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MARGARET H'DOUBLER

1889-1982

City: Madison

County: Dane

Margaret H'Doubler, “founder of American college dance,” created a dance major—the first in the U.S.—at the University of Wisconsin in 1926.

Margaret Newell H'Doubler was born in Kansas in 1889. She and her family lived in Illinois for some of her childhood years and then moved to Madison, Wisconsin. H'Doubler studied biology at the University of Wisconsin (UW). After she graduated in 1910, she was asked to stay and teach in the Department of Physical Education for Women, where she became popular as a basketball and baseball coach.

In 1916, H'Doubler took time off from her job at the UW to go to graduate school at Columbia University in New York. Her boss at the UW told her to find out something about dancing that she could bring back to Madison to teach. H'Doubler was surprised, because she had no interest in dance and didn't know much about it. But she ended up having bold new ideas about creative movement and the teaching of dance in higher education, and she was passionate about the subject for the rest of her life. She taught her students that dance involved both the body and the mind, and she was known for using a skeleton to explain how the body moves.

In 1926, the UW approved H'Doubler's proposal for dance as a major that included science, philosophy, and art. In 1940, H'Doubler published a book, *Dance: A Creative Art Experience*, that has been called “a classic of dance education” and is still being used. In 1942, she became a full professor, and she continued teaching at the UW until she retired in 1954. H'Doubler died in 1982.

To learn more, visit womeninwisconsin.org/profile/margaret-hdoubler