

# UCC ROOTS

## *Remembering our History*

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September 2017

### Florence Alden Partridge

She was always an advocate for women, even before many church people recognized the need to give women more visibility and influence. She spoke out with conviction, saying: *“It is a time for women to step out of their former place and take a more definite part in the community, the nation and the world.”*

Florence Alden Partridge (1898-1983), rooted in the German Reformed tradition, was born in Chicago. She attended Wells College and earned a Masters degree at the University of Chicago when few women had advanced degrees. From 1935 to 1942 she was Dean of Women at Heidelberg College. As a woman of learning and culture, enjoying reading, the symphony, opera, and discussion with friends she was exceptional.

From 1942 to 1963 Partridge served as executive director of the Women’s Guild for the Evangelical and Reformed Church, based in Cleveland, Ohio. The E&R Women’s Guild blended the earlier Reformed Women’s Missionary Guild and the Evangelical Women’s Union for about 20 years, until the formation of the United Church of Christ.

Partridge traveled all over the country for the Women’s Guild; promoting its emphases on equality, understanding, love and service. She blended her abiding Christian faith with practical activism urging women to take leadership roles and actively work against all prejudice. She was proud of the way her office expressed the concerns of church women, insisting that *“Women-power is being stressed in all areas of life and women of the Church are very valuable in upholding the Church in critical times like these.”*

As one of the few women holding executive administrative responsibilities in the national leadership of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Florence Alden Partridge was remarkable. Her commitments to the church and to women continue to inspire.

*Contributor: Richard Berg*

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