

Women's History Month

Outstanding contributors recalled

By BARBARA LEOMBRUNO
News Editor

"In all she did, there was something of growth, of family living, of the good taste of things, of stubbornness and of the changing season." (*Hilltop Press* supplement, Tuesday, Dec. 7, 1965, in memory of the late Fay Lucille Corey).

Although the above quote was meant for the late Fay Lucille Corey, those same words also ring true of Ruth E. Dowd, and Bessie L. Park.

Dowd, Corey and Park were innovators at a time when this type of assertion by women was not encouraged.

The Ruth E. Dowd Fine Arts Center, Bessie L. Park Center and Fay L. Corey Union are buildings at the State University College at Cortland that stand in memory of three women who made outstanding contributions to SUCC.

Dowd, a member of the SUCC faculty for 42 years, was professor of music emeritus when she died on June 30, 1973.

A graduate of the Cortland Normal School (as SUCC was formerly referred to), Dowd concentrated on the areas of music theory, opera and voice as a teacher.

A soprano, Dowd gave many public recitals throughout the state and appeared in several New York City concert programs sponsored by the New York State School Music Association.

James Sarvay, former chairman of the SUCC College Council committee for naming buildings, once said of Dowd: "Ruth influenced many hundreds of people, and I know she is held in high esteem by Cortland alumni who studied under her guidance."



RUTH E. DOWD

Dowd founded the SUCC Varsity Choir in 1955 and conducted the College Orchestra, Women's and Men's Glee Clubs, and also work with children's musical groups and acted as director of the choir at St. Mary's Church.

Following Dowd's retirement, the SUCC music department created the Ruth E. Dowd Award. The award is now given annually to an SUCC senior music major for excellence in music.

According to Donna Anderson, chairman of the music department, the award has been named in Dowd's honor, because she was a "very dedicated teacher" who "always tried to make sure each student achieved (his/her) maximum potential in music."

"Those of us who had the opportunity to know her will be cognizant of her physical absence. The few of us who never had the opportunity to meet her will continue to hear people talk about her," wrote Shelia Hebert in a Dec. 7, 1965, supplement to the *Hilltop Press* in memory of Corey's death.

Corey, former associate dean of students for counseling, died Nov. 17, 1965, after a long bout with cancer, the *Hilltop Press* reported.

In her dissertation, "Values of



FAY LUCILLE COREY

Future Teachers -- A Study of Attitudes Toward Contemporary Issues," Corey wrote, "This writer believes that faith in students is one of the primary requisites for persons working with young people."

According to Marsha K. Carlson, professor of recreation and leisure, Corey was "way ahead of her time" in the consideration of attitudes and values in teaching.

Although Carlson knew Corey only a short time, Carlson called her "a rare personality" and an experienced counselor who's background included more than book knowledge.

As a counselor, Corey "did a phenomenal job," Carlson said. Corey was "professional, ethical and sensitive to students," Carlson said.

In January 1980, a recommendation was made by the College Council to name the SUCC Physical Education-Recreation Center in honor of Bessie L. Park, who died Feb. 25, 1979, at the age of 97.

Park was called by her colleagues the "guiding spirit" in the establishment of a physical education major at SUCC.



BESSIE L. PARK

Park was a graduate of the Cortland Normal School and worked for 25 years in various teaching, administrative and public service roles.

Park organized the first group of women students to participate in a two-week camp program at Song Lake in 1936. She was instrumental in starting the YWCA in Cortland in 1915 and was a board member for a number of years.

During Park's retirement years, she wrote a 337-page history of SUCC from its founding to 1959. It was titled, "Cortland, Our Alma Mater."

In 1944, Park received the first service award ever given by the New York State Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation. In June 1945, Park was honored with a distinguished service award from SUCC.

Park's name has been attached to an alumni scholarship awarded annually by SUCC to an outstanding woman senior physical education major.

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