

WELLESLEY MEMORIES:1957-61**PREAMBLE:**

We wanted to create a picture of life at Wellesley during our years there, 1957-61, that reflected not just the memories the three of us shared, but those of other classmates as well. In the absence of an e-mail list from the college for a mass mailing, we reached out to about 30 of our classmates for memories. Some responded, some didn't. We have tried to weave into our narrative the voices of those classmates we heard from. We make no pretense that this is a representative sample and pray the indulgence of any of you who feel the Wellesley we are portraying bears no resemblance to YOUR Wellesley. We hope our narrative will generate your own memories, which we can share at our virtual reunion.

Carolyn Revelle, Isabel Johnston Stewart, Myra Katzen Levenson

Voices:

Abby Huberman Silverman Weiss
Abi Allen Pereira
Anne Farrar
Barbara Hammond Sepenuk
Carolyn Revelle
Connie Mitchell Stroud
Cynthia Kersten Doran
Ellen Read Witmer
Gina (Virginia) Westphal Weinberger
Isabel Johnston Stewart
Jeanette Favrot Peterson
Joan Lamb Ulliot
Judith Goslin Hall
Karen Kilpatrick Shannon
Karyl Amster Maenza
Lynn Kraemer Goldfarb
Marcia Dimond Stein
Mary McConnell Meining
Myra Katzen Levenson
Nancy Palm Felton-Elkins
Pauline Ho Bynum
Polly Rightmire Scoville
Rose Mohr Rubin
Sally Schoenfeld Haver
Virginia Tansey Wilkinson
Willinda McClung McCrea

“Record-Setting Class Arrives at Wellesley”

The headline of an article by Mary Mac Guffie '60 in the Wellesley News for October 3, 1957 stressed the impact of our class on the College.

“Bright green caps dotting the campus, bewildered faces, little groups huddled together—all denote the arrival of another ‘embryonic mass’ to the Wellesley scene, with one important difference from the usual group of freshmen...The class numbers 509 students and sets a record as being Wellesley’s largest group of freshmen. Over two thousand applications were received by the Board of Admission.” Apparently the typical ‘mid-summer melt’ of withdrawals by some admitted students didn’t occur.

According to the College Bulletin for 1956-57, the total student body was “approximately 1,700 young women who bring to the community the cultural, economic and regional diversity of the United States.”

“Public schools educated 54 per cent, and private schools, 40 percent. Six per cent attended both public and preparatory schools. One out of every eight class members is the daughter or granddaughter of a Wellesley alumna. The youngest freshman is 16 years and four months. General Motor scholarships are held by four students, and National Merit scholarships by 15.”

Not mentioned in the article was the religious or ethnic/racial backgrounds of classmates. Though there were no official ‘quotas,’ some believe the College limited the number of entering students who were Jewish; a handful were Asian American, and two were African American/black. The 1956-57 Bulletin states that the College is a “Christian, non-denominational institution.” There were daily services at Chapel, though attendance was voluntary.

The list of College trustees in the Bulletin reflects the east coast WASP tradition: the Board of Trustees, fairly evenly divided between men and women, included a Cabot, Bigelow, Forbes, Elliot, Standish and Rockefeller-

The fee for tuition, room and board in 1957 was \$1900. The 1956-57 Bulletin describes Financial Aid, noting that for most of the 25% of students who receive some sort of financial aid it usually consists of a gift scholarship supplemented by a loan and or work scholarship. (At Wellesley today, nearly 60% of students receive financial aid; the average annual scholarship—that does not need to be repaid—is \$52,000. The fee for tuition, room and board for 2020-21 is \$76,220.)

CAMPUS

The scene that greeted us in the New England fall of 1957 was magical, with red and orange leaves rustling under our feet as we walked to class. Lake Waban sparkled. As fall turned to

winter, the campus became a winter wonderland with crisp cold air and snow dusting the evergreens by the lake.

Connie: *"Freshman year's most tenacious memories are the first snow, which brought all of us southerners out into the night to marvel—combined with our disgust with yet another snowfall in April, a freakish event. There was a cherry tree in the back courtyard of Munger that got very confused and was in full bloom surrounded by drifts."*

The lake features prominently in most of our memories. Joan recalls *"walking around the lake all seasons. Skating in the cove outside Navy, once it froze thick enough...before that, making do with Paramecium Pond."* The campus in a New England spring was glorious. Virginia: *"Springtime, the campus was so beautiful, the rhododendrons so luxurious that I sometimes cut classes to walk through some of the less traveled paths around campus."* Many recall the walk around rustic Lake Waban and the manicured Honeywell estate, with its banks of topiary trees.

