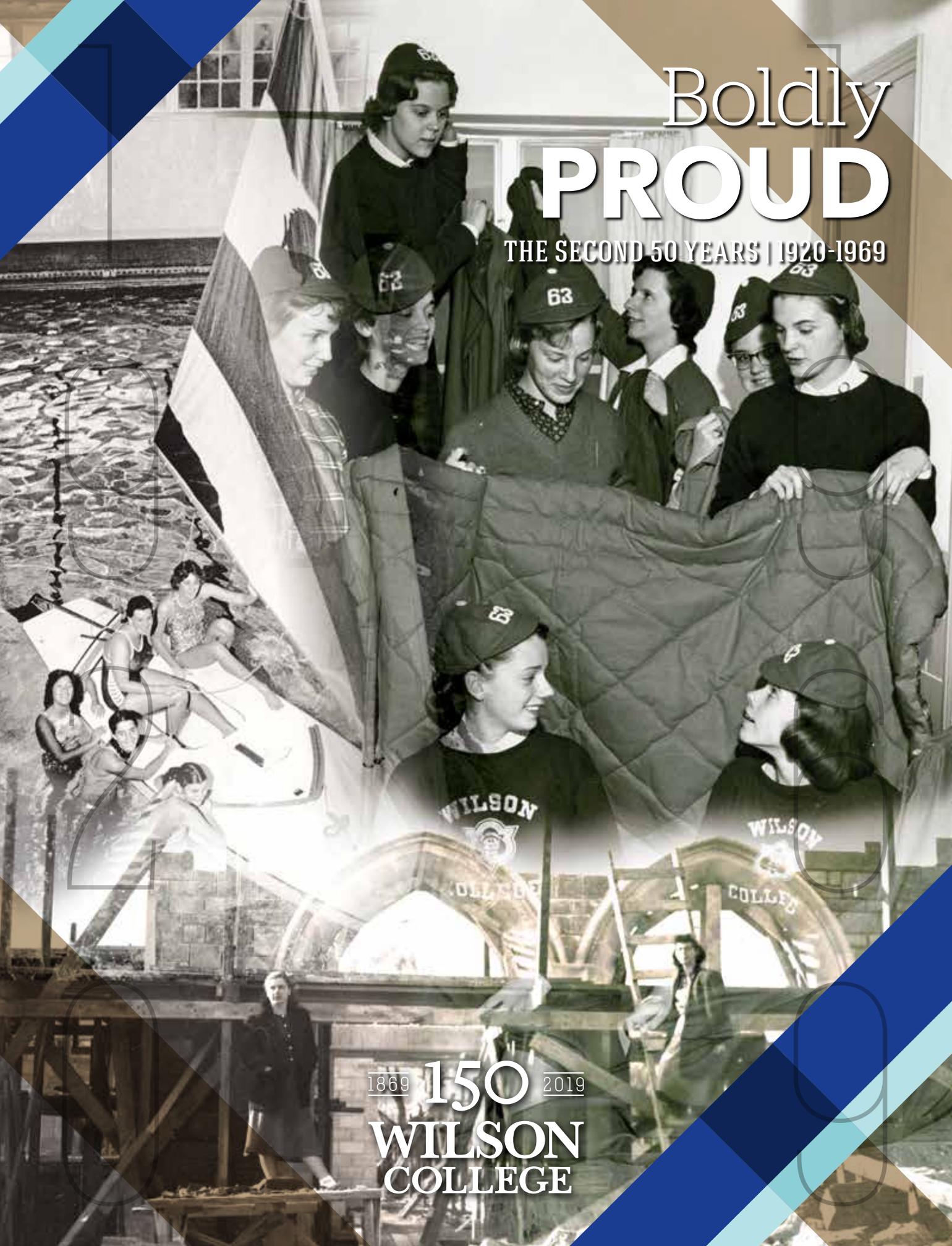


# Boldly PROUD

THE SECOND 50 YEARS | 1920-1969



1869 150 2019  
WILSON  
COLLEGE



*The Individual Remains . . .*

# The Wilson Bi

VOL. XXXII

WILSON COLLEGE, CHAMBERSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA, NO

## WHAT ABOUT OUR

### Letters to the Editor

### A Call For ACTION . . .

Dear Editor,  
I wish to extend my gratitude and thanks to the Wilson student body for their participation in the discrimination situation.  
I hope they will realize that

On October 31, the Wilson College student body stated a principle . . . a principle of disapproval of the discriminatory policy of the Penn-Wilson in relation to certain Negro members of our student body. And, in addition, we threatened to boycott . . . beyond if the policy of the manager of the Penn-Wilson continued to be in violation with our principle.

We  
be  
of  
fo  
no  
del  
the



Wilson College's second 50 years spans a period of great change and challenges. It begins in 1920 with friction between newly emboldened, independent students and an autocratic and paternalistic administration over the rights to smoke cigarettes and drive with men to dances and restaurants. It ends in 1969 with similar tensions—this time between increasingly political and vocal students and an administration that was out of step with the women's movement, culture and passions of the '60s. While tension between students and the administration is a recurring issue throughout this period, it would be wrong to categorize the College as existing in a state of simmering war. The tensions were in part thanks to Wilson women, alumnae and students alike, growing into more active and assertive roles in society and having the confidence to participate more fully in the life of the College.

Over this period, the College enhanced its reputation, improved academic standards, built numerous buildings, renovated and updated others and increased enrollment. For a small women's college with a meager endowment compared to many similar colleges, this was quite a remarkable, bold and proud achievement.

The College's survival and growth should be viewed in the context of the era. These five decades saw enormous social, technological and political changes on a global scale. The period began with horse-drawn carriages still in use and much of the country without electricity and ended with men on the moon, cars as ubiquitous as horses once were and phones and TVs in most homes. The changes weren't limited to the technological, however. The shift in the social status of women and minorities was every bit as bold and significant as the technological leaps—the second 50 years began with women getting the right to vote in 1920 and, after decades of struggle and protest, it culminated with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ending legal discrimination against African-Americans and other minorities. Wilson women proudly added their voices to the calls for integration, improved conditions, equality and fairness for minorities and women.

