

Fall 2022

Academic and Intellectual Life for Gettysburg College Women, 1960-1980

Theodore J. Szpakowski
Gettysburg College

Follow this and additional works at: https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/student_scholarship



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Women's History Commons](#)

Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.

Recommended Citation

Szpakowski, Theodore J., "Academic and Intellectual Life for Gettysburg College Women, 1960-1980" (2022). *Student Publications*. 1038.

https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/student_scholarship/1038

This open access student research paper is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact cupola@gettysburg.edu.

Academic and Intellectual Life for Gettysburg College Women, 1960-1980

Abstract

The women of Gettysburg College, students and faculty, faced unique barriers in their academic life from 1960 to 1980. The college was making curricular and calendar changes to benefit all students, women, but was slower to fix the inequities facing women. First, women had a harder time getting into Gettysburg College, due to a 2:1 sex ratio in admissions that required women to have higher qualifications than their male counterparts. Some women also struggled to convince family members that college mattered to them rather than just being an expensive way to acquire a marriage match. Once there, women were expected to work towards very limited career paths—to become nurses, teachers, or secretaries. Continuing education in graduate school was not impossible for women, but it was considered odd and unnecessary work. Female faculty members faced hiring discrimination, tokenism, and opaque promotion policies. Despite these challenges, many women found ways to support each other in achieving a positive experience at Gettysburg College that would lead them to a bright future.

Keywords

college history, coeducation, women's history, 1960s, 1970s

Disciplines

Higher Education | Women's History

Comments

Written for HIST 300: Historical Methods.

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

Academic and Intellectual Life for Gettysburg College Women, 1960-1980

Theodore Szpakowski

for Professor Michael Birkner

Hist 300: Historical Methods

Submitted December 7, 2022

Academic and Intellectual Life for Gettysburg College Women, 1960-1980

The women of Gettysburg College faced unique barriers in their academic life from 1960 to 1980. The college was making curricular and calendar changes to benefit all students, women, but was slower to fix the inequities facing women. First, women had a harder time getting into Gettysburg College, due to a 2:1 sex ratio in admissions that required women to have higher qualifications than their male counterparts. Some women also struggled to convince family members that college mattered to them rather than just being an expensive way to acquire a marriage match. Once there, women were expected to work towards very limited career paths—to become nurses, teachers, or secretaries. Continuing education in graduate school was not impossible for women, but it was considered odd and unnecessary work. Female faculty members faced hiring discrimination, tokenism, and opaque promotion policies. Despite these challenges, many women found ways to support each other in achieving a positive experience at Gettysburg College that would lead them to a bright future.

Broad Academic Context

The 1960s were a time when the administration and faculty of Gettysburg College reevaluated many facets of their academic program. Inaugurated in 1962, President C. Arnold Hanson wanted students to have both “freedom and responsibility.”¹ One student explained that these changes felt like “the administration was aware of the times and aware of what the students wanted and needed,” and indeed, these changes were generally supported by the students.² One of the broadest changes was to the academic calendar. In Fall 1965, Gettysburg College went from having two semesters in which students took five courses each to having two semesters in

¹ Anna Jane Moyer, *To Waken Fond Memory: Moments in the History of Gettysburg College*, (Gettysburg, PA: Friends of Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, 2006), 158, <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/books/76/>.

² Sue Tackach, interview by Devin McKinney, May 2, 2015, transcript, GettDigital Collections, 12, <https://cdm16274.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3543/rec/5>.

which students took four courses each and one semester in which students took one intensive course.³ This meant that the first semester ended before Christmas, which many found far preferable to having a brief period of the semester fall afterwards.⁴ There were then four weeks of a January class and then a second semester from February to the end of May.⁵ The four week semester was called the mini-mester, the January Term, or the Jan Term. Students along with faculty planned for how this new form of teaching and learning would work.⁶ Some students would be “in class all day, every day, for the month.”⁷ However, that was not the only option. Some students chose instead to participate in “off-campus courses, independent study, and internships.”⁸

