

ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION OF MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE

# ELIZABETH TOPHAM KENNAN AWARD 2019

PRESENTED TO



*Mary Williamson McHenry '54*

**MARY WILLIAMSON McHENRY, CLASS OF 1954**, the Alumnae Association of Mount Holyoke College is pleased to honor you with the Elizabeth Topham Kennan Award. This award is presented to alumnae whose accomplishments in the field of education exemplify the values set forth by the College.

Mary, your trailblazing leadership in education has helped to pave the way for many of your students, who credit you with being a major influence on their own education and success.

Professor emerita of English at Mount Holyoke, you began your career teaching at Howard University, George Washington University and Federal City College. Twenty years after graduation, you returned to Mount Holyoke to take a position as an English professor and you were instrumental in the formation of the American studies and the Africana studies departments. In 2001, two years after your retirement, your daughter, Elizabeth, memorably honored you at the Elizabeth T. Kennan Lecture, where she gave a presentation titled "Forgotten Readers: The Lost History of African-American Literary Societies." In 2007 Mount Holyoke exhibited "The Mary McHenry Papers," which included personal correspondence, writings, speeches and yearbooks of yours dating from your childhood through your time on the faculty.

When you first arrived on campus in the early 1950s, there were only five African-American women in the entire college. When you returned as a faculty member, there were 140 African-American students. Your former student Michelle Taylor '94, who became a professor of English at the Miami University of Ohio, has credited you for sparking her dual interests in teaching and African-American literature. Your long career is marked by its great impact on the lives of Michelle and so many other students.

MARY, for your accomplishments, the Alumnae Association is honored to present you with the Elizabeth Topham Kennan Award on this, your sixty-fifth, reunion.

MARIA Z. MOSSAIDES '73  
PRESIDENT  
ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION OF MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE

NANCY BELLOWS PEREZ '76  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION OF MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE