

## MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

### ALBERTA ENGVALL SIEGEL

(1931 - 2001)

Alberta Engvall Siegel, Professor Emerita of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, died peacefully at her Menlo Park home on November 3, 2001. The cause of her death was cancer.

Alberta was born on February 24, 1931 in Pasadena, California, and was raised there along with her three sisters. She was a bright and talented youngster who had her own radio show at age 15. While she was in high school, she was elected Governor of Girl's State, a singular honor. During her trip to Sacramento, she met Professor Lois Meek Stoltz, whose field of expertise was early childhood development. It was Stoltz who recognized Alberta's talent and encouraged her to attend Stanford, which she did. Stoltz, a founding mother of the field, became Alberta's mentor and subsequently her close friend and neighbor. Stoltz' husband, Herbert, also a Stanford professor, was Stanford's first Rhodes Scholar early in the 20th century.

Professor Siegel remained close to Stanford for her entire adult life. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with great distinction and Phi Beta Kappa in 1951 when she was 20 years of age, her Master's degree in 1954, and her Ph.D. in the same field with a major in Developmental Psychology and a minor in Social Psychology in 1955 - a fast track, indeed.

From 1955 to 1957, Alberta was an Assistant Professor of Child Development at Pennsylvania State University. She went there from Stanford with her husband, Professor Sidney Siegel, himself a distinguished social psychologist and Stanford alumnus. She was promoted to Associate Professor at Penn. State University in 1958. The two Professors Siegel then returned to Stanford in 1961 as Fellows at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. During that academic year, Sidney Siegel died of a heart attack and Alberta, grief-stricken, remained for a second year at the Center. Following this year she took a position on the Faculty of the Stanford University School of Medicine in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences then chaired by Professor David A. Hamburg. In 1969, she became the first woman to become a tenured professor in the School of Medicine. She was a Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and subsequently, by courtesy, in the Department of Psychology and the School of Education. Clearly she maintained her equilibrium and excelled in her scholarly accomplishments in spite of personal tragedy.

To quote from the papers put forward to the standard ad hoc committee when she was proposed for appointment as Associate Professor in 1965, "Her publications are extraordinarily clear, and are written with an admirable economy of words." Her work was further described as "...Exemplary; she defines a problem clearly, sets a reasonable

hypothesis, and tests it accurately and efficiently." Her intellectual and professional standards were then and always of the highest order.

Professor Siegel's scholarly contributions were of great practical importance. In the late 1950's she began to write about the effects of television violence on the behavior of children. A decade later, she served on the United States Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior. For the subsequent ten years, she served on successive Advisory Committees and Panels of the National Institute of Mental Health on the same or similar subjects. Another area of interest was that of working mothers and their children. Her mentor, Lois Stoltz, had been a pioneer in the field and had been an advisor to Henry Kaiser during World War II on that subject. It was Lois Stoltz who kept "Rosie the Riveter" working by setting up round-the-clock child-care centers at Kaiser shipyards. Alberta's dissertation research studied the effects of father absence and mother employment on the children of these women.

Alberta soon was chosen for positions of leadership at the national level. She was a member of several study sections of the National Institutes of Health. She served in several important positions in the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), including four years as the Editor of *Child Development*, the quarterly journal of the SRCD and became an honorary life member of that society. She was President of the Division of Developmental Psychology of the American Psychological Association in 1973-74. She became a member of the Board of Directors of Great Western Financial Corporation in 1976 and served on that Board for over 20 years. She was member of the Board of Directors of the Menninger Clinic and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Menninger Foundation. She counted Walt and Connie Menninger and their family among her close friends. Ely Calloway of golf club fame was a fellow board member at Menninger's. It would have been fun to eavesdrop on their conversations.

Alberta's service to Stanford University was quite remarkable. In this area, like many others, she served with grace and savvy. She was a trusted and respected committee chair and equally productive and respected as a committee member. She served on search committees, admissions committees and planning committees too numerous to count. She served as President of the Stanford Historical Society and the Stanford Faculty Club. She was a member of the Stanford Associates and served on its Governing Board for three years. She was a life member of the Stanford Alumni Association. For the ten years before her death, she was the Chair of the Bing Nursery School Faculty Advisory Committee.

Robert W. P. Cutler, M.D., past Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs in the Medical School, considered Alberta's service as Chair of the Committee for Re-accreditation of the Medical School to be "her greatest service to the school." He went on to say that the job required "credibility with the entire faculty and administrative leadership, superior analytical and writing skills" and so on. Many of her committee assignments in the Medical School had to do with sensitive and confidential issues such as gender discrimination, affirmative action, sexual harassment and the like. Her opinion on these matters was widely sought after, not only because she was wise, but because she kept confidences extremely well. She served her department in many roles over a period of more than 35 years.

In whatever she did, Alberta was soft-spoken, dignified and respectful of others. She was not afraid to express her opinion, but always did so in a way that showed appreciation of the opinions of others. She could be counted on to be a voice of reason in what were sometimes troubled circumstances.

Professor Siegel taught in several departments and schools of the university. Her expertise in her field of early childhood development was widely known and appreciated. For example, she taught for a number of years in her area of expertise in the Program in Human Biology. She was particularly devoted to the medical and graduate students with whom she worked. These include Lynette Cofer, Bob Bailey, Fred Volkmar and Bernadine Barr, all of whom were equally devoted to her.

Alberta's many friends brought her great joy. She was at home in many types of company, always appropriately attired for any occasion, formal or casual. And she always arrived on time. She was always good company, usually smiling, always responsive and frequently very funny. She also adored Chinese food, preferring the wonderful cooking at Tao-Tao Cafe in Sunnyvale to the fancier cuisine and surroundings at Ming's. Her other passion was opera, especially those by Giuseppe Verdi, and she loved to share this passion with friends.

Alberta had a cottage high on the shore of Caples Lake south of Lake Tahoe. The facilities were primitive - no electricity, telephone, running water or indoor plumbing. She loved the peace and quiet there, the simple life spent reading, writing and admiring nature. This cabin had belonged to Herbert and Lois Stoltz and Alberta acquired it following Lois' death. She even enjoyed the 5-hour drive from the bay area with a stop for Chinese food on the way. The cabin was so isolated that the only damage from year to year came either from heavy snow or forced entry by bears.

Alberta's greatest joy in her later years came from the birth of her only grandchild, Jay and Linda's daughter, Sydney. Alberta watched Sydney's growth and development with both personal and professional pride and the eye of a trained observer. Sydney was the light of Alberta's life, a whole new gear in her years of retirement.

Alberta Engvall Siegel is survived by her three sisters, Elizabeth Newcomb of Irvine, Ruth Anne Barton of Santa Monica and Portia Oldmann of Newport Beach; and a son, Jay, daughter-in-law Linda Carr and granddaughter Sydney, all of Menlo Park. Her family and many friends remember her fondly and mourn her passing. In her will, she established two scholarships for graduate students in psychology which will bear her name and that of her husband, and which will serve as testimony in perpetuity to this remarkable woman.

James B. D. Mark, Chair  
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