

Evelyn Picker

Evelyn Feil Picker '05 is best known to the Hunter alumni living in Westchester where, for many years, her beautiful home on the Long Island Sound was the scene of the annual garden parties of the Westchester Chapter. Unknown to many alumni, however, and especially to the younger ones, are the many contributions made to Hunter College by Evelyn and her late husband, James Picker, manufacturer of the mobile Army X-ray which was instrumental in saving so many lives in World War II and which won him a Government citation. By her aid, encouragement and inspiration Evelyn played a big part in her husband's achievements and success. Together they used that success as a means of serving in many and varied ways.

When Roosevelt House was purchased for the use of Hunter College students the Pickers immediately showed their interest in a most tangible manner. To promote a social center where student organizations might meet, they furnished the room on the second floor now known as the Picker Room, and set up a fund for maintaining and refurnishing the Room as needed. Evelyn served as the first president of the Roosevelt House League which later became the Association of the Neighbors and Friends of Hunter College.

In 1947 the Picker Lecture Series was established at Hunter with a large contribution from James and Evelyn Picker. Two years later, when the Scholarship and Welfare Fund was started by the Alumni Association, Evelyn Picker was one of the sponsors. In 1955, at the inception of the Opera Association, when Evelyn became a member of the Board of Directors, this community-minded couple pledged an annual donation of \$500 for the next six years. In that same year, when graduate study at Hunter turned from dream to reality, the Pickers again came forward with \$2,000 to be spent immediately and \$10,000 to be invested and the income spent annually to help needy graduate students. Three years later, when the George N. Shuster Faculty Fellowship Fund was created on the occasion of Dr. Shuster's retirement, James and Evelyn Picker contributed \$25,000.

It was in 1957 that Evelyn Picker was chosen as the first recipient of the Hunter College President's Medal for Distinguished Service.

The Pickers' interest and benefactions stretched far beyond the confines of their own community. For many years, Mrs. Picker was a member of the Board of Directors of the American Association for the United



Nations. Having been a close personal friend of Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, one of the founders and the first president of the League of Women Voters, Mrs. Picker actively supported the national League's Overseas Education Fund.

In November 1958 tragedy struck the Pickers with the death of their daughter, Dr. Myrtle Picker Kolker, attending pediatrician on the staff of the New Rochelle Hospital. That year and in the years following, the Pickers set up several memorials to their daughter's name. Chief among them are the Myrtle Picker Pavilion, a pediatric wing at the New Rochelle Hospital, and the Myrtle Picker Kolker Science Building at Elmira College which Myrtle had attended and of which she had been a Trustee. The Pickers also endowed the Ralph Murray Professorship at Elmira, as well as contributing to other colleges and teaching organizations.

At the 105th Commencement at Elmira College last June, the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters was presented to Evelyn Picker, and to James Picker, posthumously, the degree of Doctor of Science.

And now, carrying on the family tradition of giving, the Pickers' son, Harvey, and his wife, Jean, have established with the Scholarship and Welfare Fund a permanent scholarship in the name of Evelyn Feil Picker—an alumna thankful for her own education at Hunter, aware of the many urgent needs of today's undergraduates, and eager to help fill some of those needs.