Through all these changes and challenges, Wilson College succeeded where many women's colleges had failed and preserved both its reputation for excellence and the strong bonds among its students, faculty, staff and alumni. The College not only survived, but grew through the Great Depression, World War II, the Korean War and the early years of the Cold War and Vietnam War. At every new challenge or conflict, Wilson women proudly took up the torch and fought for what was right. Wilson women forced the administration to loosen Victorian-era rules and integrate and welcome African-American students. They participated in the war effort on all fronts, traveled the globe doing missionary work and bringing medical advances to underserved peoples and they participated in the political, commercial and cultural life of this country—achievements Wilson alumni can boldly claim as their legacy.

Amy Ensley  
*Director of the Hankey Center*

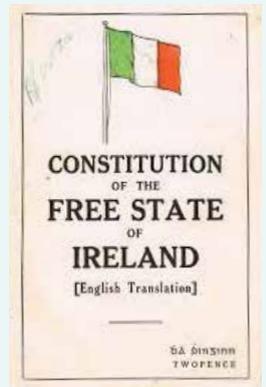
Darrach Dolan  
*Managing Editor of Wilson Magazine*

## Missionary Work

Because of its affiliation with the Presbyterian Church, Wilson College was involved in foreign missions. At least 80 alumnae served in a variety of capacities abroad and students followed their work closely through student organizations like Christian Endeavor and the YWCA.

More than 2 million Protestant women joined the field of missions from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. After the Civil War, women formed their own mission boards. In 1918, the Annual Wilson College Conference of Missions was established, which attracted more than 600 attendees each year. Female missionaries had a unique role in “woman’s

work for woman.” Thousands of women held leadership roles that hadn’t existed previously. Wilson missionaries were world travelers and writers; they led schools, and were doctors. Evangelist Dwight Moody started the Moody Bible Institute in 1886 and quite a few Wilson alumnae studied there, becoming Bible translators around the world. In addition to the foreign missions, Wilson graduates worked in “Home” missions that served isolated rural areas within the United States, including Appalachia and the Southwest. These missionary women paved the way for women’s leadership within the Protestant faith, including the ordination of women in some denominations.



The Irish Free State is Formed



Prohibition Begins

1920

1922

1924

## THE RISKS OF AUTOMOBILE RIDES AND PUBLIC DANCES

### GROWING ENROLLMENT & RISING STANDARDS

President Ethelbert Warfield’s steady leadership led to rising academic standards, increased enrollment and the hiring of talented faculty during this decade.

By 1922, applications were far exceeding the number of students the College could accept. By 1928, Wilson ranked sixth of the 49 colleges in the state of Pennsylvania as ranked by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Haverford was first and Lafayette was third.

In keeping with the College’s emphasis on achievement and raising academic standards, the Trustees in 1928 established three fellowships for Wilson students with distinguished records to attend graduate school. The Trustees hoped this might help supply the College with future instructors. In addition, alumnae classes began creating academic scholarships to attract worthy students and Wilson faculty established summer scholarships for students to study at Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory in Massachusetts.

### THE GENERATION GAP

The 1920s saw a distinct generation gap develop between the youth and their parents. New technology like telephones, automobiles and electric lights had created a starkly different world for students than that of their parents, who grew up with horse-drawn carriages and gas lamps. While many Wilson students were pursuing an education to prepare them for a meaningful career, not all were there for the academics.

Not only had new technology made communication and travel easier, but with increasing affluence, more upper middle-class young women were attending college as something fun to do before getting married.

These students were interested in having a good time. What resulted was a campus divided between an autocratic, old-fashioned, disciplinarian president and a group of vivacious, confident, bright young women. Not all of the students fit this profile—there were indeed a significant number of high-minded, serious, dignified young women—but the thick folders of discipline records in the archives reveal a struggle to maintain patriarchal campus rules in a new era of smoking, speakeasies and dating.

### THE DISCIPLINARIAN IN CHIEF

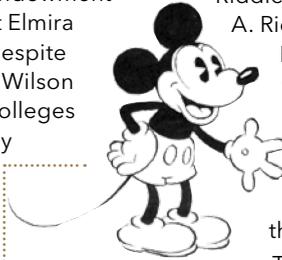
Warfield wrote to many girls’ fathers detailing their daughters’ appalling behavior. Girls going to various restaurants such as the Inn at Caledonia with men and returning after dark was especially concerning to him. In a letter to one father regarding the behavior of his recently suspended daughter, Warfield said, “When I was questioning her with regard to her driving with young men whom she had had no proper introduction to, she said that she felt it necessary to make a certain number of dates in order to maintain her prestige. So low an attitude to the general standard of



Vladimir Lenin Dies

### An Elusive Endowment Target

Wilson alumnae were not eligible for membership in the prestigious Associated Collegiate Alumnae Society. To qualify, the Carnegie Foundation insisted colleges had to have a library of 25,000 volumes, 60 percent of the faculty with graduate degrees and an endowment of at least \$500,000. The College met the first two requirements but was nowhere near meeting the third. In 1920, the Trustees made a great push to increase the endowment as part of the Golden Jubilee. Wilson's endowment was \$80,000 compared with \$340,000 at Elmira College and \$3.1 million at Bryn Mawr. Despite succeeding in raising \$300,000 by 1921, Wilson risked being left off the list of first-rank colleges by still not attaining \$500,000. A publicity agent was hired to place human interest stories for the campaign in 526 newspapers. Unfortunately the effort didn't succeed and the necessary amount remained elusive.



Mickey Mouse is Created

### Characteristic Gothic Architecture

Many campus buildings were built during this decade. Lortz Hall was made possible by the donation of \$30,000 from the estate of John Lortz, a local farmer and breeder of racehorses. It was intended for biological sciences but became instead a building for physical sciences—chemistry and physics.

Riddle Hall was named for Henry A. Riddle, a member of the Board of Trustees for 20 years and the general passenger agent of the Cumberland Valley Railroad.

Riddle ensured special trains ran between Harrisburg and Wilson at the start and end of the school year and for all holidays.

