

MARION TALBOT

**NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME**

By Diane Schultz Silvestro

NOMINEE'S NAME: Marion Talbot

NOMINEE'S TITLE: Educator and University Administrator

(example: Suffragist, Author, Political Activist, Scientist, Explorer, etc.)

FOR WHAT ACHIEVEMENT(S) IS THE NOMINEE BEST KNOWN?

Co-organized the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, the first association of college and university trained women in the world.

Initiated the Conference of Deans of Women in the Middle West to professionalize women in education.

DATE OF BIRTH: July 31, 1858

DATE OF DEATH: October 20, 1948

TITLE/OCCUPATION OF SUBMITTER: Member, American Association of Women, Buffalo (New York) Branch

AFFILIATION/ASSOCIATION TO NOMINEE: None

(example: friend, colleague, student, employee, relative, etc.)

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Please provide essential biographical information on this page only. Essential biographical information includes education/training, professional/work history, major accomplishments and or/contributions, honors and awards received. Be sure to include complete citations of sources of biographical information (reference books, periodicals, etc. You may use the "*Sources of Biographical Information*" field below for sources. Do not attach another bio, resume, or article as a substitute for using this form.

1858 Born July 31, to Israel Tisdale Talbot and Emily Fairbanks Talbot.

1880 Earned A.B. (Bachelor of Arts), Boston University.

1881-1882 Organized Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) with her mother Emily, Ellen Richards, and several other women.

1881-1894 First secretary of ACA.

- 1882 Earned Master's degree, Boston University.
- 1888 Earned S.B. (Bachelor of Science). Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Wrote dissertation/thesis: *The Determination of Organic Matter in Air*.
- 1890-1892 Instructor in domestic science at Wellesley, taught germ theory and dietetics.
- 1892 Dean of undergraduate women and assistant professor of sanitary science at University of Chicago; <sup>also</sup> taught in the Department of Social Science and Anthropology.
- 1893 Published book: *The History, Aims, and Methods of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae*, Chicago.
- 1895 Dean of graduate women at University of Chicago promoted to associate professor.
- 1895-1897 President of ACA.
- 1901 Helped establish Women's Union to unite women of University of Chicago for the promotion of their common interests.
- 1902 Planned a meeting with four other women for Conference of Deans and Advisors of Women of the Middle West.
- 1903 Appointed to Committee on Permanent Organization with two others at Conference of Deans and Advisors of Women of the Middle West to present names of those who should plan a permanent organization.
- 1904 Established Department of Household Administration at University of Chicago with Alice Freeman Palmer.
- 1905 Earned rank of professor in department of household administration at University of Chicago.
- 1910 Published book: *The Education of Women* (University of Chicago Press).
- 1912 Published book: *The Modern Household*, co-author Sophonisba Breckenridge (Whitcomb & Barrows).
- 1912 Published book: *House Sanitation: A manual for housekeepers* (Whitcomb & Barrows).
- 1918 Published book: *History of the Chicago Association of Collegiate Alumnae 1888-1917* (Chicago Association of Collegiate Alumnae) Chicago.

- 1925 Retired from University of Chicago. 1927-1932 Served two terms as acting president of Constantinople Women's College in Turkey.
- 1931 Published book: *The History of the American Association of University Women 1881-1931*, co-author Lois Rosenberry (Houghton & Mifflin).
- 1936 Published book: *More Than Lore: Reminiscences of Marion Talbot* (University of Chicago Press).
- 1948 Died October 20 in Chicago at 90 years old of chronic myocarditis.

Unspecified dates: Member of Board of Visitors of Wellesley College; President of Massachusetts Society for the University Education of Women; Alumni trustee of Boston University.

For questions 1 through 3, Please do not repeat the biographical information given in the previous section. Please put the nominee's accomplishments in context; show how they are relevant and valuable to society.

1: Describe ways nominee's contributions have been of the greatest value for the development of the United States of America (Nominees who are not leaders in their field of accomplishment will not be selected).

Marion Talbot played a major role in the Progressive Era (1880s to the 1920s), the period in our history of a wide range of economic, political, social, and moral reforms. Her contributions in organizing, teaching, curriculum development, writing, and mentoring, plus her generous support of colleagues' efforts not only changed the lives of women in her time but continue today.

Emily Talbot, Marion's mother, encouraged Marion and MIT professor Ellen Swallow Richards in organizing the first organizational meeting of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) on 28 November 1881. At the planning meeting of 17 women representing 8 institutions, Alice Freeman (Palmer) made a motion "that a meeting be called for the purpose of organizing an association of women college graduates." This was unanimously carried. The ACA was established in Boston with Talbot as secretary. Sixty-five women attended the first meeting in 1882. This was the first association of college and university trained women in the world.

