

## JAMES E. ARMSTRONG AWARD

We are nominating **Marion Carlson Hoffing**, who is 101 years young and one of the longest living members of RTAC, for the James E. Armstrong Award. Marion served the organization for many years until her health precluded her attendance. She was a director and part of the social committee of RTAC for many, many years and coordinated the luncheons. She secured raffle prizes, hand-made place-cards for the head table, and arranged for the printing of programs. She was always a major greeter for members. Her late husband Ben transported her and all the materials to the hotels as she never drove. After his death, she took a cab to the hotel & then the staff assisted her to the ballroom. She also was a writer of the greeting cards sent out monthly, and firmly believed in RTAC's mission to honor its elderly members with cards and flowers.

Her teaching of children began when she was almost a child herself. She began her career at the age of 18 at the Margaret Etter Creche as the youngest director of the infant nursery, along with the Little Wanderers Nursery where she developed relationships with youngsters that she still maintains today! Marion has a heart of gold, was always known fondly as "Miss Marion" and still signs her notes with a smiley "0" in Marion—a tradition she began long before smileys were in vogue.

Marion was a physical education and dance teacher with the CPS social center program for years and retired in 1977 as a coordinator from the Physical Education and Recreation Department having given 31 years of service. She was a coordinator of Playground Teachers in the CPS when they served the 88 school sites across the city to organize and supervise youngsters in team sports, table games, arts & crafts, drama, dance and other recreational activities after the regular school day ended. She showed her dedication to the job from the beginning when rather than take a day off from work during her first week on the job, she married her beloved Ben at City Hall on her lunch hour, and hurried back to the LaSalle St. offices to finish the workday.

Marion Carlson Hoffing Nomination for James E. Armstrong Award continued--

Marion taught physical education and recreation at the Presbyterian School of Nursing and she taught ballroom dancing at the Chicago Public Schools in the Friday night social centers—a program she and her dance partner husband created. Mrs. Hoffing had a radio program and then a TV show for a brief period of time teaching etiquette to young people as they prepared for their high school proms. They always wanted the students to be well rounded and prepared. She and Ben attended countless proms and Friday night socials across the city. When they entered the room, Marion had complete control of all the youngsters in the gym—yes, even the tough guys and gals—who found this talented couple a delight to watch! They always just seemed to glide across the dance floor.

Although Marion retired, that did not mean she stopped teaching! She and Ben taught ballroom dancing at Wright Community College and the College of DuPage for over 40 years. They volunteered on Sundays to teach dance at the Copernicus Center on the northwest side of Chicago until she was at least age 90. She now resides at the Alden. Northmoor still carrying on lively conversations and visiting with other residents and staff.

Marion was a member of many civic and professional organizations throughout the years as USO, Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago, Kidney Foundation of IL, Pilot Club, Lighted Schoolhouse Program, Chicago Dance Council, Dance Instructors Association, the Children's Reading Round Table, the IL Health, Physical Education and Recreation Association, and more. She's been a member of the Kappa Chapter, Delta Kappa Gamma Society International that recognizes key women teachers since 1975, and was our president for the 1982-84 biennium. She was an active volunteer with Women in Courts and Detention and helped to secure donations of personal items to incarcerated women. Mrs. Hoffing was inducted into the Chicago Senior Citizen's Hall of Fame in 1987.

Marion never had children of her own, but Ben's kids and so many others that she met in her years teaching and dancing became her "kids." To know her, is to love her, is certainly a truism for Miss Marion. We eagerly submit the name and accomplishments of Mrs. Marion Carlson. Hoffing to the selection committee for consideration for the James E. Armstrong Award at RTAC this year. We believe it would be most fitting to honor Mrs. Hoffing on the organization's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Miss Marion consents to this nomination and would make plans to attend—her health permitting—on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this nomination for a most deserving and long term member of the Retired Teachers Association of Chicago.