

## EUDOXIA GIRARD MARTIN

1890 - 1977



Eudoxia Girard Martin was born to French immigrant parents, the tenth of eleven children, in 1890 on a farm in Allen County, Indiana. At age 22, she married Leon Martin and lived on his parents' farm her entire married life. She was widowed at age 28, having lost her husband in the influenza epidemic of 1918, and was left with three sons, ages two, four and six.

She moved into Fort Wayne, and became one of the first women to work in a war production plant. After 1½ years she lost her employment to a returning veteran of World War I, and was left destitute with three children and no place to work.

In 1920, she moved to Lafayette, placed her children in an orphan's home, and accepted a position as a live-in domestic with full housekeeping and child-rearing responsibilities. She worked seven days a week and went to night school to acquire secretarial skills. Every Sunday, she walked eight miles to be with her sons in the orphanage. This was her life for five years, after which she received a secretarial position, set up housekeeping and took her oldest son from the orphanage. Two years later she brought the other two sons home.

After being widowed, Eudoxia Girard Martin made the decision to devote her life to insuring that her sons would have opportunities to obtain an education and become successful citizens. She succeeded admirably in her quest, in that all three sons became alumni of Purdue, two of them receiving two degrees each. All three went on to successful careers and lives.

Please note that Eudoxia Girard Martin, a single parent, achieved the goals she held for herself and her sons through the early loss of her husband, through two world wars, through the Great Depression, and through years of college. This remarkable human being overcame all odds and achieved eminent success during the worst periods in American history, times in which it was a major accomplishment just to survive.

Eudoxia Girard Martin worked in only three positions during her career: Secretary in the Tippecanoe County Farm Bureau; Secretary to the Mayor of Lafayette; and Executive Secretary to the Deans of Engineering at Purdue, the last constituting her longest tenure. It can be said, without doubt, that she became one of the best known and most respected and admired women in Lafayette and at Purdue.

After her retirement from Purdue, she continued to love and share her extended family and her community. She passed away peacefully at age eighty-seven, after a lifetime of devotion and dedication to her ideals.

Because of our abiding love for and appreciation of our mother, the sons of Eudoxia Girard Martin have established the Award of the Martin Medallion. The Award shall be made annually to a woman staff member who, in the performance of her duties, has demonstrated those personal qualities of heart, mind and spirit that evince a love for and helpfulness to students, staff and faculty - the qualities that were characteristic of our mother in all of her life's pursuits.

We are honored that Purdue has accepted this award, that it will enshrine our mother's memory, and be an inspiration to future women staff members, particularly to those single mothers who have set out on the life's road that our mother traveled.