With the number of courses changing, there were also major changes to graduation requirements—students now only had to pass 35 courses, and only a third of those were distribution requirements.⁹ This compared to a previous system where students had to pass 40 courses, with half of those being distribution requirements.¹⁰ Specifically, the Contemporary Civilization, Literary Foundations, and English Composition courses that every student had previously been required to take were now offered as electives only.¹¹ There was also no longer the requirement that students take a minor, or that they needed to pass a comprehensive examination in their major before graduating.¹²

³ Charles H. Glatfelter, *A Salutory Influence: Gettysburg College, 1832-1985*, (Gettysburg: Gettysburg College, 1987), GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/GBNP01/id/64351/rec/1>, 2:876.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:898.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Moyer, *To Waken Fond Memory*, 163.

⁷ Kelly Alsedek, interview by Devin McKinney, July 21 & 31st, 2014, transcript, GettDigital Collections, 4, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3513/rec/1>.

⁸ Steering Committee, *Middle States Self-Study Progress Report*, (Gettysburg, PA: Gettysburg College, September 1, 1973), “Middle States Report, 1973/Follow-Up Rpt.-1978” folder, Gettysburg College Archives [henceforth GCA], 6.

⁹ Glatfelter, *A Salutory Influence*, 2:876.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Glatfelter, *A Salutory Influence*, 2:868-869; Glatfelter, *A Salutory Influence*, 2:877.

¹² Faculty Meeting Minutes, March 7, 1968, GCA, Faculty Meeting Minutes, October 17, 1968, GCA.

In the 1960s and 1970s, both women and men were also able to participate in a growing number of non-credit classes organized by various groups on campus. The Craft Center in Plank Gym offered non-credit classes in crafts from pottery to silverwork starting in 1972.¹³ From 1970 to 1977, students taught each other and community members “topics as varied as guitar, automobile maintenance, and yoga” through an organization on campus called the Free School.¹⁴ The availability of internships, especially in “government, business, and industry,” also increased in this period.¹⁵ In 1977, there were 160 January Term internships across 11 departments.¹⁶ These above changes applied to all students once they matriculated at Gettysburg College. However, getting to that point of matriculation was more difficult for female students than it was for male students.

Admissions and Qualifications

In the 1960s, there was an established ratio of two men being admitted for every one woman.¹⁷ In 1967, the faculty began to openly question that policy.¹⁸ When a vote was taken, the faculty was “moderately—but not decisively” in favor of increasing the proportion of women on campus.¹⁹ One of the reasons they felt this way was that the admissions office ended up “rejecting women candidates whose academic qualifications are higher than those of men,” as Professor Ross Stemen pointed out at a faculty meeting in November 1967.²⁰ Students who participated in the Group for the Re-education of Women (GROW) also supported “increased enrollment of women” as part of their effort to end sexism on campus.²¹ However, it was the

¹³ Moyer, *To Waken Fond Memory*, 165.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁶ Gettysburg College, “Gettysburg: State of the College,” *The Gettysburg Bulletin*, May 1977, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/GBNP01/id/35823/rec/357>, 12.

¹⁷ Faculty Meeting Minutes, May 6, 1965, GCA.

¹⁸ Faculty Meeting Minutes, October 5, 1967, GCA.

¹⁹ Faculty Meeting Minutes, October 5, 1967, GCA.

²⁰ Faculty Meeting Minutes, November 15, 1967, GCA.

²¹ Moyer, *To Waken Fond Memory*, 166.