FRESHMAN YEAR

Mary writes: *"Wellesley admitted its then largest freshman class ever. If they were not quite ready for all of us, I was more unready to be away from home. I was so homesick that I probably ruined Wellesley for my freshman roommate (who left at the end of the year)..."*

The Wellesley News noted that several incoming freshmen were young for their class. Pauline: *"When I entered Wellesley in the fall of 1957, I was an unformed 16-year-old, who would have greatly benefited from a gap year."* A good number of our classmates felt overwhelmed by the academic rigor. Used to being among the top students in their high school classes, they were dismayed by poor grades on initial tests.

Virginia: *"Coming to Wellesley as a freshman...I felt completely out of my element, not academically, but socially. My classmates were so bright, so confident, and so different from my classmates and friends at home. They came with entirely different experiences. Sophomore year I discovered I was not alone in having felt that way and I began to love the challenging and stimulating atmosphere."*

We found no solace for our angst in the brisk, no-nonsense approach of Freshman Dean Jean McPherrin. Another article in the Wellesley News (September 10, 1957) contained a cheerful welcome from Dean Jean to members of the class of '61, whose names and faces she had conscientiously memorized. But she couldn't remember either a few months later and, despite the box of Kleenex she kept on her desk, she lacked the empathy visitors to her office craved. Myra recalls: *"I don't think she was exactly beloved by our class. I remember that I approached her when I was a Vil Junior about a homesick freshman in our dorm, looking for some way to help this student; but Dean Jean's response was not to offer her a way to be supported at Wellesley but that she should go home instead (which she did.)"*

Virginia remembers *"the extended standing ovation we gave Dean Teresa Frisch at the beginning of our junior year, excited by our new status as juniors and relief from our previous dean."*

All of us remember the posture pictures taken in our first week, when we had to pose in our underpants for a male (?) photographer with no explanation of how the photos were to be used. Virginia: *"I remember hearing that someone at Harvard had gotten hold of our posture pictures and posted them around the Boston Commons."* Though that story may have been apocryphal, the posture pictures taken at several women's colleges later became something of a scandal. Does anyone remember the true details?

Physical Education Classes:

The College required two periods a week of physical education in freshman and sophomore years. Lynn recalls that the introductory class was called Fundamentals of Movement ("Fundies") and that we had to wear a little blue dress with a belt and bloomers as we paraded around with a book on our head to improve our posture. Joan remembers *"getting up early as a freshman to go to a gym and lie on the hard floor while learning to 'relax.' No sleeping allowed!"* That was the same class where, as Karyl recalls, *"we learned how to get in and out of a car in a 'ladylike' manner and how to place one's luggage on the rack above the train or bus seat!"*

Polly recalls a ski class. *"Since there was no snow during our skiing class, flour sacks were placed on a hillside and we had to ski down on them. It was a fairly poor facsimile, but soon thereafter I got to the real slopes."*

Many of us remember the joy of learning to row crew and the leitmotif of the refrain "Catch, two, three, four...Catch, two, three, four" echoing across the lake in the fall.

Connie: *"I probably chose Wellesley because I saw women crewing on Lake Wabon on my tour of colleges and it somehow reminded me of the thrill of classical ballet. I signed up for crew as a phys ed class, but also volunteered for the class boat and seemed to end up out on the lake a lot. I loved the satisfactions of rowing as 'stroke' when we were all pulling together. It was the only team-like sport I ever truly loved."*

Polly: *"For gym [PE] I took up rowing. We had a class team which competed on Lake Waban with the three other classes for some special college celebration. There were many tense moments when we were neck and neck or bow to bow with other boats, but we won the race! Our coxswain was thrown in the lake!"*

Sally: *"I signed up for crew right when I got to Wellesley, figuring where else was I going to get the chance to do this sport? I eventually became not only the captain of my dormitory (Munger) crew team, but the captain of the Wellesley crew for the whole college. I most remember freezing my buns off early in the morning for 6:00 A.M. practice before class."*

Dorms:

Assigned to dorms and roommates freshman year, many established lifelong friendships. Apparently, the administration tried to pair “like with like,” including racial and religious minorities.

Sally: “At one of our periodic reunions, I was talking to my freshman roommate, Debby Bacon. Because I was aware that Wellesley tended to have ‘minorities’ room together (and back in the day, there was a 10% quota of Jews in the Ivy League), I mused to Debby that they must have run out of Jews to put us together in a room. Debby opined, “Did you ever think that they ran out of Quakers?? (Debby was a direct descendent of Sir Francis Bacon, and of course a Quaker.)”

There were three freshman-only dorms near the Washington Street entrance to campus: Navy, Homestead, and Dower. Several classmates remember Dower:

Barbara: “About 30 of us spent freshman year in Dower..., because our class totaling 509 freshmen was larger than could be accommodated in the regular dorms. We were the overflow! Many of us have remained friends ever since...” Anne recalls the prevailing theory that those who applied to the College last were the ones assigned to Dower or Navy.