The John Stewart Memorial Library was named for a former Trustee who served from 1894-1920.



Wall Street Crashes Beginning the Great Depression

1927

1928

1929



First Talking Movie Premieres

college conduct was astonishing to me.

“I pointed out to her and to her mother that it was entirely impossible for a college in a small community to secure for 400 girls suitable male acquaintances to gratify the social ambitions of any student.”

Warfield understood the College had a problem with rebellious students. “There is no doubt in my mind that young students who are uninterested in their work and indifferent

to college regulations had much better drop out of college. The college finds it is unable to helpfully influence girls who assert an individualism that inevitably defeats the aims and objects of the college.”

Most fathers acknowledged their daughters had broken the rules, assured Warfield they had never behaved this way before, and told him the girls realized their errors and would never break the rules again. However, some fathers stated plainly that the behavior of their daughters was fine with them. Those daughters were invariably expelled.

### RISKS OF RIDING IN AUTOMOBILES & DANCING

Warfield made clear the College had a role to play in the students' moral development. “Parents should know the great concern that we feel for the moral and spiritual, as well as the intellectual, welfare of our students. Wilson College is face to face with a condition in social life which makes it feel

a deep obligation to its students and their parents to protect every student against the risks of automobile riding and public dances.”

Warfield particularly disliked women smoking. He had a policy that the women he hired as professors promise in writing that they would not smoke, so the thought of young students smoking was simply outrageous. E. Grace White,

Ph.D., who came to Wilson in 1923, described Warfield as having a 19th-century attitude in matters like smoking or drinking. “Students caught indulging in these taboo occupations were expelled. Dr. Warfield was heard to declare that ‘smoking would be done only over my dead body,’” she said in an interview in 1969.

The students were well aware of Warfield's many concerns for their virtue. In 1928, the junior class made light of it in a skit called “A puff of Smoke, a Cigarette Comedy in Five Rings,” which was described in the campus newspaper as “A burlesque—rollicking in tone, original in idea, and howlingly funny.” In a further dig at Warfield's hatred of smoking, the prom favors that year were cigarette lighters of brown leather embossed with the Wilson seal for men and matching leather coin purses for women.



Prom at Wilson

### The Curran Court Case

In 1929 an epic battle began for the estate of William Curran, a Presbyterian physician who stipulated it was to be awarded to a Christian women's college near Philadelphia to provide scholarships to women who would "serve God, and their fellow man at home, in church and in the mission field."



Gandhi's Salt March for Indian Independence

Three institutions applied, each unable to completely satisfy the criteria. The Philadelphia School for Christian Workers did not meet the definition of a college. That left Wilson College, which was over 100 miles from Philadelphia, and Beaver College, which the attorneys for Wilson claimed was not an accredited Christian college.

The orphan's court awarded the estate to Wilson in June 1932, but Beaver appealed. The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania affirmed the decision in 1933.

### Bogigian Estate

The estate of Armenian rug merchant Hagop Bogigian was left to Wilson College in 1931. Bogigian, who had been educated in Presbyterian mission schools as a child, was introduced to Warfield in 1926. They quickly established a close friendship and Bogigian decided to financially support worthy young women



Hagop Bogigian

interested in a college education. The estate consisted of financial securities, some property and a collection of valuable oriental rugs and other art. The income from the estate was used to create loans for students, with preference to be given to young women of Armenian descent.



Franklin D. Roosevelt elected President

1930

1932

## RAISING STANDARDS AND BARING LEGS

### SURVIVING THE GREAT DEPRESSION

In the decade after the stock market crash that ushered in the Great Depression, Wilson fought successfully to keep the school affordable and the curriculum rigorous.

Despite the financial crisis and brewing troubles internationally, Wilson had a record enrollment in 1930 of 450 students, expanded the number of science clubs from two to three and updated the laboratory facilities for the Department of Psychology. That year average tuition with room and board was \$800, a sum many families struggled to afford. In response, the Alumnae Association created the Students' Aid Fund to assist "deserving students in circumstances of special need."

Throughout the decade, students managed to continue their group trips to Mont Alto, athletics contests and various academic clubs by creating an activities fee. At the same time they reduced book club fees to encourage more members and the activity of debating was revived on campus.

### A LEGACY OF RAISING STANDARDS

In order to attract and retain the best possible teachers, President Warfield improved conditions for faculty by providing a system for rank and promotion, sabbatical leave and a pension system. He brought high-caliber speakers to Wilson to engage the students, such

as representatives from the Republican and Democratic parties and intellectuals like Robert Frost and Dr. Arthur Haas, who lectured on atoms to Wilson students in 1936.

Under pressure from students and faculty to address dissatisfaction with the current curriculum because of its "rigid insistence on classical training, lack of flexibility, and failure to supply adequately the opportunity for individual initiative," Warfield convened a committee to undertake a complete review of the curriculum. This led to updating some courses to bring them in line with those at similar institutions, and placing slightly less emphasis on the classics, but it did not lead to a radical shift from the College's liberal arts core.

Shortly after the commencement celebrating the Class of 1936, Warfield died in the president's house 22 years after his appointment. The Ethelbert D. Warfield Scholarship Fund was established in his honor.

### HAVENS BECOMES PRESIDENT

Paul Swain Havens was the son of Wilson alumna Elizabeth Swain Havens, Class of 1895. He taught



Robert Frost in Norland Hall during his visit in 1960



Paul Swain Havens

## Student Anti-War Activism

Wilson students organized to support disarmament and world peace. They held meetings, publicized their cause and endorsed a petition favoring the limitation of armaments and the participation of the U.S. in the World Disarmament Conference of 1932. The Wilson College Peace Council was launched in 1937 and carried on "a determined campaign to enlist every one of Wilson's 425



Dorothea Lange photographs "Migrant Mother"

students in the fight against war." A 1938 poll found that 90 percent of Wilson students were against armament and fighting on foreign soil.

This anti-war activism continued right up to the U.S. entry into World War II. In 1939, alumna Chang Wai Fean sent a letter from her homeland in China, urging her American sisters not to buy Japanese goods and to continue the fight for disarmament. She shared that Japan purchased 54 percent of its munitions from the U.S. Numerous editorials appeared in the *Billboard* condemning the "contagion of anti-Semitism" and Hitler.

