



**Shirley Wight Keeney** had a lifelong commitment to volunteer work. Her mother and aunt were active in the Fortnightly Club, particularly its Welfare Branch, and the young Shirley helped deliver food to the needy and ill. Later Mrs. Keeney served as president of the Summit Convalescent Committee. She headed the Visiting Nurse Association of Summit, New Providence and Berkeley Heights before its activities were assumed by Overlook Hospital. In addition, she served on the board of the Adele Lynch Nursing and Allied Health and Scholarship Committee, which supported local students.

As a member of the Overlook Auxiliary, Mrs. Keeney served on the founding committee for the Overlook Follies, which developed into the Overlook Musical Theater, which for many years presented fundraising musical theater productions to raise money for the hospital. She was a past board member of the Summit Area Chapter of the American Red Cross, and served as an advisory member to the Summit Speech School. In addition, she was a valued volunteer with the Summit Historical Society, where she shared not only thousands of hours of her time as a docent at the Carter House over the years, but also provided invaluable help to visitors in helping them with research into local people, places and events.

Although Shirley volunteered for many organizations, The Junior League of Summit was her main focus and she truly loved the organization and the many people she encountered through the years. She served as the League's Thrift Shop Chairwoman in 1951. She always loved the shop and remained a volunteer there for more than 50 years. In 1953, at age 35, Shirley was the youngest woman to be elected president of the League. During her presidency, the League marked its 25th anniversary by establishing the Summit Child Care Centers, which later became known as The Learning Circle.

Mrs. Keeney served as executive secretary of the League from 1965 to 1990. During those years, according to an essay printed in the League's yearbook, "Shirley was the backbone of our League and provided inestimable support to countless numbers of Junior League members." In 1989, she received a Summit YMCA award for being one of five Outstanding Women in the Community. It was stated of Shirley, "You are a living example of the ripple effect. The ever-widening circles of your direct and indirect influence on Summit's women are beyond measure." In 1990, the Summit Junior League Board of Directors voted to rename the group's high school awards the "Shirley Wight Keeney Scholarships", the essay continued, "in honor of someone well-loved and greatly admired by generations of Junior League women..... It is our hope that the recipients of the Shirley Wight Keeney Scholarships embody the qualities that Shirley represents."