And Polly also recalls living in Dower: *“In September 1957 some freshmen found they were assigned to live in Dower House. I was one of them...We were a diverse but congenial group. One classmate, small in stature but mighty in talent, played jazz on the piano on the first floor loudly and enthusiastically. It usually put us in a good mood...There was no dining hall in Dower. We had to walk to Freeman nearby to eat our meals, which worked well except in pouring rain, or freezing/snowy weather.”*

Abi remembers meeting her freshman roommate: *“Driving through Wellesley’s serene campus to Pomeroy boded well. My roommate, Florence Martin, was already there and unpacked. The administration had paired us because of our shared Francophone backgrounds, she being a French girl living in Connecticut and I being recently returned from ten years of living in Geneva, Switzerland. We didn’t have many interests in common at the time, but we got along very well.”*

*“She was much better attuned to our peer culture than I was. And she played **bridge**--a lot. In fact, there was frequently a game going on in our room on the little Persian rug between our beds. This was a good thing as it pushed me out of our room to hang with others in the dorm. Amazing how much one learns nights talking and exploring ideas with smart, seeking women from diverse backgrounds and points of view. The friends I made that year have remained friends for life.”*

Sally also recalls bridge games: *“I remember passing groups of girls sitting on the floor of the Munger living room, playing bridge as I was going to class. I decided that bridge must be very addictive, as the girls missed class to continue playing. So, I deliberately never learned to play--to this day!”*

Judith: *"I lived in Freeman in my freshman year, and it was a relatively new dorm at that time. I was really impressed with the Statue of Persephone on the walkway between Freeman and Bates—a touch of ancient classics. It was a relatively modern sculpture, somewhat like a hollow tulip. And the idea was that if you got inside, there would be an important effect on you. I never got up the nerve to climb inside."*

"I was a premed student, so I had many science courses and afternoon lab experiences. What I remember was coming back from my late labs, to find my dormmates playing bridge or lounging around gossiping. I don't think I felt sorry for myself, except that I knew my time was taken with course work that theirs didn't include."

Gina remembers an amusing event: *"Freshman year one of us, (whose name shall be nameless here) decided to test whether the sprinkler system in our dorm (Shafer) really worked. She put a lit match up to the sprinkler in her room and, sure enough, out came the water, and out came the Wellesley Fire Department as well. You can imagine why this incident stayed with me all these years!"*

Several classmates recall cheering the men running in the Boston Marathon on Route 135 as they ran by the quad. (Needless to say, women were not officially permitted to run in that race until 1972.)

SOPHOMORE, JUNIOR AND SENIOR YEARS

Dorms, continued:

In the spring of freshman year, we chose our dorms based on a lottery system. Many of our roommates became friends for life.

Abi: *"I had a low lotto number for the room I would choose for my sophomore year. Carolyn came with me to Severance, where we had a large room with dormer windows and a medieval feel. We played that look up with our décor. I loved that room, and my Pomeroy friends found their way there quite often. I remember long evenings with guitar and serenades by Lizbeth New."*

Mary: *By sophomore year, "It was getting a little better: now I studied and played bridge. We smoked cigarettes and ate a lot of dorm food, especially Sunday evening fudge sundaes..."*

Polly: *"After freshman year, a group of Dowerites moved together to Tower Court East, where we continued to be hallmates for the next three years, eventually ending up on 4th floor east. In the evening we would congregate in the bathroom, sitting on the floor, drinking coffee and smoking, laughing and sharing stories. Around 9 p.m. our classmate across the hall from the bathroom would predictably come in wearing pajamas, hair up in curlers, saying 'Please be quiet. I'm trying to sleep.'" Anne remembers organizing a surprise birthday party in that same bathroom.*

Smoking was quite common among our peers, and we were allowed to smoke in our rooms, where metal waste baskets were required. The Wellesley News (1958-59) had huge cigarette ads and free cigarette samples were available on campus. Lynn recalls bumming cigarettes and that they sold for \$2 a carton. Isabel remembers that seniors gave smoking lessons to underclasswomen in front of the common room mirror on Freeman's second floor.

The **housemothers** in some dorms were nurturing and supportive. Connie, who lived in Munger all four years, observes: *"We were lucky in our house mother, Mrs. Rob, who tactfully made us feel welcome without prying too deeply into our private griefs."* We remember one housemother as an alcoholic and another as a retired advertising executive who sent business-like memos to Severance residents chastising us for small infractions. Others remember tea in the housemother's room.

