
Harriet Harvey

1919-1962

Dr. Harriet Harvey, associate professor of zoology and chairman of the department at the University of Oklahoma, died on September 18, 1962, at University Hospital, Oklahoma City.

Harriet Harvey was a conscientious and dedicated research scientist and an extraordinarily gifted teacher. Her skill in classroom and laboratory and the unstinting consideration she gave to individual students and their problems won from her students—undergraduate and graduate alike—both high esteem and strong affection. Administrators early recognized her keen insight in all problems affecting the university, her quick insights into their complexities, and her readiness to work long and diligently toward their solution. Her colleagues valued her for her sterling professional qualifications, for the excellence of her judgment, for her unpretentiousness and for her unremitting hard work even under the burden of the serious health impairment that afflicted her latter years.

Her interests and talents were remarkably diverse. She was a gifted raconteur, a guitarist and folk singer (with nearly a specialist's knowledge of folk-musicology) and adept at a variety of manual hobbies. Well-informed in literature and the arts and alert to the world around her, she was at home in any gathering. Children were enthralled by her and, despite her exhausting work schedule, she spent many a long hour giving encouragement and instruction to youngsters who evinced interest in biology, photography or the guitar.

Above all, as an extraordinarily wide circle of acquaintances and friends can attest, she was a person of warm and generous spirit. She was to a rare degree perceptive of the feelings of others, and her constant but unobtrusive thoughtfulness endeared her all who knew her.

Harriet Harvey was born December 25, 1919, in Tarkio, Missouri. She received her B. S. degree from Northwest Missouri State College in 1943. For two years she taught physical education in the public schools of Maryville, Missouri, and in 1945 went to the University of Chicago, first as a teacher in the Laboratory School of the university (1945-1947), then as assistant instructor in zoology (1947-1951). During this time she received a John M. Prather fellowship and other scholarship awards and pursued research under the direction of Professor Carl R. Moore and Professor Dorothy Price. Her research interests were primarily in endocrinology and much of her investigative work then and later was concerned with the activity of the salivary glands and their response to sex hormones.

Dr. Harvey joined the faculty of the University of Oklahoma as assistant professor of zoology in the fall of 1951. She was promoted to associate professor in 1955 and in 1961 she was appointed chairman of the Department of Zoology, the first woman to become chairman of a major science department at this university. In the intervening years her outstanding abilities were widely recognized, both within and without the university. She was twice elected to the University Senate and was appointed to numerous university-wide committees. Honors received by Dr. Harvey included one of the university's coveted awards for excellence in the counselling and teaching of undergraduates, the state Soroptimist Clubs' award, selection as Matrix Table Faculty Woman of the Year, and presidency of the university's chapter of the Society of the Sigma Xi. She was recipient of two generous research grants from the National Institutes of Health and for several years she served on advisory panels of the National Science Foundation.

Dr. Harvey was an active member of numerous professional societies including the American Society of Zoologists, Endocrine Society, Southwest Section of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine, Oklahoma Academy of Science (vice-president Section A, 1961), Phi Sigma and the Southwestern Association of Naturalists.

Paul R. David