Board of Trustees that would have to make such a change, not the faculty or even the Committee on Admissions and Advanced Standing, which also supported having more women.²²

The 2:1 sex ratio created a more selective admissions policy for women than for men, meaning they arrived at Gettysburg College were often more qualified.²³ This is very clearly represented in the SAT scores for both groups, which Gettysburg College tracked by gender from 1961 to 1976.²⁴ In 1966, the first year in which the National Center for Educational Statistics, the national average SAT math score for both genders was 492, with 514 as the male average and 467 as the female average.²⁵ At Gettysburg College in 1966, men's average math score was 571 and women's was 585.²⁶ The national trend by gender was reversed here. Nationally, the average verbal SAT score was 466, with 463 as the male average and 468 as the female average.²⁷ On the verbal side, men's average score was 534 and women's was 585.²⁸ Though women did slightly better than men nationally, the gap was much wider here due to the differential admissions processes. Women also tended to have been ranked higher in their high school classes than men. In 1960, Dean Charles Wolfe reported to the faculty that for the 1960-1961 school year, "the women accepted rank in the 1/17 of their class, while the men rank in the first quarter."²⁹ The first-year men for 1962-1963, based on the numbers the admissions office had March 31, 1962, were mostly in the top twenty percent of their high school classes, while the first-year women at

²² Faculty Meeting Minutes, October 5, 1967, GCA; Faculty Meeting Minutes, November 15, 1967, GCA.

²³ Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence*, 2:910-911.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:906.

²⁵ Steering Committee, "Table 1: Some Quantitative Indicators of the Qualifications of Entering Freshmen Classes of 1964-1976," *Middle States Self-Study Progress Report*, September 1, 1973, "Middle States Report, 1973/Follow-Up Rpt.-1978" folder, GCA, 22.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Bureau of Educational Research and Development, "Table 135: SAT score averages of college-bound seniors, by sex: 1966-67 through 2006-07," *Digest of Educational Statistics*, (Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 2007),

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_135.asp.

²⁸ Steering Committee, "Table 1," 22.

²⁹ Faculty Meeting Minutes, May 12, 1960, GCA.

the same time were in the top five.³⁰ For the 1969-1970 school year, 94% of the women were in the top fifth of their high school class, while only 42% of the men were ranked that highly.

This distinction is clear in the oral history transcripts of people who came to Gettysburg in the 1960s. Linda Curtiss, Class of 1971, was told by an Admissions staff member that it would be difficult for her to get into Gettysburg because of it being “very competitive for girls,” despite her excellent SAT scores.³¹ In contrast, James Hyman of the Class of 1969 remembered that he had only barely made it to the top quarter of his class by senior year but was still able to make it to Gettysburg.³² Susan Beebe Katsoff, Class of 1971, remembered that she had originally been placed on the waitlist, and was told it was because of her gender: ““If you were a guy, you’d be in right away; but you’re a woman, so you’re on the waiting list.””³³

Because the women were chosen more selectively, they often outperformed the men upon arrival. In March 1965, “the first time in years” that the number of freshman men exceeded the number of freshman women on the Dean’s List, there was still only one more man—it was eight to seven.³⁴ The women tended to outnumber the men at the highest levels of academics even though there were fewer of them. In 1973, women made up 35.3% of the graduating class, but 68.4% of college honors and 61.8% of department honors.³⁵ They also made up 67.4% of Phi Beta Kappa, an academic honor society, election to which is considered “perhaps the most widely recognized academic distinction in American higher education.”³⁶ A woman student,

³⁰ Faculty Meeting Minutes, April 5, 1962, GCA.

³¹ Geoff Curtiss and Linda Curtiss, interview by Michael Birkner, September 27, 2019, transcript, GettDigital Collections, 17, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3493/rec/1>.

³² James Hyman, interviewed by Devin McKinney, March 7, 2019, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/2942/rec/1>, 10.

³³ Susan Beebe Katsoff, interviewed by Devin McKinney, July 23 & September 12, 2014, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3515/>, 11.

³⁴ Faculty Meeting Minutes, March 11, 1965, GCA.

³⁵ “Male/Female Ratio,” table, July 27, 1973, “Middle States Report, 1973/Follow-Up Rpt.-1978” folder, GCA.

³⁶ “Male/Female Ratio,” table; Gettysburg College, “Honor Societies,” Gettysburg College Student Handbook, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.gettysburg.edu/offices/student-rights-responsibilities/student-handbook/policy-details?id=9f0b88ea-305d-41d3-9a96-f05b8eedbd9a>.

