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Boston Herald, "Honors Memory of Tech Woman: Husband Unveils Bas-Relief  
to Mrs. Ellen H. Richards, 30 Years Teacher," December 4, 1928.

# HONORS MEMORY OF TECH WOMAN

Husband Unveils Bas-Relief to Mrs. Ellen H. Richards, 30 Years Teacher

## FORMER STUDENTS ATTEND EXERCISES

A bronze bas-relief of Mrs. Ellen H. Richards, first woman graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and for more than 30 years a teacher there, was unveiled at the institute yesterday afternoon. It was the gift of the alumni, and was accepted by Dr. Samuel C. Prescott, head of the department of biology and public health, who reviewed the contributions of Mrs. Richards to public health and sanitary chemistry.

Two former students of Mrs. Richards lauded her great qualities as a teacher. They were William E. Nickerson, vice-president of the Gillette Safety Razor Company and Miss Alice F. Blood. Another speaker was James P. Munroe, secretary of the Technology corporation. Prof. Augustus H. Gill presided. Associates of Mrs. Richards on the faculty and many of her former students attended the exercises.

### HUSBAND PRESENT

Mrs. Richards died in 1911. She was the wife of Robert H. Richards, professor emeritus at the Institute of Technology, and formerly head of the department of mining and metallurgy. He unveiled the memorial. The bas-relief was the work of Miss Bashka Paeff.

As a scientist, teacher and humanitarian Mrs. Richards had a career that was unique and distinguished. She was born in Dunstable. The meagre education of a rural community in civil war days did not satisfy her. After earning the money needed to continue her studies she entered Vassar as a special student in 1868. She was graduated in 1870 and came to Boston. Here, in 1871, she was admitted as a special student in chemistry at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Until that time no woman ever had been admitted to Technology. A special faculty vote, after much deliberation, permitted her to enter. In 1873 she was graduated with the degree of bachelor of science. She remained at Technology as an assistant, and soon became an instructor in sanitary chemistry.

### MADE SANITARY SURVEY

With Prof. William R. Nichol, Mrs. Richards was in charge of the sanitary survey of the Massachusetts water supply in 1887, an important step forward in public health precautions. She conducted many researches into the chemistry of food, and into the fire hazards attending the use of different oils.

She developed the study of human nutrition needs, and prepared balanced diet charts for infants and school children. Betterment of health conditions in schools, homes, and in industry was her constant aim. She was the founder and first president of the American Home Economics Association.

In addition to her many activities which had to do with public health she took a keen interest in the scientific work of her husband, and in the summers of 1881 and 1882 accompanied him to the copper country of northern Michigan, where she acted as his chemist in investigations into methods of smelting copper ore.

The alumni committee which provided the memorial was headed by Frances Stern. Among its members were Everett Morss, treasurer of the Technology corporation, Prof. Augustus H. Gill, Gretchen A. Palmer, Prof. Samuel C. Prescott, Alice F. Blood, R. W. Gilbert, Lois L. Howe, Isabel F. Hyams, William R. Kales, Margaret E. Maltby, Eleanor Manning, George T. Palmer, Dwight Porter, Lillie C. Smith, Alice I. Tyler, Willis R. Whitney and Prof. C. E. A. Whitney of Yale University.