

## Pamela Matt

---

**From:** Gerald Peterson [gerald.peterson@uni.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 25, 2004 7:43 AM  
**To:** Pamela Matt; Gerald.Peterson@uni.edu  
**Subject:** Lulu Sweigard

Professor Matt--

Thank you for your recent note.

I should start with a disappointing response to your question. No, I am sorry, but we do not have any research materials from Professor Sweigard. When Professor Sweigard left this faculty in 1927, there was no organized school archives. I suppose that it is possible, though unlikely, that she left material in her department, but, because of my close contacts with the department over the last thirty years, I believe that I would know about it. It also seems unlikely that she would have accomplished much serious research by the time that she left here in 1927.

Let me tell you what I do know about her. Perhaps it will help you in your research.

First, our records universally indicate that she spelled her first name Lula rather than Lulu, when she was on our faculty. She may have changed the spelling or style after she left here.

Our catalogues give at least a small picture of her experience. She graduated from Bedford, Iowa, High School in 1913. She received a Physical Education Diploma from the Iowa State Teachers College (a former name of this institution, now the University of Northern Iowa) in 1917, and then received her B. A. from the Iowa State Teachers College in 1918. She taught in rural schools (presumably, but not specifically stated, in Iowa) in 1913-1914. She was supervisor of the Chancey Playground in Clinton, Iowa, in the summer of 1916. She was a student assistant in physical education while pursuing her degree at the Iowa State Teachers College in 1917-1918. And then she joined the faculty of the Iowa State Teachers College, where she held the rank of Instructor, 1918-1921, and then Assistant Professor, 1921-1927. She was on leave of absence for the 1926-1927 school year, but did not return to this faculty after that leave.

Other records indicate that she studied at Columbia University, probably during that 1926-1927 leave of absence, and likely received an M. A. degree from that school. She is reported in 1927 as working on a book with the head (not named in the article) of the Department of Physical Education at Columbia. She apparently taught at Columbia until 1931 when she began teaching at New York University. She received her doctorate from NYU in 1939.

Interestingly enough, she was on the S. S. Athenia when it was torpedoed by a German submarine at the beginning of World War II. She wrote a nice, long article in our alumni magazine on that experience. The article includes several sidebars on her professional life as well. I would be happy to send you a photocopy of that article if you will give me your mailing address.

There is a brief article in our student newspaper referring to an article in Life magazine (January 6, 1941), "Sweigard system corrects posture by rest". In that newspaper article, Professor Monica Wild, head of women's PE at this school, stated that while Professor Sweigard

was not the originator of the "constructive rest" theory, Professor Sweigard worked with Mabel Elsworth Todd, who did indeed originate the theory. Other PE faculty here believed that Professor Sweigard deserved more publicity for her work and wished that she would publish more on it.

I can offer you just one more thing. We have a photocopy of an article on Professor Sweigard that appeared in the New York Times. The photocopy is not of the best quality, but I believe that the date is November 24, 1940. It is in the "Science and Patents" section, in a column entitled "Science in the News", in an article entitled "Body Mechanics". The columnist is Waldemar Kaempffert. Sorry, no page number. You should be able to find this in your university library, but, if not, I can certainly make a photocopy for you.

I suppose that it is possible that Professor Sweigard might have given her material to the University of Iowa or Iowa State University. But I do not know of any personal or professional connection that she may have had to those schools.

So, that is about it. Odds and ends. Bits and pieces. Do give me your mailing address if any of this stuff sounds worthwhile. There would be no charge for this small amount of photocopy. I might propose an exchange. I would love to have a decent obituary of Professor Sweigard, or at very least, her birth and death dates. If you have an obit, you could send it to:

Gerald L. Peterson  
Rod Library  
UNI  
1227 W. 27th Street  
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613

Thanks and best of luck on your research.

Gerry Peterson  
University Archivist  
University of Northern Iowa