

Women

AT THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY:

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A HISTORY *by Julia B. Morgan*

Women

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by Julia B. Morgan

THE FOUNDERS OF The Johns Hopkins University created a remarkable institution. They sought to take the best aspects of all the world's universities and mold them into an unsurpassable whole. But even this bold and pioneering spirit was unequal to coeducation. The history of women at Johns Hopkins is largely a history of exceptional women who refused to be excluded from this inspired educational experiment and who, in turn, had important effects upon its course.

The Trustees selected by Johns Hopkins to found the University, none of them academics, conscientiously considered the many variables possible in an educational institution. In 1874, they consulted Presidents Eliot of Harvard and Angell of Michigan on a variety of topics, among them the issue of coeducation. Eliot replied that coeducation was "a thoroughly wrong idea which is rapidly disappearing." He advanced four arguments against it. First, men and

women students might be tempted to marry, which would be harmless "in any community which is very homogeneous, where there are no diversities of pecuniary condition, and where the standard of scholarship is low;" but, Eliot continued, "the coeducation of the sexes is not possible in highly civilized communities." In cosmopolitan, heterogeneous universities, coeducation could produce such dire results as socially unequal and unacceptable marriages. Second, Eliot felt the stresses of education might threaten a woman's good health and, thus, her chances of making a good marriage. Third, he believed that the women would retard the pace of instruction, to the detriment of the men. Finally, Eliot maintained that the education of women should prepare them for "the life which is before them, a life fundamentally different from that of any man."

President James Angell of Michigan supported coeducation in his own institution, but with faint praise.

He first explained that the University of Michigan was coeducational because "it is the general custom in the West to educate boys and girls together;" in addition, the citizens of the state had insisted that their taxes be spent to educate their daughters as well as their sons. Angell had nothing to say of any particular advantages of coeducation but merely remarked

there has been no practical embarrassment arising out of the system. Our girls for the most part are matured, and the greatest care is taken by myself and others in their general welfare. . . . The young men have, so far as I know, borne themselves with the greatest courtesy and prudence towards the ladies.—We have not a solitary rule about it. The thing takes care of itself. . . . The girls go to and from the College undisturbed. When boys are hustling about the streets, they fall back and let the ladies pass by.

Daniel Coit Gilman, first president of Hopkins, was more inclined to agree with his close friend and associate, Charles Eliot. Gilman resisted coeducation out of a genuine concern that mixing the sexes would have ill effects. In his inaugural address, he expressed his reluctance to expose women "to the rougher influences which I am sorry to confess are still to be found in colleges and universities where young men resort." He voiced not only this concern, however, but also his hope that someone would endow a college for women in Baltimore as "a good solution of a problem which is not without difficulty, however it is approached." Gilman was, in fact, sincerely committed to the edu-

cation of women. He studied the matter and even pledged a thousand dollars to establish an institution for the advanced education of women in Baltimore, provided nine other benefactors would join him. Gilman's concern for women's education is also evident in his assistance to the second president of Bryn Mawr College, M. Carey Thomas, whose letters to him reflect her gratitude for his advice and interest.

The Board of Trustees was by no means a monolith of opposition to coeducation. A few of the Trustees, such as James Carey Thomas and George W. Dobbin, supported admitting to Hopkins "in the higher branches of education, any woman who. . . shall show herself properly prepared to receive such teaching." On November 18, 1876, Thomas called a special meeting "on the subject of imparting, to a well guarded extent, the benefits of the teachings of the University to females, as well as to males, suitably prepared by age and acquirements to profit by such teachings." The Board, however, "was not prepared to commit itself definitely to any course, but would leave the whole subject, until instructed to the contrary, in the hands of the President of the University." Wishful thinking and failure to confront the issue of coeducation head-on was characteristic of the Trustees and President for years to come.

Nevertheless, the issue of coeducation was not to be ignored. In September 1877, Martha Carey Thomas, the Trustee's daughter, applied to undertake graduate studies in Greek. Just a month later, Emily Nunn, who had been taking Professor H. Newell Martin's special

Saturday teachers' course in physiology (which included eleven women), applied for admission to the regular biology lectures. The Trustees saw that they must enact some kind of policy, and on November 5, 1877, they adopted the guidelines, suggested to them by Gilman, that were to prevail for the next thirty years. After reiterating Gilman's hope for the establishment of a women's college, they stated that they would continue to allow the admission of women to public and special lectures. They also agreed to examine and "certify to the attainments of such women as may offer themselves as candidates for a degree," but would not "for the present. . . receive young ladies as students in the usual classes, and as attendants upon lectures not specially excepted."

