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Luella Weresub was born on the 29th of March, 1918 in Zolotonosh, Russia. When she was five, the worsening climate of antisemitism drove her family to emigrate. They chose to come to Canada, and settled first in Hubbard, Saskatchewan. When Matilda, her elder sister, ventured to the two-room village school for the first time, Luella insisted on going with her. Although officially too young to stay, Luella refused to budge from the classroom, displaying something of the indomitable will that would later serve her well. Thus began her life-long education. She quickly learned to speak English, became a voracious reader, and by the end of the year was top of the class in English, a position she never relinquished. Her fascination with and love for the language led her to an exceptional mastery of it: she often outdid the native anglophones at their own game. Laying the foundation of her mature erudition, Luella devoured books. Impatient to

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learn what lay between their covers she would often begin reading on the way home from the library, and be found hours later, still sitting by the roadside, deeply engrossed in a book, lost in a world of her own.

Most of Luella's years in public school were spent in Winnipeg, Manitoba, but her family later returned to Saskatchewan, and she completed the last two years of public school in Regina. There she attended Scott Collegiate, and won not only the Principal's Prize and the school prize for Latin but, at the tender age of sixteen, a prestigious, nation-wide Watson Scholarship to Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, two thousand miles away. But now the Depression had cast its long shadow across the land and darkened many prospects, including those of Luella's father, who was forced to close his small store in Regina. Since there was now little to keep them in Saskatchewan, the whole family, proud of Luella's achievement and with high hopes for her future, decided to go with her to Kingston. Slowly making their way eastward, they arrived at Sault Ste. Marie in Northern Ontario. But en route Matilda developed appendicitis, and the ensuing medical expenses left the Weresubs without resources to continue their journey. It was a whole year before Luella was able to travel on and take up her scholarship at Queen's, and even then her family had to stay at the Sault. Everyone in the family worked to help Luella through college—in the evenings and at weekends she herself was a waitress. But even this was not enough. She had to leave University at the end of her first year, rejoin her family and take a full-time job. Making use of her prowess in English, she worked at a radio station, writing advertising copy, reading poetry and announcing. Later, the Weresubs continued their eastward trek to Hamilton, Ontario, where again Luella worked in radio for several years.

She never lost sight of her aim, a university education, but it was not until she was 28, after a hiatus of almost a decade, that she was able to realize this ambition and enter her second year of study. It was 1946. Not only was she more secure financially, but the many returning war veterans enrolling alongside her made her less conscious of the age difference between herself and many of her fellow students.

Now at last she was where she really wanted to be, free to do what she wanted to do—learn. After the lost years, this time at University was a dream come true, and she always remembered it as the happiest period of her life. She was a good student. Her interests ranged widely, from taxonomy, ecology and evolution to philosophy and languages (she had a good working knowledge of French and German), and during her four years at Queen's she was awarded the Uni-

versity Scholarship, W.W. Near Scholarship in Biology, Queen's Medal in Biology, and Arts Research Travelling Fellowship. After graduating from Queen's she moved to Toronto to study for an M.A. There she lived in a tiny basement apartment, in the interest of economy, but perhaps even more of independence and privacy, commodities she always valued highly. After obtaining her M.A., she taught at the University of Manitoba for three years. Many of those fortunate enough to be her students during those years went on to become well-known biologists, and carry memories of a dedicated teacher who would go to any lengths to explain a difficult point, and whose gentleness and patience seemed endless.

But she felt a continuing discontent: there was so much more to learn and, ever the perfectionist, she considered that she was not doing the students justice as their teacher—she always believed that only those actively pursuing research could maintain both the enthusiasm and the level of knowledge required for good university teaching. She left Manitoba and returned to the University of Toronto to study for a Ph.D. in Mycology with Dr. H.S. Jackson. Under his direction she became interested in the resupinate hymenomycetes and began a study that lasted the rest of her life.

