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THE ART OF BEING FREDERICK FRANCK

WE STAND ON THEIR SHOULDERS:
CELEBRATING THE 100-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF WOMEN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH.



STELLA STEIN



MARGARET STEIN

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

When Margaret and Stella Stein walked up the steps of Observatory Hill onto the campus of the Western University of Pennsylvania (WUP) for the first time in 1895, the world was a different place. WUP, which would later be renamed the University of Pittsburgh, was located on Pittsburgh's North Side. And Margaret and Stella Stein weren't supposed to be there.

This was the time when the most popular hat style was the Kate Greenaway Poke, when people

hummed tunes like "A Bicycle Built for Two" and "Casey Would Waltz with the Strawberry Blond." This was the time when some believed that intellectual work for women was not only unnecessary but might have adverse physical consequences. The Stein sisters decided to take that chance.



THE CLASS OF 1898.
SISTERS STELLA AND MARGARET STEIN ARE SEATED
AT CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPH.

WRITTEN BY VICKI GLEBOCKI
PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Editor's Note: Much of the information for this article was gathered from "The History of Women at Pitt," an exhibit created by historian Carolyn Schumacher and sponsored by the Provost's Advisory Committee for Women's Concerns in honor of the University's 1987 bicentennial celebration.



PI THETA NU, THE FIRST SORORITY, ESTABLISHED IN 1908

1895 1899 1903 1907 1911 1915 1920

“**T**HEY WENT UP on a streetcar together,” recalls Margaret’s daughter, Barbara Fetterman Moran (Business ’33, Arts and Sciences ’32) from her Virginia home. “A young man that they knew said, ‘Where are you going?’ They said they were getting off at the same stop he was. And he said again, ‘Where are you going?’ And they said, ‘We’re going up the hill.’ The man was just aghast.”

He certainly wasn’t the first. The registrar thought there had been a mistake. As word got out, male students gathered at the top of Observatory Hill to stare at the women, as Moran described in *Women at Pitt*, with their “pompadoured hair, wearing dresses with mutton-leg sleeves, and hats of the so-called garden variety.” A student publication called them “specimens”—“rare butterflies captured by Dr. Holland to be preserved under glass for the institution.”

But Chancellor William Holland knew exactly what he was doing. WUP needed to increase enrollment and fill liberal arts courses to keep up with other growing universities. In fact, 43 percent of US colleges and universities were coeducational by 1890. So Chancellor Holland, for the first time in the 108-

year history of WUP, admitted two women who “could look after each other and keep each other company.”

The Stein sisters took college-level courses at Central High for one year and, in

classes they had signed up for. Yet, of the 28 graduates in the Class of 1898, the Stein sisters had the highest grades and flipped a coin to see who would deliver the valedictory speech. Stella won.



ACCORDING TO THE 1916 OWL, “THE GIRLS’ BASKETBALL TEAM REPRESENTS THE FIRST ATTEMPT IN ATHLETICS THAT THE CO-EDS HAVE MADE SINCE THEY BECAME A PART OF THE UNIVERSITY. THE TEAM MET WITH SUCCESS, WINNING ALL BUT ONE GAME.”

1895, entered the Class of 1898 as sophomores—the same class that, one year earlier, had voted against admitting coeds. Faculty members advised them to take courses less complex than the math, astronomy, and chemistry

She went on to teach high school math, French, and other subjects. Margaret became principal of Avalon High School—a rare appointment for a woman in those times. The “specimens” were renamed “trail-blazers.”



THE WOMAN’S INVASION

THE OPENING OF Pitt’s School of Education in 1910 gave women a long-overdue place in higher education, a place where they were supposed to be, where they were allowed to be—a haven. At the University of Pittsburgh, renamed and relocated to Oakland, coed enrollment increased from 40 to 300—described by the 1910 *Owl* as the “Woman’s Invasion.” Yet, Pitt’s “Teachers College” was a place where women had equal footing—four men and four women in the first graduating class.

There were still places at Pitt, however, where women were not supposed to be. A drawing in the 1907 yearbook showing a woman next to a chemistry set was titled “Incompatibles.” The dean

of the medical school stopped accepting women students in 1910, but women physicians persuaded Chancellor Samuel Black McCormick to reopen admission in 1912. Women students were becoming harder to ignore. With the opening of the School of Education in 1910, coed enrollment rose from four to 19 percent and to 25 percent in 1914. Women were no longer considered a novelty.