An editorial by an uncredited student condemned Hitler's tactics and his ousting of Jewish students from Germany in 1936. The student wrote of her fears of Hitler's rhetoric making its way to America:

"Peace, like charity, begins at home. A country whose minority groups suffer unrest and oppression can never be truly at peace. [...] We must, however, realize that an anti-Semitic wave is not an utter impossibility; that we are not immune from the contagion which is sweeping over Europe; that we are not aloof from the same passions which stir the members of other majority groups. An alert understanding of the facts is the best possible means of preventing this type of un-Americanism from gaining popular sanction in our country."



Amelia Earhart Lost in the Pacific

1936

at Princeton, served as an assistant professor at Scripps College and was an Oxford-trained Rhodes Scholar. On May 22, 1937, Havens was inaugurated as Wilson's president at the youthful age of 33, making him one of the youngest college presidents in the country at the time.

He noticed that students often used their summer vacations to take professional or vocational training. As one of his first acts, he established the Placement Office to guide undergraduates in the choice of a profession and to secure positions upon graduation.

Havens, like Warfield before him, believed in the value of a classical liberal arts education. In the first few years of his tenure, the classical language department offered a full-year course in Greek and Latin literature translation. Unlike Warfield, Havens was pragmatic and was willing to offer courses that appealed to students less interested in academics and careers. For the first time since 1917, a course in creative or practical art was offered. Increasing these sorts of courses could have been considered a move away from a traditional liberal arts education and a return to the socially conservative role of women's colleges as finishing schools to prepare women for marriage. However, Havens managed to balance the two. He maintained the College's high academic standards while offering courses that appealed to students who weren't necessarily going to college for academic reasons.

1937

## BARE LEGS

Warfield had fought against the cultural tide to keep Wilson students from smoking, riding in automobiles with men and going to dances. He warned parents to appreciate "how many and how insidious these temptations are" to their daughters.

Havens, although his actions in the succeeding decades would prove he was relatively conservative and quite patriarchal too, relaxed or reduced most of Wilson's Victorian-era strictures.

Smoking was permitted between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. Students were allowed 15 "church cuts" (absences from mandatory church attendance) as opposed to the traditional nine. Two or more sophomores could ride with men in motor vehicles, unchaperoned before 6 p.m., although women could not own or drive an automobile while enrolled at Wilson.

And hockey players could now show bare legs! Before the relaxation of the rules, hockey players had to wear stockings that covered all skin to above their skirt lines. On one occasion, when a particularly tall girl had difficulty keeping her stockings high enough, Warfield stormed onto the field and demanded she be taken off.



1939

World War II Begins



### Wilson Women Serve

As had been the case in World War I, the Wilson community stepped up to serve the country during World War II. Most prominently, dean and alumna Margaret Disert '20 took a leave of absence to serve as executive officer of the Navy WAVES. She achieved the rank of lieutenant commander and received a commendation from the Secretary of the Navy for outstanding performance of duty.

Margaret Disert

In all, 80 women served in the WAVES, WAACS, SPARs, Marine Corps and WASPs, and an additional 28 served in the Red Cross and the USO. In 1943, the Alumnae Association broadcast a war service program over the radio instead of the traditional alumnae reunion. Speakers included young alumnae from several branches of the armed forces, as well as Lt. Col. Alice Agnew, Class

of 1895, one of the highest-ranking Army nurses in the country and who had served as an Army nurse since World War I. Alumnae also served in civilian capacities as censors, translators for the FBI, directors in the Office of Civilian Defense and the Red Cross, and in technical laboratory work.

Physics professor Dorothy Weeks took leave during the 1943-44 academic year to serve as technical aid in the Office of Scientific Research and Development, correlating and exchanging information on classified research activities between the U.S., Canada and the United Kingdom.



D-Day Landing on the Beaches of Normandy

1942

1944

## WARTIME WILSON

### COMING WAR OVERSHADOWS CAMPUS LIFE

The specter of world war hung over the College, with editorials and articles in the *Billboard* devoted to it. A lecture series, "Background for War," explored "the last 20 years in an attempt to discover the reasons for the failure of peace."

In fall 1940, the College created a national defense program that included first-aid classes, Red Cross knitting and sewing, and British war relief efforts. The faculty and staff raised money to support a visiting refugee scholar to live at Wilson each year and give lectures in their own specialty, as well as world events.

Students raised money for the Red Cross by doing services for others, such as babysitting the children of faculty, catching mice and mending clothes. These efforts were featured in *The American Magazine* in October 1941.

### BLACKOUT PRACTICES, RATION BOOKS & BROKEN PROMISES

The attack on Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941, shook the campus as it did the rest of the country. President Havens declared, "We are ready now to fight with all the courage and strength and intelligence that we possess. The eyes of a stricken world are upon us. We shall not fail."

By 1942, air raid blackout practice was routine and the infirmary could be instantly transformed into an emergency hospital for blood transfusions and setting bones. Faculty and students registered for war ration books. Rationed

materials included dairy products, meats, sugar and gas (limited to three gallons per week).

Female college students were encouraged to study mathematics, chemistry and physics because the National Research Council predicted a severe shortage of workers in these fields. Wilson even created "war minors" with classes in fields "essential to the war effort." However, in an unwelcome bit of foresight, National Aeronautical Association President Gill Robb Wilson accurately told Wilson students in 1942, "A competent woman is in demand nowadays, but she will not be after the war when she is taking the job from a man who needs the work." Elizabeth McGeorge '38 discovered this to be true when, after serving as a WASP pilot and flying P-19 fighter planes and B-25 bombers, she applied for pilot jobs after the war, only to be offered a position as a secretary.

The war-related shortage of labor meant students had to clean their own dorm rooms and help maintain campus grounds and buildings. But students also found opportunities for fun. A Pin-Up Man contest was held to raise money for war bonds. Photos of brothers and fiancés were submitted. President Havens was also nominated, but the winner was 4-year-old Tommy Havens.



