



Clara Shoemaker

June 20, 1921 - September 30, 2009

Clara Brink Shoemaker died peacefully in her sleep on Sept. 30, at home in Corvallis. She was born in Rolde, The Netherlands, in 1921, the younger daughter of a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church. She excelled at school, and her parents, who were very supportive of their children's education, moved to Leiden so she and her sister could attend university. Awarded a scholarship, she studied Chemistry and Physics, and was active in student societies. Although her education was disrupted by the German occupation during World War II, she completed her PhD, in x-ray crystallography, in 1950. She held research posts in both Leiden and Oxford and, in 1953, took up a position as research associate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She worked there under the supervision of Professor David Shoemaker, forming a research partnership which was to last for forty years. In 1955 they married, and a year later had a son, Robert. The family moved to Lexington, Massachusetts, and she continued her research at MIT while raising their son. In 1970, David was appointed Chairman of the Chemistry Department at Oregon State University and they moved to Corvallis. Clara became a research professor, and the two continued to travel to international scientific conferences, notably in China. They retired in 1984. David died in 1995, shortly after their 40th wedding anniversary, and in 1999 Clara was the first homeowner to move into Stoneybrook retirement village in southwest Corvallis. There, she continued to engage in activities she had enjoyed throughout her life: reading, walking and identifying wildflowers

(particularly in McDonald Forest), and travelling. Her many friends came from the OSU Chemistry Department, the Dutch Club, Stoneybrook Village, and the League of Women Voters, which recently commemorated her 50 years of membership.

In June 2009 she was diagnosed with cancer, an illness which she faced with remarkable courage.

She is survived by her son Robert, of Sheffield, England, and a grandson, Roland, a student at Reed College in Portland. A celebration of her life will be held at a later date.

Contributions in her memory may be made to the Reed College Annual Fund for Financial Aid for Students, 3203 SE Woodstock Blvd., Portland, OR, 97202-8199.