In an era before cell phones, the student on **Bell Desk** (called "Bells") answered incoming calls—a challenge to answer the one phone for a dorm of 70-90 young woman. She might transfer the call to an extension on our floor—some in smelly broom closets—or announce a visitor. Myra: *"In Pom, if a woman was expecting a blind date, the bell desk person had some sort of code telling us if the man was tall or short—heels or flats."* If we wanted to entertain a male guest in our room it was only possible on Sunday afternoons with the door open and at least one foot on the floor (or so we remember).

We had to sign out at the Bell Desk to leave campus, and parietal rules meant we had to be back in the dorm by 10 p.m. on weeknights or by midnight on weekends.

Myra: *"Curfews were totally new to me. Coming from public school, I had great deal of freedom at home in terms of how late I could stay out—it just depended on the event I was attending. I was surprised to hear some of the students who had come to Wellesley from boarding schools describe how much more freedom they had at Wellesley. I certainly didn't feel that way!"*

Polly: *"On one weekend, a classmate and I went to Vermont to ski. We were supposed to sign in the book at the dorm by midnight on our return or get in trouble. As we drove back, we were engulfed by a huge snowstorm, and had to spend a few hours sleeping on a friend's floor...When we arrived at Tower around 3 a.m., we wrote 12:00 a.m. next to our names. The next day, my conscience bothered me, and with my classmate's consent, we confessed the true time to the powers that be. We went before a discipline committee and as a result were grounded for a few weekends. We remained friends."*

Carolyn had a similar experience. *"Returning from California after spring vacation junior year, my boyfriend (future husband) met the plane, which was an hour or two late. A stop for gas on the way back to Wellesley meant that I arrived at the dorm after midnight. I too was grounded for several weekends because, in making my plane reservation, I 'hadn't provided the extra time that a prudent adult should have allowed.' My mother had made that reservation."*

The preferred color scheme for halls and bedrooms was institutional brown, like the “mystery” meat served in the dining room on Sundays. No choice of vegetarian or salad bar for us, though there may have been fish on Fridays, reflecting traditions in Irish Catholic Boston.

Judith: *“I was a scholarship student, and so I worked at the buffet line serving food on designated days. What I really remember about meals was after dinner coffee. I think we were supposed to be learning good manners and to be a gracious hostess!”*

To reinforce “gracious living,” tea was served in the dorm living rooms each week around 4 p.m. Anne remembers the Tower Court housemother, in the great hall adorned with two giant Ming vases donated by Mei-ling Soong, seated at the end of a long library table serving tea from a silver service, with maids bringing in plates of cookies on silver platters. She recalls *“We’d grab some cookies and go back to sitting on the floor—so much for gracious living!”* Others remember pocketing extra cookies to take back to our rooms to study.

Abby: *“I loved Severance Hall, where I lived for three of our four years. Four of us who became lifelong friends started out in dank basement rooms and ended up senior year with rooms on the lake. I have vivid memories of the walk from the Library, along the Lake to the back door of Severance. It was spectacularly beautiful during every season and that walk was my mental health/meditation/fresh air break almost every day.”*

Dress: Though Myra remembers wearing blue “dungarees,” many girls wore pleated skirts and wool sweaters; the East coast girls wore Shetland sweaters with monograms and little gold circle pins.

Connie: *“Coming from Georgia, I was aware of differences in style. All the girls at Wellesley were into camel hair coats, khaki raincoats and Harvard or MIT scarves. Though I would never have worn wool Bermuda shorts in Atlanta, they seemed the bee’s knees in Munger in the fall of 1957. They were a subtle tweed from Peck and Peck in Atlanta. I didn’t manage to acquire a circle pin until sophomore year, and it was white gold instead of yellow. I wore my camel hair coat for a good decade.”*

Abby: *“Another memory is the civility of sit-down dinners. I recall skirts were required. And I remember quickly donning my uniform—a pleated skirt, an oxford cloth shirt with only the collar ironed and a Shetland sweater to cover the lazy laundering. And the good and sometimes irreverent conversation.”* Anne remembers that when professors came to dinner in Tower Court, she and her friends would put on skirts over their sweatpants.

