

# WHO'S WHO



MIRIAM LIDSTER

Miriam Lidster has fun with folk dance. She enjoys the excitement of the people and their music. She seems to sparkle as she whirls through a tarantella, a laendler, or a polka, and anyone within teaching range of her classes sparkles too, with the special zest and feeling for dance that is part of her.

Her bounding energy and tireless work in the folk dance movement have won her friends and praise the world over. Miriam says, laughingly, that when she leaves a folk dance festival "it takes an hour and a half just to get out the door there are so many people to say good-by to."

She first began to dance as a hobby and took modern dance all through her college years at Oregon State, where she minored in physical education. She had her first glimpse of folk dance when she saw several ethnic dance groups perform in New York City, where she had gone to continue her studies and get her Master's Degree in Dance Education, at New York University. Here she danced with Martha Graham, Louis Horst and

## MIRIAM LIDSTER (continued)

Doris Humphrey, while specializing in dance studies under Martha Hill, now Director of Dance at Juilliard.

Her first teaching assignment came in 1938 when she accepted a position at LaCrosse State University, Wisconsin, where she was to teach modern and social dance, tap, and for the first time, folk dance.

There is a laugh in her eyes and a smile in her voice as she recalls that there in the Midwest all men on the football squads were required to participate in some form of dance activity, which she had to teach.

She first came to California three years later to teach the dance program at C.K. MacClatchy High School in Sacramento. Here she and Carol Squires organized a Folk Dance group at the YWCA, and after two workshops with Lloyd Shaw, the driving force of the square dance movement, a square dance exhibition group was formed within the high school.

In the summer of 1940 she again danced with her friends, Louis Horst, Martha Graham, and many others, at Bennington, where the entire summer program was devoted to dance.

She joined the faculty of Stanford University in 1942, where she was to teach courses in the history, philosophy, modern dance, and choreography, as well as one class in folk dance. In the winter of 1942 she organized the student group that was to become the STANFORD FOLK DANCERS, now one of the oldest active organizations in the Peninsula Folk Dance Council.

Though "folk dance is for fun", Miriam has worked hard in the Folk Dance Federation. As Director of Extension she welcomed new clubs into the Federation and with her flair for organization, helped many clubs build membership and stability. Her skills in choreography and knowledge of culture in dance made her a definite asset to the Federation Research Committee.

Her energies have been bent toward many Folk Dance Federation activities, and she has been a regular attendant at the University of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp since its inception. In 1950 she presented the "heritage of present day folk dance" and beginning in

## MIRIAM LIDSTER (continued)

1954 she gave a course in "Fundamentals of Motion". One summer's absence in 1959 broke the perfect attendance, but she came back after her year's sabbatical with dances from Israel and taught during the 1960 and 1961 summer camps. She has been a constant member of the Research Committee that gives of its "free" time during folk dance camp. In 1955, 1956, and 1957 she taught Fundamentals of Movement and a Teaching Progressions course at the University of California Folk Dance Camp at Santa Barbara. Her son and husband accompanied her to Santa Barbara and helped with program planning and evening entertainment. As a dance educator she has been extremely interested in the Teacher Training Program sponsored by the Folk Dance Federation, and participated in the Merced-1959, Lodi-1960, Oakland-1960, and San Francisco 1962 training sessions.

Any time she has an opportunity to teach "teachers" she is particularly happy, and loved presenting folk dance progressions for three summers 1960-1962 at the Physical Education Workshop for Secondary Teachers, CAIPER, at Cal-Poly. A "Creativity" Workshop for elementary school teachers, summer 1961, and teaching in an Elementary School Physical Education Workshop at San Jose to her are a delight. This summer she will direct and teach in a music and dance workshop at Stanford, "Eighteenth Century to Contemporary".

As assistant Professor of Dance at Stanford she spends little time in the well-organized clutter of her office in the Women's P.E. Department. Her many activities and interests, both in and out of the Stanford Community keep her moving in a flurry of activity that gets things done.

"I'm interested in all facets of dance," says Miriam, "but my main professional interest is education in dance." A member of the faculty in both the Stanford Department of Physical Education for Women and the Stanford School of Education, she takes special pride in her work as a member of the Elementary School Committee. She is responsible for planning the Elementary School Program in Physical Education as well as teaching a required education course, Dance in Secondary Schools.

MIRIAM LIDSTER (concluded)

Her interest in dance education has led her into extensive work in dance with the national and state organizations of the Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Because there is a need for such work and because she was "just interested" Miriam formulated the idea for a study of dance in its own cultural area which would relate its modern cultural role to its historical role. This resulted in a world tour for research, a soon-to-be published book, and back at Stanford, a special seminar for seniors entitled "Dance Patterns and Culture."

Living on the Stanford Campus with her husband, Chuck, and son, Mike, 20, Miriam takes a real interest in the students and the affairs of the community. For the past few years the Lidsters have participated in the "Home-Stay" Program designed to help orient Stanford's foreign students to American by having them spend several weeks with an American family before the school year begins.

During the school year the Lidsters enjoy entertaining students in their comfortable home atop one of Stanford's hills. Chuck, who is a real estate broker and appraiser, designed the house and supervised its construction. The close-knit family enjoys doing things together, and Mike, who is studying photography at nearby Foothill College, has "just fallen into folk dance." He frequently helps his mother demonstrate dances in her classes at Stanford and at Federation Teaching Institutes.

One of Miriam's pet projects is sponsoring the special Folk Dance Institutes held at Stanford each autumn. The special sessions are open to the public and feature teachers such as Anatol Joukowsky and Dennis Boxell who are well known for their specialization in the dance of one particular cultural area.

Whether lecturing on the philosophy of dance, teaching a group of beginners the rudiments of folk dance, presiding over a Federation Teachers' Institute, or wearing a name card labeling her "MAMA" at a gathering of foreign students in her home, she is completely at ease and completely herself.

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