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Mrs. Francis Huntington Swett

Mrs. Swett was born Mary Elizabeth Glen in the year 1895 in Baltimore, Maryland, where she spent the greater part of her life until her marriage. She received all her primary education in the Baltimore city schools and graduated from Eastern High School in 1912. She entered teacher training and taught grade school for a number of years, keeping abreast of new developments and new methods of teaching through advanced studies at the John Hopkins University in Homewood. Before terminating her association with the public schools at the outbreak of the First World War, she had been Principal of her school and was recognized as one of the ablest administrators. During the war period she was employed in Washington, D. C., in the purchasing department of one of the United States Government agencies.

It was during this time that she became acquainted with Dr. Swett who was serving in the Army. Dr. Swett had been transferred to Baltimore to the Johns Hopkins Medical School where special investigations on meningitis were being carried out by the Medical Corps under the direction of Dr. Lewis Hill Weed, newly appointed Professor of Anatomy in the Medical School. Dr. Swett and Miss Glen were married in Maine during the summer of 1921 at Lake Pennessewassee where they spent their honeymoon. Following his war stint, Dr. Swett taught anatomy in the Hopkins Medical School. They remained in Baltimore till 1925 when Dr. Swett was appointed Associate Professor of Anatomy at the Vanderbilt Medical School, recently reorganized under the direction of Dr. G. Canby Robinson.

It was at Vanderbilt that Mrs. Swett began to identify herself with all the activities associated with the



Mrs. Frances Huntington Swett—1895-1955 development of a new school. She engaged enthusiastically in all the social functions. She was not only active outside the medical school where she acquired a large circle of friends, but was equally active within the school. From a part-time association with the Department of Anatomy in the role first of chartmaker and tabulator of experimental data, she gradually accepted more and more duties delegated by the department head until ultimately she assumed management of all purchasing and finances of the department. This was more or less an extension of experience gained from her government work during the war.

In 1930 when Dr. Swett was appointed Professor and Chairman of the Department of Anatomy in the newly formed Duke School of Medicine, his wife, already experienced at getting a department underway, assumed a large share of the burden of departmental detail and routine. Her interest in people and in medical students, in particular, which had always been active now became more

intense. It was her great pleasure to chat with students, and, with a few searching questions, discover their troubles. Often with her council the troubles were dissolved before there was any need to bother the professor.

Her love for medical students and their problems must certainly have been a direct inheritance from her mother. Mrs. Glen, after she was widowed, had rented rooms to and boarded medical students from The Hopkins for many years in her home at 1022 North Broadway. Anyone who came under Mrs. Glen's roof was mothered like a waif—cared for, scolded, comforted and helped in many a financial difficulty. Elizabeth Glen early became acquainted with medical students and their problems. Indeed, in a sense she became a reïmbodiment of her mother in her ability to gain the confidence and friendship of thousands of medical students who sought her council over the years.

During her active life at Duke Medical School, Mrs. Swett's interests were not confined to the medical students but included numerous campus and civic affairs. Following the death of her husband, Mrs. Swett was appointed Secretary to the Committee on Admissions, and later as Student Advisor she carried on her close association with the students. In addition she was responsible for handling the Student Rental Equipment Plan, Student Government accounts, and, as one of her special pleasures, she administered the Frances Huntington Swett Memorial Student Loan Fund. This she had been instrumental in starting in a small way before it developed into a memorial fund honoring her husband. Though these activities and interests would be more than enough to fill a lifetime, she found time besides to do countless little things for strangers—things of no great import—but things for which this school is kindly remembered.