

# Gertrude Humphreys



Gertrude Humphreys for 46 years was a pioneer in West Virginia University Cooperative Extension Service, developing program planning in the home demonstration program and directing a program for rural people that included the development of educational materials in health, citizenship, safety, and international programs, and public affairs.

Miss Humphreys, a graduate of the University of Illinois in 1919, began her career with Extensions in 1919 as Home Demonstration Agent in Mercer County. She also served as Home Demonstration Agent in Harrison County before becoming State Home Economics Specialist in 1926. She later became District Agent, State Agent, and finally, in 1933, State Home Demonstration Leader. She continued in this position until her retirement in 1965.

In cooperation with her Extension colleagues, the West Virginia Home Demonstration Council (now the State Extension Homemakers' Council), and other organizations and agencies, Miss Humphreys pursued with great dedication the improvement of the welfare of the West Virginia family.

As an Extension worker she helped to promote Country Life Conferences and was active in the American Country Life Association, serving for a number of years on its Board of Directors. She was instrumental in carrying out a continuing program of health education and initiated programs which enabled rural people to obtain better health facilities and services. From the first State Rural Health Conference held in 1947 until 1972, when the conferences were discontinued, Miss Humphreys served on the advisory committee to the West Virginia State Medical Association's Rural Health Committee to help plan and to promote the attendance of rural health leaders. In 1961, a Citizen Award was presented to Miss Humphreys "for outstanding and meritorious achievement in the field of Public Health in West Virginia." From 1948 to 1961, she represented State Home Demonstration Leaders on the Advisory Committee to the Council on Rural Health of the American Medical Association.

One of her outstanding achievements for West Virginia and the nation was the publication for many years of a series of leaflets in "Adventures in Good Living." Her leadership in this field provided educational materials for rural people that were adapted throughout the nation. The Farm and Home Electrification Center at Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp is evidence of her work to provide West Virginia rural families with learning experiences. She was chairman of the committee which planned facilities and educational program in the Center, served for several years on the Board of Directors, and for one year as its president.

Known nationally for her leadership, she served the American Association of Land Grant Colleges and State Universities in several capacities, including from 1953 to 1962 on a special Senate committee on problems and practices of Cooperative and General Extension/ She also served four years on the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy.

She received many awards and recognitions during her working years including "The Order of Vandalia" awarded by West Virginia University for distinguished service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Superior Service Award for dedicated leadership in helping rural families, and from Epsilon Sigma Phi for outstanding service as an Extension worker.

Modest and unassuming, she preferred to work "behind the scenes" and to give credit to others. She spent her waking hours all her working career, every day of the year, in pursuit of better information, greater enlightenment of people, and creating understanding.