



Regina Olson Hughes

She was an American scientific illustrator in Botanical Art. Born February 1, 1895 in Herman, Nebraska, she became fascinated with the world of plants and flowers.

She entered NSD Dec 18, 1907 as 743rd student and graduated on June 17, 1914.

(Wife of Frederic Hughes whose Gallaudet Gym is named after him.)

Image Description: Black and white photo of Regina wearing white blazer looking down at a drawing of an orchid.

Regina Olson Hughes attended Gallaudet College for the Deaf in Washington, D.C., where she studied the arts and languages and completed a Master's degree in 1920. It was during this time that Hughes took her first job as a translator at the U.S. Department of State. Her most prestigious assignment was working on the Conference on Limitation of Armament following the end of World War I. After leaving Gallaudet, Hughes briefly taught at the Mississippi School for the Deaf, and in 1923 married Frederick Hughes, a drama professor at Gallaudet.

In 1930 Hughes began a long career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, first working as a research clerk and then as a botanical illustrator. She had no formal botanical training but worked diligently to acquire knowledge that would help her better illustrate her subjects. Hughes retired from the USDA in 1969 and became a freelance illustrator, working primarily for the Smithsonian Institution's Department of Botany.

Over a long career, Hughes created an impressive legacy of botanical illustrations. Her orchid paintings have been exhibited at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum and Gallaudet College. Publications containing her pen and ink illustrations are numerous: *Common Weeds of the United States* (1971), the drawings for which were prepared from dried herbarium specimens; *Flora of Ecuador*; *Flora del Uruguay IV: Bromeliaceae*; *Agaves of Continental North America*; and many issues of the *USDA Technical Bulletin*. One notable USDA publication, *Economically Important Foreign Weeds: Potential Problems in the United States* contains 6000 of her illustrations.

When she was 92, Hughes told the *Omaha World-Herald*, "I don't believe in retirement. I hope to die with a brush in my hand." She died at her home in Washington, D.C. at age 98.



The last photo of her before her death.



Her artwork.