

About Mariann



HOWARD KLOC

Mariann Hoag began working at Roeper in 1948, two years after the school had moved to Bloomfield Hills with 90 students in six grades and the nursery. Fresh out of college, Mariann became George's secretary — and soon indispensable to the operation of the school. Mariann handled meetings and correspondence — in the onerous days of typewriters and carbon paper and ditto machines — but she also ran the fleet of buses the school owned to bring students from Detroit and Ann Arbor and Flint every day. She arranged for substitutes, community service and class trips, sold tickets for student plays, wrote paychecks and filled out state forms, potted and watered the red geraniums she decided would suit the school, and dispensed everything from band-aids to acerbic advice. Her crisp shirtwaists, Pappagallo flats and constant scent of Belodgia by Caron were iconic.

Grown-ups were a little intimidated by Mariann. Teachers thought twice before calling in for a sub in the morning. But somehow the children knew she was OK, and her office was clogged with kids hanging out. "She seemed stern," said one, "but you always knew she was on your side." "With Mariann, a deal was a deal," said another. "Pull up your socks and get on with it" was Mariann's stock advice, and for many students that bracing advice was a reassuring mantra in a complicated world. You could tell how much she meant to students by the vast numbers who wrote to her over the years, telling her about new jobs, new children, and sad losses. Her address book was the school's first and most complete alumni database.

George and Annemarie made it a central policy that the school would admit students based on their ability to profit from the program, not on their parents' ability to pay. Then, as now, that has been a challenge that the school has worked hard to fulfill — devoting far more of its general budget to financial aid than other independent schools. As usual, Mariann's role was to make the grand idea work in the real world. She created a financial aid process that in her no-nonsense but compassionate way was discreet and honored the applicants. Her process has held up over the years and served the school well.

As well, Mariann's commitment to the idea of a fair policy that served as many as possible was bedrock. Over the years, she reached frequently and anonymously into her own pocket to cover tuitions. When she "retired" in 1997, she stayed on to run the Financial Aid Committee. At the end of her life, when she was quite ill, the committee met at her bedside in her townhouse not far from the Birmingham campus. And when Mariann Hoag passed away in 2009, the school honored her unceasing commitment and renamed the financial aid program in her honor: The Mariann Hoag Financial Aid Grant Award Program. She, in fact, left her entire estate to the school. The near \$500,000 donation was directed toward the Tim Booth Endowment Fund — explicitly for financial aid in lasting and loving perpetuity.

How two Roeper Alumni Honored Mariann ...

From Patrick O'Connor '78* on the dedication of the Mariann Hoag Gardens at the Birmingham Campus in 1991.

The Birmingham Campus saw some beautiful landscape updates that summer, including the addition of a lovely garden right off the small parking lot. There was no doubt the garden would be named after Mariann; the real question was, how to dedicate in a way that had meaning, and a little surprise.



TOM KIRBY

The answer came in a moment. We would bus the students from the Lower School homerooms over to the Birmingham Campus and pair them with a homeroom from the Middle or Upper School. Working as partners, the students would develop a poem, card, or piece of art to present to Mariann at a brief school-wide assembly on the edge of the garden, then celebrate the day with a group lunch.

It wasn't easy keeping all of this a secret from Mariann — can you imagine how impossible it was to order six school busses without her knowing about it? — but a sunny November 1st came, and when Mariann saw the first bus pull up, she walked into Chuck Webster's office and asked, "What's going on?"

The day was memorable in several ways. Homeroom teachers planned weeks in advance for a series of wonderful presentations to Mariann, who was clearly pleased, if a little speechless. The Upper School Student Government organized the event and the luncheon with grace and timeliness, and Upper School photo teacher Andy Ross herded everyone onto the front lawn for a photograph of the very first all-school gathering we'd

had since grades 6 – 12 had moved to the Birmingham Campus in 1981. These meetings are an annual event now, but it took the community's love for Mariann to motivate us to convene the first one. While the garden has been relocated, the memory of the day lingers long for those in attendance, and is still tangible in the geranium picture that hangs in Mike Ruddy's room — his homeroom's contribution to the garden's dedication.

A Superhero Tribute of “Comic” Proportions *from Dwayne McDuffie '80*

Dwayne McDuffie graduated from Roeper in 1980 before earning a B.A. in English and M.S. in Physics from the University of Michigan. After studying film at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, he distinguished himself in the comic book and television industries as a writer who sought to culturally diversify the pantheon of superheroes as well as the personnel at the companies producing them.



A two-time Emmy nominee for animation writing in 2003 and 2004, Dwayne earned the prestigious Humanitis Prize in 2003, and in 2011 was posthumously honored with a lifetime achievement award by the Writers Guild of America, West's Animation Writers Caucus. The Roeper School — along with Apollo 13 astronaut, Jim Lovell — was proud to present a Golden Apple Award to Dwayne in 1996.

A hallmark of Dwayne's work was to help audiences understand and accept diversity and differences by depicting fictional worlds that more accurately reflect the diversity and differences in our own. His even greater mission was to provide readers/viewers of a wide variety of ethnicities, races, gender identities, etc., with the all-too-rare opportunity to relate to heroic lead characters who actually look like them. To that end, in 1992 Dwayne co-founded Milestone, the most successful African-American-owned comic book company in history, still recognized today for its ground-breaking array of multi-cultural original characters.

Perhaps the most memorable characters co-created by Dwayne during his prolific career are the iconic African-American superhero, Static Shock ... and the irrepressible Mrs. Hoag! Dwayne's affectionate tribute to Mariann is among our absolute favorites, and we are so grateful that his widow, Charlotte McDuffie, granted us permission to reprint these excerpts.

MRS. HOAG

Real name: Anne Marie Hoag
Occupation: Director of Operations for Damage Control, Inc.

Legal status: Citizen of the United States with no criminal record

Place of birth: New Haven, Connecticut
Group affiliation: President's Commission on Disaster Management, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Smithsonian, Amnesty International

Base of operations: Damage Control's offices in the Flatiron Building, New York City

First appearance: Marvel Comics Presents #19

History: Mrs. Hoag does not believe that one's history should be available for public consumption.
Height: 5' 3" **Weight:** 135 lbs.

Eyes: Blue **Hair:** Grey

Strength level: Mrs. Hoag possesses the normal human strength of a woman of her physical age, height and build who engages in no regular exercise.

Known superhuman powers: None.

Abilities: Mrs. Hoag has a number of very important friends, many of whom owe her big favors.