Responding to this "higher profile," the 1914 *Owl* carried this anonymous explanation: "The word 'co-ed' comes from the Greek, 'dough-head' meaning 'low-head' or 'lowbrow.' It has come to be applied to that lot of girls who frequent our great universities. A co-ed's ambition is to be popular with college men...she claims it is a desire to get educated. She is a distraction in the class room, an attraction on the campus.... Her idea of a sorority is a place where the deep-waved-tangled mysteries of the coiffure are explained...the book of fashions is her Bible, and her creed is the monosyllabic 'I.' And still we like her. Do we?"

Outraged by this public insult, and even more by the way McCormick dismissed it, claiming it had no purpose "except to be witty," Pitt women turned to the Women's Activities Association (WAA), formed in 1911 to "further social relations and to solve all the problems of the girls at Pitt." To deal with the men's rather exclusive attitude, the women tried a little segregation of their own. Women formed their own glee club, a dramatic club, and the first women's competitive sport—a basket-

ball team who boasted winning seasons from 1915 to 1927. The WAA went so far as to sponsor the infamous Coed Dance of 1915 where the senior women slicked

tions on campus. "I believe that through the development of women student leaders," said Amos, "the centers of influence for the university ideal are multiplied." QUAX,

wanted," says Irene Mandexter (Education '49, Business '28). But being an African American at Pitt in the '20s was far more difficult than being a woman.

"In those days, of course, it was different than it is now," explains Mandexter, one of nearly 100 blacks of the 4,206 undergraduates at Pitt in 1928, and one of two black women in her accounting class. "We weren't treated exactly the same as the whites. We had our own little group. We didn't feel threatened, but we might have been ignored."

While the first black woman graduated in 1910, the Pitt community was even less accommodating to blacks than it had been to women. Since black students were excluded from most extracurricular activities, the women formed the Council for Negro College Women (CNCW) in 1922 to foster intellectual growth, leadership, and friendship among black women. Mandexter joined both CNCW and Al-



THE WOMEN'S ACTIVITY ASSOCIATION OF 1920

pha Kappa Alpha sorority of which she, at 91, is still a member at the chapter near her home in Tallahassee. "I have no qualms about the way I was treated at Pitt—even way back in '28—because I wouldn't permit anybody to treat me shabby," says Mandexter who, until she returned to Pitt for her master's in the late '40s, managed accounts for the State Teacher's College at

back their hair and dressed in top hats and tails to escort "their beribboned little sisters, the freshmen." In the *Owl's* photos of the dance, the senior women smiled mischievously as they pinned corsages on the freshman women's dresses, propped their dates on their laps, and stood in a group with their hands in their pockets, smoking cigars. No "real" men were allowed.

FOR WOMEN ONLY



WHEN THYRSA W. Amos was appointed the first Dean of Women in 1919, she adopted the philosophy of "For Women Only." Amos encouraged Pitt women to organize more professional and service clubs so they, too, could hold leadership posi-

a science club, was formed in 1919. Mortar Board, a senior honorary society, started up in 1923. The Women's Debating Club and CWENS, a sophomore service society, were created in 1921.

But what Pitt women had gained in leadership and activities, they lost in athletics. After 12 winning seasons, the women's basketball team was replaced in the late '20s by "Play Days,"

activities for exercise and relaxation only. The University's physical education faculty stated that women were far too fragile for rough and competitive games.

"By 1928, women basically did and said what they

way back in '28—because I wouldn't permit anybody to treat me shabby," says Mandexter who, until she returned to Pitt for her master's in the late '40s, managed accounts for the State Teacher's College at



THYRSA W. AMOS, (CENTER)
PITT'S FIRST DEAN OF WOMEN

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PUBLIC PLACARDS KEEP STUDENTS UP TO DATE ON PITT'S 1930 SOCIAL SCENE.

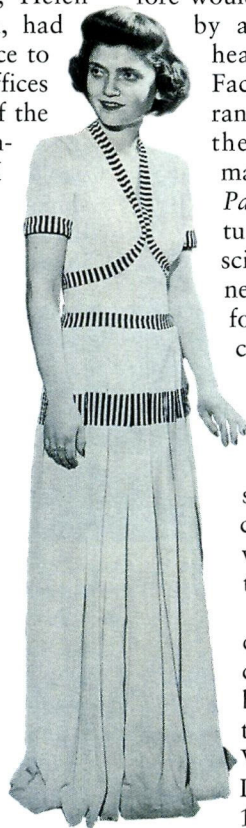
1921 1925 1931 1934 1939 1941 1945

Cheyney, near Philadelphia. "I was always sassy. My mother said I was the sassiest thing on earth. Nobody walked all over me. Nobody tried."

