

## MARTHA TRIMBLE

Martha Trimble influenced many lives during her tenure as a professor of English at Colorado State University. She was included in the 11th edition of *Who's Who in American Women* and was accorded a chapter in a book about Western writers. She was a native of Fort Collins.

## EARLY LIFE

Martha Scott Trimble was born in Fort Collins on May 27, 1914, to Edgar and Flora Clark Trimble. Her father was a prominent businessman in the community, and her grandfather, William Trimble, had been one of the earliest pioneers to come here. A graduate of Fort Collins High School, she was on the staff of the school newspaper and was also a member of the Latin Club.

## COLLEGE YEARS

Martha attended what was then Colorado Agricultural College (now Colorado State University), earning a bachelor of arts degree in 1936. While in college she took part in debates and theatrical performances and reported for the *Collegian*, the college newspaper. She then received a master of arts degree from the University of Colorado in Boulder and began teaching English at the college in Fort Collins.

## CAREER DETOUR

She had not been teaching long when World War II broke out, and Martha became the first woman in Fort Collins to join the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), an agency of the US Navy which offered women the chance to serve their country. At the time, she commented that if she had been a man she would have applied to the US Naval Academy, but that option was not open to women then.

During her time in the Navy, from 1942 to 1946, she earned the rank of lieutenant and served at the Naval Air Base in Pensacola, Florida, as a navigation instructor for pilots.

## AFTER THE WAR

A few years after she mustered out of the Navy, she returned to Fort Collins and resumed teaching at the college. She was active in the Fort Collins Historical Society, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the American Association of University Women.

Martha had a considerable degree of the business know-how that had enabled her father to be so successful. She owned and managed property, including a building in downtown Fort Collins that she turned over to local artists, who created a cooperative nonprofit organization, Trimble Court Artisans, through which they display and sell their

various art works. About 50 local artists exhibit their work there. The alley onto which the building faces is named for the Trimble family as well.

## HONORS AND AWARDS

Martha was a member of the honor society Phi Kappa Phi and of Mortar Board.

A scholarship in her name was established at the university, open to local Poudre School District high school graduates planning to attend CSU.

She was named a full professor at the university in 1977.

## HER LEGACY

As a supporter of the arts, an active member of the college faculty and a Navy veteran, she served as a role model of what women with wide-ranging interests can achieve. Not only was she a professor at the college who was highly regarded by her students and by her colleagues, she was also engaged with the community as a member of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, the PEO Sisterhood and the Fort Collins Historical Society.

## QUESTIONS

- How important is art in a community? What role does it play?
- Would you like to visit Trimble Court Artisans? Why, or why not?
- Martha taught navigation to pilots during World War II. What do you think that would have involved at the time without the sophisticated instruments now available?
- What do you admire most about her work and life?
- Martha said she would have applied to the Naval Academy if she could have. Why would women have been excluded from that institution?

## GLOSSARY

Artisans—creators of arts and crafts such as sculptures, paintings and pottery

Colleagues—fellow workers

Commensurate—equal to

Cooperative – joining together to accomplish a goal

Emeritus—a title given to a distinguished retired professional

Full professor—the highest status a college professor can receive, with a commensurate salary increase

Honor society—an academic organization that invites students with top grades to join

Mustered out—discharged

Nonprofit—an organization that is officially recognized by some level of

government as being non-commercial in its purpose. That is, the primary goal of a nonprofit is not to make money.

## TIMELINE

1914—born in Fort Collins

1936—bachelor of arts degree from Colorado Agricultural College (now CSU)

1942-46—Navy service

1961-resumed teaching English at CSU

1977—designated a full professor

1979—retired and became professor emeritus

April 19, 1994—death in Fort Collins

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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"Martha Trimble and Trimble Court Artisans." Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, date unknown.

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