THE YOUNG LADIES were not daunted. They were determined to gain access to Hopkins, which was offering a caliber of graduate instruction unequalled elsewhere. The Trustees' statement of policy was full of enough loopholes—and their behavior marked by enough ambivalence and vacillation—that several women did engage in graduate study at Hopkins before a policy change specifically permitted it in 1907. They were granted or denied admission on a piecemeal and seemingly arbitrary basis, but those who were admitted were exceptional enough to deserve a closer look.

Emily Nunn had been working alongside male students in the Hopkins biological laboratory as part of Martin's special Saturday course; yet her application

to the regular courses was refused, because, as Gilman wrote, "the Biological Laboratory where experiments in respect to animal life are in progress is not well adapted. . . to the co-education of young women & young men." M. Carey Thomas met with more success and was "enrolled as a candidate for the University's degree of A.M., the candidate to have the direction of studies by the University Professors, and the final examination for degrees without class attendance in the University."

Thomas persisted in her studies for a year before withdrawing from the University. Her polite, carefully-worded letter to the Trustees evinces the frustration, disappointment and anger of one denied the full privileges of graduate study. In particular, she noted the bar upon her attendance of the Greek Seminary. She persevered in seeking graduate education, however, first at the University of Leipzig. There, in 1882 she completed a three-year course with high marks but was denied a degree because of her sex. Then she went to Göttingen, where she was again met with refusal, but the University of Zurich, after a rigid examination, awarded her the Ph.D., *summa cum laude*. A year at the Sorbonne and the College of France completed her studies in Europe. Returning to the United States in 1885, she began organizing Bryn Mawr College, which opened its doors the following year. She became its first dean and, in 1894, its second president. Dr. Thomas was always an innovator, and, in addition to her part in establishing the first women's college to grant the Ph.D., she led the movement for new methods of teaching, was

engaged in the women's suffrage movement and co-founded Baltimore's Bryn Mawr School. She also promoted coeducation and scientific research by women, worked for international peace, and inaugurated an experimental summer school for working women who might not otherwise have had educational opportunities. At Johns Hopkins, she was instrumental in the establishment of the School of Medicine, and the University honored her with the LL.D. in 1922.

At the same time that M. Carey Thomas was agonizing over the decision to withdraw from Johns Hopkins, another young woman was seeking to study mathematics under the venerable and influential James Joseph Sylvester. Christine Ladd's scholarly publications had impressed Sylvester, and he urged her admission to Hopkins, writing Gilman that she would be "a source of additional strength to the University." Trustee Reverdy Johnson feared that "through this back door the whole system [of coeducation] is coming upon us." George William Brown, however, wished to give Ladd the opportunity to study under Sylvester "without establishing the principle of coeducation." On April 25, 1878, the executive committee of the Board of Trustees agreed to permit Christine Ladd to attend only the lectures of Sylvester, without her being enrolled as a student. After demonstrating her exceptional abilities, she was soon admitted to the lectures of preeminent logician and philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce. She proved her worthiness, inventing a technique for reducing all syllogisms to one formula, called the antilogism, which still holds a significant

place in logic. "Brilliant" was the term Peirce used to characterize her dissertation, "The Algebra of Logic." While the Trustees had been willing to permit Ladd's attendance and even voted her the stipend (but not the title) of a fellow, they stopped short of awarding her the doctorate she had earned.

Christine Ladd married Hopkins professor of mathematics, Fabian Franklin, and in 1882 the two of them went to Göttingen and Berlin to study. While carrying on experimental work in Helmholtz's laboratory, Ladd-Franklin developed an innovative theory of color vision. Upon returning to the United States, Fabian Franklin resumed his faculty position at Hopkins until 1895, when he became editor of the *Baltimore News*. The irrepressible Christine led a fight, in 1897, to persuade the Trustees to change their policy respecting the admission of women to Hopkins. She received a polite letter from Gilman stating that it was "inexpedient, at the present time, to take up the question submitted to [the Trustees]."

