TRIBUTES TO WINONA H. WELCH

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Perhaps the late A. J. Grout said it best in writing a tribute to his close friend, Marshall Avery Howe, noted hepaticologist and marine phycologist, who enjoyed a long and distinguished career at the New York Botanical Garden. "Very often," Grout wrote, "tributes are written with tongue in cheek and are properly discounted by the readers, but what I have to say will, if anything, be an understatement of patent fact" [A. J. Grout, Marshall Avery Howe, 1867-1936. Bryologist 40: 33-36, pl. III. 1937]. These are exactly the words that characterize what I want to say in this article about my close and cherished friend, Winona Welch.

I have known Winona almost as long as Grout had known Howe when his article was written. They were born and raised not far apart and when youngsters they met at the Windham County Fair in Newfane, Vermont, where Howe sold popcorn and Grout peddled plums from his family's orchard. They knew each other for over 60 years. Winona and I didn't meet at a county fair and it is unlikely that either of us ever peddled popcorn or plums, but we have known each other for over 50 years. We first met in June 1936 at a foray of the Sullivant Moss Society (now the American Bryological and Lichenological Society) in Linville, North Carolina. Winona was the newly elected vice-president of the Society and the principal duties of that office then, as now, entailed running the foray and annual meeting.

This particular foray had unusual interest because it was sponsored jointly by the Society and the Torrey Botanical Club. The planning, however, was carried out almost entirely by Winona. Jack Sharp, who knew the flora well, assisted with the field identifications, but it was Winona's efficient organization and attention to details that made the foray a huge success. We stayed in the old Carolina Hotel, known for its hospitality, good food, spartan rooms, and modest prices. A huge stone fireplace in the spacious lobby was the focus of evening gatherings. An ancient gramophone provided music of sorts and each evening ended with dancing led by Stanley Cain, the noted plant geographer and sometime bryologist, who exhibited a remarkable talent for dancing. His attempts to persuade Winona to dance with him always failed, much to everyone's regret. The foray produced two remarkable new finds for the Southern Appalachians. Jack Sharp discovered a colony of Splachnurn pennsylvanicum (Brid.) Grout ex Crum, on cow dung in one of the Linville bogs, and several of us collected Leptodontium flexifolium (With.) Hampe, on Grandfather Mountain.

Winona's adult life has been incredibly intertwined with DePauw University. Owing to lack of finances, her undergraduate studies were delayed, but her determination for a professional life prevailed and she obtained her A.B. degree from DePauw at the "ripe" age of 28. Except for her graduate studies, an A.M. from the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. from Indiana University, followed by a two-year instructorship at the latter, she has been at DePauw since.

Upon returning to DePauw, Winona became a colleague of her favorite undergraduate teacher, Truman G. Yuncker, the man who had interested her in botany and who had become her role model. Yuncker was chairman of the department of botany and characteristic of a genre of inspirational teachers scattered among a select group of relatively small high quality private liberal arts institutions in this country. These gifted individuals possessed a genius for recognizing talented students, arousing their interests, and kindling them with the motivation to tackle graduate school and obtain advanced degrees. These schools have been the seed
beds for populating our graduate schools. Yuncker and his kind understood the necessity of balancing teaching, research, and community service. Both Yuncker and Welch were generalists; they taught a wide variety of courses and for most of their careers they had heavy teaching loads. Yet each brought scholarly distinction to DePauw through their researches and publications. Together they assembled one of the best small herbaria in the country.

I first heard of Winona Welch through two DePauw graduates who were graduate students with me at the University of Pennsylvania, William D. Gray and John K. Edwards. Both held Winona in such high esteem and described her in such lovable and saintly terms that I wondered if anyone could possibly live up to their description. As I came to know Winona, however, I realized that Gray and Edwards had not exaggerated. Truly, she is a good person. I don't think she is capable of doing a mean or selfish thing. Her good deeds and helpful acts are beyond recounting and I can't believe that she has an enemy in the world. I have never heard her criticize anyone. Winona had every reason to condemn vigorously the actions of the late Frans Verdoorn when he decided not to publish her monograph of the Fontinalaceae after stringing her along for ten years with hollow promises that publication was imminent. It was a cruel thing to do. Winona, however, in her kind, trusting way, expressed only mild and controlled exasperation. The monograph, after a required updating, was finally published by Martinus Nijhoff in 1960, eleven years after she had delivered the manuscript to Verdoorn. In the introduction she stated merely that "A number of events causing the delay in publication were unavoidable."

Even in retirement Winona lives essentially on the DePauw campus. Her lovely