IN MEMORIAM

ANNA HISS

Miss Anna Hiss, Professor Emeritus of Physical Training for Women, died on January 28, 1972 in Baltimore, Maryland where she had lived since her retirement in 1957. Her passing marked the end of a remarkable career in which her vision, foresight, and leadership were highly significant factors in the national development of physical education for girls and women.

Miss Hiss was born on May 11, 1893 in Baltimore, Maryland, one of five children born to Mary Hughes Hiss and Charles Alger Hiss. She was reared in an atmosphere in which discussion and intellectual curiosity were encouraged. She was imbued with the principle that time should not be wasted, but should be used for accomplishing worthy purposes. This early insight was given expression through the multitude of achievements during her lifetime.

She received her early education at the Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore and then attended Hollins College in Virginia in 1912-13. She was graduated with honors from Sargent School (now Boston University) in 1917 where she served as president of the student government and editor of the first yearbook. In later years, she received a Bachelor of Science degree from Teacher's College, Columbia University (1936) and an honorary degree of Doctor of Science in Physical Education from Boston University (1948). Her life exemplified the ideal of continuing study and thus it was consistent that she pursued advanced study at the University of Colorado, the University of Wisconsin, Stanford University, Mills College and New York University as well as
in several foreign countries.

After Miss Hiss graduated from Sargent College, she taught for one year at the Friend's School in Baltimore. In 1918, this enthusiastic, energetic young teacher accepted an Instructor position at The University of Texas in Austin. At that time the facilities and program in physical education for women were minimal. Miss Hiss believed so thoroughly in the importance of a program of physical activity for the general college student that she crusaded to implement her ideas. She quickly advanced to Associate Director and subsequently was made Director of Physical Training for Women in 1921. Over the years she also advanced in academic rank, no small feat for a woman in the physical education profession in that era, and received a promotion to Professor in 1941.

For thirty-six years Miss Hiss served as Director of Physical Training for Women and her achievements are unequalled in administrative circles. Several qualities contributed to her administrative success. She had unusual foresight and could predict years ahead and plan toward seemingly remote goals. She had disdain for the status quo and when one goal was attained, she had already launched into other projects. Another administrative quality that she possessed was organizational ability, and minute details of planning absorbed her interest. Although she had a knack for delegating work and authority, no detail involved in a job escaped her inquisitive mind. Miss Hiss also possessed the trait of making her colleagues seem important and she brought out their best by emphasizing their strengths. She could inspire dedicated work in her staff and interest them in continuing personal development,
allowing no room for complacency. Above all, she had the ability to sell herself and her program. Her efforts in public relations were invaluable because she invited faculty members from other departments to visit and she informed them of the program and purposes of physical education. Many a scholar and academician came to appreciate the value of physical education because of Miss Hiss' insight into public relations.

One of the major achievements during Miss Hiss' tenure was the construction of the Women's Gymnasium. Miss Hiss toured the United States at her own expense and carefully examined existing gymnasias. She compiled ideas and plans over a ten year period. She then utilized this information in assisting the architects in designing the Women's Gymnasium and also convinced The University administration to construct the building during a depression era. The building was dedicated in 1931. Now, as then, the Women's Gymnasium is a model facility both in functional and aesthetic qualities. It is said that she so thoroughly planned this building that she predicted it would reach its capacity in 1960 and indeed her prophecy was correct. She also spearheaded the addition of a girl's athletic field, tennis courts, and archer-golf areas. She was a pioneer in including indoor areas for archery, golf, and tennis because she did not want the quality of instruction sacrificed because of inclement weather.

Her other accomplishments were numerous. She was instrumental in founding the intramural sports program for women and served as its director. She organized women's sport clubs in the University of
Texas Sports Association. She was keenly interested in developing the qualities of leadership and fellowship in young women through these clubs. One of her greatest pleasures was leading the students in planning the annual T-night Banquet where awards were presented to students who excelled in sports. She also initiated a co-recreation program. She was the moving force behind the inception of a teacher-training program in physical education. She spent four years developing plans for this program and secured approval for it from the administration in 1925. She lectured in the program until a departmental chairman was employed for that area in 1926. Miss Hiss also initiated a program of sending physical education majors into the public schools and parks to assist in teaching sports activities.

Her influence was pervasive in numerous facets of life at The University of Texas. For example Miss Hiss was a co-founder of the women's service organization called Orange Jackets. She was on the Round-up planning committee and, in addition, assisted with developing Swing-out. She helped found the Campus League of Women Voters. For several years she was the chairman of the University Recreation Committee. She found time to assist with Girl Scouts, Interscholastic League, Women's Independent Campus Association, and the Mental Hygiene Association. Miss Hiss also became involved in community activities. She arranged for the Orchesis Club to present dance concerts for the Austin community. Additionally, she was a member of All Saints Episcopal Church. Nothing seemed to escape her attention; for example, she went to the Austin City Council and persuaded them to
move the main traffic artery from Speedway to San Jacinto because she foresaw that Speedway would someday be the center of the growing "forty acres".

Miss Hiss' influence extended to statewide and national organizations. She was a national founder of Delta Kappa Gamma in 1929 and chaired the committee that selected and purchased the property in Austin for the national headquarters. She promoted a statewide organization for Directors of Physical Education for Women. In 1923 she assisted in forming the Texas Athletic Federation of College Women and supervised the state headquarters for four years. In 1926 she organized the state Association of the National Athletic Foundation (Women's Division).

Professional organizations claimed a great deal of Anna's seemingly endless reserve of interest and energy. She was a founder of the Texas Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation and served as president in 1926-27. She received an honor award citation from this association as well as from the Southern District and American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Honorary Membership was extended to her by the Southern and National Associations of Physical Education for College Women because of her outstanding work. She was co-chairman for this association at the International Relations Conference in Copenhagen in 1949. Miss Hiss was active in the National Education Association and in Texas State Teachers Association. In 1936 she served on the President's Committee of 50 at the National Conference on College Hygiene, and in 1954 she was a delegate to the National Conference on Collegiate Physical Education.
Somehow, while cataloging Miss Hiss' achievements, one fails to grasp the qualities that made her so unforgettable to those she met. She enjoyed being with people and had a remarkable memory of those she met. She loved social gatherings and frequently became the life of the party whether telling stories, leading singing, presenting dramatizations, or drawing each guest into the enjoyment of the occasion. She was extremely well-informed on a large scope of affairs and could be a fascinating conversationalist. Her colleagues remember her dynamic personality and her awareness of life and other people. She believed that everyone could live more vitally if each would try, and she encouraged and assisted those she met in this effort.

For forty years the vision, enthusiasm, and energy of Miss Anna Hiss influenced the development of physical education and campus activities for women at The University of Texas. With unassailable courage she dedicated her life to lofty purposes. Her legacy is significant to each University student who has found intrinsic meaning in her life through sport and dance and movement forms.

Stephen H. Spurr  
President of The University of Texas at Austin

Harold C. Bold  
Secretary of the General Faculty

This Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Professors Rowena Kimmey, C. H. Leinbach, Edwin Price and Dorothy Burdeshaw, chairman.


(With Leah Gregg and Annie W. Blanton) "The Child of Texas One-Teacher School: Physical Status Tests," University of Texas, 1936.


"Physical Fitness" (ed.), National Association of Directors of Physical Education for College Women, Madison, Wisconsin, June, 1943.