Gretchen Cranz Fornof, was the first triple major in college history by her own account, majoring in Latin, Greek, and theater arts.³⁷ Throughout their college careers, women generally had higher GPAs, leading the men to consider them “eggheads” and creating some social tensions.³⁸ Nancy Locher, former Dean of Women, explains more on the day-to-day effects on this policy in her oral history:

Back when I first started, we tended to get top-notch women, [and our] men would cover more the normal spectrum. We got some fine men too, but some of them were less able than most of the women, and it was the women who would often help pull them through college, but then would sit back in class and not speak up, where the men would speak up. Now I’m sure that’s changed; women are just as assertive as men these days, if they want to be.³⁹

The women were more academically qualified, but that did not mean they were always respected. However, there were some women who appreciated the policy, because it did make dating easier for heterosexual women.⁴⁰

Women and men also had different experiences around financial aid and scholarships. The financial aid committee generally made offers “according to the 2:1, male to female, ratio enrolled,” even though the women were more academically qualified and the needs among students may not have fit into a neat 2:1 ratio.⁴¹ Athletic scholarships were an option for men, but “not even a remote thought for women.”⁴² Lois Davis Hely and Jim Hely were both athletes in

³⁷ Gretchen Cranz Fornof, interviewed by Devin McKinney, July 17, 2014, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3521/>, 1.

³⁸ Jean V. Smith, interviewed by Devin McKinney, June 9, 2020, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3022/>, 15.

³⁹ Nancy Locher, interviewed by Devin McKinney, April 1, 2014, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3540/>, 25.

⁴⁰ Curtiss and Curtiss, interview by Birkner, 33.

⁴¹ Faculty Meeting Minutes, March 5, 1970, GCA.

⁴² Lois Davis Hely and Jim Hely, interviewed by Michael Birkner and Devin McKinney, June 30, 2017, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3601/>, 8.

the Class of 1972. Her athletic qualifications could not get her any scholarships or special consideration, but he got into Gettysburg College after being initially rejected because the football coach wanted him to be on the team.⁴³

In the early 1970s, things began to change for women. Mary Margaret Stewart reports that in 1973, compared to 1963, people “were much more aware that this was truly a co-ed school.”⁴⁴ However, outsiders from the Middle States accreditation group still saw it as “a male-dominated campus, whether it be in terms of staff, faculty, or students.”⁴⁵ Still, they too picked up on the change in the air. In the mid-1970s, the admissions policy was finally changed so that women and men were evaluated together based on merit, with no quota or ratio system.⁴⁶ This was done more out of necessity than justice—the college did not want to continue taking on men who were academic risks just to preserve the ratio.⁴⁷ By 1980, there were slightly more women than men enrolled at Gettysburg College: 974 women to 963 men.⁴⁸ When women and men were held to the same standard of admissions, women proved themselves.

Expectations Pre- and Post-College

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of transition in the expectations around women going to college. Lois Davis Hely, Class of 1972, reported that she and all her siblings, male and female, were expected to go to college.⁴⁹ However, Linda Curtiss, of the Class of 1971, had a different experience.⁵⁰ She was not overtly told not to go to college, but she learned later that her

⁴³ Hely and Hely, interviewed by Birkner and McKinney, 8, 22.

⁴⁴ Mary Margaret Stewart, interviewed by Alyson Reichgott, November 3, 1993, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/2699/>, 25.

⁴⁵ Middle States Evaluation Team, “Report,” October 1973, “Middle States Report, 1973/Follow-Up Rpt.-1978” folder, GCA, 3.

⁴⁶ Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence*, 2:910-911.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Anna Jane Moyer, *To Waken Fond Memory*, 24.

⁴⁹ Hely and Hely, interviewed by Birkner and McKinney, 8.

