Larzette G. Hale

Larzette Hale, a mighty force in the lives of all she touched, passed away on Thursday, February 5, 2015. Dr. Hale was an accounting faculty member and department head of the School of Accountancy from 1971 to 1990.

She began her life humbly, attending Langston University in Oklahoma, in as much as a young black woman was not permitted to enroll in the state’s leading institutions at that time. Completing a business degree there, she then proceeded to the University of Wisconsin, earning a master’s degree, and eventually her PhD. She initially taught at Clark University in Atlanta, passed the CPA exam, and founded a prosperous CPA firm. Her personal successes must be framed against their historical context, which mark her achievements as being possible only by someone of talent, integrity, fortitude, and conviction. Dr. Hale was recently recognized by the American Institute of CPAs as one of the most influential CPAs of all time.

Despite her impressive accomplishments, Dr. Hale was more known at USU by her students and colleagues as a loving and compassionate faculty member. She embraced those around her as members of her family, and used “tough love” to instill a drive for personal excellence by all she came in contact with. Her former students around the country are quick to relate that much of their motivation to succeed was in part to not disappoint Larzette Hale.

Quoting Emerson: “To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children, to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch . . . to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded!” Indeed she did, indeed.

— Larry Walther, Department Head, School of Accountancy