

— *hidden* — HISTORY

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, HANKEY CENTER!

By Amy Ensley

The Hankey Center, home of the C. Elizabeth Boyd '33 Archives and Baron Bluett Hunnicut Classics Collection, will mark its 15th anniversary on June 7. The Hankey Center was the vision of retired U.S. Navy Capt. Joan R. Hankey '59 and made possible by former Wilson President Gwendolyn Jensen, along with major funding from Hankey and her family, and enthusiastic support from many others.

A number of people at Wilson have worked to preserve the history of the College over the years. Mary Belle McElwain (Class of 1895 and former dean) frequently wrote about Wilson people and events and Nettie Hesson Lloyd (Class of 1897) compiled a history from 1870–1910. But it was Boyd, an alumna and former registrar whose passion and fierce insistence that the college community retain its records, who most inspired Hankey's interest.

While serving on the Board of Directors for the Alumnae Association of Wilson College and the AAWC's Preservation and Restoration Committee, Hankey worked with Boyd and others to organize the archives under less-than-ideal conditions. Hankey then approached Jensen with a plan to create a dedicated facility worthy of its purpose.

After the decision was made to renovate Sharpe House as the new home of the college president, Jensen proposed modifying the former president's house for the archives. Hankey and Boyd began working to transform the 100-year-old house into a state-of-the-art repository and exhibit gallery. The plan was to go beyond properly housing the archival collection, with the ultimate goal of creating a research center to study the history of the education of women and girls.

Rooms that were once the private space of college presidents or the sitting room for a faculty/student tea are now classrooms for learning about those presidents, laboratories for restoring documents and textiles, and galleries for showcasing college artifacts and antiquities. The modern spaces flow seamlessly into the former historic residence.

Today, the Hankey Center buzzes with activity. Student workers digitize photos and create online exhibits using digital humanities tools. Alumnae volunteers reminisce as they transcribe letters. Students

work on research projects about student activism and gender stereotypes. High school students learn about the response of Wilson students to World War II. And descendants of alumnae still come to find photographs of their great-great-grandmothers.

Wilson staff, as well as outside researchers, make regular use of the archival material as part of their scholarly research on the history of women's education and women's changing roles in work and society.

As we look forward to celebrating the College's sesquicentennial, we also celebrate the education and work of women—and of the visionaries who transform dreams into reality.

— For more information on the Hankey Center's C. Elizabeth Boyd '33 Archives, please send email to hankeycenter@wilson.edu or call 717-262-2562.

