

Mary Routt dies at 96 ^{H-R}

June 30, 1986

ORVILLE

Mary Patterson Routt, a Grinnell College graduate who became one of the first women to be a White House correspondent, died last week in California. She was 96.

Born in Iowa in 1890, Routt received undergraduate degrees from Grinnell in 1908 and Wellesley College in 1909. Grinnell awarded her an honorary doctorate in 1966.

Routt, the author of "The Life and Times of a White House Correspondent: 1933-45" (College Press, Inc., 1983), was a resident of Mount San Antonio Gardens in Claremont, Calif.

Routt began her career in journalism in 1931 as a local columnist for the Beverly Hills Citizen. In March 1933, she was assigned to cover the inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Her story, a report on Washington in economic despair, was printed nationwide, launching a 12-year career as a nationally syn-

icated columnist covering the Washington political scene.

Routt was one of six women journalists admitted to Roosevelt's White House press conferences and among the elite group of women reporters invited to attend Eleanor Roosevelt's "for women only" briefing sessions. She was the only woman correspondent to travel with Sherwood Eddy's group to Berlin during the month that Adolph Hitler became chancellor of Germany.

An emerita trustee of Scripps College in Claremont, Routt was the last surviving member of the college's founding board of trustees. (Scripps, a liberal-arts college for women, was founded in 1926.)

Routt is survived by her son, Robert, and a grandchild.

A memorial service will be held on the Scripps College campus after classes begin in the fall.