



Claudine Gray

Marie Alexandria Claudine Gray '97 was a true product of Hunter. She graduated from the College's Elementary School and from the College, and all her regular teaching was done in the Elementary School, the High School, and the College.

She was born on August 4, 1877, in New York City, but part of her childhood was spent in England and France. When she returned to this country at the age of eight, she was placed in our school, and from it she went to Hunter, then known as Normal (there was no high school interval in those days), graduating in 1897. Through later additional study she earned two degrees from Normal, Pd.B. in 1900, and A.B. in 1912. She was one of the original group of seven alumnae, all persons with exceptionally high records, elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1920, the year of the establishment of our Chapter. She later (1922-23) served as vice-president of the Chapter, and as president (1924-25).

She received the degree of A.M. from Columbia in 1914, and at the University of Michigan did some further graduate work.

On her graduation she had begun to teach in our Elementary School in 1897. In 1902 she returned to her chosen specialty, French, for which as an undergraduate, under Miss (later Dean) Annie E. Hickinbottom and under Professor Eugene Aubert, she had conceived the great love that was to endure all her life. By this time the High School had been separated from the College, and there she spent six years, during the last two as Head of the French Department. She was transferred to the College in 1908, where she served

CLAUDINE GRAY

successively as Instructor (1908-16), as Assistant Professor (1916-20), as Associate Professor (1920-26), and as Professor and Department Head (1926-40). She retired on September 16, 1940, and was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus on December 15, 1941.

During the summers of 1919, 1921, and 1922, she acted as Director of the Maison Française and Professor of French Phonetics at the Normal School for Teachers in Cleveland, Ohio.

Claudine Gray's great interest was in the training of her students in oral work, and in training them similarly to train others. Under her guidance, beginning students acquired fluency and facility in conversation, and excellence in pronunciation. One of her star pupils, who learned under her to speak French like a native, was Dora Schatzberg Bashour, now Assistant Professor and Director of the Language Laboratory at Hunter. Claudine Gray was far ahead of her time in the use of oral drill, phonetic transcription, and mechanical apparatus; thanks to her, Hunter was one of the first institutions of the country to acquire laboratory equipment for training in pronunciation (victrolas with records by great users of French such as Sarah Bernhardt, artificial palates to be used by the students in making their own records, etc.). All this was at a time when high schools and colleges throughout the country were teaching reading alone, and the present writer can testify that professors all over the United States refused to believe her when she assured them that at Hunter French was the language of the classroom at every stage. Thanks to Claudine Gray countless generations of Hunter graduates went out into the schools of the City, ready and eager to teach their students to talk and understand French as well as to read it.

As a supplement to classroom work, Claudine, who was herself a superb actress, coached innumerable French plays, mainly chosen from the classic theatre of France.

In recognition of her success in teaching the French language, France in 1930 made her an Officer d'Académie (the award granted by the Minister of Public Instruction) and in 1932 a Chevalier de la Légion

