

**EDYTH
THOMAS
WALLACE**
1880-1975



**‘POINTS
FOR
PARENTS’
COLUMN**

Dr. Benjamin Spock launched a revolutionary philosophy of child-rearing in the baby boomer age with “The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care” in 1946, which sold fifty million copies by his death in 1998. Twenty years before, Edyth Thomas Wallace published a nationally syndicated column “Points for Parents”, featuring gems of wisdom and discipline for parents, entertainingly presented by cartoons and brief text.

Edyth Thomas was born in November 1880 in Carson, Iowa and grew up in Council Bluffs, where she married her high school sweetheart Robert Wallace in September 1901. When he died in 1923, Edyth and her four children struggled financially. She manufactured mayonnaise in her basement, ran a small cafeteria, and even worked at the YWCA.

During an illness, Wallace wrote some articles on “Questions My Children Ask Me – How Shall I Answer Them?”, based on a friend’s suggestion, who had long admired Wallace’s skill in giving explanations about problems bothering her children. “This was better than making salad dressing, but didn’t help our family’s living expenses.”

After special training in child development and parent education, Wallace moved to Ardmore to become a ‘Mothercraft’ teacher in 1927. She soon became director of adult education for southeastern Oklahoma, eventually moving to Oklahoma City in 1935.

While on a New York subway enroute to visit her ill son in a hospital, she conceptualized “Points for Parents”. In 1936, after peddling the column for three years, the editor of the Omaha World-Herald liked her articles and asked her to write a column three times weekly, although she had no formal training in journalism. Her column sympathetically disclosed the right and wrong way to handle children. Its cartoons warning “This” and “Not This” soon appeared in sixty newspapers six times weekly.

NOT THIS – Mother: “Hurry up! It’s bedtime...no, you cannot stay up longer! I still have a lot of things to do.” THIS – Mother: “Come on. Let’s sing some Christmas carols before you go to bed. What do you want to sing first, Ann?” LESSON – Sleep come more easily after a quiet, happy time than it does after a hurrying one. Wallace published a book of her cartoons in 1946 – still available online.

For 36 years, she produced more than 11,000 columns for newspapers. “Trying to find new ways of presenting old truths which will be of help to parents,” said Wallace, “is the undying arm of Points for Parents, with its ‘Not This – This’ contrasting examples.” Wallace continued to write her syndicated column until age 90.

Wallace also wrote the “Our Homes” column for The Daily Oklahoman, articles on family relations for the Farmer Stockman magazine, and produced a weekly radio program on WKY for many years. During her lifetime, her accolades included Oklahoma Mother of the Year (1940), Distinguished Citizen Citation from the University of Oklahoma (1957), Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame (1982) and inaugural class of Oklahoma Women’s Hall of Fame (1982). Edyth Wallace died in October 1975 at age 95 in Ardmore.