

MARIAN PARKER WHITNEY

1861 – 1946

Marian Parker Whitney, who died at her New Haven home on June 16th, 1946, in her 86th year, contributed a great deal to the development of Vassar College during her twenty-six years of service. Schooled largely in Europe, a Ph.D. of Yale, she was at home in several foreign languages and cultures and was tireless in bringing students to a broad understanding of foreign peoples and their literatures. As Head of the German Department from 1905 to 1929 she introduced new methods of language teaching which became a pattern for other institutions. She built up a strong department, gave many books to the Vassar library and by her text books and journal articles she spread her influence far beyond this campus. As the originator of our first course in Comparative Literature – Contemporary Drama – she helped to break down narrow departmentalism. Through her European contacts as a leader in the woman suffrage movement and as chairman of the Education Committee of the International Council of Women she brought many interesting guests to the college and helped work out foreign exchanges of students and teachers. In all these ways she was a most valuable member of the faculty; more than all, she was a warm, liberal and generous person, eager to make shy young instructors feel at home, constantly helpful to them and to her students, and always a most loyal friend.

Ruth J. Hofrichter

Anna T. Kitchel

Winifred Smith

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