

Taken from The IAMPETH Newsletter, Winter 1995

Joe Vitolo

Paula Loya
(19??-1994)

Her experiences with the pen date back to grade school in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, and after she finished high school, Paula went on to study at the College of Watchmaking and Engraving, and attended the Zanerian College of Penmanship. Under the guidance of P.Z. Bloser and E.A. Lupfer, she became a qualified Supervisor of Penmanship. After teaching public school for two years, she went on to work as a jewelry engraver with a Pittsburgh company, and would later become an assistant engrosser to W.A. Henning of Worcester, Massachusetts. In 1938 she founded the Loya Studio in Boston with her sister Anne. Becoming established in her own business, many challenges were presented and successfully accomplished from which the patient gathering of knowledge brought forth satisfying results. Some of these challenges included restoration of manuscripts, lettering on real sheepskin, as well as metal, glass and leather, lettering on trucks, designing and building parade floats and pyrography.

Edward Hippensteel of Orlando, Florida sums it up nicely in a 1963 letter to Major F.O. Anderson:

"One is constantly amazed at the volume of work she (Paula) produces. There seems to be no limit to her originality and creativeness. She is at home with all styles and mediums."

Paula Loya's originality and creativeness was evident as a member and past president of IAMPETH. She would produce her own newsletter which contained miscellaneous information and hints regarding pen work, alphabets and news about members. Each envelope was hand-decorated and personalized, and has become a treasure to all who received them.

In addition to her newsletter, Paula always presented interesting workshops. She would use pens, pencils, crayons, paints, papers and materials in many unique ways, always opening the door to challenge ones sensibilities and abilities to find an original solution to a problem rather than following the status quo.

Among her many accolades, Paula had become best known to the members of IAMPETH for the canvas smock she wore while teaching and demonstrating. She called this smock her "Walking Listing of Pen People." On it, she had lettered alphabets in various styles, sizes and colors using textile paint applied with a brush. In addition to these alphabets, Paula also included verses, illuminations and an on going listing of the members.

Paula was a fine, likeable person and those who knew her will miss her very much. On September 23, 1994, Paula Loya passed on after much illness.

Fred Popowicz was a major contributor to this article. Aline Malone and Jo Pezzulo also made valuable contributions.