Christine Ladd-Franklin became the first woman in the Hopkins Faculty of Philosophy (Arts and Sciences), despite the reluctance of the Trustees to change their policy regarding women students and their refusal to grant her the degree she had earned. She was Lecturer in Logic and Psychology at Hopkins from 1904 to 1909 and spent the rest of her academic career at Columbia. Ladd-Franklin finally collected her forty-four year overdue doctorate on February 22, 1926, at the University's Half-Century Celebration. Anne Kinsolving, *Sun* columnist, observed, "Is Johns Hopkins Univer-



Christine Ladd-Franklin was the first woman to earn a degree (1882) and join the Faculty of Philosophy at Hopkins (1904-1909). Photo courtesy of Special Collections, Vassar College Libraries, Poughkeepsie, NY.

sity now conferring an honor upon Mrs. Christine Ladd-Franklin, or is Mrs. Christine Ladd-Franklin conferring an honor on Johns Hopkins University?"

The first woman actually to receive a Hopkins degree of any kind was Florence Bascom. Both parents had nurtured her intellectual development. (Her father taught philosophy at Williams College and later instituted coeducation at the University of Wisconsin, where he was president.) Bascom was a brilliant student, especially in the sciences. She earned three bachelor's degrees at the University of Wisconsin and continued there, taking her M.A. in Geology in 1887. At that time, microscopic study of minerals was in its infancy, and there were no textbooks; yet Bascom mastered the subject and made it her specialty.

In 1891, Bascom sought admission to Hopkins. The Dean of the Faculty, Edward H. Griffin, was a friend of her father's and pleaded her case before the faculty and Trustees, who allowed Bascom to attend lectures and use the laboratory. She was not enrolled as a student on the official register (which at least had the benefit of exempting her from tuition) and was barred from competing for scholarships or fellowships. On December 4, 1892, the Board of University Studies unanimously recommended to admit Bascom to the doctorate, and the Trustees approved the recommendation on June 1, 1893. After completing her dissertation on volcanic formations in South Mountain, Maryland, she was awarded her degree on June 13, 1893.

Bascom took a position as associate professor at Ohio State University and then went on to found Bryn Mawr College's Department of Geology, which flourished under her leadership for thirty-three years. She was the first woman to be elected a fellow, councilor and vice president of the Geological Society of America and was also the first woman to serve on the U.S. Geological Survey.

THE DECISION to grant a degree to Bascom was probably influenced by another decision made six months earlier. The Trustees had accepted a bequest that enabled them to open a school of medicine on condition that it accept qualified women on an equal basis with men. The eagerness of Gilman and the Trustees to establish the school overrode their solicitous protection of young ladies. Weakness in the new University's finances opened a window of opportunity for women.

Johns Hopkins had left most of his fortune to the University in the form of Baltimore and Ohio Railroad stock. In 1886, the Railroad began a serious decline and, by 1888, no dividends were paid, leaving the University almost without income. Friends of the University raised an emergency fund, which kept Hopkins solvent but hardly allowed for the addition of a new school. On May 2, 1890, M. Carey Thomas and three other Trustees' daughters—Mary Elizabeth Garrett, Mary Gwinn, and Elizabeth King—formed the Women's Fund Committee to raise a sum of money sufficient to establish the School of Medicine. The Committee insisted not only on the

**Click here to view photograph
of Florence Bascom**

*In 1893, geologist Florence Bascom
became the first woman to be awarded
the Ph.D. at Hopkins.*

**Click here to view photograph
of the Women's Fund Committee**

*The nucleus of the Women's Fund Committee consisted
of five women, four of them Trustees' daughters.*

*Surrounding Mary Elizabeth Garrett are
(clockwise, starting at bottom left),
Elizabeth King, Julia Rogers, Mary Gwinn,
and M. Carey Thomas.*

admission of women but also on standards so high that they were to change the course of medical education in this country.

Mary Elizabeth Garrett had tried a similar tactic in March 1887, offering the University \$35,000 a year and necessary buildings to establish a technical school at Johns Hopkins's Clifton estate, provided the University be open to both sexes in all its departments. The Trustees found this offer unpalatable and declined it not only because of their reluctance to admit women but also because of their resolve not to relocate to Clifton or to turn from pure to applied science. What the Women's Fund Committee proposed ultimately proved more tempting.