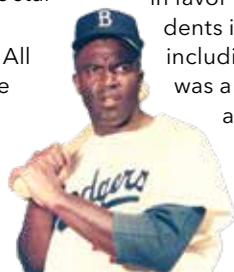
Manhattan Project Begins

## The Push for Integration Begins in Earnest

The *Billboard* noted Negro History Week was first celebrated in 1926 and coincided with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. It took until February 1944 for the college administration to officially recognize it. Meanwhile, Presbyterian churches sponsored Negro Brotherhood Week with mixed conventions for young people. Vicki Willis '46 called out the lack of equality in sports "when the great Negro Olympic star Jessie Owens was refused recognition."

Six weeks later the editorial "Brotherhood among All Races" appeared in the *Billboard*. "Racial prejudice has no place within a nation striving to present a united front to her enemies outside. If we expect the Negro to fight for the U.S., he has a right to expect equitable treatment for himself and his family at home."

Louise Genthner '47 said, "It is each individual man who will decide whether Christianity is to be lost forever in an abyss



Jackie Robinson joins Brooklyn Dodgers

of prejudice or is to shine forth in world fellowship and brotherhood in God." Betty Brown '46 said in a vespers talk, "The solution to prejudice is to get to know people on a personal level—how can we do that at Wilson if we have no Negro students?"

The question of integration was put directly to the students in 1945 and the responses were overwhelmingly in favor of admitting African-American students. Students invited African-American speakers to campus, including future civil rights icon James Farmer, who was a 25-year-old graduate of Lincoln University and spoke on nonviolent protest, and Dudley Cobham, also from Lincoln University, who said, "Religion, I think, will be the force, the power and the organization that will tie people of all races together."

The administration dragged its heels on the issue. It took another seven years to make integration a reality at Wilson.

1945

### WORLD WAR II ENDS

In May 1945 students celebrated the end of the war in Europe but were warned the war in the Pacific could continue for years. A V-E Day Service was held in Thomson Hall and members of the Class of 1945 discussed how their entire college careers were spent at war.

Following the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the surrender of Japan in September 1945, many of the lectures at Wilson returned to the topic of world peace, just as they had at the beginning of the decade. Lecturers brought up new trouble spots, including Korea and Israel and Palestine. The 75th anniversary of the College included a forum on citizenship and peace that featured U.S. Rep. Margaret Chase Smith, who had sponsored the creation of the WAVES and was a friend of Margaret Disert. Herbert Hoover was the

guest Convocation speaker and spoke on the moral and spiritual recovery from war. A new lecture series focused on atomic energy in peacetime.

### SPORTS & SEX

As campus life returned to normal, a new focus on sports emerged. In 1946, Wilson got its own riding



World War II Ends

1947

school and stable after years of sharing facilities with Penn Hall. New sports were added or brought back, such as fencing and archery. Tournaments and exhibition games were organized for a variety of sports.

At the same time students and faculty continued to be involved in relief efforts around the world, including raising funds for food and clothing for displaced persons and care of orphaned children.

By the end of 1949, students were dealing with the more typical concerns of young people. In a lecture on dating problems for Wilson girls, admissions director Ruth Leitch "attacked the overemphasis on sex, which she blamed on the publication of the *Kinsey Report*." She said it was "foolish to marry for sexual attraction because a man's business life and a woman's homemaking demand at least two-thirds of their time." She suggested girls shouldn't marry the first man who came along and "stressed the importance of knowing a great many men." We don't know how the students received her advice.

The decade ended with new graduates dealing with increased competition for jobs and lower starting salaries. The value of a liberal arts education was being questioned, as technical skills training and the move toward specialization were increasing.



People's Republic of China is Established

1949

## Late to Integrate

Many other women's colleges, including the Seven Sisters schools, began admitting African-American students in the late 19th century. It would take until fall 1952 before Nan Miller, a young woman from Washington, D.C., became Wilson's first African-American student. She was accepted by a unanimous vote of the board and made the Dean's List before leaving after two years to study nursing at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing.

As early as the 1920s, black Presbyterian ministers had begun asking whether Wilson would admit young women from their congregations.

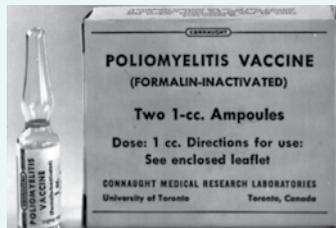
The College received its first application from a black student in 1927 but denied her admission. Over the following decades, calls for integration were supported by Wilson alumnae who had been active in progressive movements and social reforms, and by Wilson students who had attended regional and national conferences where improved race

relations were encouraged.

Their efforts finally paid off with a little help from a well-respected alumna, Wilmina Rowland, Class of 1929. She wrote to President Havens in January of 1951, demanding to know what was the College's "either explicit or implicit" policy on admitting African-American students. Havens claimed there was no policy against African-Americans—it was simply that no African-American women were interested in applying to the College.

He added that he didn't intend to go "beating about the academic bushes" looking for them.

Rowland kept up the pressure through a series of letters before eventually offering to personally recruit African-American students, essentially forcing the administration's hand. In fall 1952, Miller



First Effective Polio Vaccine Created

1952

1954

## A TRANSITIONAL DECADE

### DEMOGRAPHIC PRESSURES & THE RED SCARE

The 1950s began with Wilson celebrating the 80th anniversary of its founding. However, other than the anniversary, there seemed little to celebrate. The freshman class for 1949-50 was 25 percent smaller than the previous year. And in fall 1950, the College opened with the smallest enrollment since 1942—54 fewer students than the previous fall. President Havens lamented that expenses had increased more than income. It "means that for the first time in almost 40 years, Wilson faces the certainty of a current deficit." He attributed the drop in enrollment to lower birth rates during the Great Depression, competition from other colleges and, "We are undoubtedly feeling the even keener competition of coeducation."

