To honor Mary White, her high school set aside a restroom/lounge for African American girls. The school also dedicated its annual, 
*Re-Echo*, in honor of Mary, and included some of her drawings. The White family donated 50 acres to the city of Emporia for a park in Mary’s honor. The name, Peter Pan Park, came from her father who referred to her as the child that didn’t want to grow up. In 1958 the Children’s Room in the William Allen White Library on the campus of Emporia State University was named the Mary White Room. The 1977 film *Mary White*, inspired by her obituary, was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture for Television. As short as her life might have been, these memorials serve to remind us of the impact Mary White had on those whose lives she touched.
Mary Katherine White was born to William Allen and Sallie Moss Lindsay White on June 18, 1904. She was rather frail for the first few years of her life due to heart medication her mother took during pregnancy. Mary’s parents encouraged her to spend time outside for better health, and she eventually became somewhat of a tomboy. Whether it was her vigorous nature or her upbringing, the frail Mary became a formidable young woman interested in justice and equality. She appreciated where she came from, but she longed to be more than just the daughter of “the Sage of Emporia.”

Mary loved horses and had one from the time she was big enough to ride. She was also an avid reader and enjoyed classics by Charles Dickens and Mark Twain. Later she read articles in Collier’s Journal, Saturday Evening Post, and her father’s newspaper, The Emporia Gazette. Music interested her, especially Beethoven and Brahms, along with drawing and stamp collecting.

Mary with brother Bill and father William.

Mary believed in fairness for all and fought against inequity. When a high school boy committed a theft but served the consequences, she stood up for him while the other students avoided him. Mary found an African American girl hiding in the only girls’ restroom in high school just to read. When asked why, the girl confessed that she was afraid that the white girls wouldn’t want her there. Mary hounded the school officials for a restroom/lounge for the African American girls to meet.

At the age of 16, Mary had a tragic accident on her horse. Her horse swerved under a tree and a limb hit Mary’s head. She died a few days later on May 13, 1921. In the greatest emotional crisis of her father’s life, the “Sage of Emporia” wrote an obituary telling Mary’s story. The editorial was distributed more widely than any other her father ever wrote. It appeared in newspapers across the country and was read over the radio. At one time it became a standard selection for high school and college reading.