

# “Lou Henry Hoover Vanguard for the Girl Scout Movement”

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Lou Henry Hoover, although having no daughters of her own, had a distinguished career in Girl Scouting being the only woman elected twice as President of the National Council of Girl Scouts, once in 1922-1925 and again in 1935-1937 following her term (1929-1933) as First Lady of the United States. From her earliest work as a local volunteer leader in 1917 to her death in 1944, Mrs. Hoover was deeply involved in giving support and direction to the Girl Scout Movement.

Her contributions included encouraging the development of quality national leadership training at both colleges and regional centers, emphasizing the homemaking skills-feeling that while careers were important for the modern woman of the 1920's and 1930's, the home and the family needed to come first, and modeling citizenship skills as well as encouraging democratic and participatory governance at all levels of Scouting.

Her own person was best expressed through her poetry and activities which emphasized her love for the out-of-doors. The most memorable leisure of the youth and young adulthood of Lou Henry was spent camping, canoeing, and horseback riding with her father. She met her future husband, Herbert Hoover, in a geology laboratory at Stanford, and their friendship grew on Geology Club outings in the Sierras. As National President of Girl Scouts, Mrs. Hoover visited almost all council camps in the nation, initiated day camping, and led the Girl Scouts to authorize internal camp safety standards.

Upon the unexpected death of Mrs. Hoover in 1944, the Girl Scouts designated a national conservation project as a memorial. More than 45 Lou Henry Hoover Memorial Gardens still flourish in scout councils across the nation in memory of the woman who felt Girl Scouts should be at the forefront of the Conservation Movement.

It was to the youth of America that Mrs. Hoover left her greatest heritage. Lou Henry Hoover was the Vanguard of Girl Scouting-she was a leader and at the front edge of the development of Scouting for young girls as a social force of the 1920's. Through her husband's position she was a lady of national influence. Lou Henry Hoover used that influence and her personal magnetism to recruit powerful and able women into leadership positions in Girl Scouting firmly believing that Scouting was an important vehicle for improving the future of American womanhood.