



Dorothy C. Adkins

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(1912–1975)

Dorothy Christina Adkins, third child of George and Pearl Adkins, was born in Atlanta, Ohio on April 6, 1912. She died on December 19, 1975 at her home in Plain City, Ohio, where she had retired in June, 1974 for health reasons. Private burial services were held at Spring Lawn Cemetery, Williamsport, Ohio. Her father was a successful business man and farmer; her mother had been a school teacher. The interests and abilities of both parents are reflected in their daughter's career as a teacher and administrator.

Dorothy attended the public schools of Atlanta, graduating from high school in 1927. For the next year she studied violin at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. She decided to give up a professional career in music but retained a deep and sophisticated interest in music all her life. Dorothy then entered Ohio State University to study mathematics and psychology. She was awarded the B.S. degree in 1931, and the Ph.D. in 1937.

Dr. Adkins' career in psychology covered nearly forty years, beginning while she was a graduate student at Ohio State as a research assistant and later as a teaching assistant. From 1936 to 1940 she was an assistant to the Board of Examinations and later Research Associate in the Department of Psychology at the University of Chicago. Both these assignments involved test development and research on psychometric methods. From 1940 to 1944 she was at first Assistant Chief and then Chief of a Research and Test Development section of the U.S. Social Security Board in Washington, D. C. From 1940 to 1948 Dr. Adkins was a member of the staff of the U.S. Civil Service Commission in Washington, completing her service there as Head of the Test Development Section.

In 1948 she decided to return to academic work and became Professor of Psychology at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Only two years later Dr. Adkins became chairman of the department, serving until January, 1961, when she was on leave of absence in Brazil until August, 1961. Returning to Chapel Hill, she remained a Professor of Psychology until June, 1965.

Upon returning from a trip to the Orient in 1968, Dr. Adkins stopped for a visit with friends in Hawaii. She loved the Islands, and when the opportunity to go to the University of Hawaii as a Professor of Educational Psychology with interesting research opportunities was offered, she accepted. A year later she was made Director of the Center for Research in Early Childhood Education. Dr. Adkins was very busy and happy professionally at this time. It seemed as if she might stay in Hawaii the rest of her life, but in less than ten years complicated health problems indicated that she should take an early retirement.

Dr. Adkins served in many consulting roles in addition to the full-time positions listed above. From 1956 to 1958 she was a Merit System Supervisor for the North Carolina Merit System and later was a consultant to the N. C. Merit System and the N. C. State Personnel Board. She also had special assignments for the Governments of the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, the State of Georgia, and Thailand.

From 1938 to 1964, Dr. Adkins carried out many editorial assignments for *Psychometrika*, *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *Educational Perspectives*, and *Public Personnel Review*. The most extensive of these services was as Managing Editor of *Psychometrika* from 1950–1956.

Dorothy Adkins was more than just a member of the professional organizations to which she belonged, for she gave a great deal of her time and creative efforts to them. She was president of the Psychometric Society (1949–1950), Member of its Board of Trustees (1969–1972), and Representative on its Inter-Association Council on Test Reviewing (1969–1972). She was Secretary-Treasurer of the Division on Evaluation and Measurement of the American Psychological Association (1949–1951) and President of that Division (1952–1953). She was Recording Secretary and Member of the Board of Directors of the American Psychological Association (1949–1951) and President of the North Carolina Psychological Association (1951–1952).

She was an excellent administrator, as is evident from many of the facts cited above. She liked work involving supervision and administration, and felt that administrative duties had to be a part of her life.

Dr. Adkins was productive in research; her teaching ability was highly regarded by her students and colleagues. Her reputation as an excellent teacher was achieved through her ability to think straight and to develop an idea with order and precision, as well as through her dedication of many hours to preparing her lectures and class material. The years she spent constructing test items at many levels of difficulty were an important influence on her teaching. Dr. Adkins devoted the same critical study to preparing the many lectures and reports for all the meetings in which she participated. She was never unprepared.

The list of her publications is too long to reproduce here. A complete listing can be found in the Archives of the History of Psychology, University of Akron, Akron, Ohio.

Many readers of *Psychometrika* have known of Dorothy Adkins' work in psychology for a long time. But I should like to write about another Dorothy Adkins whom I knew for forty years, with whom I traveled in many countries, and with whom I went to plays, concerts, parties, and games. She was always busy, but she was one of the most compassionate people I have ever known. If her friends were sick she went to see them, took them something special she had cooked, or some flowers from her yard. She had many friends and found time to entertain them in her home—big parties

and little parties—and they were all friendly and gay. Did anyone ever serve you a hickory nut cake—nuts in it that she cracked and cake made from scratch? Dorothy did that.

She had two wonderful Weimaraner dogs to whom she was devoted and who were loyal to her. She and I drove Marty (Martin Luther Saint Francis) to California and put him on a plane to Honolulu. When she came back to Ohio in 1974, she brought the dogs with her, and they are still there.

She loved Chapel Hill and planned to move back here when she retired from the University of Hawaii. But she became so ill that she had to take an earlier retirement than she had planned, so she went to Plain City to be near her family.

Many of us were fortunate to know her for her contributions to our personal lives. All of us have benefitted from her many and varied professional contributions.

Thelma G. Thurstone