FOR THE GOOD OF THE COUNTRY

THE NEW DEAN of Women, Helen Poole Rush, had only one-day's notice to move out of her offices on the 12th floor of the Cathedral of Learning. World War II had started, and the University needed space for the Pitt students in uniform. Around that time, Betty Halde- man Raymond (Business '43) first met Rush. "She explained to me that we had to strive even harder," says Raymond, "so we could take our position right along with the men."

But, instead, women began to take the positions of the men. For the first time in the then 48-year history of women at Pitt, they out-



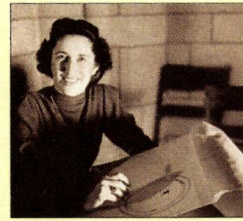
1943 SENIOR QUEEN BETTY HALDEMAN RAYMOND

numbered the civilian men on campus. "There were so many women," remembers Raymond who, upon graduation, handled accounts for Carnegie Illinois Steel. "We had to fill in spots that be-

fore would have been filled by a man." Women headed the Student Faculty Association, ran *The Pitt News* and the undergraduate magazine, *The Pitt Panther*, and were actually directed into scientific and engineering courses—all for "the good of the country."

"It changed the direction of women everywhere," she says, "but on the campus as well. It was an unusual time."

Most of the changes at Pitt were caused by the war, but many were due to the new Dean of Women. After Dean Amos died in 1941, her assistant Helen Poole Rush took the helm.



AFTER 1927, CLUBS WITH "GIRL" IN THEIR TITLES CHANGED TO "WOMEN."

along with you, which was the coming thing anyway. She was ahead of her time."

Rush noticed a problem on campus between the women and soldiers, a concern she addressed with then Vice Chancellor Rufus H. Fitzgerald. Everywhere the women went, she told him, the soldiers made comments, especially in the Commons Room where they actually threw notes at

the women from the upper two floors. Fitzgerald, unlike McCormick in 1915, did take action. The soldiers' harassment stopped.

If the Pitt women were bothered by the soldiers' behavior, they surely didn't let it affect their patriotism. They organized social dances for

the men in uniform, participated in blood drives, mended uniforms, and hemmed trousers. Enrollment in the School of Nursing increased from 281 to 1,286.

While Raymond remembers the 11,961 undergraduates enrolled in 1942-43 as having "a shortage of men," the end of the war brought them back—in hordes. More than half of the over-25,000 students enrolled in 1947-48 were veterans. Women, again in the minority, were expected to return to liberal arts, education, and nursing classes. Many did.



SERVING TEA IN THE DEAN OF WOMEN'S OFFICE, C. 1940.

But some, like Joan Krayniewski Smith (Engineering '58), did not. When asked about being a woman engineer at Pitt in the mid-'50s, Smith says, "You mean me and 1,600 men?" Smith was one of two women in the school of engineering, the only woman in chemical engineering.

"Everybody was going into nursing or secretarial work or teaching," explains Smith, now a member of Pitt's Board of Trustees. "Those

were the accepted fields for women to get into. A few were going into chemistry, but engineering was just weird. Everybody thought I was weird.”

Most schools, like Carnegie Tech, wouldn't accept women into engineering. Because Smith was strong in math and science, most of her Pitt professors supported her. But a few frowned on having a woman in their classes, so much so that Smith believes they were biased in grading her.

“One professor told me I would never be an engineer,” says Smith, one of a few in her class to find a job after graduation, since 1958 was a recession year. “When I got an ‘A’ in the follow-up class, I went back into his classroom, threw the papers on his desk, and said, ‘This is the kind of engineer I’m going to be.’”

Though Smith had little time for extracurricular activities, she did make time for Lantern Night, a yearly ritual created by Dean Amos in 1920 to welcome freshman women. They carried small lanterns lit by alumnae—the passing of wisdom



IN THE EARLY 1940s, MEN AND WOMEN SHARED THE STAGE AS MEMBERS OF THE PITT PLAYERS, THE HEINZ CHAPEL CHOIR, AND THE ORCHESTRA. PHOTO FROM THE 1940 OWL.

from past to present. For Smith, who has saved her lantern for 41 years, Lantern Night was the moment when she felt a part of something that would make a difference in her life. “It gave me a feeling of belonging,” she says.



THE COUNCIL FOR NEGRO COLLEGE WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1922 “TO FOSTER HIGHER SCHOLARSHIP AND FRIENDSHIP AMONG NEGRO WOMEN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH.” PHOTO FROM THE 1927 OWL.

