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## Research Support for Younger Scholars

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*Helena M. Shire*

## Research Support for Younger Scholars

First of all I bring to the members of this conference warmest greetings and best wishes from Helena Shire. She is unable to be here because she can no longer tolerate heat nor long distance travel, but she is here in spirit with us all.

Helena Shire's message calls for "support for younger scholars." Support means money, of course, and we are all grateful for the support this conference has received from the University of South Carolina and from the National Endowment for the Humanities. However, support can also mean an opportunity to know what is going on and the chance for an exchange of views. It is this particular kind of moral support which I wish to emphasize today.

The people who need this kind of support, says Helena Shire, are "younger scholars." Perhaps I should mention that from the point of view of someone who is nearly eighty years old we are all younger scholars, so this appeal is not only for those in their twenties.

There are of course particular groups: research students, who may have time but not money; young married women with children, who may need money to buy time for research. There are also people who support themselves with jobs outside universities, teachers, librarians, archivists, whose need is especially for an exchange of views, since their jobs may well be in a town where there is no research library. They may be of course able to travel to a university library. However, although it is easy for someone out-

side to obtain a ticket to read in a university library, and also to borrow, it is very difficult to obtain the right to use the inter-library loan scheme. There are people who have retired and who wish to use their time to re-enter the field of research. Finally, and this applies especially to Scots and Scottish studies, since the Scots themselves travelled and settled widely over the globe, there are those who are separated by distance from centers of Scottish culture.

If I may speak from my own experience, I would like to pay tribute to the support I received, when I myself had young children, from the Bunting Institute, part of Radcliffe College which is itself part of Harvard University. The Institute gave me a scholarship which provided access to the Harvard Libraries and the right to attend any lectures or seminars I wished, a study in the Institute and \$250 a year—just enough in 1970 to pay for part-time nursery education for our youngest child. Even more valuable than these benefits, however, were the opportunity to lunch (bringing one's own sandwiches) in company with other women at a similar stage in life and the requirement that one should give a lecture to the Institute about one's work in progress. I would like to ask that universities and colleges should make opportunities for people to meet others of like interest, through such inexpensive means as invitations to dine or to attend seminars, through which there could be the chance for the scholar working alone to test ideas in conversation with those working full time in the field.

Helena Shire would also like to call for there to be some system whereby researchers who are widely scattered around the world can be introduced to others working in the same field, so that they can exchange ideas by letter. This would help in the initial stages, making more cost effective the necessary visit to special collections. This essential travel also needs support, and not all countries are able to give the financial support that some can, and not all scholars belong to institutions to which to apply for travel funds. I would like to suggest one way to provide practical support for scholars, an idea that again comes from Radcliffe College. The College office holds a list of names and addresses of alumnae, who now live scattered all over the world, who are willing to provide bed and breakfast accommodation. Payment for this goes half to the host and half to Radcliffe where it supports scholarships for student travel.

These last two suggestions require some central place and someone willing to organize it, and some funding, although this would not be a large amount, and those using such schemes should be willing to pay something towards costs. I know that the University of Germersheim is already giving valuable support with the letter it circulates about future conferences in the field of Scottish language and literature. Does anyone else have suggestions

for systems of support for scholars that could be easily and inexpensively organized?

*Robinson College, Cambridge*

[The preceding communication was read to the members of the conference by Alisoun Gardner-Medwin.]

As this volume of *Studies in Scottish Literature* was going to press, word was received that Helena Mennie Shire (1912-1991) died peacefully on November 16. Helena Mennie was a graduate of the University of Aberdeen (LL.D. 1988) who went on to Cambridge where she married E. S. Shire of that university. She was associated with Robinson College, Cambridge, from its founding and was a Fellow until her retirement in 1980. Helena Shire devoted her life to teaching and research, with particular emphasis on Scottish music and literature. Major contributions to the field were *Music of Scotland 1500-1700* (1957) and her now classic *Song, Dance and Poetry of the Court of Scotland under King James VI* (1969). Her commitment to scholarship was of the most unselfish sort, as readers can judge from the above communication. Her last book, *The Wrong Music* (1989) contains a sensitively-written introduction to the poems of her fellow Aberdonian Olive Fraser. E. H. Parker's "Funeral Ode on James A. Garfield" may appropriately be quoted for Helena Shire:

Life's race well run,  
Life's work well done,  
Life's victory won,  
Now cometh rest.