



## **Rose E. Steidl**

March 1, 1921 – December 10, 2016

Rose E. Steidl, professor and former Chair of the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis (DEA) in the College of Human Ecology, was born on March 1, 1921 in Paris, Illinois and died on December 10, 2016 in Jacksonville, New York. Rose received her B.S. in Home Economics from St. Mary-of-the Woods College in Indiana in 1942, her M.S. in Household Economics and Management from Cornell in 1949, and her Ph.D. in Household Economics and Management from Cornell in 1957. From 1942 until 1947 she was a teacher in secondary schools in Illinois. Rose also taught summer sessions at Cornell, the University of Tennessee, and Nassau Community College.

Rose was appointed as an assistant professor in the Department of Household Economics and Management in the College of Home Economics at Cornell in 1947. In 1969 the College of Home Economics evolved into the College of Human Ecology, and Dr. Steidl played a major role in developing the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis, and was promoted to associate professor and Assistant Chair. In 1975 she was promoted to professor and was elected Chair of DEA, a position she held until 1980 when she retired.

Professor Steidl's areas of expertise included human work costs, activity analysis and management, and functional design and arrangement in homes, especially kitchens. In this area, Professor Steidl led the widely cited *Functional Kitchens* project. In that study, she set up single frame movie cameras in a selected group of kitchens around the United States. Those cameras filmed everything that took place in those kitchens every day for several weeks. The project formed the basis for designing kitchens around the world. One of the best known findings from that project was the focus on the kitchen work triangle, sink to range to refrigerator, the distance of which should be less than 23 feet for maximum efficiency. Professor Steidl also experimented

with adding supplemental sinks to kitchens, a radical idea in its time, but a common feature in kitchens today.

Professor Steidl was well known for a college textbook she co-authored with Esther Crew Bratton, *Work in the Home*, which became a major reference around the world for students studying the management of human resources through the design of work and workplaces. This book, which was translated into Japanese, was popular with manufacturers of household equipment and kitchen designers. It also became a useful reference for specialists in various fields and professionals who worked with the disabled.

Professor Steidl's professional memberships included the American Home Economics Association, the Human Factors Society, the International Ergonomics Association, the Gerontological Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She was an elected member of Omicron Nu, Phi Kappa Phi, and Pi Lambda Theta.

Professor Steidl's service to Cornell included memberships on President Corson's Search Committee for Director of University Libraries, the College Grievance Committee, College Grants Committee, and Faculty Search Committees. She also chaired various tenure review committees, and was a member of the Evaluation Panels at the Center for Consumer Product Technology, National Bureau of Standards, and The National Research Council.

Rose was an invited speaker at numerous national and international conferences, a Visiting Scholar at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and the author of numerous articles in refereed journals including *Ergonomics*, *Home Economics Research Journal*, *Journal of Home Economics*, and *Human Factors*.

For many years, Professor Steidl was an active parishioner of St. Catherine of Siena Church in Ithaca. Her personal interests included genealogy, traveling, and nature, as well as a fondness for the Cornell Botanic Gardens and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Her colleague, Paul Eshelman, remembers Rose as having a gentle spirit that belied personal strength and a disciplined approach to her work as a home economist and researcher of domestic ergonomics. She was chair of the DEA department at the historically important and challenging point in time when the department and the College were in the throes of operationalizing the transition from a home economics perspective to that of human ecology. Her teaching touched the lives of many students and her academic research contributions changed residential designs and the way that Americans and others around the world live.

*Written by Joseph Laquatra, Paul Eshelman and Alan Hedge*