and extension experience still bring a smile and a reminder of the way of life of a woman who was truly liberated—long before that term came into common use.

After retirement, Mabel's involvement in community activities increased. An active Presbyterian, she served on a number of church committees, was a deacon and was among the active supporters of an interdenominational group, Area Congregations Together (ACT). Through the Kitchen Cupboard, ACT continues to provide weekly supplies to families and individuals in emergencies. Mabel was also an active member of the Ithaca Women's Club.

Mabel was predeceased by two sisters and two brothers, and is survived by a nephew, Robert Doremus of Schenectady, New York; by a niece, Ann Nicholson of Dallas, Texas; and by several great-nieces and great-nephews.

Charlotte Bruce, Mary Wood, Mildred Dunn