

## HELEN WALKER

1915 - 1970

Helen Walker, an instructor in Russian at Vassar from 1966 until her death in 1970, died on November 4th that year in Troy, New York after a long illness at the age of 55. Prior to 1966 after coming to this country from China, Mrs. Walker had served as a mainstay assistant in the Russian Department from 1946 to 1949 and as director of an eminently successful evening Russian program for teachers from 1962 to 1966.

Born in Manchuli, Manchuria on June 10, 1915, the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Alexander P. Bugaer, Helen Walker came to this country in 1946. Although she had forfeited all trace of her previous academic records in China, Mrs. Walker enrolled for the Vassar undergraduate degree, which she received in 1950, followed by the second degree which she took with distinction in 1964. She thereafter enrolled for the Ph.D. in Slavic Studies at New York University. While still in China from 1942 to 1945, Mrs. Walker had served as an editor and translator for Havas Telemondial, the French News Agency in Shanghai. She was an instructor from time to time in the adult education program of the Poughkeepsie Schools, and was an instructor of Russian at Dutchess Community College between 1959 and 1962. During the summer of 1965 Mrs. Walker returned abroad to study at Moscow State University.

The success of the Institute for teachers of Russian held on campus for the four years mentioned in the 1960's has been attested to by the rise and popularity of Russian studies in Dutchess County schools. The inauguration of the program in the Arlington High School, for example, is directly attributable to one of her students. Many students, subsequent to their fanned out in to high schools in other states. They found, courses in other institutions of Mrs. Walker's other teacher study in the Vassar institute in surrounding areas, as well as also, that when they enrolled in to pursue further work, Mrs. Walker had given them a rigorous, strong, and rich preparation in a difficult and demanding discipline.

Although her central concern was with her students in the classroom, Mrs. Walker constantly opened her expansive Russian heart to those who needed her personal help. In most recent years, under the burden of her increasingly debilitating illness, she

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shared the warm cordiality of her lovely modern house in the woods near Vassar with her colleagues on the faculty and her students.

The memorable gourmet delicacies that she created and served introduced those who visited her to Russian food; while the talk and fellowship simultaneously revealed other glimpses of her previous life in a different culture.

Soon after Mrs. Walker came to Vassar it was discovered that she had an incurable congenital kidney ailment which threatened her life. Notwithstanding, she courageously accepted her condition, and acted to give and gain full measure from her daily professorial commitments.

One of her colleagues has summed up her qualities as a constant thirsting for intellectual activities. "She was a most conscientious, unselfish, and talented pedagogue, considerate and very thorough and kind." In her quiet and modest way she sustained the highest standards of language teaching and criticism

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Gregg

Charles Griffin

Elizabeth Daniels, Chairman