The Women's Fund Committee set up fifteen regional committees, which included such noteworthy and influential women as Mrs. Benjamin Harrison, Mrs. Grover Cleveland, Dr. Emily Blackwell, Julia Ward Howe, Sarah Orne Jewett, Alice Longfellow, Clara Barton, Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell, and Mrs. J. Pierpont Morgan; the list of Baltimore Committee members reads like a page out of the social register and includes the names of many wives and daughters of Hopkins faculty and benefactors.

In less than a year the Women's Fund Campaign had raised more than \$100,000 toward the \$500,000 needed to endow the School of Medicine. The fund grew, but fell short until December 22, 1892, when Mary Elizabeth Garrett gave the Trustees a surprise Christmas gift. She contributed the full \$306,977 needed to bring the endowment to half a million dollars; this was in

addition to her previous donation of \$47,787. When the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine opened its doors on October 2, 1893, three of the eighteen students were women. One of the School's earliest women students was perhaps one of its most famous—Gertrude Stein, who studied medicine at Hopkins from 1897 to 1902 but took no degree.

*F*ROM THE BEGINNING, women attended the numerous non-credit courses and public lectures offered by Hopkins and visiting faculty. The first of these was H. Newell Martin's Saturday teachers' course in physiology, which he began teaching in 1877. It is impossible to determine how many women attended these informal courses, which led to no degree, because the students generally did not register. Some early photographs of geological expeditions, however, reveal that many women took advantage of this limited opportunity to gain the benefits—if not the formal trappings—of a Hopkins education. As it became apparent that adults in the Baltimore community, particularly teachers, looked to Hopkins for part-time education, the College Courses for Teachers were

As early as 1877, women were admitted to special noncredit courses, such as the Teachers' Scientific Course.

Here pictured is a geology field trip in Green Spring Valley, April 22, 1899.

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[Click here to view photograph of early Hopkins library](#)

Within a few years of their admission to the graduate programs in 1907, women became a more familiar sight in Hopkins libraries and laboratories.

established in 1909; these were coeducational from their inception and led to the Bachelor of Science degree. Along with other part-time programs, the College Courses for Teachers evolved into what is now the School of Continuing Studies.

FOURTEEN YEARS ELAPSED after the establishment of the School of Medicine before a policy change admitted women to the graduate programs of the Hopkins Faculty of Philosophy. The opening of the Woman's College of Baltimore (Goucher) in 1888, with a curriculum closely patterned after that of Hopkins, provided the Trustees with a solution to the problem of women seeking undergraduate admission. Yet the same argument could not be made for the availability of graduate education in the Baltimore area. Yale, Brown, Columbia, and Harvard admitted women to graduate study in the 1890s, while Hopkins, usually the pioneer, trailed behind.

Finally, on April 1, 1907, the Trustees approved the recommendation of Academic Council "that women who have taken the baccalaureate degree at institutions of good standing be admitted to graduate courses in this University, provided there is no objection on the part of the instructors concerned." Three women graduate students entered in the autumn of 1907, and the first four women officially to take Hopkins doctorates did so on June 13, 1911. Their fields were Chemistry, Geology, German and Mathematics.

These first women graduate students did not confine themselves to traditionally feminine fields, such as the

humanities and education. During the first fifteen years, the greatest number of doctorates awarded to women was in Psychology (15, or 19%), followed by Mathematics (8, or 10%); over a third of the women took their degrees in the natural, physical or quantitative sciences. They also went on to prove their merits after graduation; of the sixty women who took Ph.D.s in the first thirteen years (1911-1924), seventy percent pursued academic careers.

ONCE WOMEN WERE ADMITTED to the graduate programs, the next obstacle to surmount was representation on the Hopkins faculties. Women joined the all-male ranks slowly. Julia Anna Gardner became the second woman faculty member in the Faculty of Philosophy (after Christine Ladd-Franklin). Dr. Gardner was a geologist who had been among that first group of women to receive the doctorate in 1911; she served as an Assistant in Paleontology from 1911 until 1917 and went on to work for the U.S. Geological Survey. The Medical School had been quicker to appoint women (often its own graduates) to the faculty, although they usually held low ranks, such as Assistant or Instructor. In 1898, Elizabeth Hurdon was made Assistant in Gynecology, followed by Florence R. Sabin (M.D. 1900), who became Assistant in Anatomy in 1902. Working her way up through the ranks, Sabin was appointed the first woman Professor in the School of Medicine in 1917. A statue of Dr. Sabin stands in the gallery at the U.S. Capitol, testimony to her contributions to the field of medicine.

