



In Memoriam

Erna Leonhardt Gibbs

1906–1987

Erna L. Gibbs, a pioneer in the world of EEG technology and brain research, passed away at her home on July 23, 1987. She was 81.

The former Erna Leonhardt emigrated to this country from Germany in 1928. She worked at Harvard University under Dr. William Lennox, the father of epilepsy research. On December 16, 1930, she married Dr. Frederic A. Gibbs.

Together as a team, the Gibbes dedicated their lives to brain research. While working through the Johnson Foundation at the University of Pennsylvania, they invented a blood recorder that proved that epilepsy was not caused by the sudden loss of blood to the brain, but was the result of electrical brainstorms or bombardments. With fellow scientists they brought about the first breakthrough in the successful conquest of mental illness through chemical treatment.

The Gibbes and Albert Grass, while working at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, developed the use of the EEG as a diagnostic tool and the mechanism for recording brain wave patterns. Dr. and Mrs. Gibbs developed

the renowned *Atlas's of Electroencephalography* and over the years published numerous other articles on their work.

Mrs. Gibbs was the leader in providing training for EEG technologists. She also taught EEG to others in the medical and scientific communities.

Both Mrs. Gibbs and her husband have received numerous recognitions for their work. In 1938 they were honored for their research in blood flow by receiving the Mead Johnson Award. The Mary Lasker Award for Medicine was presented to them in 1957 for their EEG work. Dr. and Mrs. Gibbs earned the prestigious Golden Brain Award in 1984.

The American Women's Association named Erna Gibbs their "Woman of the Year" in 1958 for her "discoveries which have stimulated medical scientist all over the world" as a result of the "most comprehensive study ever made by a single individual in specialized brain research."

Mrs. Gibbs was a forerunner of the *professional woman*. She successfully balanced her career and family. She will be sorely missed by the neurological community. Our heartfelt sympathies are extended to her family and close colleagues.