After completing her doctorate in 1957, she joined the Canadian Department of Agriculture as a Research Officer in what is now known as the Biosystematics Research Institute, on the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. There she was to work for twenty-two years, establishing an unparalleled, but largely unsung, record of unselfish service to others. Her publications are fairly numerous, and their intellectual content of a consistently enviable standard, but much of her time was taken up in reviewing theses and countless research papers which poured in from authors and editors all over the world. They knew that her critiques would be devastatingly honest yet encouragingly constructive. She always signed her reviews. She let you know, directly but courteously, if you had been guilty of woolly thinking, turgid prose or slipshod grammar. Where logic or language counted, she never compromised.

The English language, its usage and abuses, was a lifelong passion as we have seen. Nomenclature was a second passion, one she acquired in adult life as a result of questions put to her by puzzled colleagues. Her penetrating intellect and clear, logical patterns of thought were a good match for the seeming obtuseness and obfuscations of the Botanical Code of Nomenclature. She had a rare ability to cut through a tangle of conflicting interpretations and lay bare the heart of the matter (we can hear her laughing at those clichés and tell-

ing us, in her usual self-deprecating manner, to tone them down). Luella worked tirelessly to make the Code more easily understood, less equivocal, more comprehensive, and hence more useful. Again she was consulted daily—in person, by phone and by letter—by those with nomenclatural problems. Her unflinching generosity in dropping what she was doing, and concentrating immediately on each query, astonished and gratified all who experienced it. Those who did—taxonomists the world over—will miss her. As a world authority on Botanical Nomenclature, especially as it applies to fungi, she was an active member of the Nomenclature Committee of the Mycological Society of America, of the International Association for Plant Taxonomy's Nomenclature Committee for Fungi and Lichens, and of the International Mycological Association's Nomenclature Secretariat. She was chairman¹ of the Subcommittee on Article 59—on naming of pleomorphic fungi—and contributed substantially to international discussion on starting point dates for Fungi, and on palaeomycological nomenclature. She attended and vigorously contributed to, nomenclature sessions of Botanical Congresses at Montréal (1959), Edinburgh (1964) and Seattle (1969), and the Mycological Congresses at Exeter (1971) and Tampa (1977). And yet we remember her best for those innumerable private consultations which in sum did so much to improve the literature and the nomenclatural decisions therein.

Reviewing, formal and informal, she did as her duty to science. But she delighted in debating face to face or by letter. We who write this have both enjoyed many long and lively conversations with her while working with her on joint presentations. We feel uniquely privileged to have had the benefit of her fluent, incisive analyses, her amazing ability to play devil's advocate, her immediate detection of the logical flaw in our arguments; and her summaries, which said it all. How many times have we walked into her cluttered lab, been offered a cup of the strong, scalding coffee that was always at hand, then settled down to the serious business of having our mental cobwebs blown away.

Yet her sparkling talents were available to anyone who provided an appropriate stimulus. She was a concerned, and often saddened, observer of world events, but even when we first met her many years ago, had achieved an inner calm and strength that enabled her to reach out and help those around her in trouble, with just the right word and action. Luella knew everyone in her Institute, from the Di-

¹She thought 'chairperson' too contrived and stuffy, and clearly proved that the best man for the job is often a woman!

rector to the janitorial staff, and treated them alike, as fellow humans. And despite her innate shyness, she was always the first to welcome and entertain visiting scientists.

To visit Luella's house was always a treat. She and her sister Matilda were perfect hostesses. But after the social niceties had been observed, the debate was on, with occasional time out to search through several gigantic dictionaries that were always at hand, for elusive definitions and clarifications of meaning. Yet Luella had sympathy with those who found dictionaries hard to use. "How can you possibly look a word up" she said "if you don't know how to spell it?"

Luella was, to put it simply, a most remarkable person. There are others whose intellects are as keen, others who radiate a like human warmth. But in Luella the two qualities were present in memorable measure, each enhancing the other. We could pay her no greater tribute than to try to live in some measure as she lived: open, unafraid, upright, chivalrous, loving. To a world without her we owe no less.

A memorial fund for acquisition of books, the commodity she loved so dearly, has been established in the Department of Botany, University of Toronto. Donations payable to the University of Toronto and marked L. K. Weresub Memorial Fund can be sent to the Department of Private Funding, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1, Canada.