Even when enrollment faltered, the College continued to enhance its reputation in the community and beyond, hosting weighty lecture series and cultural events, and involving itself more in local endeavors such as a community orchestra. A Phi Beta Kappa chapter was installed in January 1950, the first at a women's college in Pennsylvania. In 1951, the College hosted what *the Alumnae Quarterly* called "perhaps the most outstanding musical event at the College in many years"—a performance of the opera *La Boheme* by the Charles L. Wagner Co., a touring group that often featured singers from New York City's Metropolitan Opera.

Two years later, the College hosted a series of 10 lectures on the topic of "What is Behind the Russian Iron Curtain?"

The perceived communist threat was a recurring theme throughout the decade, especially for Havens, who wrote and spoke repeatedly about it. In his 1951 fall Convocation address, he took on a decidedly pessimistic tone. "We are concerned over communism and democracy and socialism ..." In words that are a portent of today, he spoke of the "greatest growth in all history of agencies dedicated to the spread of propaganda ..." following with, "... more of us are subject to more of this for more hours of the day than any people in the history of the world."



Brown vs. Board of Education

### A CULTURAL CROSSROADS & MEN WELCOMED

The 1950s was a transitional time between the ebullience of the post-World War II era and the civil unrest of the 1960s. This crossroads was reflected at Wilson, where students' desire for more freedom to interact with young men, forego required chapel attendance and drink alcohol on occasion collided with rules and social mores from an earlier time. After a senior was asked to leave the College because officials discovered she had married, several students sent a letter to the *Billboard* criticizing "the old-fashioned and unrealistic policies guiding the Administration ...,"



Doris Oswell Brunot

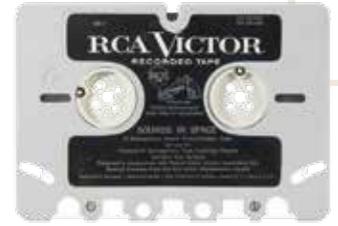
became Wilson's first African-American student and was followed the following year by Joretha Langley of Columbia, S.C. Both women transferred to other colleges before they had completed their studies at Wilson.

Six years later, Doris Oswell Brunot '58 became the first African-American to graduate from Wilson. She later earned a master's degree in counseling education and became a teacher, working in the Washington, D.C. area for 31 years.

### Beatniks on Campus

In October 1958, Wilson's Fall Prom Committee announced the prom theme would be "Wilson Joins the Beatniks on the Road." The Beat Generation began as a literary movement led by authors belonging to the generation that grew up during the Depression and World War II, many with a sense of despair that was later reinforced by the Cold War and its threat of nuclear war.

From the end of 1958 through 1960, the media became obsessed with the beats or beatniks as representatives of a Bohemian counterculture. An August 1958 spread in *Look* magazine depicted beret-wearing, bongo drum-playing young people. Journalists debated whether this group was composed of dangerous delinquents or merely harmless pot-smoking poets. Clothing stores started carrying tight black trousers and loose sweaters, and college kids quickly picked up on this beat style and began copying beat slang and hosting poetry readings.



Cassette Tape Invented

1955

which the students pointed out also included "drinking, chapel and the Honor Code." The letter, whose authors' names were withheld by request, continued, "We feel that unless the Administration is revitalized by adopting a realistic approach towards life as it is in the 1950s ... then the attitude of the students on this campus shall continue to be one of apathy and/or rebellion."

In a big shift for the College, thanks to the competition from coed schools, Wilson's administration worked to cultivate a welcoming atmosphere for young men. In particular, the College entertained men attending colleges such as Dickinson, Franklin and Marshall, and Haverford colleges, Princeton and Lehigh universities, the University of Pennsylvania and the U.S. Naval Academy. In other words, they encouraged men who were suitable matches for Wilson women—especially in the eyes of their parents—to attend socials and visit campus.

Regarding young men visiting, Havens wrote, "We like them on weekends, during the week, any time they want to come." He noted how Wilson students traveled much more than they once did and that the College had not placed limitations on their weekends away. "The modern Wilson girl seems to



Men Welcomed on Campus



Rosa Parks Refuses to Sit at the Back of the Bus

be able to do her work well and have a good time too," Havens concluded.

### WILSON REBOUNDS

By the middle of the 1950s, Wilson's enrollment had rebounded and worries of financial problems

had diminished. In fall 1957, the College had an enrollment of 450 students, a 12 percent increase over the previous year. This was likely due to demographic changes and a booming economy that brought families more disposable income.

Laird Hall opened in spring 1950 and in early 1955 ground was broken on a new dormitory, Prentis Hall. The College raised enough money to renovate Main Hall and plan an annex to the Stewart Library. An ambitious, two-year campaign to raise \$625,000 was launched in spring 1955 and by winter 1956, more than \$500,000 had been contributed or pledged.

The College also boasted a number of prominent women faculty members, including Guggenheim Fellows Dorothy Weeks, the first woman to earn a doctorate in math at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Cora Lutz, who had a doctorate in the classics from Yale University. Lutz won a second Guggenheim Fellowship in 1954.

By the end of the decade, Wilson's financial woes had seemingly faded and the College, like the nation, was poised for a time that would bring social upheaval and change.

1958

## Positive Academics and a Troubling Prediction

In June 1968, President Havens addressed the alumnae gathered for Reunion. He spoke encouragingly of the newly revised curriculum, a new Senate structure for WCGA and a case study visit by the Middle States accrediting association. He reported that the case study team described in glowing terms the feeling of community, trust and respect. The team added, "The skeptic, of course, may wonder how long this tone can be maintained in a national climate of power conflicts and seething distrust. Nevertheless, effective links between

trustees, administration officers, faculty, and students have become stronger ...

Wilson College is a strong institution having an unmistakable integrity in its philosophy and program. Students impressed the members of the case study with their



Assassination of JFK

obvious seriousness of purpose and well-articulated insights."

However, Havens had a warning for the alumnae. "In spite of this excellent report, I must now warn you that Wilson faces crisis. Costs of operation have mounted sharply; colleges have built dormitory facilities for more students than they are now receiving; the competition from the tax-supported institution, the large state university, the state college and now rapidly increasing number of junior and community colleges is keener than it has ever been. Thus for the first time in many years the Board of Trustees has budgeted a deficit—a substantial deficit—for the academic year 1968-69. It is a bad omen that we are now compelled to budget a deficit of any kind. We must somehow find a way to meet this problem."