Lynn recalls paying someone to wash and iron her shirts, while Myra sent her dirty clothes home to West Hartford in a special mailing box for the first few months of freshman year. Local dry cleaners in Wellesley advertised storage boxes to keep winter clothes over the summer. (Wellesley News 1958-59)

ACADEMICS

We lined up to buy our textbooks at Hathaway House, the charming cottage that served as the College bookstore across Central Street from the main campus entrance. We walked or cycled to classes on the academic quad (Green, Founders, Pendleton, the new Jewett art building that opened in October 1958 or to Sage, the Science Building. Joan recalls *"the El Table - a great place to gather, talk, eat between classes."* Judith: *"To make spending money, I worked in a little shop in the basement of Founders Hall. I would have two-hour shifts so I would have the in-between class rush. We sold everything from paper to ice cream. It could be totally hectic and then it would be totally deserted in between. I remember trying to study in those few minutes."*

Virginia recalls *"the long uphill walk home from the library to the Quad at night carrying a pile of books and notebooks. Fortunately, the 'Well' was still open and not too far away for ice cream or other snacks."*

Classes our freshman year met three times a week, including Saturday mornings. Saturday classes were eliminated our sophomore year, and most classes then met for longer periods twice a week. At the end of each semester, a ceremony in Chapel that began with the stirring Jeremiah Clark's Trumpet Voluntary recognized the students who had achieved honor grades. Unfortunately, exams for the fall semester were given AFTER Christmas vacation. Thus, we lugged textbooks home on the train or airplane and couldn't really enjoy the vacation because of the dread exams looming over us.

Some of us remember staying up all night to finish our term papers, typing in the dorm living room in order not to disturb our roommates. We typed our papers on portable typewriters and struggled to correct typos with ink erasers that tore the page, or we used 'corrasable bond' that smudged. Myra recalls paying a fellow student \$1 a page to type her papers. The 1956-57 Bulletin stated that "Admission credit is not given for courses in typewriting although this skill is helpful to the college student and the Board of Admissions urges candidates to learn to typewrite in secondary school or during the summer vacation." Of course, we didn't really want to become too proficient at typing for fear of being confined to secretarial roles in our future life.

In fact, Abi deliberately chose not to learn typing for that reason. Describing her preferred writing mode, she recalled: *"My choice of workspace was my bed. The night before a paper was due, I would set up my spot, review the notes I had taken during the week while pondering the assignment, and start writing long hand very carefully and legibly. A longtime woman reporter friend of my parents had advised me early on not to learn to type 'because that is what your boss will have you do.' I took her advice seriously. Thankfully my professors accepted my work."*

The 1956-57 Bulletin describes the College's educational philosophy: "Wellesley believes that the study of the liberal arts develops perspective and intellectual strength for the endeavors of a lifetime. It seeks to give to the student broad knowledge of her cultural heritage and to develop her competence in and respect for disciplined honest thinking."

As part of this philosophy, English 100 was required of all Freshman. Since few of our correspondents commented on Freshman English, it was perhaps not memorable for most of us. Virginia, Abi, and Carolyn had the same instructor, a young woman named Miss Paulus. She accused Abi of plagiarizing her paper because it was so professional, and Abi had to bring in her notes before she gave her the A grade she deserved. Virginia remembers that Miss Paulus was a recent graduate of Radcliffe and we may have been her first teaching assignment. *"What stood out in her class was an account of the Dreyfus case, a shocking eye-opener for many of us, especially those of us in advanced French who had been taught to revere the French."* For her paper on Dreyfus, Carolyn had to get special permission to access documents in the male-only Lamont Library at Harvard.

In addition to freshman English 100 and Biblical History 104 sophomore year, and two years of P.E., we had to fulfill distribution requirements. We mastered French or German verbs for our language requirement, or some read Balzac or Thomas Mann in the original. We tramped the local hills to learn about "drumlins" for a geology course or grew plants in the greenhouse for a course in Botany. Virginia: *"We watched a teacher dissect a guinea pig, describing the male body parts, when suddenly she discovered he was a she!"*

Most of us remember the required Biblical History 104 course, which we may have resented but later decided *"was one of the most valuable courses we had had."* (Virginia) We learned about the Old Testament in the fall semester and New Testament writers in the spring from memorable teachers: Mr. Lacheman, Mr. Gale, Miss Mowry, and the chairman Mr. Denbeaux. Joan remembers Mr. Lacheman *"'proved' a point to us by showing us a clay tablet. We explained that we couldn't read cuneiform."* She also remembers that Mr. Denbeaux frequented the El Table accompanied by his dog.

Nancy recalls: *"Although I had read and not understood the Bible before I came to Wellesley and had been very involved in our local United Church of Christ, I truly had no idea how it was authored and why it was so revered by Christians and Jews. Its teachings were the basis or rudder of my life at that time, but I never thought I'd learn more about it. The introductory Biblical History course was important since it leveled the playing field for religious discussions, which we did have on occasion in our dorm rooms. Ever since that initial intellectual approach to the Bible and its origins, I have kept in the recesses of my aging brain an understanding of who wrote it, and the circumstances surrounding the various versions and compilations. As a result, I have been a more informed reader and interpreter of Biblical verses and customs than many people, thanks initially to Biblical History and Fred Denbeaux."*

Cynthia became a Biblical History major. *"I had been told that the founder of Wellesley, Henry Fowle Durant, believed that one wasn't educated unless [one] knew the Bible. Admittedly, classroom discussions were certainly lively, but what I remember most were the discussions that later took place around the lunch table. Because we each had a different professor, those debates were even more spirited."*

“Although I’m sure virtually none of the members of the Class of 1961 intended to major in Bible when we enrolled—it was not the most practical major--there were more than 30 of us. Although I wound up earning a graduate degree in teaching history, I’ve always assumed that my Bible major helped me get my teaching job at Oregon Episcopal School. Teaching American History was my primary assignment, but I was also responsible for teaching Religion courses. Those Bible courses certainly came in handy.”

