

Anne Theresa Dunphy

1890 - 1956

Born in Haydenville 24 November 1890 daughter of Thomas and Margaret Kennedy Dunphy, Anne attended the schools in Haydenville, going on to be graduated from Smith College in the Class of 1913.

Miss Dunphy was on the staff at Williamsburg High School where she taught Latin and other subjects through the years. She was Class Advisor to the Class of 1916, producing the earliest Class Yearbook, *The Unquomok*. In 1918 she was appointed Principal, a teaching principal, as it were, a post she would hold until her health failed in the mid 1950s. Construction of an elementary school started with a ground breaking in the spring of 1954, but it would be the autumn of '55 before it was fully open.



c. 1930

“What to name the new school,” was a query bantered about, when it was still under construction. There were several nominations, with some division over each. To find one that all could take pride in—that was the goal. One suggestion, that was winning support, was “Unquomok” a Native American place name, which had great merit. It came up in a chat between Lew Black and Johnny Breguet, who said it first? But when Johnny suggested “Anne T Dunphy” it flew from the start. There were none alive, not student, alumnus nor parent but held the highest regard for Miss Dunphy. Everyone thought she deserved the honor while she lived. What she gave--what Anne Theresa Dunphy gave to the Williamsburg Schools was the greatest gift of all—her talent, her heart—her life. With limitless devotion, she was wedded to the enduring Helen E James School and her offspring was the new school, named in her honor.

Miss Dunphy held the highest regard for the disciplines of formal education and was very encouraging to every student to strive toward excellence and leave the halls of Burgy High as a candidate for higher education. To cite only one example of her devotion, if you would indulge me. Lewis H. Black, class mate of Johnny Breguet, in the Class of 1923, was a good student, maybe an excellent, scholar and athlete. He was medalled in history and lettered in sports. Miss Dunphy urged him to go on to college, but this one-horse farm-boy, born into a Searsville agrarian family, had not the resources from his folks to go to college. Miss Dunphy would prevail, she took him in her Model A to MAC, Mass Ag. College, to take entrance exams, which he sailed through with flying colors.

“No, we haven’t the money to send him”, lamented John and Alta who subsisted, husbanding what they could from their hide. Although John labored around the neighborhood at fifty cents a day, their pecuniary situation was dire at best.

“Do not fret about the tuition,” advised Miss Dunphy, “just you enroll him.” When the bursar at MAC demanded payment, it was paid, and Lewis nor his parents ever knew by whom. Very likely, Miss Dunphy did not provide the tuition herself, but had resources and knew who would. She never left the Principalship, but after enduring an extended sick leave, on 24 February 1956, she left this life on Earth and a host of sorrowing, respectful townsfolk whose lives had been much affected by hers. Even today, her portrait stands on my writing table, and penciled on the back, “But for A.T.D, I would never have gone to M.A.C.” Often do I find myself in lowly contemplation, led to gazing into her eyes.

