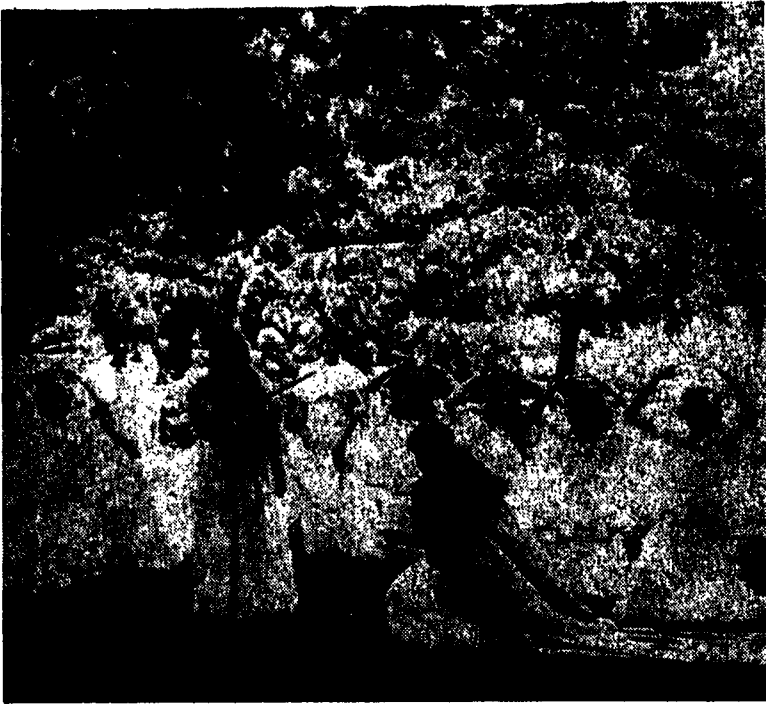


Grecian Goddesses



MILDRED RIDE DUNLAP is being crowned queen of the first May Day program in 1914 by the first president of Women's Student Government Association, Eunice S. Williams. Members of the court made their own Greek togas. WSGA sponsors the program each year.

1st Queen Crowned On May Day, 1914

By GINGER HANCE

Forty-one years ago the University's first queen was crowned thus establishing a custom that has continued through the years. Mildred Ride was crowned May Queen in 1914 in a ceremony that was given by College women for the benefit of the hospital fund.

May Day and all its ceremony at the University resulted from the efforts of Dean Lovejoy, who was former Dean of Women and also a graduate of Mt. Holyoke where May Day had been a tradition. She was assisted by a student, Ethel Sparks, who planned the dances. The first costumes were of a Grecian type, simply made by the women themselves. They were creations of pastel cheesecloth.

All were Eligible
The festival was held at sunset in the little amphitheatre on the front campus. Woman's Building was the formation spot for the procession which continued on to the amphitheatre. Unlike today, there were no candidates or finalists. All women were eligible and they congregated in the front parlors of Woman's Building for the selection of the May Queen.

World War I was the major cause for the discontinuation of May Day ceremonies until 1921. Included in the original program were several dances. The Dance of the Flowers, Dance of the Fruits, and Dance of the Sowers and Reapers highlighted the ceremony. The traditional May Pole Dance was also performed. Music was by courtesy of the College Regimental Band.

Honored as Leaders
Coed Colonels made their appearance on the campus in 1930. These "queens" were selected on an honorary basis in recognition of their positions as campus leaders. Three senior women were selected, one colonel and two lieutenant colonels. A committee of two women and two men students representing the Women's Student Government Association and the regimental officers respectively, nominated the girls. Student officers in Reserve Officers' Training Corps selected the winners by ballot. The names were kept secret until the night of the Military Ball at which time Helen Buckwalter, colonel, and Mildred Wentz and Ann Mellinger, lieutenant colonels were announced. The women led the Grand March around the dance floor.

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Man Taught Coed Class In Phys Ed

By GAIL GILMAN

Imagine yourself a coed doing calisthenics with varsity basketball practice on one side of you, boxing on the other, and professors creeping in on hands and knees looking for stray balls from their game of handball! Such was the situation in 1924.

Women's physical education classes were being shifted continuously from building to building and were even held in the Armory and the Methodist Church gym.

When women's physical education first started at Penn State, there were no women physical education teachers; thus the director of the gym had to take the job, and employ a military man to teach the women marching.

Need for a women's gym was recognized as early as 1916. In 1924, when Miss Marie Haidt joined the staff, she began working toward such a goal. For 14 years Miss Haidt was the only women's physical education teacher at the University.