Perhaps the most oft-remembered course was History of Art 100. Karen recalls: *“My freshman year, I fell in love with Art History 100, because, in addition to excellent staff, Wellesley was renowned for its innovative teaching techniques. In addition to the large lecture halls and small discussion groups, we were assigned a lab, where we came to better understand the period presented in lectures by creating our own work ‘in the style of’ say, a medieval Madonna painted with egg yolk tempera on a small piece of wood.”*

Nancy says *“I loved the laboratory. I carved a brick, painted a seagull on a tray, made an architectural plan for a temple, and tried drawing with pastels. Ever since then I have been interested in picking up art courses wherever I am. I had the confidence and interest to try art on my own terms.”*

Georgia too was impressed by the innovative teaching techniques: *“I still remember from Art History 100 Mr. McAndrew's description of the Byzantine Church Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, Turkey. In addition to showing slides of the ornamental details, he explained its basic structure, the pendentive dome, using a pink grapefruit! First, he cut the grapefruit in half, then took one half with the now flat side down, and sliced a piece off the outside, rotated the grapefruit 1/4 way around, cut again, until he had made four cuts. The half-grapefruit now had a square base, narrow "columns" with triangular tops (points down) connecting the square base to the round dome.”*

The teaching staff’s creative approach elicited equal imagination on the part of students. Abby: *“Julia, Cindy, Karen and I took the famous Wellesley Art History 100 class together. During our study session for the midterm exams, we posed—pantomime style—to quiz each other on famous paintings. Karen posing for French Baroque period paintings—think Poussin and Fragonard—gave us some very funny memories.”*

Pauline: *“When I think of Wellesley, I think immediately of the excitement I felt, taking the famous introductory Art History course. The thrill of learning about Botticelli and then venturing to the Gardner Museum to see one of his paintings. And wandering through the Busch Reisinger Museum where I once found myself stranded after closing hours because I was in the rest room and didn’t hear the bell. I emerged into a dark museum, only to hear voices and then glorious organ music--most likely E. Power Biggs playing on one of the museum’s famous organs.”*

“As part of my scholarship, I worked a few hours in the art history department office, cleaning slides as well as showing slides for the art history faculty—always amused by how each would

request a slide change— ‘please,’ ‘next’ or ‘tap’ with the pointer. And it was Dean Frisch whose art of the Far East course opened my eyes to Chinese art and history.”

Karen also recalls the production side of the slide lectures: “Another teaching innovation was the kind of slides projected on the screen during lectures. My scholarship job was to work this big, clunky, noisy projector twice a week for another class. I can still feel handling those precious thick, 4” glass squares carefully so as not to leave any fingerprints. When the wooden box of slides was handed to me before each class, my heart would be pounding in my ears. The slides were arranged and marked by the professor to indicate a single or a comparison, so my attention could not be focused on the art, rather on nervously waiting for the “next, please,” on not ruining the class and humiliating myself. Oh, to sit in on an art history class today, 60 years later, to see what has replaced that projector and those slides!”

For Willinda, the impact of Art History 100 has also lasted a lifetime: “I remember sitting on one of those canvas stools in front of Vermeer’s ‘The Concert’ at the Gardner Museum one Saturday morning in 1958. It was my first Vermeer experience. The work enchanted me, and I knew that the paper I was planning to write about it for Art 100 was going to be splendid. To this day I don’t remember a thing about the paper, but I do remember the desolation I felt in 1990 when I read that the Vermeer had been stolen from the museum, along with 12 other paintings. Although the theft happened 32 years after my personal Saturday morning with ‘The Concert,’ the emotional bond I still felt with that painting and with all the Vermeers I had subsequently viewed made my heart pound.”

History of Music 101 was another survey course with lasting impact, as Nancy recalls. Before coming to Wellesley, she had studied and played multiple instruments and sung choral music for many years. “But I knew nothing about music! Just how to read notes and play instruments. This first music history course I loved! I talked about music with my roommate, Happy Craven (Fernandez), and we argued whether we preferred Bach or Beethoven, or atonal music, Gregorian chant, or Debussy. I had an extensive record collection and while others down the hall were listening to current pop or French singers, I listened to piano concertos, classical music, and cello soloists. The knowledge I gained in Music 101 has enriched my life and understanding of music ever since.”

