

DONNA YOUNKER

FOURTEENTH WILLIAM E. DRAKE LECTURER

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Donna Lee Younker received the Ph.D. degree from The University of Texas in 1964 with Professor William e. Drake. Her dissertation, *Teacher Education in Texas, 1979-1929*, was also signed by H. Bailey Carroll, Chair of the Department of history, George I. Sanchez, Franklin Parker, and H.F. Alves. Three former Drake lecturers were her classmates: Bill Cowart, James Van Patten and Jack Willers. This fourteenth Drake Lecture is written as a tribute to her mentor's life-long admiration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In Drake's *Autobiography* he stated:

His was an authentic sense of social justice, a pragmatic sense of how to make things work. He was a man of action who truly cared about others on the other side of the fence. (pp. 61-62).

Professor Younker explains her shift in focus from FDR to Eleanor as follows:

The President was overwhelmed first by economic restructuring due to the Depression and the impending Second World War. It is in the life of the once shy debutante, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, that a profound sense of social justice and action takes shape. Daily these thoughts expressed in notes were placed in a booklet on his bedside table.

Professor Younker has excelled in all three areas of teaching research and service. For twenty-nine years Professor Younker was responsible for all foundations courses at the University of Central Oklahoma. She has certified numerous elementary teachers in Oklahoma. When she retired she was honored for her professional achievements by the Regents of Higher Education of the State of Oklahoma when they designated her Professor Emeritus with Honor.

She is considered an authority on George S. Counts and contributed "George s. Counts: 1889-1974" to *Higher Education Activists in Academic Profiles in Higher Education* edited by James Van Patten (Mellon Press, 1992). Her publications and presentations are primarily concerning moral education reflecting a Bachelor's degree in political science, *cum laude*, from Baylor University.

Professor Younker is a member of the Philosophy of Education Society and was the first woman president of the Southwest Philosophy of Education Society, now the Society of the Philosophy and History of Education. Her "firsts"

also include being the first woman member of Phi Delta Kappa in Oklahoma.

In the area of community service her community activities have included the presidency of the Edmund Oklahoma DAR, active membership in St. Luke's Methodist Church, and teacher for over thirty years of an Inquiry Class. In retirement her community involvement has increase. Since retiring she has attended a seminar on William Faulkner at the University of Mississippi, participated on television in the University of Central Oklahoma's C.S. Lewis Festival, and in her spare time she is taking an extension course in Hebrew from St. Gregory's College. She is an education consultant to the NAACP Education Division at Herbert Hoover Middle School, an Alzheimers' Advocate in Tulsa working on legislation for patients and caretakers, and has been a Stephen Minister to Alzheimer patients.

Professor Younker paved the way for women in SWPES/SOPHE and has served as a mentor and role model for those women who became members throughout the years. For many years, members enjoyed the company of her late mother, Florence Jett Younker, a lady of grace and charm.

Today Professor Younker lives in Edmund, Oklahoma with her extraordinarily talented and perceptive dog, Henry the Eighth.