**[Click here to view photograph
of Florence Bamberger](#)**

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Florence Bamberger, Professor of Education, became the first woman to be appointed a full professor, in 1924.

Once the College Courses for Teachers were established in 1909, more faculty positions for women opened up at Hopkins, as women were more accepted in the field of education. Opportunities arose also in the School of Hygiene and Public Health. Just a year after the School opened its doors in 1918, women comprised one-third of its faculty, albeit at the lowest ranks.

On March 4, 1924, Florence Eilau Bamberger became the first woman in the Faculty of Philosophy to be appointed a full professor. Dr. Bamberger had joined the faculty in 1916 as an instructor in education. She had taken her bachelor's and master's degrees at Columbia, where she also earned her doctorate in 1922 (studying under John Dewey); she did graduate work at Hopkins as well. While at Columbia, Bamberger had been an active and ardent suffragette and became no less outspoken in expressing and defending her ideas on education. She was a frequent—and sometimes controversial—lecturer to both professional educational associations and community groups. In 1930, she succeeded Dr. Edward F. Buchner as Director of the College for Teachers and Chairman of the Department of Education in the Faculty of Philosophy. She served on the Hopkins faculty until she was made professor emeritus in 1947. Two months after Dr. Bamberger's promotion to full professorship, Buford Jeannette Johnson became Professor of Psychology. These two women were, however, anomalies.

A future Nobel Prize winner was among those women who suffered the effects of faculty hiring dis-

crimination at Hopkins—and at other academic institutions as well. Maria Goeppert Mayer was the victim of nepotism rules (which forbade the employment of both spouses) as much as of sex discrimination. She came to Hopkins in 1930 with her husband, Joseph Mayer, who took up an appointment in the Chemistry Department. Because of his position, the Physics Department was able to offer his wife only a modest assistantship, which allowed her access to the University facilities, a place to work in the Physics Building, and the opportunity to participate in the scientific activities of the University. When Joseph Mayer moved on to Columbia, Maria met with similar professional hardship, and at the University of Chicago a nepotism rule again dictated that Maria could assume only a voluntary faculty position in the Institute for Nuclear Studies. It was not until 1946, at the Argonne National Laboratory, that she assumed a paid half-time position.

At Chicago, Maria Mayer was one of a stellar assembly of physicists and chemists, which included Enrico Fermi, Harold Urey, Willard Libby and Edward Teller. Fermi and Joseph Mayer supported and encouraged her in her search for an explanation of atomic shell structure in terms of the quantum mechanics of the nuclear particles. She published at about the same time as J. Hans D. Jensen, and in 1951 the two began collaboration on further interpretation of this model. It was for this work that they were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1963, making Dr. Maria Goeppert Mayer the first woman residing in America to win a Nobel Prize in Physics, the second woman in history

**[Click here to view photograph
of Buford Jeannette Johnson](#)**

*Buford Jeannette Johnson (Ph.D. 1916)
was the second woman to become a full professor.*

to win the Physics prize, and the third woman to receive the Nobel Prize in a science category.

TWO SCHOOLS AFFILIATED WITH Johns Hopkins in the second half of the twentieth century: the School of Advanced International Studies in 1950 and the Peabody Institute, Conservatory of Music in 1976. From its founding in 1857, Peabody has been coeducational. Women have always been an important part of the student body and faculty. In fact, in 1894 the Peabody Preparatory Department was established by a woman, May Garretson Evans, a Conservatory alumna.

Coeducation at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) was more nominal until recent years. When the School opened in October 1944, more than half of its twenty-three students were women, because the war effort had so depleted the male student population. The percentage of women dropped off drastically right after the war but then steadily increased. In the mid-1960s, a concerted effort to recruit women students began, and between 1961 and 1973, the number of women tripled.

Aside from language instructors and lecturers, SAIS had no women faculty members until 1972, when Ann Hollick (M.A., 1966; Ph.D., Political Science, 1971) became Assistant Professor of American Foreign Policy. She taught courses in international relations, international resource management, and international science and technology policy and also set up the Ocean Policy Project (1972-78). She became an Associate Professor in 1975 and remained on the faculty until 1983.

Joan Nelson organized the Department of Comparative Politics and Modernization and was made its Director in 1978, but she was denied tenure and the rank of professor in 1982. Grace Goodell succeeded her in January 1985 as Director of the program, renamed Social Change and Development, and entered with tenure at the Associate Professor level.

