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Some Spoken Thoughts at the Graveside Services for Josephine Cherry Lowman

We gather here this morning in memory of and to pay honor to a beautiful and gracious Josephine Cherry Lowman, a celebrity from the world of journalism and a special person dear to the hearts of us all.

We gather also as an expression of our sincere sympathy to her daughter, Dr. Cherry Lowman; her son, Shepard Cherry Lowman; her sister, Elizabeth Cherry Burge; her grandchildren; and to the other members of the family.

Time and propriety will not permit me to do any more than recite a brief resume of the achievements of Josephine Cherry Lowman – a true pioneer in overcoming barriers in a journalism world structured and almost completely controlled by men. I mention this only better to illustrate the dimensions of her success.

This extraordinary woman was born in Bowling Green, educated in the city schools of Bowling Green, and was graduated from Western. She organized and headed Western's Department of Physical Education in 1920 following her graduation from the Sargent School of Physical Education in Boston. She was married in 1923 to Shepard W. Lowman. Following their marriage, they located in Tulsa, Oklahoma, one of the oil centers of the nation – an ideal choice for a young and talented geologist. It also proved to be an ideal choice for his young bride because later her desire to write in her field led her to visit a broad-minded editor of a Tulsa newspaper. During that interview, she convinced him that his readers would be interested in a physical fitness column. Her creation, which she titled "Why Grow Old," was an immediate success, and within eight weeks a syndicate expressed interest in her work. Her column went into syndication and has been a great American success story ever since.

At one time during her amazing career, more than 100 newspapers in the United States and abroad carried the column. At one time syndicate officials estimated that she received two million letters a year from her far-flung readers. With syndicate help and personal secretarial assistance, she tried to answer every one. This personal touch brought about an expansion of her horizon to include the writing of 90 booklets on such subjects as beauty, nutrition, diet, and numerous other aspects of health development and protection.

As late as January 16, 1983, the Knoxville, Tennessee, News Sentinel carried a special and lengthy feature on Josephine Lowman, announcing that they were introducing her 1983 Beauty Improvement Plan in connection with her column, "Why Grow Old." An enlarged, recent, and unusually beautiful photograph of Josephine embellished the feature story. So, from the mid-'20s to 1983, she mastered chance and change and time in preserving her amazing appeal to her readers. What a story!

Josephine Cherry Lowman is now returned to the land of her nativity. Her highly successful career started here, was nurtured here, and somehow even during the many years of its extraordinary zenith remained inextricably intertwined with here.

That this is her final home was her choice and a decision made after much thought and deliberation. I am sure that all of us who live here and who gather here this morning are gratified that Bowling Green and Warren County and Sand Hill and Western all did so gently but effectively tug at her heartstrings. All of us, I am sure, feel a special sense of satisfaction in that, because of that choice of the heart, she and her equally successful husband, Shepard Lowman, will forever be at home in this minute part of our country, her

truly native land. Here, where just a very short space away, are her brother, Hardin Cherry, for whom she had such devotion; her lovely mother, Bess Fayne Cherry; and her illustrious father, Henry Hardin Cherry, the founder of Western Kentucky University. Here also are many of her friends from her lifetime of making and keeping friends.

From the mosaic of God's great master plan, another and final message came down a few days ago from up among the stars.

Its summons – Josephine, it is time for you to go on your greatest adventure of all.

Josephine Cherry Lowman, mother

Josephine Cherry Lowman, sister

Josephine Cherry Lowman, friend

Listen to the poet –

“Of the sweetness and the zest,

Of the happy life possessed –

Thou has left us at thy best.”

Additional information regarding Josephine Cherry Lowman:

College Heights Herald

“Alumnus Lectures in Philadelphia,” February 9, 1940, p. 3.

Lashbrook, Austin. “Mrs. Lowman Certainly Practices What She Preaches – That’s Health,” October 3, 1941.

“Lowman Recognized in Editor and Publisher,” March 23, 1956.

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Leopold, Helen. “Josephine Lowman Ignores Age,” *Louisville Times*, April 5, 1954.

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O’Connor, Grace. “Josephine Lowman Menands Resident,” *Times Union*, Albany, NY, October 1, 1983.

Park City Daily News

“Josephine Lowman Dies,” October 5, 1983.

Lowe, Herman. "H.H. Cherry Was Well Acquainted with Barren River," March 2, 1986.

"Lowman's Death is Great Loss," October 12, 1983.

Talley, Rhea. "'Why Grow Old?' Writer Her Own Best Ad," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, May 20, 1951.

"Why Grow Old?" *Teachers College Heights*, April 1937.

These and other sources are available in the Harrison-Baird Reading Room at the Kentucky Building.