

Muna Lee on Lecture Tour

By MALVINA STEPHENSON

IN 1918, the University of Oklahoma got a call from the government for a linguist. Officials immediately recommended the brilliant Muna Lee, '14, who had just completed a term teaching at the Tonkawa Preparatory School.

Thus, it was World War I which took Muna Lee to New York and romance with a brilliant young Latin editor. After a whirlwind courtship, she became the bride of Luis Munoz-Marin, now president of the Puerto Rican Senate.

Again, in the new war emergency, she comes to the aid of her country even though this time it means a temporary separation of the devoted couple. Besides being a First Lady of Puerto Rico, Muna Lee de Munoz-Marin is also a poet and a personality in her own right. She ranks as one of the most outstanding feminine figures in the whole western hemisphere, the first woman to have addressed a Pan-American conference.

With this broad background as a writer and a lecturer, Senora de Munoz-Marin, or Muna Lee as she is known to countless University friends, has joined the staff of the Cultural Relations Division of the State Department. Her official title is division assistant.

In the practical promotion of Uncle Sam's Good Neighbor policy, Muna Lee will return to the University campus at mid-April as an honor guest with Dr. Francisco Castillo Najera, Mexican Ambassador to the United States, at the Pan-American Fiesta. Officially, Muna Lee will be a representative of the State Department on a good will tour, but of most significance to her, it will be coming home, making her first personal appearance on the campus since she was a pretty co-ed writing poetry and making top-notch grades.

"Of course, I am very happy to have this opportunity to return to the campus and see so many of my old friends," she observes in discussing the prospective trip. She will also visit with her brother, Floyd Lee, a Norman resident, and his family.

On April 16, Senora de Munoz-Marin is scheduled to discuss Inter-American cultural relations as a factor in war-time solidarity. On the following day at a luncheon of Oklahoma teachers of Spanish, she will speak on "What the Citizens of the United States Can Do To Make Friends Among the Latin Countries." Before returning to Washington, she will bring the cultural relations program to her native state of Mississippi.

With her dual background both in the

United States and Puerto Rico, Muna Lee is particularly equipped to further friendship between Uncle Sam and the Latin countries. She knows and understands the people of the various sections, and can visualize a program which will be of general interest.

Muna Lee was born in Mississippi on January 29, 1895, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Floyd Lee. With her family, she moved to Hugo in 1902 and completed her public school education there, except for a year at her mother's alma mater, Blue Mountain college, in Mississippi. She then attended the University of Oklahoma, and later graduated at the University of Mississippi. School teaching followed at Sulphur, Lawton, and Tonkawa.

After the period in New York City with the mail censorship division, she moved with her husband to his family home at San Juan, Puerto Rico, where they have made their home ever since except for intervals of world travel and stays in the states. Both continued their own interests and soon were important figures in the island and the whole hemisphere. Senor Munoz-Marin became editor of his family paper, and she for 14 years has been in charge of public relations at the University of Puerto Rico. Both have contributed widely to publications in the United States.

Since coming to Washington this fall, Muna Lee has made numerous appearances, giving lectures and reading her own poetry translations. She discussed "The Women of Puerto Rico in National Defense" before the Society of Women Geographers, the Washington branch, of which she is a member. She spoke on three Latin poets and read her translations from their works at the annual dinner of the Poetry Society of America in New York. On the occasion of Susan B. Anthony's anniversary observance in the crypt of the United States Capitol recently, she read an original sonnet.

The latter part of March, she spoke on Puerto Rican women to the Washington branch of the American Farm and Garden Association. Dr. Walker Linares of the University of Chile was introduced by Muna Lee at a luncheon in his honor given by the American Association of University Women. Her articles on a Latin artist and a poet most recently have appeared in *The Magazine of Art* and in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, the latter publication having awarded her its lyric prize back in 1915.

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