But it was difficult for a woman to “belong” in an engineering class of 1,600 men. Looking back now, Smith, a human resources administrator for Eaton Challenger in Pittsburgh, remembers her classmates fondly, although they often made her life at Pitt challenging and a bit frustrating. For instance, Smith used a janitor’s supply closet to change into blue jeans for her chemical engineering class since there were no women’s facilities in the lab where the class was held. “Probably once a month,” Smith recalls, “I’d find a little present from my classmates. I’d go in there and my blue jeans would be filled up with sand and tied to the ceiling, just comical little things.

But it wasn’t funny at the time. You can never get sand out of your shoes.”

A WOMAN'S PLACE

HISTORY REPEATED itself. Women began to emerge as a force on campus, and the 1970 yearbook staff responded, just as they had in 1914: “Now it is the PITT WOMAN who feels discriminated against. She feels that a woman’s place is no longer in the home and the children are not the mother’s primary responsibility. She now wants to be ‘equal’: to have special Women’s Study Courses and more female deans and department heads. She wants to be ‘liberated,’ whatever that means, and to be able to do anything a man can! Who will cry discrimination next?”

The 1914 yearbook remarks were a reaction to a greater number of women on campus. In 1970, though, the editorial note was the result of women speaking their minds. The political climate that had been sparked by demonstrations against US involvement in Vietnam, and protests for civil rights gave women the courage to speak—and the forum.

“The whole process was not just one of activism,” explains Ann Begler (Arts and Sciences ’71), now a partner in a Pittsburgh law firm. “It was one of introspection about how you grew up as a woman and who you were and who you wanted to become as a woman.”

As president of Panhellenic, the governing body for sororities, Begler was appointed to Chancellor Wesley Posvar’s Advisory Council on Women’s Opportunities



IN 1970 THE ASSOCIATED WOMEN STUDENTS SPONSORED "WOMEN WHO DARE!" WITH DISCUSSIONS RANGING FROM REPRODUCTIVE ISSUES TO THE PEACE MOVEMENT.

1946 1949 1954 1960 1965 1968 1970



BY THE '70s, THE STUDENT BODY WAS 40% FEMALE.

(ACWO), formed to study areas of concern to women—an honor she took rather casually, not showing up to meetings, not wanting to be involved.

"One day," she says, "a woman administrator on the council came up to me and said, 'We've had three meetings, and you haven't been there. Just put somebody else in your place if you don't care.'" Begler went to the next meeting, and it changed the direction of her life.

"I began to realize that even though I may not



have had a consciousness about sexism personally in my life, sexism was at work in many places," she says. "I saw what was going on in the University in terms of women. You can't erase consciousness. Once you have consciousness, you have it. If you're a person who believes in the creation of betterment in the world, then your consciousness promotes you to act."

The ACWO not only fought to institute a women's studies program in 1972 but also helped establish the University-funded Women's Center in 1973 to provide walk-in support services for women. Begler also joined the Programming Council that brought feminists like Gloria Steinem and Kate Millett to speak at Pitt.

A separate group of women who felt that the ACWO was too conservative formed the University Committee for Women's Rights (UCWR). They organized a "teach-in" in May 1970 when two dozen cam-

pus feminists arrived unannounced at the chancellor's office with demands for more women in administrative positions, free child care, fairer admissions practices, and equal student housing for men and women. Not satisfied with the University's response, the UCWR issued a formal complaint to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW).

action plan to HEW promoting the advancement of minorities and women.

A GIFT OF LIGHT

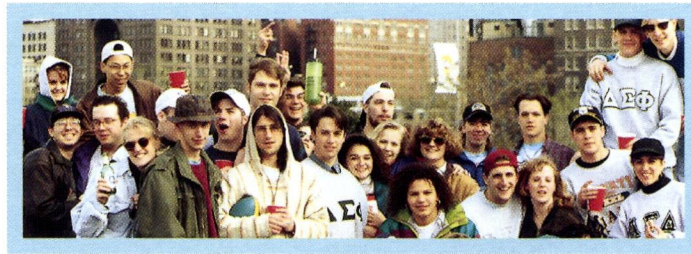
THE FRESHMAN women of the Class of 1999, dressed in sharp, stylish outfits and carrying small black lanterns, began their procession from



IN 1996, THE UNIVERSITY WILL ADD WOMEN'S SOCCER AND DROP MEN'S GYMNASTICS AND TENNIS TO GIVE MEN AND WOMEN AN EQUAL NUMBER OF VARSITY SPORTS TEAMS.

