

Tribute to Dr. Naomi Caroline Chase

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Elementary students will never realize the influence a quiet, unassuming woman has had on their education. But, since her death from cancer on December 17, 1976, elementary teachers, undergraduate and graduate students, curriculum directors, supervisors, parents and authors are recalling the influence of Naomi Chase on English education in the State of Minnesota. Dr. Chase was a professor at the University of Minnesota where she had been a faculty member since 1950.

Her respect for each student as a unique person with abilities and insights to be called forth by the teacher and nurtured to full potential, was evident in her classes, seminars and conversation. Her students learned by experience that this concern and respect for the individual was the key to excellence in teaching.

Visiting her office was always a shortcut to hours of research because she held within her mind a fund of organized, comprehensive information ready to be shared. However, out of respect for the student, this help came only with the asking of the right questions; her views were never imposed.

Her highly successful creative writing workshops and courses brought together teachers with authors of childrens' books in an effort to help these teachers see what made successful writers want to write and what gave them the ability and confidence to do so. Teachers, chiefly from Minnesota, but from the other states and Canada as well, met and grew by working together under her leadership.

The influence of Dr. Chase was also felt throughout the country because of her active involvement and leadership positions

within N.C.T.E. At a recent meeting of the Elementary Section Committee in Urbana, Illinois, a frequent comment was: "Naomi would have known how to put this together to make sense."

To those of us who taught in various capacities at the University of Minnesota, she was always most helpful and generous. Both her ideas and her materials, acquired through years of teaching and research, were always available to be shared. New ideas were never discouraged, but always clarifying help was given.

Her students are found today throughout the United States in hundreds of elementary school classrooms and among the ranks of those who prepare and supervise elementary teachers. Separated though they are geographically, they are one in their praise of and gratitude for Dr. Naomi Caroline Chase.

Our Friends Never Die

Our friends die
but we never lose them
My father, for example,
dead for over thirty years,
is more real to me now
than ever
He has never left my life
the older I grow
the better I know,
the more I understand him.

ELMER F. SUDERMAN