

Hazel Miller Croy
1907-1993
PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION, EMERITUS

B.S. Ed., Redlands University, 1928; Ed.D., University of California, Los Angeles, May, 1955
California State University, Fullerton From September 1, 1960 To August 1, 1975
Birth: August 5, 1907; Death: May 1, 1993

Dr. Hazel Miller Croy was professor of Education and founder of the Reading Department at California State University, Fullerton. She will be remembered as a pioneer in Reading Education and she was dedicated to improving education for all children.

Dr. Croy died May 1, 1993, in McKinney, Texas after an illness of several months. She had served on the faculty at CSUF since 1960, the year the permanent campus was occupied. Her retirement came in 1975 at which time she was awarded Emeritus status. After retiring she moved to McKinney, Texas to be near her daughter, Carolyn Breazeale, who lived in Plano with her husband, Bill, and their two sons, Brett and Kent, whom she adored.

After retirement Hazel would return to California frequently during the summer months, and for this purpose she maintained a summer residence in Corona del Mar. Often one or both of her grandsons accompanied her. She laughingly said she was trying to make Californians out of her Texas grandsons. In Corona del Mar she spent many happy hours with friends, including her CSUF colleagues, who visited her regularly. She dearly loved California and enjoyed driving around the state to visit her family in Redlands, her relatives in Coronado, and others.

Hazel was born in 1907 on a wheat farm in Whitman County, south of Spokane, Washington, the seventh child of parents who placed a high value on education. Her mother had been a school teacher in Clarion County, Pennsylvania, and had attended summertime institutes at Lake Chautauqua, New York. There she had been impressed by outstanding women speakers such as Susan B. Anthony, Julia Ward Howe, and Frances Willard. Hazel's mother must have instilled in Hazel the value of women who dared to speak out, for throughout Hazel's life and career she often referred to outspoken women who had made fine contributions to humanity.

Hazel's first six years of formal education were in a one-room schoolhouse in Washington. Her family moved to California in 1918 where she finished elementary school. She attended high school for two years in Huntington Park and two years in San Jacinto. During those years she was an avid tennis player and was also talented in Speech. She attended the University of Redlands and received the Baccalaureate degree in Education in 1928.

Her teaching career began in Colton, California where she taught for about two years at Garfield Elementary School. She then spent a couple of years teaching in Idaho, where she was married. She returned to California and taught at several elementary schools in San Bernardino County. Part of the time she was administrator for the San Bernardino School District. From 1950 to 1958 she taught in the Education Department at the University of Redlands where she became director of teacher training. During this time she completed the requirements for the Ed.D. degree at UCLA awarded in 1955. Hazel then served for two years as Director of Education in Delano, California.

After coming to California State University, Fullerton, she decided to establish a graduate program of training for reading educators. The program became a reality. Many of the teachers who received the M.S. degree in Reading Education under Dr. Croy went on to become school administrators and leaders in reading education, higher education and other fields. Realizing the importance of a close liaison between alumni and the University, Hazel, along with several alumni, organized the Reading Educators Guild in 1970. It was one of the first and is still one of the strongest groups at CSUF.

Hazel Croy will be remembered not only as a fine and loyal colleague but as a friend to many. She enjoyed life and people, and was never at a loss for words. She was a source of inspiration because of her positive outlook. She was open to learning new things. She had a fine sense of humor and a hearty laugh. She was an avid fan of major league sports, perhaps the influence of her six brothers, and could describe plays and players, latest scores, and Hall of Famers. She was bold in accepting new challenges--especially when told she could not succeed.

Hazel was devoted to her family and courageously stood by her only daughter, Carolyn Breazeale, as she battled cancer for several years. After Carolyn's death in 1980, Hazel stayed nearby and helped rear her two young Texas grandsons, giving them as much of herself as possible and sharing with them her dreams for their future. When their father died several years later she became even more important in providing direction for her grandsons.

Hazel had a strong desire to see educational equity achieved. She gave of her time while at CSUF to consult and work with inner-city teachers to help children in reading and language arts. She became actively involved in the early 1970's in providing support services for underrepresented students at CSUF. She actively recruited faculty and graduate students who represented diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Among her contributions to California State University, Fullerton is an annual scholarship award named in memory of her daughter, Carolyn Croy Breazeale. The award is given to a graduate student in Reading or Counseling who has a strong academic record and who shows promise in education and/or counseling, particularly as a role model for ethnic minority youth.

At a memorial service for Hazel Croy on May 22, 1993, in Redlands, California, the faculty in Reading paid a special tribute to her. The tribute read:

"The faculty of the Reading Department at California State University, Fullerton remember Dr. Hazel Croy in fond and positive ways.

"We remember Hazel as the founder of the Reading Department. It can be comfortably stated that developing a new program on a university campus takes vision, tenacity, and leadership. Hazel had these qualities in abundance.

"We remember Hazel for her intelligence and clarity of thought. She recognized the tremendous need for reading specialists in California. She developed a program that produced teachers in great demand throughout the state. The program that Hazel began has produced over 1200 reading specialists.

"We remember Hazel for her commitment to quality education. She felt that the graduates of the Reading Department should truly be masters of their science. She produced a program that insured this happened.

"If it is possible for a California State University, Fullerton Emeritus to assume legendary status then Dr. Hazel Croy has done so. While it has been many years since she was a member of the faculty she is still remembered for her tremendous leadership ability and the depth of her accomplishments."

Submitted by
Ruth Graham May-Siegrist
Professor of Reading, Emeritus
(est.) September 15, 1993