

AU alumna and pioneering woman in ceramic engineering dies at the age of 85

6/06/05

Dr. Esther Tuttle, an Alfred University alumna who was a pioneer in the field of ceramic engineering, died Saturday, June 4, 2005, in Jones Memorial Hospital in Wellsville at the age of 85. She had made her home on Randolph Road in the Town of Alfred for several years prior to her death. Born April 3, 1920, in Rochester, she was the daughter of Frank A. and Anna Berndt Miller. She was married June 26, 1948, to Milton A. Tuttle, a 1941 alumnus of Alfred University, who died in November, 1992. Dr. Milton A. Tuttle was a long-time faculty member in ceramic engineering as well as a track coach for the University. She and several AU alumni created the "Doc" Tuttle Scholarship in memory of her husband. The scholarship is awarded annually to a ceramic engineering student who excels in academics and athletics, particularly track. After earning her B.S. degree in 1942 and her M.S. degree in 1943, both from AU, Esther Tuttle earned a Ph.D. in ceramic engineering from the University of Illinois. She was the second woman to ever receive a doctoral degree from the University of Illinois, and the first to earn one in ceramic engineering. She was a spectroscopist for the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries in Portland, OR, for three years; a research associate and project director at North Carolina State University experimental station in Raleigh, NC, for three years; owner of a private petrographic laboratory for 10 years; and a visiting professor of spectrography at Alfred University for four years. At the age of 65, she began a two-year stint teaching digital electronics at Alfred State College. She was leader of the Alfred 4-H photography club for a number of years and was also active in the Alfred Women's Investment Club, the Alfred University Women's Club, and the Alfred Seventh Day Baptist Church. Her hobbies included woodworking, computers and genealogy. She is survived by a daughter, Amy (David) Hoelzer, a 1979 alumna of Alfred University, who now lives in Oak Ridge, TN; two sons, Bruce (Evelyn) Tuttle of Albuquerque, NM, and John (Stefani) Tuttle of Douglasville, GA; five grandchildren, Rachael and Daniel Hoelzer, and Andrew, Joshua and Michael Tuttle; and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by three sisters and a brother. The family has requested that memorial contributions in Dr. Tuttle's name be made to the Alfred Seventh Day Baptist Church, 10 Church Street, Alfred, NY 14802 or to the charity of the donor's choice.