In 1938 Mary Beaver White Hall was finally completed. The building was named for Miss White because of her interest in and assistance to women on campus by loan funds and scholarships. This building marked the result of nearly a half century of work towards getting adequate facilities for the women's physical education program. It was built mostly of the indefatigable effort of Miss Haidt, and contains rifle range, swimming pool, bowling alleys, fencing room, squash court, gym, calisthenics room, and club rooms.

Along with the planning of White Hall, it was decided to change the name of the organization of sportswomen from the Women's Athletic Association to the Women's Recreational Association, the former sounding too masculine.

WRA supplements the regular program having a four-fold program: competitive sports, club activities, special activities, and a voluntary participation in the facilities offered. Its purpose is "to give opportunity for socialized recreation and development of skill in various sports and activities."

That Ol' Ratio Is Here to Stay

The University's time-honored ratio of three males to one female won't be seriously changed in future undergraduate enrollment.

Present studies, projected into 1960 and beyond, show that the ratio will still hold in 1960 when an estimated 9900 men and 3350 women will enroll at the University.

In 1965, the totals will be 11,593 men and 4250 women. Five years later they'll be 13,340 and 5160, respectively.

Automatic voting machines were used for the first All-University elections in 1939.

University Open To Coeds in 1871

"It is the responsibility of the College as recipients of the bounty of the government to help citizens who have daughters as well as those who have sons."

So said President James Calder in 1871, when the faculty and the Board of Trustees voted to admit both sexes without distinction as to qualifications or privileges.

The doors of the institution were thrown open with the aim of preparing "the female student" for "a matron instead of a parlor ornament."

Same Courses for Coeds

However, the privilege of an equal education with men was not always an unqualified success. Started as the Farmers' High School, the College curriculum in the early years was almost entirely confined to courses in agriculture, science, and engineering. Since no concessions were made to women, they had to follow the same courses of study as the men.

But from the first the women students did well. President Calder said in a report to the trustees:

First Six 'Ladies'
"Thus far six ladies have entered, and have proven as diligent, orderly, and successful as the young men in the same classes."

During the 1880's, there was a growing demand for courses designed especially for women. The enrollment of coeds was dropping. The number rose from six in 1871 to 49 in 1879—the peak for about 30 years. In 1906, the figure dropped to six again.

'Ladies Course'

A weak attempt to interest the women in higher education was made in 1884 with the introduction of a curriculum titled "Ladies' Course in Literature and Science." It covered two years of work.

A student editor, in 1889, questioned whether "women should be educated in the classes and take the same courses of instruction as men in the colleges. A woman needs that which will make her a queen of the household and of society," he wrote, "while man needs that which will fit him for the harder, sterner duties of life, to which the ladies should never be driven except in cases of exigency."

Alumnae Club, Too
An effort to reverse the downward trend in the enrollment of women was made in 1906 when the Alumnae Club issued a circular pointing out the advantages of the University.

"That more young women in Pennsylvania do not take advantage of the excellent opportunities offered them here at so moderate a cost," the circular said, "is astonishing when similar institutions in other states are overcrowded with their women."

Six Coeds; 784 Men

Pointing out that of the College's 800 students, only six were women, the circular added that "this is the result mainly of the lack of knowledge throughout the state of the opportunities offered

to women, the impression prevailing that this is an institution open only to men."

The year 1907 was a turning point in the history of coeducation at the University for it marked the establishment of a department of home economics. With a special curriculum provided for women, the College attracted coeds in increasing numbers thereafter.

Home Ec Program Pushed

Strong impetus to the movement for a full program in home economics was given by the State Federation of Women's Clubs meeting in State College in 1906. It adopted a resolution demanding that the legislature appropriate funds for such a department. A campaign carried on by women over the state, resulted in the appropriation of the necessary money.

Today, 84 years after the doors were thrown open to them, few women would assert that the institution is not living up to its obligations as set forth by President Calder in 1871. The University is helping those citizens who have daughters as well as those who have sons.

WSGA History Begins in 1906

The Women's Student Government Association was first organized in 1906, but was revised and came into actual operation in 1915. Eunice S. Williams was the first president.

Officially functioning in 1915, WSGA was reorganized along the plan of the national government, with two houses—a Senate composed of representatives from each class, and a House of Representatives composed of women from the various living units. Again reorganized in 1921, it included the women living in town and in the cottages.

Revolutionary rule changes made by the new WSGA in 1923 allowed women to dine at fraternity houses on weekends with the permission of the house president, and during the week with the permission of the Dean of Women.

The purpose of WSGA is, according to the Constitution, "to control matters of student life in achieving high standards of scholarship and character." The basic organization has remained unchanged since 1923; although rules have been brought up to date as the occasion warranted.

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