

IN MEMORIAM

BETTY J. HASKELL

Betty June Haskell, born June 1, 1925, in Lewistown, Idaho, led a rich, interesting, and inspiring life. Who knew that a young girl who practiced synchronized swimming in the Snake River would find herself in the Hill Country of central Texas? Betty began her academic career at the University of Idaho where she originally studied home economics but soon took up political science, a life-long passion that may have begun during World War II. She followed that interest to the University of Chicago where she completed a master's degree; she then sought work as a newspaper reporter and landed a job with the *Honolulu Star Bulletin*. Although she enjoyed living and working in Hawaii in the 1940s, she took a civilian position with the Armed Forces in Japan. When she returned to the United States, Betty worked for the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

When World War II ended, the military recognized that many of the young men who signed up or were drafted suffered from vitamin deficiencies such as rickets and beriberi. In their infinite wisdom, they decided that it was incumbent upon the country to provide nutrition to youngsters in order to ensure that all future soldiers would be healthy. As a result, the school lunch program was born, but no one knew exactly what a nutritious lunch should look like.

At the time, a female research scientist at the University of California in Berkeley was studying vitamins, and Betty Haskell was assigned to interview the researcher and write a story about her. Betty was so fascinated by the work that she quit her job at the newspaper and enrolled at UC Berkeley to do research with this woman and to earn a B.S. and a Ph.D. in nutritional science. After serving on the faculties of the University of California, Davis and the University of Illinois, she came to Austin, Texas, as a visiting professor. As has happened to many of us, she fell in love

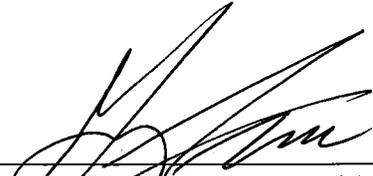
with the area and took a permanent position at UT Austin, where she served on the faculty and conducted research for many years. She swam regularly at Barton Springs, grew a spectacular garden, and nurtured Siberian Huskies (at one time, she had six of them), Abyssinian cats, and cats with less formal pedigrees.

Dr. Haskell's research career spanned two decades during which she published findings on vitamins A, C, and B-6, and amino acids, including valine and leucine.

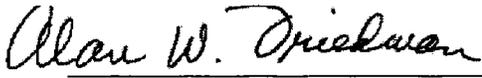
Betty typed her lectures on yellow legal paper with an old (beautiful) Corona typewriter, and her teaching assistant in the early 1990s had to haul her reel-to-reel projector around campus. Yet Betty was open to new ideas. One day, I was in her office as she was typing a lecture. She was complaining because she had run out of white out, so I told her that I thought she would appreciate word processing because one could revise while typing. "Teach me," she said.

Betty was a remarkable person who embraced life in its entirety and cared deeply for humanity. As I waited outside the door while my committee discussed my proposal, Betty approached me. I told her my committee was deciding my fate. Then, I mentioned that the supervisor of my master's thesis and the chairman of my dissertation committee had the same birthday. "Isn't that a coincidence?" I asked. She looked at me and said, "This is what I think about coincidence: every morning, Chief Sitting Bull would go outside, look at the sky, and say, 'It is a good day to die.'" For Betty Haskell, March 25, 2019, was a good day to die.

She is survived by a niece, three grandnieces, one great-great grandniece, and two great grandnephews.



Gregory L. Fenves, President
The University of Texas at Austin



Alan W. Friedman, Secretary
The General Faculty

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professor Charlotte Herzele.