

Isabel Stearns was born in Manchester, New Hampshire, on June 23, 1910. She took her B.A. from Smith College in 1931 and then both her graduate degrees in philosophy from Bryn Mawr—the M.A. in 1933 and the Ph.D. in 1938.

She began her teaching career as an Instructor and soon became an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Smith. She joined the Bryn Mawr Faculty as an Associate Professor of Philosophy in 1944, was promoted to Professor in 1952, and remained in the department until her retirement in May of 1979.

Isabel Stearns was an ideal teacher. She is fondly remembered by all her students, both undergraduate and graduate, for her unflinching dedication to teaching. Every year, at this time of the year, she was as excited about the incoming teaching year as if it were the first year. She was totally devoted to each and every one of her students, whether beginners or in the process of writing their doctoral dissertations. She had for all the students an infinite amount of patience and an inexhaustible supply of wisdom. She fully deserved the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching, which she received in 1979; indeed, it should have been called, in her case, the Lindback Award for "excellent" or "*nec plus ultra*" teaching.

Isabel Stearns was an authority on American Philosophy; she could recite by heart long passages from the works of William James or Charles S. Peirce, and then provide exceedingly original, as well as extremely sound, interpretations of their meanings. To Peirce she devoted many fruitful years; without her labors the present critical edition of Peirce's writings would certainly be much less complete than it is. She was also an excellent scholar on Ancient Philosophy, and one of the very best interpreters of Plato's later dialogues. Every article she published, whether on American Philosophy or on any of her favorite subjects—the philosophical notion of "the person," for example—is marked by her philosophical depth and uncompromising rigor. Of the three possible characteristics of an author's writings which Goethe mentioned to Eckermann—quantity, quality, intensity—the last two are evident in every page that Miss Stearns wrote, and published.

Miss Stearns, Professor Emerita of Philosophy at Bryn Mawr College, died on April 26, 1987, in the Unitarian Universalist House in Germantown, Pennsylvania. As one of her former colleagues in the department of philosophy, and as a close friend and admirer, I would suggest the following words on her epitaph: wise, learned, loyal.