After teaching at Wellesley 1890-1892, Talbot accepted a position in 1892 as dean of undergraduate women and assistant professor of sanitary science at the University of Chicago at the invitation of Alice Freeman Palmer, former president of Wellesley, Professor of History and Dean (of Women) in the Graduate School at the University of Chicago. When Palmer resigned in 1895, Talbot was named dean of women and promoted to associate professor. She fostered a supportive environment for women scholars; her efforts united women in their quest for higher education, personal satisfaction and the betterment of society as a whole.

In the 1890s, the position of dean of women proliferated. As a group, they can be described as professional women who were both administrators and scholars, highly-educated in a variety of disciplines, predominantly unmarried, and active in social and political causes of the era. At the turn of the century, there were many individuals acting as deans of women; they learned on the job, using their own experiences and common sense. The early deans were concerned about issues of both control and protection of students. By 1902 the dean of women position had proliferated enough to warrant collective professional discussion. Talbot sought to professionalize deans of women in 1902 by organizing, with four other women, the 1903 Conference of Deans of Women of the Middle West as she did through the formation of the ACA.

2: Describe significant national or global impact of nominee's achievements. Quantify the answer, where possible. (Individuals whose contributions are local or regional will not qualify.)

The ACA established guidelines for eligibility to membership stating that the power of the Association lies in the help it may give toward lifting up and unifying standards of education in the country at large. Historically it used its exclusivity as a tool for change, maintaining an approved list of colleges and universities meeting its criteria. Members were inducted only if their institutions were on the approved list; they were required to have programs and policies that benefited women students, high academic standards and after 1908, an active and legitimate dean of women position. The ACA was a constant source of advocacy for and responses to critics of women's participation in higher education. In 1889, the ACA and the Western Association of Collegiate Alumnae merged, then in 1921, the ACA merged with the Southern Association of College Women to become the American Association of University Women (AAUW).

In 1904 Talbot, with Alice Freeman Palmer, established the Department of Household Administration at the University of Chicago and led female members of the University community in establishing their academic and social places on campus. Throughout her own career in Household Administration, Talbot was called upon to recommend qualified persons in the field, and her opinions were frequently solicited regarding curriculum and other theoretical and academic dimensions of this work. Talbot published extensively many of her books may be read online.

Talbot was one of five women who, in 1902, planned a conference held in 1903; eighteen women attended the Conference of Deans of Women of the Middle West. They met to share experience and expertise, generate a collective voice, compare work situations and for support and networking. For nearly 20 years, similar groups held at least 20 regular professional meetings they called conferences of deans of women. Eventually there were seven different conferences for deans of women, differentiated by specialization and affiliation. Some Conferences of Deans of Women were held independently (some in conjunction with ACA conventions) although quite independently of it, and some in conjunction with other organizations spurred by the convenience of having to travel only once to attend two meetings.

After Talbot's retirement from the University of Chicago in 1925 she served two terms as acting president of Constantinople Women's College in Turkey. A 1914 New York Times item states that the college offered a collegiate course of study and more than 275 women had graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree since 1890. The language is English; the curriculum corresponds to that of Wellesley or Vassar, the life of the students is in every respect like that of students in our colleges of the Western World.

3: Present evidence nominee's achievements have (or will have) enduring value. Where applicable focus your comments on change that has been created and how that change is expected to last over time.

Marion Talbot died in Chicago on 20 October 1948 at ninety years of age from chronic myocarditis. Her legacy lives on through AAUW's network of nearly 100,000 members, 1,000 branches, and 500 university/college partners. Members have examined and taken positions on fundamental issues of the day – educational, social, economic, and political, and have long influenced legislative debate on critical issues pertinent to women, girls, and families. Each year AAUW provides millions of dollars in fellowships, grants, and awards for outstanding women and community action projects, in fact, the largest non-government grantor. Pioneering research on women, girls, and education is also funded. The Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF) works to combat sex discrimination in higher education and workplaces through campus outreach programs, an online resource library and research reports. LAF also provides support to workplace sex discrimination cases. Talbot's achievements will always have enduring value through the continuing work of AAUW in seeking equity for women and girls.

Talbot's prestige as co-founder of the ACA, a leader at the University of Chicago, and an organizer of the 1903 Conference of Deans of Women of the Middle West justifiably emphasized her leadership role in the professionalism of deans of women. Successor organizations went by different names over the course of the twentieth century, the National Association of Deans of Women (NADW), the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors (NAWDAC), and the National Association of Women in Education (NAWE). While this was not a linear progression, there is no question of their impact on the professionalization of women in education and Talbot's influence.

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could retrieve this item was by using [www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com); put *Guide to the Marion Talbot Papers 1854-1948* in search line. Search result is: ICU.SPCL.TALBOT

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