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Gertrude Keir

Miss Gertrude Keir died quite unexpectedly on 16 September, 1985. Known to countless undergraduates and postgraduates of the Department of Psychology at University College

London, she will be sadly missed. A graduate of St Andrews, she was an Assistant lecturer in Philosophy at Bangor for a short period before moving to the London School of Economics to study what was then called 'Social Biology'. Miss Keir subsequently worked at both the Maudsley and the West London Hospitals before taking up a post in the Ministry of Health. Then, after three years work in the county of Surrey, she took up a post as Assistant Lecturer at UCL in 1946. She retired in 1975 as Senior Lecturer.

With Professor Burt's support, she established the professional training course for educational psychologists which continues to the present time. A member of many committees, Miss Keir made a particular and valued contribution, over many years, to the British Psychological Society's Training Committee and to the Education Committee and the Council of the Institute for the Scientific Study of Delinquency (ISTD). Her professional concerns were largely focussed on remedial education, for which she received an international reputation. At the time of her death, she was still working on tests of literacy and numeracy for the Prison Service. Her publications included papers on the war time evacuation of children, the influence of the cinema, a history of the Child Guidance Service and a study of children from the island of Tristan da Cunha who were temporarily located in this country.

Miss Keir will be remembered and respected for her directness of manner and forthrightness of expression. She also expected nothing but the best from students, and usually got it. It was not unusual (even 30 years ago) for trainee educational psychologists to be working under her direction in the evenings and on Saturday mornings, providing a free remedial service for adolescents who were at work during the day. Although there has been much change and development in training since those days, the need to maintain high standards with integrity which she always expounded, remains. Her concern for children and the development of better psychological services in education will not be forgotten.

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