

H-R

June 23, 1997

Ruth Prescott



Herbert L.

Ruth VanBuren Prescott, 84, formerly of Grinnell, died Thursday, June 12, of congestive heart failure and emphysema at Elms Convalescent Hospital, Glendale, Calif.

She had lived in California since 1979, following her 1978 retirement from the Grinnell College administrative staff.

At her request, the body was cremated, and no memorial service was held.

Born Sept. 25, 1912, in Kearney, Neb., she was the daughter of George J. and Eda Cramer VanBuren. She grew up in Iowa and graduated from Monticello High School in 1929 and from Cornell College in 1933. At Cornell, she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, the national honor society.

After several years as a newspaper reporter and editor in Bangor, Maine, and a year as a researcher in the Brown University alumni office in Providence, R.I., she came to Grinnell in 1944 and was associated with Grinnell College until her retirement. During that 34-year period, she held various supervisory titles in public relations, retiring as associate director of college relations and college editor.

Over the years, she produced many award-winning publications, in addition to overseeing a news service and special projects. These included the startup of The Grinnell Magazine, an alumni publication, and serving from its beginning as its managing editor.

Long active in the American College Public Relations Association, she was the director of its eight-state Mid-America District in 1968-69 and was a member of its national board of trustees from 1971 to 1974. She then a member of the organizing board of trustees when it merged with the American Alumni Council in 1974-75 to form the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

She was an accredited member of the Public Relations Society of America and served on its Iowa chapter board of directors. For several years, she was professional adviser of the Grinnell College chapter of Women in Communications, Inc. She also served as a term as president of the Grinnell chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and three times was a chapter delegate to the triennial councils of the national society.

A supporter of civil rights and environmental causes, she was a member of, among others, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Organization for Women, Planned Parenthood, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the Sierra Club and Greenpeace.

In 1934, she married Herbert L. Prescott in Bangor, who became a professor of communications at Grinnell. They were divorced in 1963.

Surviving are her son, Joel of Rexford, N.Y.; her daughter, Jane Glass of Glendale; four grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her