Roberts Hall Honors A Career of Service

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Iowa State College
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ROBERTS Hall was the first building at Iowa State to be named for a living person. The honor of having the women's residence hall named for her during her lifetime came to Miss Maria M. Roberts, professor of mathematics and later dean of the junior college, when Roberts Hall was built in 1936.

Alumni of Iowa State remember Miss Roberts best as head of the Department of Mathematics. She was always interested in her students and found time to look them up wherever she traveled. One year Dean Roberts entertained, in groups of four or five, all the students on campus whose parents had graduated from Iowa State.

Traveling was Miss Roberts' favorite recreation. She visited Europe several times and studied in a German university. Nearly all her academic life was spent at Iowa State although she studied at Chicago University, Columbia University and Cornell University during her vacations.

Miss Roberts came to Iowa State from her home in Dunlap, Iowa. While she was a senior, the YWCA was founded, and she became its first president. She was a member of the advisory board for many years. After graduation she became instructor in the Department of Mathematics and between 1891 and 1921 progressed from instructor to head of the department. She was co-author of "Analytical Geometry."

Dean Roberts herself was proudest of her record as supervisor of the Student Loan Fund. In careful interviews with each student she explained just how the loans were managed. When she was offered payment for administering one specific estate, she agreed to take the money only for the loan fund. At the fiftieth reunion of her class a loan fund was established in her honor.

Miss Maria Roberts' career has been one of service to Iowa State. It is fitting that the dormitory forming the nucleus of the group of women's residence halls be named for her. Her enlarged photograph finished in oil hangs in the lobby of Roberts Hall, an everlasting reminder of her honesty, sincerity, loyalty and devotion to ideals.

—Natalie Benda