

DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
GENEVA HANNA PILGRIM**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Geneva Hanna Pilgrim, professor, curriculum and instruction, has filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

John R. Durbin, Secretary
The General Faculty

**IN MEMORIAM
GENEVA HANNA PILGRIM**

Geneva Hanna Pilgrim, emeritus professor of curriculum and instruction, died on January 18, 2000, at the Knute Nelson Memorial Home in Alexandria, Minnesota. Born in Paynesville, Minnesota, on November 25, 1914, to Reverend George and Regula Hanna, she attended public schools in Alexandria, where her father served as pastor of the United Methodist Church. Following her high school graduation, she enrolled at Hamline University in St. Paul, from which she graduated in 1937 with a BA in social studies and English.

A high school teacher of English and history in Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois from 1937 until 1944, Dr. Pilgrim received both her MA in teacher education (1941) and her PhD in social studies education (1946) from Northwestern University. Following an assistant professorship at Ohio State University from 1945 to 1950, she joined the faculty of The University of Texas at Austin, serving until 1955 as a lecturer in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, as an associate professor until 1971, and then as a full professor until her retirement in 1980.

Professor Pilgrim made many contributions to the University. She organized and chaired The University of Texas Conference of English Teachers, held in cooperation with the Department of English (1956-61 and 1964-71); was chief investigator and director of the Secondary Program and Follow-up Study in Mental Health and Teacher Education, a project of the College of Education (1956-63); directed The University of Texas Reading Conference (1962); directed the Prospective Teacher Fellowship Program for Teaching English to the Disadvantaged (1968-70); chaired the Committee on Graduate Studies of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction (1970-71); directed the Texas Hill Country Writing Project, co-sponsored by the University and linked to the Bay Area Writing Project, now the National Writing Project (1978); and was a regular consultant for the Ready Writing contest, sponsored by the University Interscholastic League.

Coauthor (with Mariana McAllister) of *Books, Young People, and Reading Guidance* (New York: Harper's 1960, 2nd ed., 1968) and author of *Learning and Teaching Practices in English* (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1966), Professor Pilgrim also published chapters in yearbooks sponsored by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the Association of Student Teaching, and the National Society for the Study of Education. In addition, she contributed various articles to such journals as *Educational Leadership*, *The English Journal*, and *Psychological Reports*.

A strong leader within the professions of English and education, Dr. Pilgrim served as a consultant to numerous school districts in Texas, Ohio, Louisiana, and Virginia. She was a member of the Commission of Secondary Education (1961-63) and a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Supervision and Development (1960-65). In 1965 she chaired the Adolescent Literature Textbook Committee for the Conference on English Education, and she was associate chair of the Committee on English Grades 7, 8, and 9 for the National Council of Teachers of English (1959-63). She organized and served as first president of the Texas Council of Teachers of English (1965). Her biographical entry appeared in *Who's Who in American Education*, *Who's Who in American Women*, and *Who's Who in the South and Southwest*.

In the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Professor Pilgrim was regarded as an exemplary teacher of both undergraduate and graduate courses related primarily to the teaching of secondary school English. Following news of her death, a number of her former graduate students reflected on her contributions to their careers. Cynthia Selfe, chair of the humanities department of Michigan Technological University and author of numerous books on the link between computers and composing, wrote:

My memories of Dr. Pilgrim remain ... fresh I can still see her face and hear her voice, and I remember the diligence with which she pushed me to do a better job—actually to be a better professional—than I ever really thought I could do or be. She ... simply would not give up on me, even when I gave up on myself numerous times.

Hugh Burns, chair of the Department of English, Speech, and Foreign Languages, Texas Women's University, paid her this tribute:

Professor Geneva Hanna Pilgrim led me to answers I did not know—and to those answers I did not know I knew. That was her special gift. ...I shall remember her as a model of what every teacher must become—a true believer in every student's possibilities and every human being's potential. She believed in us. She believed in me.

Maxine Hairston, professor emeritus of English, The University of Texas at Austin, had once considered obtaining a credential in the teaching of secondary English and, to that end, had taken a number of courses in education. She said of Dr. Pilgrim, "Without question, she was the finest teacher I encountered in the College of Education. She truly inspired in me the desire to teach children's literature."

Geneva Hanna married Reverend Walter N. Pilgrim on July 3, 1965, at the University United Methodist Church in Austin, where Walter had begun serving as associate pastor. The following December, Geneva and Walter began as follows a Christmas letter titled "Pilgrim's Progress":

Midway in their separate Pilgrimage through life, Man, known as Walter N., and Woman, heretofore called Geneva Hanna, renewed a 20 year acquaintance, carried on a courtship 1200 miles apart, then resolved to travel no further in their separate ways, and were united through benefit of clergy, July 3, in Austin, Texas. They were ably supported at this special event by the three Pilgrim sons, their wives, three grandsons, the Russell and Paul Hanna's, with mother Hanna as official hostess Just three weeks before, Walter was appointed associate minister in this 2500 member church located on the edge of The University of Texas campus.

Following retirement in 1988, Geneva moved with Walter to Alexandria, Minnesota. There she served on the board of Listening Ear and taught for the Lifetime Learning Program, a continuing education program for seniors, one begun in Alexandria by the Pilgrims in 1989 and sponsored nationally by the American Association of Retired Persons. In 1977 Geneva and Walter had established in Austin a similar program, which today has an enrollment of over 1000 seniors in 54 classes.

Dr. Pilgrim is survived by her husband, Walter; three sons from Walter's first marriage: Norman and wife Suzanne Pilgrim of Arvada, Colorado; Richard and wife Neva Pilgrim of Syracuse, New York; Dennis and wife Mona Pilgrim of Albuquerque, New Mexico; grandsons Philip, Chris, Bruce, Steve, Brian, Jeffrey, Jonathan, and Jason Pilgrim; great-grandson, Kyle Pilgrim; nieces Emily Hanna Johnson of San Rafael, California, and Kathryn Hanna of Minnetonka, Minnesota; nephews: John Hanna of Palo Alto, California; Robert and wife Becky Hanna of Vancouver, Washington; Bruce and wife Marilyn Hanna of Medicine Lake, Minnesota; Phil and wife Mayuree Hanna of Las Vegas, Nevada; and eleven grandnieces and nephews. Geneva was preceded in death by two brothers, Dr. Paul Hanna and Russell Hanna.

Interment was in Graceland Park City Cemetery, Sioux City, Iowa.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Edmund J. Farrell (chair), Judith W. Lindfors, and Nancy L. Roser.

Distributed to the Dean of the College of Education, the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the President on June 9, 2000. Copies are available on request from the Office of the General Faculty, FAC 22, F9500. This resolution is posted under "Memorials" at: <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/>