

In Memoriam

Grace Rawlings, OBE

It is a sad fact of life that all must eventually leave it. What is surprising is that this obvious fact continually surprises us, no doubt because so many who leave us seem so full of life. Grace Rawlings was emphatically one of these.

An additionally sad fact of recent Society life is that we have lately been losing a number of prominent well-loved members who were the creators of the Society as we now know it, having shaped its post-war character and nurtured it to Royal Charter requirements. Grace was again emphatically and pre-eminently one of these. The Society probably owes much of its present position to the vision, efforts and groundwork of Grace and her immediate circle of post-war colleagues.

Her long and varied career mirrored closely the development of psychology as a profession. After studying under Spearman at University College, London, she went to the Central Association for Mental Welfare. A pioneer in educational psychology, she did much to encourage local education authorities to establish their own departments. By 1939 she was herself working for the City of Oxford, while being closely involved with the Canonbury Clinic in North London.

At the end of the war, Grace concentrated upon clinical psychology. At University College Hospital, while continuing to practise in her own right, she was responsible for post-graduate professional training. It was in this field, above all, that she built up her international reputation; a reputation by no means confined to her fellow psychologists.

The first sub-system within the society to cater for professional needs was the CPP (Committee of Professional Psychologists) which later gave rise to the English and Scottish Divisions of Professional Psychologists (EDPP and SDPP). Only later did the professions separate, not intrinsically because of differences in work (something Grace would have wanted us to remember) but because of the differences in the governmental structures

providing the services and the negotiating bodies which determined the salaries and conditions. Grace was crucially influential in this groundwork and, for instance, was involved together with Graham Foulds in a survey of clinical service needs which laid the foundations for psychologists in what was then the brand new National Health Service. Her energy and involvement was widespread and sustained so that it was gratifying that this was recognized with the award of the OBE in 1970.

Grace died in Exeter on 12 August, 1988 at the age of 79. A legend in her own lifetime, she was a figure who towered above everybody else. She was the B.P.S. She had seemingly done every job there was to do in the Society, culminating in the presidency in 1966-67, the first clinical psychologist to hold the post. In retirement, she served until quite recently on the Standing Committee on Membership. It was on the train from St Pancras to Leicester for its meetings that she could from time to time be persuaded into accounts and anecdotes of the early struggles to establish psychology as a profession.

Many will still remember the impressive trio of Grace Rawlings, May Davidson and Norah Gibbs who could be seen conferring at Society gatherings of all kinds and from whom all worldly wisdom and professional counsel seemed to flow. Whilst Grace remained, this flow of wisdom and knowledge seemed assured. At the same time, green young psychologists could always count on the wisdom being dispensed with warmth and kindness. She is remembered with great affection and will be much missed by all the many people who knew and admired her. It is a privilege to have known her and a privilege to be able to set down some account of her place in the life of psychology and the Society. Sympathy and appreciation will be shared among all the family of friends and colleagues which gathered around Grace Rawlings.

Tony Black



Tribute from office staff

Everyone who was on the Society's staff in the sixties would have been saddened, as I was, to see the announcement of the death of Grace Rawlings.

In those days the General Secretary came to the office once a week. We always welcomed Miss Rawlings' day: not only did she sort out problems connected with the work of the office, she took a personal interest in each member of the staff. By so doing she did a great deal to "oil the wheels".

During my 12 years with the Society, Hon. Gen. Secs. came and went. They were all kind and helpful but Grace Rawlings was my first, and well-loved Gen. Sec. We shall all remember her.

Honor Glover

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