⁵⁰ Curtiss and Curtiss, interview by Birkner, 11.

father had thought it was of no use to send her, because she would just get married.⁵¹ Her mother had to fight for her behind the scenes.⁵² Women also faced strict expectations of the paths that were open to them after college. Two different students of the early 1970s reported being told that women were “nurses and teachers and secretaries” and so they had to pick one of those options, no matter how skilled they were in other fields.⁵³ Because of this expectation, the elementary education department was almost entirely female students.⁵⁴ Not all women of the time chafed at their limited job expectations. Carol Cantele, currently Gettysburg College’s Women’s Lacrosse Coach and Assistant Athletic Director and alumna of the class of 1983, had wanted to be a teacher since middle school.⁵⁵ For her, the options available for women worked perfectly. Coming to Gettysburg College, she “found her purpose” in a way that makes her feel “blessed beyond measure.”⁵⁶ However, not every woman was as lucky.

Those who wanted to go to graduate school after Gettysburg College faced multiple barriers. Many graduate schools did not accept women in the 1960s, although this was starting to change by the early 1970s, according to one female graduate of Gettysburg College.⁵⁷ As Janet Morgan Riggs, Class of 1977, explained, graduate school admissions weren’t the only problem. In her oral history, she explains her struggle to get a fellowship nomination from Gettysburg College:

I remember that I was engaged. I had a diamond ring on my hand. One of the interviewers said to me, “Well, you’re engaged to be married,” during the interview for this fellowship. And I said, “Yes.” And he said, “How can we be sure that you’re really

⁵¹ Curtiss and Curtiss, interview by Birkner, 11.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Hely and Hely, interviewed by Birkner and McKinney, 9; Katsoff, interviewed by McKinney, 9.

⁵⁴ Faculty Meeting Minutes, September 19, 1968, GCA.

⁵⁵ Carol Cantele, email message to author, December 1, 2022.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Smith, interviewed by McKinney, 15-16.

serious about graduate school?” So that was an interesting, crystalizing moment for me. I assured them that I was serious. But there were guys who interviewed for that who were also intending on getting married and that was not being questioned. I know that because I had some friends go through the process.⁵⁸

Her mother also found her commitment to getting a PhD hard to believe, not understanding why Riggs would put herself through all that “aggravation” when she was going to be married and have a family.⁵⁹ The idea that a woman could do both had not yet entered the popular consciousness in the way it has today, despite growing interest in graduate school among Gettysburg College students.⁶⁰ Part of the reason for people like Janet Morgan Riggs’ doubt of women’s need to go to graduate school may have been that one of the main reasons students were considering graduate school was to improve their hopes in the job market.⁶¹ Increasing a married woman’s career options would have been seen as time wasted, because her husband would be making money.⁶² The same perceptions of women valuing marriage over college came up in calendar discussions as well—faculty worried about their ability to engage “marriage-oriented girls” in May classes.⁶³ Sororities were seen by some students as particular encouragers of women’s focus on marriage due to the engagement parties hosted there.⁶⁴

The constraints formed by these gendered expectations are exemplified in the case of Yolanda Berg Poff in the Class of 1972. Poff had wanted to go to an institution with a strong pre-med program, particularly Denison College in Granville, Ohio, but family members chose

⁵⁸ Janet Morgan Riggs, interviewed by Andrew Nosti, March 25, 2016, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/2457/>, 36.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Gettysburg College, “Gettysburg: State of the College,” 13.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Stewart, interviewed by Reichgott, 21.

⁶³ Faculty Meeting Minutes, April 9, 1968, GCA.

⁶⁴ Katsoff, interviewed by McKinney, 6.

Gettysburg for her because “women are not doctors; women are nurses.”⁶⁵ Even though this stereotype never made sense to her, she did not have the ability to push against it as a young woman. After Gettysburg, she did not end up being a doctor or a nurse. She worked in a variety of jobs including as a choreographer, an FBI employee, an AARP lobbyist, and a theater director.⁶⁶ The dance-related experiences are a direct result of her coming to Gettysburg College, alumni where she participated in *Jesus Christ Superstar* as a dancer.⁶⁷ In this way, women who were originally limited in their career paths from strict gender roles turned these barriers into stepping stones toward new directions. If she had been able to go to Denison College, she may have become a great doctor, but dance might have been missing—instead of lingering on what could have been, Poff has created a satisfying life out of the parameters she was allowed.

