

MRS. ROBERT A. MILLIKAN

A Tribute

by Inga Howard

GRETA BLANCHARD MILLIKAN died on October 10, after a two-year illness, at her home in San Marino. She was 77 years old.

To say that the California Institute of Technology would not be what it is today had it not been for the devotion to its interests of Mrs. Robert A. Millikan would seem like an over-statement to those who did not know her well and were not aware of her activities. Her paramount interest centered in the success of her husband's work as executive head of the Institute. She did not spare herself in her efforts to assist those members of the student body and staff with whom she came into contact—and she had a large number of friends. At the opening of each fall term she entertained the freshmen in small groups on Sunday evenings, and the graduate students were invited to her home for Sunday dinners.

She inspired the confidence of her friends, gave wise counsel, and showed sympathetic interest in the troubles and happiness of others. She was energetic and effective in all her activities. Her real interest in the Institute graduate students is shown by the fact that in her will one-third of her estate was set aside for a fund (to be named in honor of her husband) to assist needy graduate students in Physics.

Dr. and Mrs. Millikan came to Pasadena to take up their duties at the Institute in 1921. There were just three buildings on the campus then—Throop Hall, the first wing of the Gates Chemical Laboratory, and Culbertson Hall. A fourth building was just nearing completion—the Norman Bridge Laboratory of Physics, which Dr.



Bridge had agreed to build if Dr. Millikan would accept its direction.

In that first year there were only 26 graduate students and the Institute was practically unknown outside southern California.

Dr. Millikan pulled the struggling school through many lean years and, with the help of the trustees and staff, made of it what it is today—an institution which draws famed scientists and eager students from most of the world. It is a truly impressive achievement—and Mrs. Millikan was a mighty help in attaining it.

Born in Rochester, Pa., she was graduated from the University of Chicago in 1900, with a B.A. in Greek. She served as assistant principal and teacher of the eighth grade at the Highland Park (Ill.) Public School for a year. Then, in 1902, she was married to Dr. Millikan.

She was extremely active in civic affairs and musical activities, both in Chicago and here—in addition to her busy life as helpmate to her husband.

Mrs. Millikan is survived by her husband; her sons, Clark, director of the Guggenheim Aeronautical Laboratory at the Institute, and Max, professor of economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; the three children of her son Glenn, a physiologist, who was killed in a Tennessee mountain-climbing accident in 1947; four other grandchildren; and her only sister, Mrs. Harry Leslie Walker of Bronxville, New York.

Memorial services are to be held in December, when her son Max and his wife—now in India—are expected to reach Pasadena.