

MARTHA PEARL JONES

Martha Pearl Jones was a very diminutive little lady probably 4 feet 11 inches to 5 foot two inches but she was a complete dynamo. She had endless energy and was one of the most outstanding and productive professors during the time she was at the University of Puget Sound from approximately 1930 until she retired in the sixties. She was a product of southern culture. Her mother was a southern lady - tall, very straight of stature and large. Martha Pearl was the name which she used and the southern drawl was known to everyone. She was a fine hostess and often had the students at her apartment which was down toward town. The students came and "Momma" Jones, as she was called by the students, fed them southern baked bread, rolls, and southern fried chicken. The students dearly loved it and consequently were always at the Jone's Apartment.

Martha Pearl taught Speech and Poetry. She did not particularly like Debate and was very happy when Dr. Battin decided he would like to have the Forensic and the Debate portion of the curriculum. She trained outstanding people like Wilber Bassinger who succeeded her and is now at the head of the Speech Department. She also had other people whom she trained such as Richard Lane who was head of the Speech and Dramatic Department for the Hoquiam-Aberdeen area for many, many years. He was so successful that the ladies in the area built a Speech and Drama Building in the neighborhood of \$400,000 to underwrite his drama to help his program.

"Teach" was very much interested in children. She had what was called the "Wee Campus Playcrafters." She would take small children - five, six, and seven years of age and have childrens' plays for them and use the children in various plays. It was a very outstanding program and well received in the community and many outstanding people have spoken of how much they learned as part of the "Wee Campus Playcrafters."

She also had a part of the curriculum which was called "Choral Readers" and it was a group very highly selected who were willing to sacrifice far beyond the call of duty to memorize the poetry and the various portions of some of the classics which was presented by the Choral Readers. It was a most outstanding program and much appreciated by the City and University Community and this, likewise, was far reaching.

She was also very good at the business of dramatics although there was some criticism because her plays were more or less Cinderella - do - good type without any great "social message." However, her work was well done, she was very cooperative and she was a very outstanding influence in the life of the young people.

"Teach" had a grapevine that whispered all over the campus and she knew when students were in trouble, she knew when students were having financial difficulties and she helped a good many of them personally. Often she would be at my door

when I would come at 7:00 in the morning and say, "I just have to talk to you, Dr. T." I knew then that when she came in she was going to tell me about some student who was in dire circumstances and had to have financial help. I suppose ninety percent of the time we gave it more or less anonymously through "Teach" to help a student over a rugged place. She also knew when students were having difficulties with their parents or difficulties among themselves. She was an arbiter many times in these difficult situations. She would fight for people in whom she had confidence and she was tenacious until the very end. In the probably hundreds of times she came to see me about student situations and student affairs, there was only about once that I felt I had been betrayed and then I was sure that the people who gave her information were not honest with her. She would tell me people who she thought I ought to see about money and quite often the lead was productive. She had an aunt who had a big farm in Idaho and she kept hoping the Aunt would leave her farm to the University of Puget Sound. However, she said, "She is an ardent Baptist and will probably leave it to the Baptist College in Oregon rather than to us." I never knew what happened to the farm but it did not come to us.

She lived with her mother for many years in the apartment and finally when her mother died I was very anxious to see how she would react to the loss of her mother. It did not take very long to see that while it was a very great personal loss to her, she had the ability to adjust and work even harder than ever before.

She finally came to the time of her retirement. I talked to her at some length about it. She said she wanted to retire because she wanted to travel. She did retire, she still lived in the same apartment. She kept contact with Professor Bassinger and some of the other students until the generations she knew had graduated. She traveled to Europe, she traveled to Africa, she traveled to the Indonesian Islands and she spent some time north of the Arctic Circle. She was an indefatigable person who never stopped and constantly used all her energy for her students whom she loved and the faculty whom she considered loyal. She was a terrific fighter for the University and when some faculty member would be disloyal either to the University or the Administration, she often used her influence to set them right. Sometimes it clouded the issue rather than helped it but there was no question where her loyalty lay.

She gradually grew older and became less able to handle her affairs. A young man who graduated with us and also became a veterinarian and his wife became her guardians and took care of her until they had to put her in a rest home and then finally she left us.

I am sure there are hundreds of people all over the United States and the world who look back with fond recollection on "Teach" and realize how important was her influence in their lives and who feel that she was a very outstanding teacher and influence in the history of the University of Puget Sound.