

## PROFESSOR EMERITUS

### MARY F. HIGGINS

On February 18, Professor Emeritus Mary F. Higgins died in Philadelphia, where she had spent the years since her retirement in 1939. Although many of our Alumnae who knew her will remember her against a backdrop of an ivy-draped Gothic Hunter College, it would be an error to think of her as cast only in the limited role of holding the lamp for neophytes seeking, in the idyllic past, the coveted dignity and security of a teaching career.

In 1908, Miss Higgins became one of the small corps whose duty it was to teach the art of teaching to young ladies at Normal College. One of the earliest extra-curricula projects which she undertook at the behest of President Davis in 1909 was to assist in the organization of the Barat Club — the forerunner of the Newman Club. She became its first Faculty Adviser, and remained throughout her years at Hunter the generous patron and guiding spirit of this Catholic student group.

When Dr. James M. Kieran was named to the Presidency of Hunter College in 1929, she succeeded him as Head of the Department of Education. Even at that time the Department had tremendous scope and enrollment, providing not only the teacher-training courses, but also the offerings in psychology and philosophy. During the same period the educational and vocational guidance programs were burgeoning, and to the support she gave to nurturing them during the developmental years must go some of the credit for the contribution the Guidance Bureau has made to the College.

In her concluding years at Hunter, following the 1936 fire, she found herself confronted with the rigorous task of administering an overextended department distributed in four different centers — two of them housed in bustling midtown office buildings. But this fazed her not at all. At the same time she found herself plunged into a strange new academic world in which Board of Higher Education By-Laws dictated that, contrary to tradition, departments should have the right to elect their own chairmen. She bowed to the new order with an enigmatic smile — and was unanimously elected by her large, loyal department to serve as its first democratically chosen Chairman. She supervised the planning of accommodations for her department in a new "skyscraper" home in which she knew she would never have an office.

The same rather unexpected capacity for adapting to arbitrary reality was called upon again when, on the very eve of her retirement, the death of her only sister cast upon her shoulders the care of two teen-age nephews and the management of a household. She dedicated the remaining years of her life to this charge.

For some who knew her indifferently, Mary F. Higgins will remain a symbol — a figure

spanning the years between Yesterday and Today, with gaze turned more toward the past. But for those who knew her well there is the memory of a warm, perceptive, and wise woman whose militant virtues, softened with humor, made her lovable and unforgettable, and whose timeless spiritual values have won for her their enduring respect.

MARY ROSE SHEEHAN

### DEAN MARIE K. GALLAGHER



On April 16, Marie K. Gallagher's many friends on the Campus and beyond it, were stunned by the news of her tragic death. On her retirement just a few months before, this paper had carried a warm, delightful reminiscence by the Editor on some early—and recent—College experiences which the two had shared, concluding with the echo of an earlier wail: "What will Hunter do without her?" The Faculty, too, had paid her affectionate tribute with warm wishes that the threat of ill-health which was giving her some concern would quickly lift, and that there might lie ahead for her many years of rewarding leisure. We had reconciled ourselves to "doing without her" in our councils and ceremonials; but we were quite unprepared for the finality of the parting so soon to follow.

Probably no person has ever been more thoroughly and uninterruptedly identified with Hunter than Marie Gallagher. She was a distinguished daughter for whose education, from elementary school through college, Alma Mater proudly takes full credit. Immediately on receiving her degree in 1914 she accepted an invitation to teach in the Department of Education, and although she turned then to Fordham and Columbia for her higher degrees, she continued, during those post-graduate years, to serve Hunter as a brilliant and effective young instructor. (As one of her students, the writer speaks with the authority of personal experience.)

For about 58 years Hunter was a central interest in her daily life, and over the entire period runs a record of notable achievement, as student, alumna, and member of its Faculty. Since the ALUMNI NEWS has so recently carried a detailed review of this record, we shall