His warning would prove prescient. Lower enrollment throughout the '70s would almost lead to the closing of the College.



The Beatles Appear on The Ed Sullivan Show

1962

1963

1964

## CIVIL RIGHTS, ACTIVISM AND STORM CLOUDS

### DISCRIMINATION IN THE OPEN

The turmoil that would define the 1960s played out at Wilson too. In the fall of 1960, a group of Wilson students, including two African-American students, went to celebrate a birthday at the Penn-Wilson Restaurant in Chambersburg. The restaurant refused them service because they were African-Americans.

This set in motion a protracted and contentious campaign to stand up for and protect the rights of the two black students who had been discriminated against. The Wilson College Student Government Association, knowing it had to take a stand on such an important issue, suggested a student boycott of the restaurant. While the vast majority of students were against discrimination and only one student voiced her reservations, they failed to pass a formal motion in favor of a boycott. Instead, they voted to send a letter to the Chambersburg *Public Opinion* condemning discrimination and threatening a boycott.

When students met with the restaurant's manager to discuss the issue, he said he had nothing against African-Americans personally. The policy to refuse them service was a business decision and one he wouldn't change because his customers were against integration.

The *Billboard* published a series of scathing editorials berating the students, college administration and faculty for their inaction on a matter of principle. It wasn't until after the publication of the letter in the *Public Opinion* that

the WCSGA finally passed a unanimous motion to boycott the restaurant. The faculty and administration eventually voiced support for the students' restrained and appropriate response, as did many in the wider Chambersburg community. In the end, the restaurant reversed its discriminatory policy and the students ended their boycott.

However, fault lines between a mostly progressive student body and a conservative, aging administration were exposed.



MLK Delivers "I have a dream" Speech

### ACTIVISM & PROTESTING CHAPEL ATTENDANCE

Affiliates of national student organizations were formed on campus, including Students for a Democratic Society, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the National Student Association. Members of these groups were active and loud. *Billboard* editorials demanded that students address racial and political issues, and promoted direct involvement.

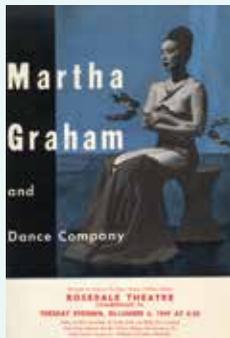
As students' methods became more radical and included demands for more freedom on campus, the administration clamped down. One issue brought the battle to a head—demands for voluntary rather than compulsory chapel attendance.

## Traditions New and Revived

Students updated or added new traditions during the 1960s. Dummy Rush became more of a battle of wits rather than an athletic brawl. The original Devotional Week got a makeover, becoming the Orr Forum, and featured lectures on a broad spectrum of religious interests. The synchronized swimming group, the Nereids, began in 1965. The group was very popular and its shows featured elaborate productions and costumes. Lacrosse became quite competitive and, for a few years, Wilson had a yachting team, which won the Princeton Regatta in 1966.

Not all new traditions were successful. A football game between the men of Lehigh University and the women of Wilson called the Lechers vs. the Wenches failed to catch on.

Orchesis continued to bring leading dancers and dance companies to campus, including Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham.



Program for the Martha Graham Performance

A range of campus speakers included Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar Huston Smith, who talked about "Psychedelics and the Religious Life." He told students how wonderful his own experiences on LSD had been.

The Rev. Urcille Ifill, pastor of St. James Church in Chambersburg and the father of journalist Gwen Ifill, spoke about the Black Power Movement. Another speaker came from Planned Parenthood to talk about family planning and birth control pills.

Isaac Asimov spoke about "science writing and science fiction." Asimov, who had a doctorate in chemistry from Columbia, wrote science fiction almost exclusively until 1957, but with the advent of Sputnik and the resultant panic in the United States concerning science education, he felt it necessary to help Americans understand the value of science.

1968

1969

Although Wilson was a Presbyterian-affiliated college, the College was technically nondenominational. Students complained about being required to attend the Protestant chapel services three mornings a week—already cut down from the original daily services.

The discord reached a climax when the administration sent letters to the families of three students, saying they would not graduate because they had overcut chapel. The editors of the *Billboard* demanded to see the official policy in writing and speculated about what other unreasonable grounds the administration might use to deny diplomas: "On what grounds? Hair color? Grades? Membership in undesirable organizations? Or merely chance?" The faculty responded privately to the Trustees that the decision to withhold the diplomas would not hold up in court and it was withdrawn.

The administration criticized students, claiming that "their anger seems more borrowed than real." They referred to the need to be patient and encouraged the students to get their thinking and their values in proper perspective. President Havens addressed students in chapel. "Let us turn away from protest to appreciation of all we have," he said.



Tet Offensive in Vietnam

## EXPANSION DESPITE WORRISOME SIGNS

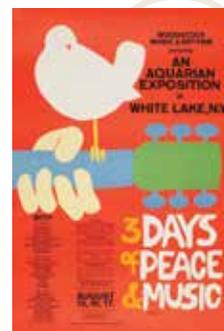
In 1961 there was an unexpected bump in enrollment when 58% of accepted stu-

dents enrolled instead of the expected 52%. The Trustees then decided to expand the number of students from 500 to 750. They planned a new science center, new dormitories, a fine arts building and major renovations. By fall of 1966 there were more than 700 students and Disert and Rosenkrans dormitories were opened.

But whispers of discontent became louder. An underground student publication, *The Finger*, complained about unnecessary "prep school" rules, among other criticisms. More and more students complained of being bored. Mixers were less frequent and less well-attended. In a weak and belated attempt to improve campus social life, the administration

allowed boys in dorm rooms between 2 and 5 p.m. on Sundays, providing that doors remained fully open at all times. Most students chose to leave campus on the weekends.

A 1967 editorial in the *Billboard* asked, "What is happening to Wilson College?" and tried to guess at the issues troubling the campus. It stated the College was "plagued by transfers and a smaller freshman class for the past two years. Is it the poor transportation and a rural location?" Total campus enrollment in 1968 had fallen to 676 students. The decade ended with a concerning report from the admissions office on declining applications and missed enrollment targets.



