

## P.E.O. Founders' Day Program

**Reader 1** - Candles are for birthday cakes, anniversaries, power failures, dinner parties, weddings, and Advent wreaths. Candles put stars in the eyes of young lovers, wishes on the lips of little children, and candles warm tired hearts with nostalgic dreams. Candles are like people because both are loveliest when giving of themselves.

Today we light seven candles in remembrance of the seven founders of P.E.O. We remember seven young women who, in their wildest imagination, could not have foreseen the growth and influence of that first little society, founded on a January day in 1869 on the campus of Iowa Wesleyan College.

**Reader 2**- Hattie Briggs was the first to dream of P.E.O, and though she did not linger with them long, the ideas were really hers. In 1873, she married Henry Bousquet and became the mother of two sons. Her circle of P.E.O. was smaller than others, for she lived only 7 years to wear her Star. It has always been said she gave our Sisterhood a note of joy that has grown stronger as the years come and go.

So in loving memory of Hattie Briggs Bousquet, I light this candle.

**Reader 3** - Alice Bird was practical and literary. To give their idea reality, she created our vows and wrote our constitution. Alice Bird became the first president, and the oath she wrote, is the same we say today.

In loving memory of Alice Bird Babb, I light this candle as it is bright and far-reaching as was her leadership.

**Reader 1** - Franc Roads was dashing, artistic and dramatic. She was destined to be wife, artist, mother, and champion of causes for equal rights and opportunities for all.

In loving memory of Franc Roads, I light this candle, symbolizing the artistic.

**Reader 2** - Alice Coffin was a handsome southern girl from Kentucky. She was always well poised and beautifully dressed. It was Alice who chose our emblem, the Star, whose points of Faith, Love, Purity, Justice, and truth are ever leading us onward.

In loving memory of Alice Coffin, I light this candle.

**Reader 3** - Mary Ellen Stafford's unswerving faith gave spirituality to the dream of P.E.O., and made it an idea to which the little circle could cling, finding in it the riches of virtue and the essence of sharing truth.

In loving memory of Mary Ellen Stafford, I light this candle, symbolizing the brightest beams of our star.

**Reader 1** - Suela Pearson had the voice of an angel. She left beauty, gaiety, and eternal youth for us to remember, for after she left Iowa Wesleyan, she never saw any of the others again. She was the youngest of the seven girls.

In loving memory, of Suela Pearson, I light this candle, symbolizing life and vitality.

**Reader 2** - Ella Stewart chose our flower, the marguerite, and from the white of its tapering petals and the yellow of its heart, the idea inherited purity and light. Ella gave us the heritage of love. Her love focused on compassion and taught us to forgive our sisters' faults and failings.

In loving memory of Ella Stewart, I light this candle.

**Reader 3** - Today we honor and celebrate the seven founders of P.E.O., who on a January day in 1869 on the campus of Iowa Wesleyan College, came together to establish this wonderful organization.

They did not realize that they were establishing an institution which would be handed down through generations. They but followed the urge of their own personalities and thereby developed the P.E.O. Sisterhood. It is because of these seven wonderful ladies that we are here together today!