

Clara Louise Garrett

February 16, 1882 — August 14, 1964

Clara Louise Garret was born in Knox, Pennsylvania, and attended school in Oil City. She obtained a B.S. degree from Teachers College, Columbia University, in 1915 but did advanced work at many places and continued to study throughout the years. Two years were spent at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts where she later became a Fellow. She also studied at the Buffalo Art Students League, at the Art Students League in New York and took advanced work at Cornell University. Summer schools were attended in Chatauqua, Ogunquit, and Provincetown.

Miss Garrett spent two sabbatic leaves in Europe studying drawing, painting, and art history. During her last sabbatic leave she made a survey of art schools and drawing courses in the northeastern United States with special attention directed toward scientific illustration as taught at the Medical Schools of Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland.

Summers were utilized for travel, sketching, and painting in Jamaica, Costa Rica Bermuda and in many sections of our own country. One summer vacation she taught painting in the Panama Canal Zone.

Although she was skilled in the use of both watercolor and oil paints, water-color was her favorite medium and the one for which she is best known. Her work has been exhibited in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Buffalo, Rochester, and in many regional art exhibits.

After three years of experience in commercial illustration early in her career, Miss Barrett came to Cornell in 1913 as an illustrator and assistant to Professor W. C. Baker in the New York State College of Agriculture. Upon Professor Baker's retirement in 1938 she assumed full responsibility for the freehand drawing courses offered by the Department of Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture. In 1923 she was made Assistant Professor and in 1946 Associate Professor of Freehand Drawing.

The drawing courses in the College of Agriculture were established to aid students in illustrating their own reports and publications. Miss Garrett's insistence that thoughtful, analytical observation is the first step in drawing made her classes a training ground for careful observation. Under her guidance many students in the natural sciences discovered the value of drawings as a helpful tool in their laboratory problems and research. Also her love and appreciation of art were infectious. She considered interpretive response to experience to be the ultimate goal of artistic expression, and the standards she set in the advanced courses were challenging. Her own professional skill,

her energy, the warmth of her personality, and her wide knowledge of art and its history commanded respect and made her a stimulating teacher. Clara Garrett will be remembered by her many students and friends as an alert, responsive person with extensive knowledge in an unusually large number of fields. History vied with art for her attention. Next came travel, literature, drama, music, and natural history. She read widely in all of these areas. Since she was articulate, had a remarkable memory, and was a thinking individual, she opened new channels of thought for many students whose contacts with the humanities were necessarily limited by the pressure of work in vocational subjects. Her lively curiosity about the world and its inhabitants kept her mental horizon expanding all her life. As a consequence, many of her friends found their own views broadened by their association with her. As part of her teaching duties Miss Garrett organized and taught a rural art group for residents of Brooktondale and Slaterville, a new venture in the College extension courses. She was also chairman of the first Cornell Rural Art Exhibit held during Farm and Home Week and a member of the Ithaca Art Week Committee. From the time of her retirement in 1949 Miss Garrett was handicapped by impaired eyesight, but her spirit was indomitable and she continued to be active within the Ithaca community. She was a member of the League of Women Voters. She gave generously of her time and skill as a leader in the Art Study Groups of the American Association of University Women, the Ithaca Women's Club, and the Cornell Campus Club. The book clubs, music groups, and the drama groups of these organizations also profited from her active participation. Miss Garrett's death leaves a void in the community that will be hard to fill. The solidity of her educational background, the integrity of her character, her alert and inquiring mind, the thoroughness with which she delved into each new subject, and the spontaneous enthusiasm with which she shared the results of her inquiries all combined to make her teaching and her community leadership in the arts memorable and outstanding.

R. J. Lambert, E. L. Burckmyer, L. H. MacDaniels