

book succeeds in offering much stimulation. However, in her attempt to synthesize disparate points of views and to see these complex matters in their entirety, Miss Webber fails to achieve her own clear-sighted 'I.'

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Jonathan Goldberg

#### IN MEMORIAM

### *Ruth Wedgwood Kennedy*

**R**UTH WEDGWOOD KENNEDY, Professor Emeritus at Smith College and a distinguished historian of Italian Renaissance Art, died in Boston on November 30, 1968. Vitaly associated with the Department at Smith from the mid-twenties when she assisted her husband Clarence Kennedy with his courses until, and indeed beyond, her official retirement in 1961, she established a high reputation among Smith students of nearly four decades as a beloved and pre-eminent teacher, erudite, inspiring, and humane, and one who wore her great learning with disarming lightness. For her dedicated teaching both at Smith and in Italy, her able scholarship, and her passionate concern for every aspect of Italian culture, she was admired and honored in this country and abroad. From 1958 until her death she was an active and valued member of the editorial board of *Renaissance News* and *Quarterly*, which herewith records its gratitude for ten years of wise counsel.

The history of art was not at first her chosen subject. After two years at Berkeley—this was her independent effort to avoid being a provincial Easterner and an early sign of a breadth of view maintained all her life—she graduated in 1919, Phi Beta Kappa, from Radcliffe with a *magna cum laude* in Economics and during three of the next four years, which included a year at Oxford where she received a Diploma in Economics with first-class honors, she taught this subject at Smith. But already her marriage in 1921 to Clarence Kennedy, who was soon to acquire an international reputation as a highly gifted and scholarly photographer of Greek and Italian Renaissance sculpture, marked her inner conversion to the history of Italian art. She spent three successive summers in Greece with her husband—valuable propaedeutic for her later studies—and in 1929 President Neilson of Smith sent them to Florence for three years where they established the Smith College Graduate

Program abroad, a program in which they trained a number of young women who have since served the history of art with distinction. It was in these fruitful years, during one of which she was a Guggenheim Fellow, that she laid the real foundation for her great knowledge of Italian art and did the preparatory work for her beautiful and thoughtful book on Alesso Baldovinetti, published in 1938. On her return she was at once actively engaged as lecturer in art at Smith, but in the years that followed, before and after the last world war, she was also lecturer for a year each at Springfield College, at the Toledo Museum of Art, and at Wellesley. Not only were her talents as teacher widely acknowledged, but she was also a scholar of recognized authority, serving as a member of the editorial boards of *Renaissance Quarterly*, *Art in America*, and the *Art Bulletin*. She was early honored by a fellowship from the American Philosophical Society and in recent years by the coveted invitation to be, with her husband, a Resident Art Historian at the American Academy in Rome in 1960–61.

Ruth Kennedy made her reputation as a scholar with her *Baldovinetti*. She not only placed this charming and hitherto underestimated artist securely in the pattern of Florentine painting from 1450 to 1475, defining the special quality and beauty of his art as something briefly transitory and dependent on a delicate balance of old beliefs and new vision, but she also reconstructed with great sensitivity the artistic complexity and richness of the whole period and milieu in which he worked. She wrote essays of great urbanity and distinction, sometimes as introductions to books on various aspects of Italian art. The beautiful introduction, for instance, to her *Renaissance Painter's Garden* (Oxford University Press, 1948) not only shows (as do her comments on the plates which are chiefly flower details of Renaissance paintings) a fond familiarity with Italian plants and flowers and with the beauty of the Italian countryside, but also knowledge of the relation of Italian horticulture to that of antiquity. Earlier she had written a thoughtful essay, published with great artistry as a pamphlet by her husband's Cantina Press in Northampton, on the *Idea of Originality in the Italian Renaissance*. The relation between tradition and innovation in art fascinated her and her 'Novelty and Tradition in Italian Art,' the Katherine Asher Engel Lecture given at Smith in 1962, is a perceptive study of Titian's debt to his contemporaries and the character of his own originality. Her last published writing was her fine essay on Francesco Laurana in a book for which Clarence Kennedy provided exquisite photographs of three of

Laurana's incomparable portrait busts. The many book reviews which she wrote on subjects ranging widely over the field of Italian art testify alike to her broad mastery of the field and to her wise and humane scholarship.

During the last years of her life after retirement she prepared a series of lectures on tape, chiefly on Titian, with synchronized slides, designed for general audiences. She had always believed passionately in the sharing of knowledge, and several years ago she gave her voluminous and valuable notes on Titian gathered over a decade to Michelangelo Muraro, with whom she had hoped to collaborate on a book, Muraro being also sympathetic to the idea of making knowledge widely available. Her faith in education as well as her learning tempered by wisdom and her enthusiasm for art were her constant legacy to her students. She believed that the Summer School of Italian Studies which she and her husband inaugurated (the idea caught fire at Smith) was perhaps her most valuable single contribution to education. The standards she set herself in the classroom were always lofty and always unswervingly maintained, yet one may well believe that in Florence and Venice, those well-loved Italian cities where the greatest schools of Renaissance art had flourished and where she knew intimately every step of the way, her powers as a teacher both early and late in her life found their finest fulfillment.

[Rensselaer W. Lee]

## Conferences

THE NEW YORK CITY RENAISSANCE CLUB held its spring meeting on April 8 at the home of Richard Harrier (35 W. 9th St.). The speaker was David Hicks (New York U) who presented a historical consideration of San Bernardino of Siena.

THE RENAISSANCE SEMINAR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO held its fourth session for the year 1968-69 on February 18. Walter Ong, s.j. (St. Louis U) spoke on 'The Humanities Then and Now: Reflections on Current Crises and Renaissance Antecedents.'