

Hanna Woods - Consular Aide Dies in Wreck

Miss Hanna Wallace Houston Woods, daughter of the late Mrs. Mildred Saunders (Milly) Woods, former food editor of the Arkansas Gazette, was killed Sunday, Nov. 3, 1968, in an automobile accident in Yugoslavia, where she had served for two years as an officer in the Foreign Service of the State Department.

Miss Woods, 29, was en route to Venice for a vacation. A spokesman for the United States Embassy at Belgrade said the accident occurred 120 miles west of Belgrade, near the town of Nova Gradiska. Miss Woods, who was driving her own car, swerved off the road to avoid collision with an oncoming vehicle as she attempted to pass another vehicle.

Her car went down an embankment. She fell from the vehicle and was killed instantly.

Miss Woods was second secretary of the Consular Section at the Belgrade Embassy, where she had been assigned for two years.

It was her family's second tragedy in less than six months. Her mother, whose editorship of the Gazette's food, home and garden section from 1949 to her retirement in 1965 had made her Arkansas institution, was incapacitated by emphysema and on May 23 took her own life.

Miss Woods was "Item One" to the thousands of women – and men – readers of her mother's weekly food columns, which ranged far and wide in their content before leading, often with skillful but seemingly impossible transitions, to the subject of food on which Mrs. Woods was a widely-acknowledged authority.

Tall and attractive woman, Miss Woods had inherited her mother's intellect as with her sister, Mrs. Robin Bartsch of Little Rock. "Item Two" Miss Woods developed a lively curiosity about all things and an independence that took her immediately after college into her State Department career. Despite distances, the three maintained a close relationship and Mrs. Woods before her death talked often of joining Hanna at Belgrade.

Miss Woods was born April 30, 1939, at St. Louis. The family lived for a time at Falls Church, Va., and in the children's early years went for two years to Lima, Peru. They returned to the family home at Pine Bluff and later came to Little Rock, where Miss Woods enrolled at Central High School in 1954.

She graduated in May 1957 in a small group of students in her class to have earned a perfect record, receiving the grade of A for a full term's work in every one of the 30 subjects she had studied in the three years at Central.

The record earned her a full four-year General Motors Corporation national competitive scholarship and she elected to attend Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania.

Her achievement there was equally impressive. She graduated cum laude in June 1961 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science.

During her junior year at Bryn Mawr, Miss Woods spent the summer in Belgium, working for the Banque de Bruxelles as part of a job exchange program under the auspices of the Alliance Internationale des Etudiants de Sciences Economiques et Commerciales.

In September following her graduation the late President Kennedy appointed her the level of vice consul and a secretary in the diplomatic service. She had completed the Foreign Service Institute orientation as one of two women in a class of 40.

Her first assignment was to the Dominican Republic. In preparation for it she attended the Foreign Service Spanish Language School and then the Department's Consular School.

Miss Woods remained at Ciudad Trujillo 19 months and was reassigned to Washington as a staff aide to Mrs. Katie Loucheim, then deputy assistant Secretary of State. Mrs. Loucheim made no secret of her admiration of Miss Woods' diplomatic skills, and exercised her influence to retain her as an aide, with some four years, about twice the usual assignment length.

Eugene Fretz, former Gazette magazine editor and a longtime family friend, said of Miss Woods, "She was one of the bright hopes Little Rock had produced. She was an achiever; she persevered."

In addition to her sister, survivors include her father, Robert Chatham Woods of Houston and her grandmother, Mrs. Dillard Houston Saunders of Pine Bluff.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete. The family requests that no flowers be sent.