

Helen J. Cady

February 26, 1911 — October 17, 2001

Professor Emerita Helen J. Cady died October 17, 2001 in McPherson, Kansas, after a retirement of twenty-nine years from the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis, College of Human Ecology, Cornell University. Helen was born on her parents' farm near Lawrence, Kansas on February 26, 1911, and completed her secondary education in Excelsior Springs, Missouri.

Professor Cady was a life-long student as is evident in her educational pursuits and interests, receiving the Associate in Science degree from Kansas City Junior College; the Certificate of Completion for Interior Architecture and Interior Design, Kansas City Art Institute; a B.F.A. degree in Design, University of Kansas; and an M.F.A. degree in Fine Arts Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. Her love for and interest in design and the crafts led her to a variety of teaching and work experiences. Early positions included technical illustrator for an advertising agency in Chicago, and a professional interior designer in Kansas City. During World War II, she held positions as a master templater, Douglas Aircraft Incorporated in Santa Monica, California, and as a technical artist and draftsman with the Donners-Joyce Co., Chicago, Illinois.

Professor Cady's teaching career began in 1940 when she held the position of Instructor at Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa, followed by her appointment as Head of Interior Architecture and Design, the Memphis Academy of Arts, Memphis, Tennessee. In 1946, she was appointed Assistant Professor of Housing and Design (Design and Environmental Analysis), a position she held until her retirement in 1972.

At Cornell, she taught courses in interior design with an emphasis in residential lighting, history of furniture, and color. She is the author of an article on "How to Enjoy Color and Use it Effectively".

She taught weaving as a disciplined craft and as a free, "expressive art". To enhance her teaching expertise and to enrich her personal growth, Miss Cady was an active member of the New York State Craftsmen, the American Craftsmen Education Council, and the World Craft Council. She was also an active member of the American Society of Interior Designers and encouraged the interior design students to participate in the activities of the student chapter.

Helen was a member of Delta Phi Delta, national honorary art fraternity, Kappa Delta Pi, and Pi Lambda Theta. She was also affiliated with the American Association of University Professors, the Academy of Lighting Arts, and the French Azilum, Inc.

Professor Cady was a willing member on numerous college and university committees such as a subject matter consultant for the Cornell-Ghana project; a member on the Secondary School Educational Policies Committee; a member of the planning committee of the Adult Institute for Community Leaders; a consultant for local and state craft groups; and a vocational consultant for the Housing and Design Department.

Helen loved to travel, and in 1951, she was awarded a four-month travel and study to France, Italy, England, and Sweden. During a sabbatical leave in 1958-59, she traveled to Holland, Belgium, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, which enabled her to attend design exhibitions, to meet practicing artists and designers in their studios, and to visit schools in session. In 1969, she received a travel study award from the National Society of Interior Designers for a summer session of the National Trust in England. These travels and studies, both formal and informal, gave greater meaning and depth to her teaching the history and design of furniture, architecture, and interior textiles.

Professor Cady had an unusual talent and capacity to work with individual students and to encourage them to discover themselves through special interests outside the regular classroom curriculum. Her efforts were effective, meaningful, and sincere. Her many accomplishments over her extensive and productive teaching career will be cherished by her students and colleagues.

Allen R. Bushnell, Clark E. Garner