

It was a pleasure to have known Marlowe Sherwood

*Excerpts from a eulogy delivered
by Carolyn McHenry Elwess, '71*

It is a privilege for me to pay tribute to my sister alumna and dear friend Marlowe Sherwood. Marlowe, who lost her valiant battle with cancer on May 3, 2002, embodied all the highest principles of alumni spirit and participation and was an unfailing advocate of both the University and its alumni. Many of you will remember her fourteen years as alumni director, but her commitment went farther than that; at the time of her death, she had been involved with Park alumni for nearly forty years.

Marlowe's first taste of Park University was during 1946-1947 when she and her husband, **Paul Sherwood, '47**, served as house parents at Woodward Hall while Paul finished his degree. Years later Marlowe returned to Park as an adult student and graduated in 1963 with a degree in Art, magna cum laude. After her graduation, she was elected to the Executive Council of the Alumni Association and in 1966 volunteered to edit the *Alumniad*. The school was wise enough to hire her as alumni director in 1969 and she held that position full time, part time or voluntarily until her retirement in 1985. Even then she willingly gave her time when needed, serving as interim director for several months in 1989. Marlowe's term on the Alumni Council was renewed time and time again until she stepped down so others could serve; even so, the council would not let her go and named her historian of the Alumni Association in 1998. True to her nature, she was still active until a month before her death, working with the awards committee and helping to edit the *Alumniad*. Marlowe was also a member in long standing of the Park University Friends of the Library and held the office of treasurer of the Park University Historical Society since it was formed in 1984.

Throughout all of her labors, Marlowe was content to stay in the background, concentrating her efforts to reward others who deserved recognition. When the alumni honored her as a Distinguished Alumna in 1980, the highest award given by the association,



The above drawing of Marlowe Sherwood was created by the late Vincent Campanella, Park University professor emeritus of art and distinguished artist in residence.

they surprised her, fully aware that she would have tried to talk them out of it if she had known. In addition to organizing alumni weekends, maintaining correspondence with hundreds of alumni, editing and writing most of the *Alumniad*, treating reunion classes with special care, and performing the multitude of other tasks required of her position, she made it a point to become involved with students.

She told us about Park history, attended our events, advised us, counseled us and also promoted some of our causes. I know that many of my peers can recall her commitment to equal rights during the turbulent 1960s and her sensible answers to our questions. She did not do this to create a future base of alumni donors — although that certainly was an eventual result — she did this because she cared and because she knew that fostering an attitude of love and respect for alma mater would keep us coming back to participate in events and reunions. More importantly, when we did come back, she remembered us and

took sincere interest in our post graduate lives; she made us feel special. Without our knowing it, by her example, she groomed and trained us as the active alumni of the future. As anyone in the alumni relations field can tell you, this was, perhaps, one of her most valuable contributions.

Marlowe spoke of her multitude of alumni friends as her “extended family” and she worked tirelessly for their welfare. Ever affable and ever sincere, Marlowe was our assurance that all was right with the university that was so dear to her heart. She will be sorely missed. Let us all give thanks for who she was — outstanding alumna, determined citizen, mentor, sage and one very classy lady.

In closing, I know that she would not be satisfied with the oft-used phrase “well done thou good and faithful servant.” Rather, she would be pleased by a summation offered by another of her alumni family, **Dorla Watkins, '80, '00 (M.P.A.)**, who told me, “Marlowe would want our lives to go on and she would expect each of us to continue the service with which she has entrusted us.” I can think of no greater legacy.

Marlowe's memorial service, attended by a significant crowd, would have pleased her too. Everyone was given a colorful button reading “FOM — Friends, Family and Fans of Marlowe” and all left the chapel to the strains of “When the Saints Go Marching In.” Other speakers were the Rev. Brian Ellison of the Parkville Presbyterian Church, and long time friends **Dr. Harold F. Smith, '44** and **Mary Riggs Dixon, '47**.

To help carry on her concern and care for the future alumni of Park University, those who wish to may make a donation to the Marlowe Sherwood Scholarship Fund. Checks made payable to the Park University Alumni Association may be mailed to the Office of Alumni Relations, Mackay Hall 12, Park University, 8700 N.W. River Park Rd., Parkville, MO 64152. For more information, please contact Director of Alumni Relations Julie McCollum at julie.mccollum@park.edu or (816) 584-6206.

In November, the Park University Alumni Council voted to rename the Alumni Association's service award the “Marlowe Sherwood Memorial Service Award” in honor of Marlowe's lifelong dedication to serving her alma mater and her community.

