



"Mildred's actions were imbued with personal resolve and inner strength rather than by ambition. The subtly anthropomorphized stele memorial reflects the quiet and somber dignity which is befitting one whose pursuits were impelled by selfless love and idealism. The memorial is intended to spiritually unite Mildred with her formative base and intellectual center, Wisconsin."

Specification drawing of the sculpture *Mildred* by John Durbrow, dedicated 2019 in Marshall Park.



Photo: German Resistance Memorial Center

"Do you remember Picnic Point, where we got engaged? I sang for joy, early in the morning at the Club. And, even before that, our first serious conversation at lunch in a restaurant on State Street? That conversation became and has remained my guiding star."

— Arvid Harnack, 1942

Mildred Fish-Harnack

Mildred Elizabeth Fish was born in Milwaukee in 1902. In 1926, as a student of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison she met Arvid Harnack (b. 1901), a post doctoral student in economics from Darmstadt, Germany. They married in 1926 in Brooklyn, Wisconsin.

In the late 1920s, Mildred and Arvid moved to Germany and studied at Giessen University, from which she received her Ph.D. in 1941. They were deeply concerned about fascism and the poverty they observed throughout Europe. Together with other intellectuals they created a circle of friends who debated the consequences of Nazism and how Europe might develop after the fall of the Hitler regime.

The Gestapo learned of their resistance work and dubbed them "die Rote Kapelle" ("the Red Orchestra"). They did, in fact,

pass on military and economic information to both the Soviet Union and the United States.

On September 7, 1942, they were arrested by the Gestapo. On December 22, 1942, Arvid was executed. Mildred was initially sentenced to prison, but Hitler ordered her execution, which took place on February 16, 1943. She was the only American woman executed by Hitler's direct order.

Arvid's letter to Mildred from shortly before his execution reveals his deep love for her, as well as fond remembrances of their happier days in Madison.

It is said her last words were, "Und ich habe Deutschland so geliebt" ("And I have loved Germany so much").



Marshall Park in Madison