Woodstock is Held

# EIGHT NOTABLE ALUMNAE | 1920

Physicians, nurses, philosophers, scientists and linguists are some of Wilson's notable alumnae.



Agnes Flack

**Agnes Flack '20** graduated from the Woman's Medical College in 1926 and had an extraordinary career in medicine. After a decade as a pediatrician and obstetrician, she moved to the atomic energy plant at Oak Ridge, Tenn., during World War II to work on the Manhattan Project. While there, she and a colleague developed a new treatment for hydrofluoric acid burns. She wrote, "We feel we have had a real part in ending the war and hope our efforts to turn atomic power into peacetime uses will be successful." In 1953, she became the medical director of the New Jersey State Reformatory for Women. There, she became involved in the vaccine trials of the Sabin attenuated polio vaccine. She also ran trials in the Belgian Congo in 1958, which vaccinated 244,000 people and put a quick end to a polio outbreak. She remarked, "So maybe someday we will all be safely immunized at birth—and best of all, it will be permanent."

**Margaret Peters '35** completed a nursing program at the Columbia University Presbyterian Hospital and later trained for the Army Nurse Corps during WWII. She was first stationed in England, then served in a field hospital in France for three years. After the war, she worked at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C., where she joined a group of scientists researching the use of radioactive substances in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. Her role was to develop nursing techniques for Army nurses as the use of radioactive substances increased in medicine. An article about the use of "atomic" medicine appeared in many newspapers in 1952, featuring Peters under the headline: *Atomic Cocktail Nothing to Fear, Army Nurse Says*. "If your doctor prescribes an atomic cocktail, go ahead and take it. That's the message of Maj. Margaret Peters, U.S. Army Nurse Corps, whose job is to take the fear out of giving and receiving radioactive treatment." Peters was the only servicewoman and the only nurse to observe the atomic experiments at Frenchman's Flats, Nev.



Margaret Peters

**Elizabeth Flower '35** earned a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania. She was the co-author of the two-volume *History of Philosophy in America*. Among her thousands of students was the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He attended her first graduate seminar, *Ethics and Philosophy in History*. "Martin Luther King's contribution to the discussion was solid and articulate," she recalled later. "Interestingly, questions of discrimination did not seem to have come up, but questions of peace and of conflict, of moral order and the effectiveness of a moral stance—as in Gandhi—were much in the air. And in all this time, his thought was already vigorous and well forged." Elizabeth's teaching and writings were credited with having advanced the field of ethics.



Elizabeth Flower

**Kathryn Keller '40**, from Chambersburg, Pa., earned a master's degree in linguistics from Indiana University and studied at the Wycliffe Bible Institute. She spent 40 years as a translator and missionary with the Chontal Maya people in Mexico. There she developed a technique for determining the anatomy of speech sounds. She wrote a book called *"Instrumental Articulatory Phonetics"* to explain her process. She recorded albums of Bible verses in the Chontal language.



Kathryn Keller



Li-li Ch'en

**Li-li Ch'en '57** graduated Phi Beta Kappa and received the President's Prize. In 1980, she was awarded an honorary doctorate. Ch'en earned a master's degree from Radcliffe College and a doctorate in comparative literature from Harvard. She also studied at Cambridge University, Academic Sinica in Taiwan, Universite de Paris in France and Kyoto Daigaku in Japan. She established courses in Chinese languages and literature at Tufts University as director of the program in Chinese. Ch'en won the National Book Award for Translation and the National Magazine Award for a short story in 1976, winning over acclaimed author John Updike.

**Capt. Joan R. Hankey '59** joined the U.S. Navy three days after graduating from Wilson. She earned a master's degree in computer systems management from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif. She directed one of the Navy's largest computer operations centers. Hankey was the first woman executive officer of a Navy command not involved with administration of women, and the first woman officer named as assistant for automation for the organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. When she was promoted to captain, she was one of only 17 female Navy captains outside the Nurse Corps. She was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for outstanding service.



Capt. Joan Hankey



Janice Johnson

**Janice Johnson '61** was one of the African-American students refused service at a Chambersburg, Pa., restaurant in 1960. The incident resulted in a Wilson student boycott of the restaurant. Johnson received a master's degree in guidance counseling and has worked in Girl Scouts, social work and youth development, and founded her own real estate business. Since her days at Wilson, she has been an activist for justice and has held leadership roles in many organizations. Johnson served as chairperson of Virginia Organizing, a nonpartisan grassroots organization that challenges injustice and empowers people. She currently serves as its treasurer and as board president of People's Action, a national organization that promotes justice and equality.

**Diane Davidson '69** earned her doctorate in biology from the University of Utah in 1976. She received a Guggenheim Fellowship and numerous National Science Foundation grants. She has also had support for her research from the U.S. State Department, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture and the National Geographic Research Committee. Her work focuses on several areas of ecology, including the evolutionary ecology of ant-plant interactions, geographical ecology and experimental community ecology. Her research has taken her to tropical rainforests in Central and South America and to Australia, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia and Borneo.



Diane Davidson

---

Special thanks to the Hankey Center for the History of Women's Education for all the research and documentation it took to write this brief history of the College. For more in-depth histories and Wilson archives, please visit the Hankey Center's website at [www.wilson.edu/hankeycenter](http://www.wilson.edu/hankeycenter). To view a more complete timeline of Wilson's history, visit [www.wilson.edu/wilson-college-timeline](http://www.wilson.edu/wilson-college-timeline).

---

#### PRODUCTION AND MEDIA

Cassandra Latimer, Vice President for Marketing and Communications  
Darrach Dolan, Managing Editor | Kendra Tidd, Design | Cathy Mentzer, College Editor

Contributing Writers: Amy Ensley, Kieran McGhee, Cathy Mentzer

Photos provided by: The Hankey Center for the History of Women's Education

---

1869 150 2019  
WILSON  
COLLEGE

Chambersburg, Pennsylvania