One result: the government withheld \$15 million in federal funding until the University developed an affirmative action program. Six months later, the University submitted its first affirmative

the William Pitt Union to the Cathedral of Learning. Still warm from the 90-degree heat of the August day, it was a perfect evening for ceremony, perfect for the 75th anniversary of Lantern Night



IN 1995, WOMEN MADE UP
55 PERCENT OF THE INCOMING FRESHMAN CLASS AT PITT.

1971 1975 1979 1985 1989 1992 1995

Even with nearly 300 women gathered in the Commons Room, the large hall was quiet. Dimmed lights and a harp set the mood—solemn and reverent.

The world is a different place, though, from the first Lantern Night in 1920, Interim Chancellor Mark Nordenberg noted. 1920 was the same year KDKA made the first-ever radio broadcast, the same year that Sun-kist became a trademark, a time when the country was recovering from World War I. 1920 was the year women won the right to vote.

If much has changed since the first Lantern Night, even more has changed in the hundred years since Stella and Margaret Stein first strode up the hill to take their place with the Class of 1898. But for the freshman women there in the Commons Room—women who make up 55 percent of their incoming class—the history of women at Pitt might seem like an entertaining story from a century past, a fairy tale. Raised in a world of

political correctness and affirmative action, these young students will never be called “specimens” or “girls” or “coeds,” or be urged to take

fighting for equality on campus is passé,” says student government board member Jane Berger, a junior with a double major in communica-

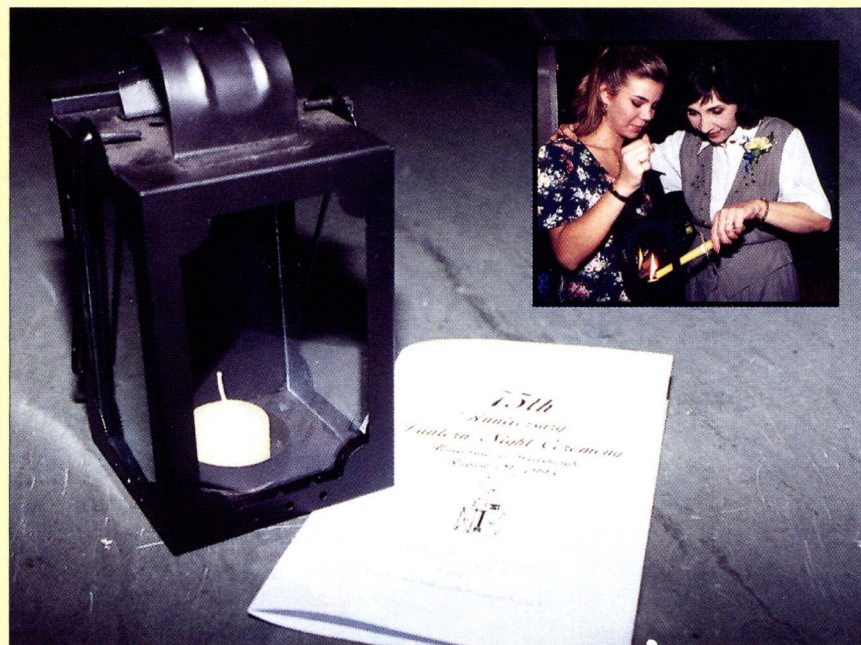
nist fighting. I don’t think Pitt needs it.”

As a formal induction into the University, Lantern Night 1995 may also have seemed passé, if not for the tradition it represented—one preserved over 75 years, through wars and political unrest, depressions and recessions, through decades of change.

Alumnae return each year for the ceremony. These women, who have preceded this night’s group of freshmen by a generation or two, walk slowly through the assembly in the Commons Room. As they stop at each student to pass on the “Gift of Light,” the new meaning of this venerable ceremony becomes clear.

Lantern Night in 1995 is a connection to the past, to the heritage. And the gift given, the gift from the alumnae to the Class of 1999, is far more than the flame.

The gift is the present, forged by a history that was begun—by two remarkable women, and carried on by thousands of others—a hundred years ago. □



1995 MARKED THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF LANTERN NIGHT,
THE SOLE SURVIVING “WOMEN ONLY” RITUAL OF THOSE
CREATED BY DEAN AMOS IN THE 1920s.

less complicated courses, or find their jeans filled with sand. Their stands against sexual harassment and date rape have their roots in earlier battles for suffrage and equal rights. But to many of them, feminism and equality are dated terms.

“From my experiences,

tions and political science, who plans a career in public service. “There’s a woman president of the Student Government Board. There are women representatives in other organizations. Women have as much representation as men. I really don’t think there’s a need for serious femi-