



14th President of ARF (1992-93)
Ruth Rockwood

DEATH

Pioneering librarian, teacher dies at 90

Ruth H. Rockwood helped set up libraries all over the state.

By Dorothy Clifford
 DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

Ruth H. Rockwood, a retired professor of library science who helped develop a public library in Leon County and in other counties throughout the state, died Saturday at Tallahassee Memorial Regional Medical Center. She was 90.

"She was eternally young," said son Charles Rockwood, a Florida State University economics professor. "She was the youngest graduate of her class at Wellesley College, I think, and she taught until she was 72, which is longer than most people teach."

A member of the FSU faculty for 26 years, Ruth Rockwood retired in 1979.

"She was a pioneer in the FSU school of library science and in the public-library development throughout the state of Florida," said Mary Ruth Hunt, a colleague and friend for more than four decades.

"She was a wonderful friend who loved to have fun," Hunt said. "She was a conservationist and she



Rockwood

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was a strong woman — a young widow who raised three children by herself. Both of her daughters became librarians."

Rockwood was born and raised in Chicago, where both of her parents were medical doctors. She received her bachelor's degree from Wellesley College in 1927. She received a master's degree in library science from the University of Illinois in 1949 and a doctorate in education from Indiana University in 1960.

Hunt met Rockwood in 1951 when Rockwood came to FSU to spend a year as a visiting professor before serving as a Fulbright lecturer at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. There, she taught prospective librarians and helped establish a professional association of librarians as well as a system of cataloging books for that country.

She was the author of numerous professional and scholarly publications and was an active participant in national and international professional associations. She was also a past president of the Florida Library Association.

Rockwood was hired by the Leon County Commission in the early 1950s to establish a public library. She also had been a consultant to the Florida State Library and had traveled widely in the state to help found additional libraries.

She was a member of Trinity United Methodist Church, the FSU President's Club, the Pilot Club, the Tallahassee Garden Club, the Tallahassee Women's Club and the Sierra Club.

In addition to her son, she is survived by two daughters, Nancy Rockwood Haigh of Winter Park and Alice Rockwood Bethke of Palo Alto, Calif.; a sister, Helen McCalley of Cleveland; four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Trinity United Methodist Church.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Leon County Public Library or to the FSU School of Library and Information Studies.