Dr. Adma Jeha d’Heurle, a distinguished Professor Emerita and one of the five founding faculty members when Mercy College first opened in 1961, will be remembered for her profound contributions to the study of psychology, inspired teachings, commitment to social justice, and warm and welcoming spirit.

Born Adma Jeha in Bishmizzine, Lebanon in 1924, d’Heurle played among the Middle East’s olive and silkworm trees as a child. As a teenager, she entered boarding school and graduated with a bachelor’s degree from the American University of Beirut. A scholarship brought her to the United States to attend Smith College, where she received her master’s degree. Upon moving to Illinois to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago, she met and married Francois d’Heurle, a Parisian metallurgist, and together they had three sons: Amal, David and Alain.

Drawn to Westchester County by the newly constructed IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center, where Francois became emeritus scientist, the d’Heurles moved from Chicago to a home adjacent to the Teatown Nature Preserve in Ossining. The red house in the woods, up a long, long, driveway, would host get-togethers of family, friends, neighbors and scholars, enraptured by fascinating conversation around a large table. The family would eventually donate 17 acres of land to the preserve, one of their beloved gathering places.

“I enjoyed the terrific food and exchange of ideas, as well as touring her incredible garden. Adma was a fantastic hostess and cook of international cuisine. Whenever we invited her somewhere, we made sure she brought the dish she was famous for — tabbouleh,” said professor emerita Ann Grow, dear friend and colleague of d’Heurle.

In 1961, d’Heurle started teaching psychology at Mercy College, “…bringing a sophistication, credibility and academic seriousness to the College and its faculty,” Grow added. She remembers d’Heurle’s quiet strength, how she carried herself with a presence of assertion and humility at the same time.

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Raised in the Middle East, married to a Frenchman and multilingual, d’Heurle brought a multicultural perspective to her pursuits, incorporating a sense of the breadth and depth of human experience. Her teaching, writing and community service reflected her concern for the human condition.

Synthesizing material from a variety of disciplines, she developed a historical, multidisciplinary and multicultural approach in the courses she taught. Not heeding boundaries between domains of knowledge, she emphasized insight and understanding from the study of the arts, philosophy and a broad spectrum of viewpoints within the social sciences.

Her scholarly work represented a gradual broadening from the child, to the couple, the family, the community and global society. She wrote articles about the fairytales and folktales of Europe, Japan, Africa and the Middle East, schoolbooks of various countries, the films of Ingmar Bergman, novels of D.H. Lawrence and dramas of Henrik Ibsen.

While at Mercy, d’Heurle rose through the ranks to serve as a department chairwoman and received several accolades, including Outstanding Mentor.

In addition to her work at Mercy, she served as an adjunct professor at Long Island University, lecturer in social thought at Stanford University, Fulbright Scholar in Sweden at Uppsala University, Visiting Scholar in the Humanities at New York University and Fulbright Scholar in Finland at the University of Turku. While in Finland, she collaborated with Russian and Finnish colleagues on an international study of children’s friendships.

On October 19, 2019, d’Heurle died at the age of 95. She is survived by her three sons and six grandchildren, d’Heurle’s dedication to education, science and humanity will forever be cherished and celebrated by Mercy.