

IN MEMORIAM

**Eleanor Ransom Swift**

Eleanor Ransom Swift was a vital part of the Oriental Institute for many years. Whether accompanying her husband Gustavus F. Swift III, the first full time curator of the Oriental Institute, on excavations or volunteering in the Suq, she was always full of energy, honesty, and just plain spunk. She kept us all in order. Mrs. Swift died January 11, 2003 in her Hyde Park home.

Eleanor was raised by her mother and uncle in Denver, Colorado, after her father, a mining engineer, died before she was 5. There she adopted the western traits of pluck, determination, self-reliance, independence of spirit, and the frontier courage of meeting life head-on that lasted throughout her life. With this attitude, she headed off to Radcliffe where she graduated in 1939 *magna cum laude* in English. While at Radcliffe, she met her husband and they were later married and moved to Chicago.

She first traveled with her husband in 1951 to Iraq where he worked with Bob and Linda Braidwood at Jarmo. In the 1960s, she became a constant figure in Turkey while her husband was on the senior staff of the Sardis excavations. Undaunted that her family was not allowed to stay at the excavation compound, she set up house outside, learned Turkish, and did her shopping in town where her gregarious nature won the hearts of the village merchants.

Volunteerism was always a part of her life. She was an air raid warden for her neighborhood in Washington, D.C., during World War II, and went on to donate many years of service to the Chicago Child Care Society. Eleanor will be most remembered by us for her Mondays and Wednesdays in the Suq. She was always there, keeping us organized unless she was off with Georgie Maynard, another amazing Suq volunteer, on some unusual world tour — like the year they took the mail boat up the coast of Iceland.



*Eleanor Ransom Swift*

She loved working in the Suq where she could handle 100 children at once with ease and understanding, while having the unique ability of being able to melt the most difficult of customers. She was also devoted to the students who worked in the Suq, making sure they had her extra tickets to the Lyric Opera or the Chicago Symphony, believing that an education in the arts was also important.

We who had the pleasure of knowing Eleanor Swift will never forget her.

*Prepared by Denise Browning, with parts excerpted from the speech of Mrs. Swift's daughter, Alice Swift Riginos, at her memorial service January 26, 2003, at Montgomery Place.*