

## **Katharine Briggs and Isabel Myers**

Katharine's (INFJ) maiden name was Cook. She had four uncles who were college Presidents. She started taking classes at the age of 13 at the college where her father was a professor of Biology. Her father was a scientific man who believed in evolution and taught it for 20 years in the late 1800's

It was the Victorian belief of the time that if a woman developed her mind, then her reproductive capacity would be irrevocably impaired, yet Katharine completed an undergraduate degree in agriculture. She was prevented from getting a graduate degree due to failing eye sight. She wore granny glasses with thick lenses most of her life. She was a published author, publishing 33 editorials in *The Ladies Home Journal* as well as a variety of other short articles.

Isabel was born on October 18, 1897. Her christened name was Susanna Isabella McKelvey Briggs after her father's mother. Her mother called her Suzanne but she called herself Isabel. She could multiply by the age of three and write at five. She was home schooled for much of her youth spending only one full year in public school before entering college, the ninth grade. She started studying German at eight and was conversant by the age of ten. She also studied Latin and French which she was competent by 13. She had dazzling grades in college but once flunked Trigonometry. She published her first article at the age of 15 in the *Ladies Home Journal* as a high school Freshmen. She was an honor graduate of the Quaker College, Swarthmore College (1919). She continued to publish and ten years later in January, 1930, published a prize-winning mystery novel, *Murder Yet to Come*.

It was Katharine's desire to understand her daughter Isabel's fiancé, "Chief" that led her to begin to explore the importance of temperament in character development. By 1922 she had written an unpublished manuscript titled, *Notes on the Art of Creating Characters* in which she described her own theory for analyzing character. She said that she was more interested in trying to understand the basic principles of behavior and personality than in application. In 1923 when she read Carl Jung's work she is alleged to have said, "This is it!" Four year later she began corresponding with Jung which continued until 1936. She met him in 1937 in New York city on his way back to Zurich after a lecture series at Yale. He asked her what she had done with her own manuscript but she told him that after reading his *Psychological Types* she had burnt her notes.

In 1942 at the age of forty four, Isabel Myers read an article in the *Reader's Digest* titled, "Fitting the worker to the job" which was about the existing efforts to move soldiers back into suitable jobs after the war. It was her dissatisfaction with the existing sorting tools that led her to create the MBTI in 1943. Over the next 30 years she continued to refine the instrument which was published in 1962. The first version of the tool was finished in 1943.

Isabel's husband, Clarence, (Chief) was an attorney. Her father Lyman Briggs (INTP), was a physicist who was head of the National Bureau of Standards.

Isabel was an INFP. Her husband an ISTJ. Form A of the Indicator was completed in the Spring of 1943 when it was copyrighted. It consisted of eighteen pages, 172 questions mimeographed

on both sides and stapled together. The answers were written on a separate sheet and it was scored by hand. By 1944 she was on Form C which had fewer questions. It was first used commercially in 1945 by Edward Hay and Associates who signed a five year contract with Isabel to use it with clients in his consulting business.

In her eighties Katharine suggested that since she didn't really have much to do with the Indicator that her name should be removed. Isabel refused.

Isabel was first able to norm the Indicator in 1955 when she gave it to 3,605 students from 45 college members of the American Association of Medical Colleges. This led to her work being recognized by the Educational Testing Service who invited her in 1956 to present her Indicator to their research staff and by July of 1957 they contracted to publish it. It then went through a period of rigorous testing and Form F was declared ready to release to the public in 1962.