Female Professors

As Seen By Students

By 1960, there were several female professors, although they were vastly outnumbered by men. One of them was Kathrine Kressman Taylor, an English professor, who became the first female faculty member to retire and be granted the honor of emeritus status in 1966.⁶⁸ The English department had several female faculty members during this time period. One of the most talked-about by alumni was Mary Margaret Stewart. Many students, male and female, liked her, although they also found her “demanding” and at times “dry.”⁶⁹ One woman in particular saw her as a mentor. Jean V. Smith, Class of 1966, recalled:

⁶⁵ Yolanda Berg Poff, interviewed by Devin McKinney, August 7, 2014, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3516/>, 2-3.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 13

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁸ Faculty Meeting Minutes, May 19, 1966, GCA; Catherine Q. Perry, “MS-086: Kathrine Kressmann Taylor (Rood) Papers” (July 2007), <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/findingaidsall/79/>.

⁶⁹ Robert Lohrmann, interviewed by Devin McKinney, July 1, 2021, transcript, GettDigital Collections <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3507/>, 7; Lohrmann, interviewed by McKinney, 11; Lynda Herman Thomas, interviewed by Devin McKinney, June 16, 2020, transcript, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3020/>, 9; Poff, interviewed by McKinney, 4.

She was very helpful to me when I became a major, because she's the one that said, "Honey, I'm going to teach you. You've got a lot of good thoughts here, and I'm going to teach you how to write." [Laughs] And she did. I mean, she didn't say "This is a mess, go do it over." She took me in and said, "This is how you structure an introduction. This is how you structure your argument." I said, "Won't that be boring if I let you know right up front in the introduction kind of basically what I'm going to say? I want to lead up to it and hit you with it at the end." She said, "Feel free to bore me. Get right to it at the beginning, so I can see where you're going." That was tremendously helpful. She was a marvelous lecturer and led wonderful discussions, and I was there again inspired to be prepared for her class and ready to discuss.⁷⁰

Later, Smith became a teacher, and passed on what Stewart had taught her to her own students.⁷¹ She was one example of the connections that formed between female faculty and female students.

However, not everyone was enthralled with Stewart. Donna Schaper, an activist on campus, thought that Stewart was "brilliant" but too conservative—according to Schaper, Stewart told her to focus on her classes more because her activism was "not going to go anywhere." This does not quite match with what other students said about her. Marianne Larkin, Class of 1971, saw her as someone who may have been somewhat conservative but certainly stood as "a great protector of people speaking up and speaking out."⁷² Despite these elements of controversy, she seemed to be well-liked overall, and certainly made a difference in many students' writing.

⁷⁰ Smith, interviewed by McKinney, 10.

⁷¹ Ibid., 36.

⁷² Marianne Larkin, interviewed by Devin McKinney, June 17, 2015, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3531/>, 2.

Another controversial female English professor working at the same time as Mary Margaret Stewart was Marie McLennand. Robert Lohrmann, Class of 1973, reports that “everybody thought she was crazy as a loon, and everybody thought she was great.”⁷³ Her appearance included a turban, constant smoking, and “huge, huge, glossy eyes” that implied drunkenness—perhaps factors into why students considered her crazy.⁷⁴ Despite these eccentricities, she was not without her followers. Gale Flynn remembered and appreciated being taken under McLennand’s wing in her sophomore year—apparently part of a line of students with whom McLennand did the same thing annually.⁷⁵ Flynn was struggling in college with the loss of her mother, so it is unsurprising that this mentorship would have been especially meaningful to her.⁷⁶ She considered McLennand to be one of four what she called “heart ties” she made here, the adults that were most meaningful in shaping her life.⁷⁷

These were just two of the women working at the college—perhaps the two that made the strongest impressions on their students. Another woman who served as a mentor was Lisa Portmess, who Ann Parham says “helped me to think deeply and logically.”⁷⁸ Her teaching almost caused Parham to change her major to philosophy.⁷⁹ Ruth Pavlantos was the head of the Classics department beginning in 1967.⁸⁰ One student described her as “full of passion,” especially for her husband and daughter.⁸¹ Jan Gemmill, “a smart educated woman” who was also “having babies” at the same time, taught Indian Civilization.⁸² Marie Buddé taught voice

⁷³ Lohrmann, interviewed by McKinney, 8-9.

