

Alice Sturgis

By Paul Mason

On the evening of June 18th at the Merritt Hospital in Oakland, California Alice Sturgis's heart stopped. Until a day shortly before, when she was taken to the hospital, she had lived an active, vigorous life with the exuberance and courage and with the hopeful outlook of youth, though she was approaching her 79th birthday. She lived a busy life of service to people, to the public interests and of devotion to her family. Measured by her influence for good on the many organizations she had helped, and her contributions to the improved functioning of the democratic institutions she had promoted, she had lived a successful life.

Mrs. Sturgis was most widely known for her interest in parliamentary procedure. She taught courses in parliamentary procedure at the University of California at Berkeley while she was still a student there and soon afterward wrote her first book which was a text for teaching parliamentary procedure. She guided, advised and assisted all kinds of organizations from the tiniest clubs to the mightiest organizations of the nation. Among others, she worked with the American Medical Association, the American Dental Association and the American Bar Association and wrote a special book for the American Farm Bureau Federation. She was happy at any time to advise or assist anyone who had a problem relating to organizations or their procedure.

Alice Sturgis was probably best known for her books *Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* and *Learning Parliamentary Procedure*. The *Code* was first published in 1950 and revised in 1966.

The *Sturgis Standard Code* was widely adopted by organizations of all kinds and sizes as their parliamentary authority. It was used by the great mass of voluntary associations and by business organizations and by public and semi-official public bodies. Many of the most powerful associations of the nation adopted Mrs. Sturgis' *Code* and followed her advice.

Mrs. Sturgis' study led her to the conclusion that "Parliamentary Procedure is governed by Parliamentary Law and that Parliamentary Law is in fact Law." That in the last instance parliamentary questions are determined by the courts in cases taken there for final determination. That courts, in determining the law governing their decisions on parliamentary questions, look to their earlier decisions rather than to the opinions of people who write books on the subject. That therefore, for a book to stand the test of litigation the rules set forth in it must conform to the law as determined by the courts. This philosophy seems to have made considerable headway in achieving general acceptance in the par-

liamentary field.

In the many places where parliamentarians gather and where parliamentary questions are discussed Alice Sturgis will be sorely missed but her influence on the practice and philosophy of decision making in associations and groups of all kinds will linger on and on and on. And by her many friends she will be sadly missed. □

Does The Chair Have A Leg To Stand On?

By George A. Calder

Once upon a time, long, long ago, there was confusion over the title of a female member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Could she be called a "congressman" or should she be referred to as a "congresswoman?"

This confusion has now been forgotten or completely overshadowed by the chairman-chairperson-chairone controversy. Each of these titles has its supporters and its detractors, and arguments for and against each have been presented before.

Why not stop the Controversy by simply referring to the "Chair?" Thus we would have:

The representative assembly's Chair
The Chair of the finance committee
John Doe, Chair, or Chair Doe
Mr. Chair or Madam Chair or even Ms. Chair

Such a title would emphasize the *seat* of power (if you'll pardon the pun) rather than the person of power. And when the Chairs of all committees meet, we wouldn't have to worry whether they were chairpersons or chairpeople or chairones.

If we don't settle on something quickly, the animals may overthrow the human race . . . I mean, the huperson race. □

Mr. Calder is parliamentarian for the Livonia, Michigan, Education Association.

One freedom not allowed to human beings is freedom from responsibility. There are duties that must be performed to preserve democratic freedom. People who desire a free and effective government must think of themselves as its custodian. In this duty they must not be indolent or careless.

The Royal Bank of Canada Monthly Letter, 6/74.