

**PRESENTATION OF CITATION FOR
1976 ALUMNUS OF HONOUR
AT THE HOMECOMING OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
TO MISS HELEN M. MCKERCHER**

**by Mr. Peter Anderson
President U. of G. Alumni Ass'n**

Helen May McKercher has, throughout her working life, charted an unwavering course that involved service to people. Her simple, straightforward philosophy, "Take people from where they are to as far as they can go," has been her formula for a distinguished career in Home Economics Extension.

During that career her name became a household word with Ontario farm families. She has been described as "Diplomat," "Untiring Leader," "Tower of Strength," "Subtle But Firm Director," "Champion of Women's Rights" and most importantly to her—"A Friend."

Born October 4, 1911, Miss McKercher, comes from a Huron County farm near Seaforth. After graduating from Macdonald Institute in 1930, she interned in dietetics at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and the Ottawa Civic Hospital. In 1931 she joined the Women's Institute Branch of the Ontario Department of Agriculture and was Home Economist for the Counties of Wellington, Dufferin, Middlesex and Perth.

In 1943 she enlisted in the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service as one of four dietitians acting as advisors on food preparation for all Canadian naval ships and establishments. Responsible for feeding 20,000 men, she performed a feat that has possible merit for inclusion in the Guinness Book of Records.

Discharged as a Lieutenant in 1945, Miss McKercher returned to the Department of Agriculture as County Home Economist for Welland, Lincoln and Haldimand. A year later she enrolled at Cornell University, where she completed her B.Sc. degree in Foods and Nutrition and her M.Sc. in Extension Education. In 1948 she returned to the Ontario Department of Agriculture and spent two years as Supervisor of Home Economics Education. In 1951 Miss McKercher joined the Canada Department of Fisheries where she became Chief of Consumer Services.

She returned to the Ontario Department of Agriculture as Director of the Home Economics Branch in 1956. After 20 years in this capacity she will retire this month with a proud total of 36 years of service to Ontario people.

Miss McKercher is Honorary President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario and an Honorary Life Member of the Canadian Society of Rural Extension; a Life Member of the Associated Country Women of the World, and the Macdonald Institute Alumni Association; Past President of the Canadian Agricultural Extension Council, and a member of the Ontario and Canadian Dietetic Associations and the Canadian and Toronto Home Economics Associations. In 1967 she was awarded the Centennial Medal in recognition of valuable service to the nation. She was a founding member of the Alma Mater Fund's Century Club and has served as Class Agent and Editor of her class newsletter.



Miss McKercher receiving citation from President Peter Anderson, University of Guelph Alumni Association.



Ready for a day at the Erland Lee Home.



Final dictation to secretary Margaret Roberts.