⁷⁴ Gale Flynn, interviewed by Devin McKinney, June 8, 2020, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3019/>, 13.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ann Parham, Connect Gettysburg message to author, December 6, 2022.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Gettysburg College, *Gettysburg College Catalog, 1963/65-1969/71*, (Gettysburg, PA: Gettysburg College, 1971), <https://archive.org/details/gettysbu196365196971gett/page/n573/mode/2up?view=theater>.

⁸¹ Fornof, interviewed by Devin McKinney, 5.

⁸² Hely and Hely, interviewed by Michael Birkner and Devin McKinney, 35-36.

and Judy Annis, who was “very sweet and very enthusiastic,” taught dance.⁸³ Despite the presence of all these women faculty, women students could still feel isolated on campus. Janet Morgan Riggs, Class of 1977, reported that “it was an all-male faculty” despite the presence of some of the above women during her time here.⁸⁴ Her factually incorrect statement provides a window into the emotional experience of female students at the time. The presence of women on the faculty did not make up for how vastly outnumbered they were. The women faculty themselves also struggled with this issue.

Faculty Experiences

From hiring to pay to promotion, women faculty had a different experience than men working at Gettysburg at the same place and time. Mary Margaret Stewart explains that deans were more willing to bend the rules for male hires than female ones:

We almost didn’t get [Molly Anne Marks] hired, because Basil [Crapster] was dean at the time, and he had problems with hiring women, I think. We had hired John McComb. John McComb’s wife, at the time, taught at Towson, so they lived halfway between. Molly Anne was married to a man who was in medical school — he also was brilliant — at Johns Hopkins. They lived in Reisterstown. We couldn’t hire Molly Anne because she would be commuting. But why did he not question John McComb?⁸⁵

Once they got here, women were paid less than their male counterparts—without their knowledge. Mary Margaret Stewart mentions how “horrified” she felt to learn that she was making less when

⁸³ Beth Kershaw Shirley, interviewed by Devin McKinney, March 4, 2014, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3536/>, 2; Suzanne Smith Tillman, interviewed by Devin McKinney, April 22, 2014, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3551/>, 3; Tillman, interviewed by McKinney, 6.

⁸⁴ Riggs, interviewed by Nosti, 36.

⁸⁵ Mary Margaret Stewart interviewed by Michael Birkner, March 3, 2014, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/2346/>, 29.

a survey of compensation was done in the 1980s.⁸⁶ At that point, women faculty members received a raise, but it did not make up for all the years in which they had been quietly paid less.⁸⁷

Nancy Locher, a female administrator, notes that there were limited opportunities for women professors to achieve tenure and be promoted at the beginning of her time here.⁸⁸ This may have been because all promotion decisions were made by a committee of men, at least through the 1960s: “the President, three full Professors on the Augmented Advisory Committee, the Dean of the College, two members of the Academic Policy and Program Committee and two members of the Executive Committee.”⁸⁹ At this point, there were not clear requirements for promotion, so these men were “on their own” to decide what should be considered as grounds for promotion.⁹⁰ Women were expected to do a lot of work without knowing whether it would count. For example, Mary Margaret Stewart recalls participating in many committees as a junior faculty member because “there always has to be a token women,” which was good experience but also frustrating: “it was not because I had so much expertise, it was... more because they wanted a woman representative.”⁹¹ Gettysburg College was doing the right thing in including these women in committee meetings, but it felt like they were doing it for the wrong reasons—to check a box rather than in pursuit of equality. As the only Black faculty member during her time here, Dr. Judith Gay was asked to be an advisor for the Black Student Union and also served as a mentor to many Black students.⁹² The students needed this mentorship, and administrators expected

⁸⁶ Stewart, interviewed by Reichgott, 3

⁸⁷ Ibid., 21.

