



A Special Teacher: Sally Slocum

Ann Otto

Sally Pitts Kennedy Slocum was an excellent English literature teacher. Her love of the South, romanticism, and ancient England resonated with many. It made our subjects so much more attractive and influenced us to really understand the material by immersing ourselves in whatever period we were reading at the time.

But the class day I remember most is April 5, 1968. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had been shot the previous evening. Dr. Kennedy (as we knew her then) was an emotional person, and we knew her strong position on civil rights. She came into the room late that day, slammed some books on her

desk, looked out at all of us, and said in a frustrated voice, “What are y’all doin’ here today?” and a few more sentences that didn’t register with us due to our surprise. Then she left teary-eyed.

She couldn’t teach that day, but she wanted to give us all a message. That lesson had more impact than any lecture could have by making us reflect on the significance of what had just happened.