We remember not only the impact of certain classes but equally of the **professors** who taught them. The 1956-57 Bulletin lists the following gender distribution among the faculty members: [numbers approximate]: Professors: 12 men, 22 women; Associate Professors: 14 men, 22 women; Assistant Professors: 22 men and 14 women; Instructors 21 men and 44 women, and Lecturers: 6 men and 12 women. Among the women, about 50% of the Professors had received their B.A. degrees from Wellesley or other seven sister colleges; 31% of the Associate Professors; 19% of the Assistant Professors; 6% of the instructors.

Abi: “Speaking of professors, what an engaging, stimulating bunch of women I had the privilege of being exposed to. Senorita Breton allowed me to take a class more advanced than I was qualified to take and advised me on extra resources to use to help me catch up.” And I

remember “my philosophy and English professors whose words come back to me many times, but not their names.”

Some who taught us were established scholars, others just starting out on what became distinguished careers, like the poet David Ferry, art historian Curtis Shell, or economists Carolyn Shaw Bell and Marshall Goldman.

One of the oft noted benefits of a college the size of Wellesley is that students got to know their professors as human beings. Marcia wrote of her long friendship with Mr. Goldman:

“I was in the first Economics 101 class Professor Marshall Goldman ever taught. He was only a graduate student then, not much older than we were in 1957. Maybe that is why he seemed so accessible. He was finding his way at the front of the classroom, often stammering, dropping his chalk, blurting out thoughts like his astonishment that some women were knitting in class rather than taking notes. After all, we were the chosen ones, the best and brightest. We had to be. We got into Wellesley. Why, we were just like his wife who was getting a PhD in Chinese Intellectual History!”

“I must have taken every class Mr. Goldman gave. I invited him to Wednesday faculty dinners and frequently stayed after class to chat about whatever we were studying, particularly if it had to do with Russia. My grades were consistently stellar because I loved what I was learning.”

“Things suddenly changed in December 1959 when I had a “boyfriend crisis” so devastating I did not complete a final paper in any of my classes, including his. He called me and asked what was happening in my life. I told him the truth with such tears he offered to call every faculty person whose class I was taking. He pleaded my case and got extensions from each one...”

“He even asked me to babysit for his two young children, an idea I liked. The Goldmans lived right next to campus so I could walk over. He greeted me at the front door, took me to see his two sleeping toddlers and hurried me into the kitchen where he took a can of tuna down from the shelf and started to open it. I can still hear the fizz it made. “You know”, he said, “I would rather have a can of tuna for dinner and an interesting wife to come home to than a full-course home cooked meal served by someone with nothing to say.” Suddenly a light bulb went on in my head. “I can get a cute guy like this and never have to cook.”

Marcia kept up a life-long friendship with Professor Goldman, and both Lynn and Rose maintained a friendship with Economics Professor Carolyn Shaw Bell.

Professor Schwarz invited German history majors to Sunday lunch at his home. (His wife was reputed to be a Hapsburg.) Virginia and Carolyn were invited to the home of our European history professor Gabriel Jackson. Virginia recalls inviting him to dinner in Shafer, and Carolyn maintained a friendship with him over subsequent decades.

Virginia remembers a seminar she attended one afternoon a week at the home of Professor E. Faye Wilson—a medievalist who was researching medieval manuscripts to distinguish one monk from another by the different pen-prickings on the vellum. *“There were fewer than ten of us. We had all these primary sources to study and most of the classes had one of us presenting a paper relevant to the current reading. I have wonderful memories of that class.”*

Others remember eagle-eyed Clare Zimmerman in psychology, married to the laid-back Owen Stratton in political science or the demanding Margaret Ball, also in poli sci, where you had to read the daily New York Times and come to class prepared because she might call on you without warning. Or historian Edward Gulick, who taught Chinese History; if you got behind in your reading, you didn’t recognize that the Guming Dong he was talking about in class was the same as the Quo Min Tang in the textbook.

Ellen, who currently teaches Chinese literature at Wellesley, notes that the Chinese language was not taught at Wellesley in our era. She did discover Russian language and history as an undergraduate through “Mrs. Berlin’s class on Russian history. Mrs. Berlin made Russia and its history seem like an exciting part of world history. After taking her course I also began studying Russian, under Mrs. Lynch, a wonderful language teacher.”

