

Obituary

MURIEL A. K. WESTLAND

Muriel Westland was born in 1925 and died in December 1995. Her outstanding contribution to the training of Dietitians was recognized by her election in 1982 to Honorary Fellowship of the British Dietetic Association. She was keenly interested in the work of the Nutrition Society and served as Programmes Secretary from 1976 to 1983.

After graduation from Glasgow University with a BSc in General Sciences in 1947, Muriel obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Dietetics the following year from the West of Scotland College of Domestic Science. She practised first as a dietitian at St Helier Hospital, Carshalton, and then at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford. In 1953 she was appointed as a Lecturer in Dietetics at Battersea Polytechnic. This appointment was made jointly with the British Dietetics Association and was to run an experimental 'Diploma Course in Dietetics and Catering'. This course was a great success and became the basis for all such courses in the UK. In 1963 she was given full responsibility by the Principal of Battersea Polytechnic (later to become the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Surrey) for the planning of an Honours Degree Course in Dietetics. Her plans were approved by the Academic Advisory Committee in 1964 and the course was accepted as one of the fifteen courses 'successful completion of which would lead to a degree of the new University'. It was to be the first University Degree in Dietetics and was approved by the Council of the Professions Supplementary to Medicine (CPSM). Thus graduates were eligible for State Registration in Dietetics (SRD). At this stage Muriel was promoted to Senior Lecturer (Old Style) in the Polytechnic in recognition of the contribution that she made to the dietetic profession.

The course was transferred to the newly created Biochemistry Unit in 1965 and Muriel continued to be responsible for it until a Reader (JWTD) was appointed in 1967. Although the title of the course was changed to an Honours Degree in Nutrition with an increase in its science content, it retained its applied aspects and continued to be approved by the CPSM for eligibility for State Registration in Dietetics.

Muriel Westland was an excellent administrator and a stimulating teacher. Many dietitians and nutritionists in responsible positions today owe much to her influence and personal interest in them. She played a major part in many committees both inside and outside the University. Muriel was a loyal and valued colleague to those of us who had the privilege of working with her. Closely related to her interest in dietetics, she was involved in the spread of sound nutritional knowledge, sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm with students from varied backgrounds, talking to nurses, nursing tutors, those caring for the elderly, and members of the British Legion and Women's Institutes.

No appreciation of Muriel Westland would be complete without reference to her husband. She and Gordon were inseparable and did everything possible together. Our warm sympathy continues to be extended to him in his aloneness.

JOHN W. T. DICKERSON