



A memorial service for MARGUERITE RICE LARY, who taught more than 40 years at Scarborough High School, will be held at 3 p.m. on Sunday July 5 at the high school auditorium. She died near family in Maryland last November at the age of 95. A teacher for more than 50 years, she was a member of the Delta Kappa Gamma Teachers Honorary Society. In 1978 she was named Maine Mother of the Year. A Marguerite Rice Lary Literary Scholarship Fund has been established in her honor. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, memorial donations to the fund be made at Key Bank in Shop 'N Save Plaza at Oak Hill or, by mail, to Lary Scholarship c/o Key Bank, P.O. Box 237, Scarborough, ME 04070-0237.

# In Memory Of Marguerite

By Frank Hodgdon

Word has come from Frederick, MD., of the death Nov. 15, 1997 of Marguerite Rice Lary at the age of 94. Mrs. Lary, who for generations was the much-loved head of the English Department at Scarborough High School, where she also taught math and served as the drama coach for uncounted school productions and student essay and speaking competitions, had been a patient at North Hampton Manor for the past couple of years. The facility allowed her to be near her daughter, Jocelyn Mostrom, a resident of Rockville, MD., and her eldest son, Ralph, a resident of Bethesda before entering the same facility as a result of multiple sclerosis. Ralph, retired from the U.S. Marine Corps as a lieutenant colonel, had then become an account executive for Merrill Lynch before illness overtook him. Jocelyn had enjoyed a career as a teacher, artist, and dress-designer. Another son, Edmund C., whom many of us recall as the winner of a prestigious General Motors competition for automotive design as a senior at Scarborough High, had a stellar career as a physicist for Head Company's tennis and ski equipment, and worked as a research and development scientist for United Aircraft-United Technologies Inc. in East Hartford, Conn. before retiring to Taos, New Mexico, where he died in 1990.

Mrs. Lary, a native of New Jersey, attended Colby College and received her AB degree from Barnard College in New York City. At Columbia University, she received an AM degree in 1928. It was in New York City that she fell in love with the theater; she regaled her students with tales of having squandered her lunch money on tickets to the big Broadway productions of the day.

She taught three years at small Maine high schools and three years in Montclair, N.J., before accepting a position at Scarborough High in 1930. With the exception of a nine-year hiatus to raise her children, Mrs Lary remained at Scarborough High until her retirement in 1972. It was here she met and married Ralph Leon Lary in 1933 and moved into the Lary home at Dunstan, one of Scarborough's most historic homes. Completed in 1814 of bricks made on the site, the house's four corners were positioned to indicate the four points of the compass. It served for a number of years as "Mulberry Milliken's Tavern" in the days of horseback and stagecoach travel.

At the time of their marriage, Leon Lary was employed as a poultry farmer. Nevertheless, by dint of hard work and persistence, he managed to see all three children through college. In later years, he was employed by the Maine Turnpike Authority. He served the town in numerous positions--as treasurer, tax collector, and on several school committees and boards. He died in 1976.

When my class arrived as freshmen in 1947, Mrs Lary had but recently returned to teaching from her extended parental leave. No one who came into contact with Marguerite as a student is likely to have forgotten her. She was ever the dramatist. Her every move, every gesture, every sentence was designed to impart excitement and evoke interest in the subject at hand, no matter how mundane. She frequently tossed her well-coiffed head and stamped one foot for emphasis, and never hesitated to raise her voice--or lower it to a whisper--to keep her restless charges in thrall. She kept a messy desk piled high with books and papers awaiting her perusal, but woe-betide anyone who touched a single item, for she would recognize an item moved from twenty paces.

In her later years at school she would become "Mother" or "Ma" Lary to countless of her students. She never missed a plug for college to those she thought should go, but in the 40's and 50's, higher education was a fleeting dream for most. For those of us enrolled in the "general" course of instruction, Mrs. Lary was our only contact with the performing arts and culture, the excitement of drama, and encouragement to develop our latent talents for writing, poetry, and art. I silently thank her still for encouraging me to write and speak in public.

Many of her former students, home from college for various holidays, found time to stop by and thank her for their preparation.

Mr. and Mrs. Lary were the chaperones for our class trip to Washington D. C. in April, 1950. No one could have been more knowledgeable about the sights to see, the history, or the places and things we visited. They kept us busy all day, but trusted us to behave ourselves in the evenings, and miraculously, we did.



In New York, we stayed at the Hotel Piccadilly, visited the Statue of Liberty, visited the Museum of Modern Art, attended the Easter Pageant at Radio City Music Hall and a performance of "Where's Charlie" starring Ray Bolger.

In Washington we visited all the usual sites--capitol, White House (then under massive restoration), Smithsonian, Mellon Institute, National Gallery of Art, Arlington National Cemetery and the Tomb of the Unknowns, then went on to visit Mount Vernon and the Masonic Shrine at Alexandria, Va., where much George Washington memorabilia is on display. Some of us climbed the 99 steps of the Washington Monument, and experienced the hushed awe of the Lincoln Memorial. We all returned home and slept for a week. The Larys seemed unphased by the hectic pace.

In 1978, Marguerite Lary received the most distinguished award of her career; she was named Maine's Mother of the Year. She had been named "Merit Mother" or runner-up the previous year. Her nomination was made by the Cumberland County and Maine State Retired Teachers' Association, Beta Chapter, Delta Kappa Gamma International, and the West Scarborough Methodist Church. She was feted at the 14th annual awards day and tea at the Blaine House in Augusta, and went on to represent Maine at the National Conference of American Mothers in Des Moines, Iowa.

Marguerite never tired during her lengthy retirement and loved to attend class reunions where she could relive the days of her teaching career.

Shortly after her retirement, she organized the Nonsuch Chapter of Scarborough Senior Citizens and served as its first president. The club continues to thrive, meeting once a month for luncheons. She also did substitute teaching and in 1973 was president of the College Club of Portland. She also found the time to compile and edit the Memoirs of Maine's Retired Teachers, filling five volumes.

Her exploits have confounded lesser mortals--even while residing at North Hampton Manor, Marguerite was photographed on a roller-coaster, which she breezily described as "a way to relax".

Perhaps it is appropriate and fitting that she left us at the holiday season. We may all recall her many gifts to her hundreds of pupils, her beloved family, and our community over a span of 60 years as we count our other holiday blessings. We'll remember Mrs. Lary...