STATISTICS provide some interesting insights into the pattern of women's enrollment in the various Hopkins schools over the years. (A table detailing the percentages of graduate women enrolled in the Schools of Arts and Sciences, Medicine, Hygiene, and Engineering from 1893 to 1986 can be found in Appendix A.) In most of the divisions, the percentage of women remained relatively constant and low in the earliest years, but increased markedly during the First World War, peaking in academic year 1918-19. Presumably, women stepped in to fill the places in the University vacated by the men who joined the armed services. After the war, the percentages decreased, but not to the pre-war level. The percentage of women enrolled in the School of Medicine remained constant—and low—during the 1920s, but, in the Faculty of Philosophy and School of Hygiene, it rose steadily.

Except in the School of Medicine, the Depression years saw a decline in the percentage of women enrolled. If funds were available for higher education, families were more likely to educate sons than daughters. Unfortunately, statistics are unavailable for the period from 1942 through 1946, so it is impossible to

determine what impact the Second World War had on the enrollment of women. In the years immediately following the war, the percentage of women enrolled was about the same as during the 1930s, but it declined in the 1950s, a period when traditional roles for women were being reemphasized. In the Faculty of Philosophy, the percentage of women grew slowly beginning in the late 1950s. In the School of Medicine, however, the slump continued until the late 1960s.

The School of Hygiene is an exception to this pattern of decline followed by slow growth, having had a constant and relatively large enrollment of women from the post-war years until the late 1960s. At this point, the percentage of women grew markedly in all the schools, most likely spurred by the impact of feminism on society in general. In the School of Hygiene, which always admitted a greater percentage of women than either the Faculty of Philosophy or School of Medicine, women began to outnumber men after 1978.

Since engineering has long been a male-dominated field, the School of Engineering differed significantly in its enrollment patterns; it has been the Hopkins di-

vision with the lowest percentages of women enrolled over the years. From the available records, it appears that there were no graduate women in Engineering until 1949–50. From this time until 1967–68, when the School of Engineering merged with the Faculty of Philosophy to become the School of Arts and Sciences, there were never more than seven women enrolled in Engineering in any given year. After the G.W.C. Whiting School of Engineering was established in 1979, the percentage of graduate women enrolled grew significantly.

**Click here to view photograph
of Rachel Carson**

*Rachel Carson, author of
the best-selling and highly-influential book,
Silent Spring, took her M.A. in Biology
at Hopkins in 1932.*

THE WOMEN who did graduate study at Hopkins generally went on to distinguish themselves in academic and other professional careers. One of the best-known of these women was Rachel Carson. Carson took a master's degree in zoology in 1932, and, beginning in 1936, she worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as an aquatic biologist. She combined her

first love—writing—with her fascination with the natural world and published *Under the Sea Wind* in 1941. She followed this with two best-sellers: *The Sea Around Us* (1951) and *Silent Spring* (1962). The latter set off a nationally publicized struggle between the proponents and

opponents of the widespread use of pesticides. The book prompted President Kennedy's Science Advisory Committee to undertake a study of the issue. Carson also appeared before the Senate Committee on Commerce, which was hearing testimony on the Chemical Pesticides Coordination Act and related bills. Rachel Carson was a quiet, mild yet firm crusader, whose efforts eventually led to the banning of DDT and more careful control of pesticides generally. Her work played an important role in catalyzing the environmental movement of the late 1960s.

16 **J**OHNS HOPKINS was founded as—and became famous as—a great graduate university. Undergraduate education always received less attention, and there was even an attempt, in the late 1920s, to eliminate it altogether. Thus, after the founding of Goucher College, the admission of women to undergraduate study at Hopkins was not a pressing issue until the 1960s, when many all-male bastions, such as Harvard, Yale and Princeton, broke with long tradition.

One exceptional woman had taken the Bachelor of Arts degree at Hopkins long before the University officially granted that degree to women. Helena Roselle Long Watts studied mathematics under the New Plan, which allowed precocious students to begin graduate studies after two years of college. Mrs. Watts was unable to complete her graduate program, and, in recognition of her academic work, the University awarded her the B.A. in 1952.

