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IN MEMORIAM

Herta Taussig Freitag
December 1908-January 2000

Herta Taussig Freitag, long-time teacher, mathematician, and Fibonacci enthusiast, died January 25 at the age of 91. Her radiant smile and articulate speech reflecting her native Austria were unforgettable to hundreds of colleagues and friends. She remained an active participant in The Fibonacci Association until shortly before her death, assisting in the presentation of four papers at its 8th International Conference in 1998.

Herta's life story is one of triumph over adversity. Born in Vienna, she pursued her education there with a major interest in mathematics. When Hitler took over Austria in 1938, an event for which she had vivid memories, she began a six-year struggle to emigrate to the United States. It became clear that the only way out of Nazi Austria without a financial guarantor was to obtain employment in England as a domestic servant, an experience her brother describes as "Dickensian." A more complete account of her journey to freedom is included in the book *One-Way Ticket* by former student Mary Ann Johnson.

Upon arrival in the United States in 1944, Herta first taught at Greer School in New York State where she met her husband, Arthur H. Freitag. She began her long career at Hollins College in 1948 and completed her Ph.D. at Columbia in 1953. Among her numerous teaching awards were the Hollins Medal and the Virginia College Mathematics Teacher of the Year Award.

In her lifetime, Herta experienced prejudice in several forms but was never embittered by it. When she received the Humanitarian Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1997, the nomination read, in part: "What would have been a life-shattering experience for many set her on a course of personal professional achievement directed toward helping everyone, regardless of race, sex, color, ethnic background, religious persuasion or social class reach their maximum potential. And she does it in such a way as to make one feel that she is traveling with you, rather than leading the way."

Herta is survived by a brother, Walter Taussig, an associate conductor with the Metropolitan Opera, and a niece, Lynn Taussig. She will also be greatly missed by her Fibonacci "family" and a host of friends.

Margie Ribble

