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Clara Jordan
Iowa State College

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An Appreciation of the Life of Dean Mac Kay

Compiled by CLARA JORDAN

THE LOSS of a woman like Dean Catherine J. Mac Kay is felt, not only by the group with which she is most intimately connected, but by people all over the state and nation. In this symposium we have collected a few words of appreciation from representative people, who have realized the influence of Dean Mac Kay’s personality and ideals in their own lives and in the work with which they are connected.

Raymond A. Pearson—President of Iowa State College

A great leader in home economics and in the whole field of education went out when Dean Mac Kay passed away. Iowa State College mourns. But the college is glad to have had her service so long. It was constructive, cooperative, and always joyous. Her instruction and example have been helpful to all who came in contact with her and through them will be helpful to others.

For many years the friends of Dean Mac Kay will point to objects and policies at Iowa State College which she originated or helped to promote.

It will be the purpose of all of these friends to carry on as best we can her plans which were so well laid and to change them only after careful thought, as she would do, to meet changing conditions from time to time.

Edna E. Walls—Acting Dean of Home Economics at Iowa State College

Three years of intimate contact with Dean Mac Kay lead me to say of her, as was said of Alice Freeman Palmer, she believed that “it is people that count.” Possibly this is one of the secrets of her inspiring personality. She sensed the potential abilities of students, members of the faculty and all with whom she came in contact and by inspiration, commendation, and constructive criticism helped each in the development of her own powers.

But her interest was not limited to the individual, nor to her immediate associates. She had a remarkable vision of the possibilities of organized effort in the accomplishment of great purposes. This was one of the characteristics which led to the development of the Home Economics Division at Iowa State College and won for Dean Mac Kay a place among national leaders. All who knew her well feel keenly the loss of an exceptional executive, a wise counsellor and a loyal friend.

Florence E. Busse—Head of the Household Science Department of Iowa State College

Some time in everyone’s life there comes the inspiration from some older person. It may be a teacher, pastor, or friend who has the great human instinct. Because they believe in you, and trust your reactions to real problems, you are tempted to put yourself to tests that before may have seemed too hard to undertake.

Dean Mac Kay was that sort of inspiration to those who had the joy of close conference with her. She let you look in on her great vision of what Home...
Economics should mean, not only to her much beloved Iowa State but for all homes. With a generous conception of importance of right homemaking she pointed out clearly that organization, equipment and all the best that science can give can be valuable only as they raise the standards of the home. She felt keenly that our homes cherish only the best, that the household is the character of the youth whose privilege it is to be trained there. Such a vision made one wish to think clearly and bravely.

Dean Mac Kay planned for High Economics, her belief in people, her confidence in the direction of the Infinite in one’s life has been a stimulation to her many friends. Because she believed that other people were being influenced into other people the influence of her beautiful life will go on working forever.

Elizabeth Storm—Iowa State Alumna

To teach another generation of girls what she had learned by experience was the guiding light, the goal of all Dean Mac Kay’s girlhood ambitions. Knowing this, it is not hard to see why she understood so well the why it will be impossible for any girl who has ever known her to forget her ideals of homemaking. I recall how she told me once of how she happened to take up Home Economics as a task.

She told me of how her mother had died, leaving her a young girl with younger brothers and sisters to care for and the household to manage, but with little understanding of the responsibilities of the home. When left alone the burden loomed great to the eldest daughter, but she bore it. She followed her heart’s desire to go away to college to study Home Economics.

In those long patient years on the Canadian farm she decided on her life purpose to become the older sister and the household to bear the responsibility of a home when the need came. In every change made in the curriculum at Iowa State College she sought to take the opportunity to influence the young girls of the college to take up the responsibilities of homemaking and to have a heart for others.

Just how dear Dean Mac Kay’s influence has been felt is shown by these extracts from letters which have come in from people all over the United States.

Carrie Chapman Catt—President of the International Suffrage League

"Dean Mac Kay was a truly wonderful woman and the world will miss her."

Merril Ladbrook—President of the Home Economics association at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

"The death of Miss Mac Kay is a loss not only to your institution but to all who are interested in Home Economics work. I feel this as a personal loss as I have admired her sterling qualities."

Cora C. Whitley—Chairman of the Iowa Division of the Home Economics association of National Defense

"In the days of the war when Dean Mac Kay was secretary of the organization that absorbed most of my time and thought, we were brought together in a very close and interesting relation and she has meant much to me ever since. Somewhere there must be noble worthy work for souls like her."

Isabelle Bever—Former Head of Home Economics at University of Illinois, now engaged in literary work. She was granted an honorary doctor’s degree at the Semi-Centennial.

"Her death means the loss of a fine woman and worker and I am deeply grieved."

Cora M. Winchell—Formerly associated with Miss Mac Kay but at present secretary of the Home Economics association

"Miss Mac Kay was such a noble woman and my acquaintance with her was so precious."

Grace Vaul Gray—One of the four instructors in the Home E conomics department when Miss Mac Kay came

"I feel that the loss of Miss Mac Kay is the loss of a dear wonderful friend."

Julia A. Robinson—Member of the State Library commission

"To her associates at Ames her loss will come most keenly, but all in the state who knew her are conscious of a personal loss."

Helen M. Walzic—Former President of Iowa Women’s Clubs

"She was a noble woman and Iowa suffers a great loss in her death. We were so proud of her—never did we admire her more and her loss means a precious qualities but her refinement and her womanly ideals."

Genevieve Fisher—Former head of Teacher Training Department, but now head of Vocational Education department at Washington

"Those of us who have been privileged to walk closely with Miss Mac Kay know the splendid qualities and the inspiration of her personality."

Edna N. White—Director of Palmer Merrill School at Detroit, Mich.

"The workers in the field of Home Economics will feel Dean Mac Kay’s loss very keenly from a personal as well as a professional standpoint. There are few women of her professional attainments who have been able to attain as sweet and lovable a personality."

Helen Taylor—First vice-president of Women’s Clubs

"She was a valued friend and I mourn her loss with a deep sense of personal loss. She not only had exceptional ability but also a charm of personality that endeared her to all who had the good fortune to come in contact with her."

Iowa Members of W. C. T. U. Meet

By HELEN PASCHAL

Perhaps one of the highest tributes that was paid to the union during this particular convention was made by the Hon. Ben J. Gibson who said that the W. C. T. U., in his estimation, had done more for law enforcement than had any other organization.

The W. C. T. U. does it’s work so quietly and with so little self praise that it’s accomplishments are often not recognized. The way in which the convention met, the way in which the women who had been drawn into the work from some tragedy, perhaps, in their home life, the way in which the students of Iowa State College had become busily engaged in the affairs of the convention and as quietly returned to their homes when their business was completed, was typical of the way in which the organization does it’s work.

Since the passage of the seventeenth amendment, people have been watching with some expectancy to see what W. C. T. U. will do next for the benefit of the human race. The resolutions passed at this convention indicate, at least, what the organization plans to do in the near future.

Five resolutions were passed by the convention delegates; one against tobacco in general and cigarettes in particular; one for the enforcement of national prohibition and world peace; one for more modest dress for women; one for a temperature in all schools and finally one for effective censorship of the movies.

A glance backward at what the Iowa