

Sarah D'Eloia

PREFACE

This issue includes a number of essays in addition to the addresses delivered at the first Shaughnessy Memorial Conference, April 3, 1980. The editors have chosen as the introduction to the issue an essay written for a different occasion, Robert Lyons' appreciative assessment of the scholarship and value of *Errors and Expectations*. It is followed by a description of The Mina Shaughnessy Scholarship Program, the creation of which was announced at the conference by Charles I. Bunting, then Acting Director of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, and simultaneously in Washington, D.C., by Secretary of Education Shirley Hufstедler.

The publication of this issue also seemed an appropriate occasion for printing a selection of Mina's speeches and essays which have either not been printed before or not reprinted elsewhere.* The pieces chosen recapture a bit of her spirit and our history—our attempts to rise as individuals, departments, and institutions to challenges which strained our resources, above the limitations of our training, our expectations, our experience, and our institutional structures. They record our struggles to shore up flagging spirits as we coped with budgetary crises and premature predictions and "proofs" of failure; our struggles to find realistic and appropriate criteria against which to hold ourselves, our students, and society accountable.

The addresses delivered at the conference touched upon that theme which quickened Mina's spirit: the centrality of literacy to a thinking citizenry, to the health of any democracy worth its name, to the possession of an enriched, empowered, consciously lived life. These essays convey, we

*Were it not already recently reprinted in Richard Gebhardt's *Composition and Its Teaching* (NCTE No. 08083A), and in Garry Tate and Edward P.J. Corbett's *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*, Oxford, forthcoming, we would have also included "Diving In: An Introduction to Basic Writing," first published in *College Composition and Communication*, 27 (October, 1976), 234-239.

believe, the inevitable connection she saw between teaching the rudimentary skills of writing and imparting the knowledge which forms the culturally literate person, that extraordinary combination of practical and moral sensibility she bequeathed us.