⁸⁸ Nancy Locher, interviewed by Devin McKinney, 5.

⁸⁹ Faculty Meeting Minutes, March 6, 1969, GCA.

⁹⁰ Faculty Meeting Minutes, March 6, 1969, GCA.

⁹¹ Stewart, interviewed by Reichgott, 3.

⁹² Judith Gay, interviewed by Devin McKinney, September 30, 2020, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/3501/>, 6.

committee service, but women had no promise that this work would be recognized when it came to promotion—and as described earlier, it certainly was not when it came to pay.

When Janet Morgan Riggs arrived in 1981, there were still so few women faculty members that they could fit around one table.⁹³ She also remembered the same tokenism as Mary Margaret Stewart—always being called to represent “women in the natural sciences” as a psychology major, which was both a burden and an opportunity.⁹⁴ Although the administration reported efforts to improve hiring of women in the 1970s, these promises were not immediately fulfilled.⁹⁵

Conclusion

Despite the different standards that existed for women, many of them enjoyed their time at Gettysburg College. Pat Henry noted that although she did notice sex-based discrimination in athletics, she was “unaware” of similar problems in the academic realm.⁹⁶ Women felt that professors treated both men and women as if they “mattered” in classes.⁹⁷ Suzanne Smith Tillman “loved both the academic and the social life.”⁹⁸ Despite the double standards that existed, women seem to have found ways to make their time here positive. However, most of the personal narratives do come from oral histories conducted by people at the college. Those who had strong negative thoughts about their experience here may not have agreed to an interview, so there is a possibility of sampling bias based on who would agree to do an oral history. Overall, female students at Gettysburg College worked through discrimination to achieve success academically, aided by each other and female faculty members.

⁹³ Janet Morgan Riggs, interviewed by Andrew Nosti, 37.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Charles Glatfelter, “Response by the Steering Committee,” December 1973, “Middle States Report, 1973/Follow-Up Rpt.-1978” folder, GCA.

⁹⁶ Pat Henry, interviewed by Devin McKinney, October 1, 2014, transcript, GettDigital Collections, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2/id/2950/>, 6.

⁹⁷ Jean V. Smith, interviewed by Devin McKinney, 15.

⁹⁸ Suzanne Smith Tillman, interviewed by Devin McKinney, 4.

Bibliography

- Bureau of Educational Research and Development. "Table 135: SAT score averages of college-bound seniors, by sex: 1966-67 through 2006-07." Digest of Educational Statistics, Washington, D.C, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 2007. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_135.asp.
- Gettysburg College. *Gettysburg College Catalog, 1963/65-1969/71*. Gettysburg, PA: Gettysburg College, 1971.
<https://archive.org/details/gettysbu196365196971gett/page/n573/mode/2up?view=theater>.
- Gettysburg College. *Gettysburg College Oral History Collection*. GettDigital Collections. Accessed December 7, 2022,
<https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16274coll2>.
- Gettysburg College. "Gettysburg: State of the College." *The Gettysburg Bulletin*, May 1977,
<https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/GBNP01/id/35823/rec/357>.
- Glatfelter, Charles H. *A Salutary Influence: Gettysburg College, 1832-1985*. (Gettysburg: Gettysburg College, 1987. <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/books/57/>).
- Moyer, Anna Jane. *To Waken Fond Memory: Moments in the History of Gettysburg College*. Gettysburg, PA: Friends of Musselman Library, Gettysburg College,
<https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/books/76/>.
- Perry, Catherine Q. "MS-086: Kathrine Kressmann Taylor (Rood) Papers." July 2007.
<https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/findingaidsall/79/>.