

★ 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

cite here again only a few of the outstanding contributions which have significantly shaped Hunter's traditions and development, and which have engraved her name with honor upon the pages of its history.

In 1914, during her final year as a student at Hunter, she helped to establish and became the Managing Editor of the *Bulletin*, predecessor to the *Arrow*, and the first Hunter student publication to report news of the college community. Its equally well-known co-founder and first Literary Editor, E. Adelaide Hahn, in describing the venture, makes special note of the rare organizing ability and astuteness in her young Chief which kept the infant project alive in the face of dire threat, and ultimately set it upon its own self-supporting feet.

It is hard to single out for special mention any one of the numerous Alumni activities with which she has been identified over the years. In that organization, as in the Faculty, she was recognized as a tower of strength: eminently clear-headed and informed in her judgments, tireless in her acceptance of responsibility. From the early years of her association with the group, we might select the establishment in 1920 of the Bureau of Occupations — later the College Placement Bureau — for which she shared joint credit, as precursive of her later mature concern for the development of practical community methods of handling problems of guidance and social welfare. The same absorbing interest is reflected in her later role as Director of the Scholarship and Welfare Fund of the Alumni Association.

In 1931, as a professor in the Education Department, she undertook a relatively modest assignment from which was to grow the most memorable achievement of her active and brilliant career. Interest was focused on the common and vexing problem of freshman students whose work did not match up with their capacity. A counseling program was begun which quickly attracted wide student notice. One interviewer could not handle all the appeals for help, and soon more were assigned. A special room was set aside for the purpose, furnished with a few desks and chairs, and a Secretary was provided to make appointments. And so the Guidance Bureau (at that time the Bureau of Educational Guidance) was launched, with Marie K. Gallagher as its Director.

There is a temptation to linger on the story of the Bureau, for it was, in effect, the Rose Window of Marie Gallagher's professional career — a source of wonderful light constructed with the most painstaking thought and care to produce the desired effect. To this cherished project she dedicated twenty-six years of well-martialed effort and superb administrative talent. Were we to say that she was, in a sense, its life and its soul, we could imagine her protesting the extravagant metaphor, and acknowledging with loyal pride, the work of the capable lieutenants, who, charged with her own spirit of dedication, have helped to evolve its philosophy and to

crystallize its objectives, and to assure through their own inestimable contribution the smooth-running and excellent service on which students, faculty, and administration have come to depend heavily. To pay such a tribute to the Guidance Bureau is, at the same time, to pay a most sincere tribute to the vision and generalship of the late Dean Gallagher.

Much of her personality shines through the facts we have already reported, but no picture of her would be complete without some attention to the "off duty" qualities that won her so much love. Her gaiety, which is mentioned several times in the resolutions written earlier in her honor, and more than that, her wit, made her a delightful and sought-after companion. She easily threw off the official mask and fell in with the spirit of fun and frolic. But beneath this surface light-heartedness was the capacity for quick sensitive response to the troubles of other people. She understood suffering and was quick to reach out tactfully to give what help she could to alleviate it. That same warmth of spirit made it her pleasure to do the uncounted thoughtful acts which her colleagues are now bringing to light in the affectionate anecdotes we hear everywhere about the College in these sad days since her death. . . . "I never expected it! Imagine her remembering to send flowers on the day my promotion became effective!" . . . "Someone told her that my sister was ill, and the very next day I had a note from her with a Mass card." . . . "And so it turned out that Dean Gallagher, who was really the guest of honor, picked up all those who had no means of transportation, and drove each one of them home." . . . The stories could go on indefinitely.

To have had her among us as a member of the Hunter College family for so many years was a privilege which I think we all did fully appreciate even at the time. To be able to point to her as a fellow-alumna of Hunter College, in addition, is a very special honor. But now we must accept what is particularly hard to accept when death strikes suddenly a vivid and valued friend. She is gone, and again we ask, "What will Hunter do without her?"

MARY ROSE SHEEHAN

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. James Munro Edsall (Annie Long), '84, died in Iliion on June 28, 1957, at the age of 94. For many years she was a teacher in New York City, and her husband was a District Superintendent of Schools there. She had been Treasurer and President of the Brooklyn Woman's Club; a Director of the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs, and a charter member of the Federation's "alumnae" organization, the Formers; a member of the Herkimer Garden Club, the D.A.R., the Long Island Historical Society, and the Long Island Geneological Society; a member of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, and Executive Director of the Diocese of Long Island; and Registrar of the Colonial Daughters of