In 1969, a student-faculty-administration committee studied the possibility of undergraduate coeducation and strongly recommended admitting women undergraduates. The committee held that coeducation would increase both the size and the diversity of the pool of qualified applicants (which was biased toward the natural sciences), improve the intellectual and social environment on campus, and eradicate a form of discrimination. On October 29, 1969, the Academic Council concurred with the Committee's recommendation, and the Board of Trustees instituted the new policy with an official resolution on November 10.

President Lincoln Gordon formed a Task Force on Undergraduate Coeducation, consisting of an administrator, a dean, two faculty members and two undergraduates. They were charged with exploring all aspects of coeducation and making specific recommendations. The committee considered such issues as the number of women to be admitted, admissions policies, the impact of coeducation on the collaboration between Hopkins and Goucher, housing arrangements, adjustments in the athletic program and facilities, possible requirements for additional services, and the budgetary consequences of coeducation.

The University immediately began accepting applications for admission from women transfer students, who would live in off-campus apartments, and freshmen in the Baltimore area, who would live at home, since the freshman dormitories could not be adapted for women by the autumn of 1970. There were even a few Baltimore women (e.g., Nancy Chipman and

Click here to view photograph of "girlwatching"

Even as late as 1960, women were enough of a rarity on campus to attract attention.



*In academic year 1971-72,
the first dormitories for freshman women opened.*

Carol Williams) who entered early, for the spring semester of 1970. In September, ninety undergraduate women—twenty-one freshmen and sixty-nine transfer students—broke a ninety-four year old tradition and entered Johns Hopkins.

Within a month of their admission, the women were voicing concerns over the University's intention to postpone renovating the dormitories to accommodate freshman women. The Student Council organized a Convocation on Coeducation to discuss "the social isolation of female undergraduates." In addition to complaining about housing, the women expressed their frustration with the treatment which the male students accorded them. As Rebecca Love said in a *News-Letter* article, "You feel like a cross between Gypsy Rose Lee and Typhoid Mary." Clearly, the University had to address the problems of facilities and the unbalanced male/female ratio.

By November, the Office of Student Affairs had formed a committee, chaired by undergraduate Kathy Matthews, to deal with these issues. The University administration responded by going ahead with construction to adapt Adams and Baker Houses for women students, and the Director of Admissions projected that the proportion of women would increase to twenty-five percent of the next entering class. When the women expressed the need for increased security, an information center and a gynecologist on the infirmary staff, University officials heeded most of their requests. Nevertheless, rather than formulating a long-range plan for a changeover to a completely coedu-

cational university, the administration chose to address problems piecemeal. As Dean George Benton said, "Let's get what we need when we need it."

The undergraduate women used many strategies to improve their quality of life at Hopkins; they circulated petitions and organized a women's group (variously known as the M. Carey Thomas Women's Center or the Feminist Alliance). Ultimately, improvement in the situation for undergraduate women came simply as a result of the gradual increase in their numbers and a consequent normalization of relations between the sexes. The percentage of undergraduate women in the School of Arts and Sciences climbed from 4.7% in 1970-71 to 38.2% in 1985-86; even in the School of Engineering, 22.2% of the undergraduates enrolled were women. (See Appendix B for statistics on undergraduate enrollment, 1970-1986.)

In 1984, a Hopkins fraternity newsletter published an obscene article reflecting a pathological attitude toward women. This outraged sensibilities on campus and spurred the administration to set up an Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women. The seventeen-member group of students, administrators, staff and faculty members spent much of the 1984-85 academic year studying the status of women at Hopkins. The Committee concluded that Hopkins "remains a male institution with an atmosphere that is at best indifferent and at worst hostile to the concerns of women." One of the most serious problems was the under-representation of women on the faculty; in 1984-85, only seven percent of the tenured and tenure-track faculty were

women, as opposed to the sixteen percent average at Hopkins's peer institutions. In addition, women made up three-quarters of the support staff, but few were in senior-level administrative positions. The Committee recommended hiring more women faculty, establishing a day care center and a women's center, and initiating a program to facilitate upward mobility for women on the staff. Various offices within the administration have taken responsibility for addressing these concerns.

Thus, in 1986, as in 1893, 1907 and 1969, the University has reached a turning point. There are opportunities to be seized and positive steps to be taken, so that Hopkins can finally embrace coeducation fully. The time is right for turning the tide and moving into a position of leadership in this field, in keeping with the Hopkins pioneering tradition.

[Click here to view data for Appendix A](#)

[Click here to view data for Appendix B](#)

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