

Who Are These People and Why Was an Award Named After Them? Grace Frysinger

Anna-Mae Kobbe, Ph.D. (MO), Past President, 1984-1985

The **NEAFCS Grace Frysinger Fellowship** is named in honor of a fascinating woman I think most of us would have seen as a pioneer in home economics and a true advocate for Extension home economics work. Writings portray her as innovative and a catalyst for change. It is fitting that we continue to honor her for her influence in organizing our professional association.

A number of references provide a glimpse of Miss Grace Frysinger and her leadership at USDA-Extension. Writings by Maxine Reeves, NAEHE/NEAFCS Past President (1967) and the official history of the National Extension Homemakers Council (NEHC), written by Charline J. Warren give us a snapshot of Miss Frysinger's work.

Prior to 1952, USDA-Extension had a Division of Field Coordination with four senior home economists representing Federal Extension. These "field agents" were assigned to a region of the country. According to the NEHC history, they "worked with state leaders and county agents to extend home economics education." Miss Frysinger was the field agent for the North Central Region.

Both histories clearly give Miss Frysinger credit for having a vision of a national professional organization of home economists and an organization of Extension Homemakers. In 1933, she asked Clara Brian, home advisor in McLean County, Illinois to organize a meeting of home demonstration agents to consider an organization of a National Home Demonstration Agents' Association (NHDA). Miss Frysinger also suggested an Advisory Council be organized for the NHDA, so in 1946 the first council was formed.

In the early 1930's Miss Frysinger encouraged the idea of an organization of "rural women's groups" that would eventually be called the National Extension Homemakers Council. After Miss Frysinger helped organize NEHC, she served as the first USDA Advisor to the Council; a position she held from 1936-1945.

Miss Frysinger's leadership in creating a professional organization that provides professional development for Extension family and consumer sciences professionals may make her a candidate for title, "Mother of NEAFCS". I'll bet she would be excited to know that 75 years later, NEAFCS is celebrating a rich history and preparing for a bright future.

N.E.H.C. Advisors from the Federal Extension Service



Miss Grace Frysinger
Sr. Home Economics
1934—36

Grace Frysinger, the "Mother of NEAFCS"