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Speech delivered before  
THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PAPYROLOGISTS

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regarding  
**LOUISE CANBERG YOUTIE**

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Louise Canberg Youtie died on February 18, 2004, at the age of 94. But before my eyes I still have her vivid image from an earlier period, when she was sitting at her desk in 807 of Hatcher's Graduate Library, hiding behind a row of books of ancient medical writers. To her left was the desk of her husband Herbert Youtie. Both had their back to the row of windows with the shades closed. From time to time Mrs. Youtie would raise her eyes from her books and papyri and overlook what then was an oasis of silence. She was the protective spirit watching over everything that concerned Herbert, and this included the papyri and this part of the library. She would also make sure that nothing would happen in 807 that was inappropriate or violated any rule of tasteful behavior. I am sure she is looking now on us to watch if I am finding the appropriate words.

I remember one afternoon, she was not in 807 and one of our students in papyrology now a member of this illustrious assembly misused her absence and got himself a cup of coffee. When he heard her enter the room, he tried hastily to hide the cup with one hand under the table. Unfortunately there was a leg of the table in his way and he spilled the coffee. Well, he would not have been able to hide the coffee anyway. Just one step into the room, she would have stopped, sniffled and caught him red-faced.

Louise was Herbert's ultimate assistant. But, with her own drive, nursed and challenged by Herbert, she became one of the finest, most precise decipherers or, with another word, "readers" of papyri, or, to use Herbert's word, an "artificer of fact." We admire her various articles with editions of papyri which she mainly wrote in her later life, in particular, however, her book on The Michigan Medical Codex (P. Mich. 758), a masterly piece of work. Herbert Youtie once told me that he would work best when he could start from someone else's transcript. They were made by his various collaborators, which meant, however, mostly by Louise Youtie. There was good reason for Herbert's wish to start from Louise's transcripts. She knew what Herbert Youtie expected. He always explained that in this business of papyrology everybody is standing on someone else's shoulders. In his modesty Herbert added: the one standing above can see farther, but he can do so only because someone else has already done most of the work and he therefore can start with a fresh mind, when the other is exhausted. It is true, Herbert would not have been Herbert Youtie, if there would not have been Louise Youtie in his professional life as well as in his private life. There is a complimentary truth: Louise's influence and art of reading goes far beyond what is reflected in her own and occasionally joint publications. Her art pervaded and is an integral part of Herbert's work. When in 1976 I presented to H. Youtie his Festschrift, I said at the end: "Your work is her merit too, and this not only in the general sense that she created the atmosphere you needed for your work, but in the very sense that she has an active share in it. She is your partner who listens to you, but also criticizes your suggestions in her own mild, but charmingly determined way, and she adds her own comments. You would publish nothing without convincing her first."

Indeed, before my eyes is the diptych of two very great papyrologists whom we have lost in one sense, but whose art of reading and editing and thus recreating the papyri and the facts they report lives on in our discipline.