

Irene B. Graff

DYNAMIC LEADER

The graduate study program, ideally centered at 695 Park, draws students from all parts of the City. That the College has continued to have so accessible a mid-town center, as well as its uptown campus, is due in no small measure to the role a former president of our Alumni Association played when the interior of the old College building, which had stood at 68th Street and Park, was destroyed by fire in 1936.

In the discussion of plans that followed, some of the City fathers urged that all of Hunter be removed to the Bronx, where the campus center had been opened in 1931. But College authorities, members of the Board of Higher Education, and leaders of the Alumni pleaded for the retention of the mid-town site.

Perhaps no one was more persuasive than Irene Brandon Graff, speaking as President of the Alumni, in winning Mayor La Guardia's consent to the plan to rebuild at Park Avenue.

A member of the Class of 1898, Irene Graff has to this day an unbroken record of service to the College, to the Alumni Association, and to the City. Ever since Lenox Hill Settlement was established by our Alumni, over sixty years ago, she has worked tirelessly in its behalf. Through annual appeals and annual functions she has raised tens of thousands of dollars for its benefit. She is secretary of the Settlement's Board of Directors, which includes seven other Hunter Alumni.

The story of the good works of our Association may in part be written in terms of Mrs. Graff's contributions. In the early 1900's she became chairman of a program of extension courses originated by a committee of the Alumni. This lecture series proved so popular that the College later incorporated the project as an evening Adult Education program, and out of this nucleus, by 1917, grew the College's School of General Studies.



Mrs. Graff

Attentive always to student needs, Mrs. Graff worked with the committee which established the Alumni's Bureau of Occupations. For a number of years the Bureau was the only source through which part-time employment was obtained by undergraduates at the College. Later the College took over the Bureau, today's Placement Office for graduates and undergraduates.

Again, during Mrs. Graff's presidency of the Alumni Association, our flourishing nature study camp for children was established in memory of a beloved Hunter teacher, Alice Rich Northrop.

For many years Irene Graff had been chairman of our annual College Birthday Luncheon. All the Alumni may be reminded that at the '62 Luncheon, last February, President Meng announced the Reba and Maximilian Richter gift to the College, to be used as a free loan fund for undergraduates and graduates. This great gift of \$125,000 would soon be worth \$200,000, the President said, as he stressed the fact that it had come to the College through the good influence of Mrs. Graff. She "had exercised her wiles."

To those wiles, her great qualities of mind and spirit, all her legion of friends pay tribute. Irene Brandon Graff is Britain's gift to Hunter. She was born in Panama of English parents, and remained a British subject until her marriage to Leslie Graff in 1909. Through the years this gallant couple have together neglected no opportunity for good works for the lovely lady's Alma Mater.