By junior year, we had chosen our major field of concentration. A rough count from our senior yearbook (Legenda) shows the emphasis on the humanities, i.e., distribution categories I and II: around 80 of us majored in English, over 50 in history, 30 in art history, 25 in economics, 25 in Biblical History, 22 in French, and 23 in political science; smaller numbers in other fields within those categories include Music 10, philosophy 8, sociology/anthropology 8, Greek 5, German 4, classical archeology 1, Italian 1, Latin 1. Distribution III: psychology 20, zoology 15, mathematics 12, botany 7, chemistry 7, physics 6, geography 6, geology 4, astronomy 2.

In the spring of our senior year, we had to take a comprehensive General Exam on our major. The 1956-57 Bulletin describes that exam as “intended to test the accuracy, extent, and depth of a student’s knowledge of one subject (her field); her intellectual initiative and independence in analyzing, organizing, and relating the material of that subject; her knowledge of and ability to apply leading ideas met in that subject.” The General Exam was scheduled after spring break—another way to ruin a perfectly good vacation! We petitioned (unsuccessfully?) to have Generals given before the break.

Whatever our major, the love of learning was foundational. We remember not only our classes and specific professors but the joy of studying, in our rooms or in the library with its modern addition overlooking the pond and its tinkling fountain.

Anne recalls the effect on her life of fellow students and Wellesley’s faculty: *“I arrived at Wellesley completely innocent. A blond Southern California girl with almost no education from a public school. Intelligent, yes, but I had always pretended I wasn’t in high school. All these sophisticated and educated women (girls?) amazed me. I was in awe and immediately saw new horizons. Learning, thinking, pondering, disputing, discussing, sharing. I never caught up as a*

student, but my life was completely changed. What became important to me then has been important to me all the rest of my life."

"I remember walking back across the meadow to our freshman dorm discussing Kant and Professor Rorty's class with a few others from our dorm. I remember sitting around on the floor and on beds in a larger bedroom discussing classes, politics, current events. I remember walking at night with the crisscross of streetlights glistening on wet pavement. I remember the required Religion course and how amazed I was to find out the Bible had a real historical context."

"In retrospect I think I know why I had brilliant women math and physics professors -- perhaps because the jobs weren't so available elsewhere for women. Ironically, we therefore had the privilege of such amazing professors."

Jeanette: *"At our last reunion, Nan spoke to our class in the living room of Tower Court and she cited a passage from Michel de Montaigne [16th c] that has stayed with me. From his essay "On Solitude," Montaigne argues for the need to 'set aside a room just for ourselves.' If I remember correctly, Nan went on to suggest that this 'room' could be a physical or mental space."*

"At Wellesley I profited from two kinds of 'rooms,' spaces that were both solitary and collective. Having come from a family of five, Wellesley provided me with the space Montaigne seems to have had in mind, quiet and protected, perfect for self-reflection. I experienced the gift of solitude in our new, glass-walled library with its magnificent views of the lake; those hours established my lifelong love affair with libraries and old books."

"But it was in the collective spaces I shared with Wellesley classmates that I discovered the rewards of collaboration. Two experiences in particular come to mind. While in the Wellesley Widows singing group, and under the keen ear of our leader, Barbara Wesp, I learned to enjoy beauty created in unison and the abiding friendships that are forged in a joint endeavor."

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"A second, more challenging collaborative venture was midwifing the Junior Show, 'The Minstrel's Tale. Over the months of production, I came to appreciate firsthand the depth and diversity of talent in our class: Sue Gilmore's comic gifts, Kathy Kitch's musicianship, Helen Tyson's miraculous mass-cooking, Naomi Weisstein's sharp wit and Tizzie Goddard's able diplomacy, to name only a few on our brilliant team."

'Both kinds of spaces at Wellesley deeply impacted my life. Having a room of one's own nourishes the soul, but within the interactive spaces of group activities, lifetime values were alloyed that have helped me live more humanely."

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Junior Show is one of the most indelible memories for many in our class, especially Sue Gilmore belting out "I am a knight who is still in flower" and Jackie Jones seductive solo.

Carolyn hopes her memory of Saturday night's performance escaped notice. *"As the widow in the procession of pilgrims, along with "daughters" Cindy Kersten and Dagmar Paden, I had a solo. After the Friday performance, I joined cast members and guests gathered in the chilly fall night around a bonfire to drink red wine in a field across from campus. And woke up Saturday morning with no voice. Two of the show's producers, who had access to illicit Bourbon kept in perfume bottles, appeared in my room with an atomizer filled with Bourbon, honey and lemon juice. They instructed me to spray my vocal cords throughout the day. I followed their orders—going a step further and spiking some hot lemonade from the Well with the delicious elixir, which I drank between acts. I was able to belt out my solo and the chorus "Drink, drink, drink" with such gusto that my big date for Saturday night was appalled and never asked me out again."*

Barnswallows and Shakespeare Society offered opportunities for other thespian activities: During our senior year Barnswallows produced Shaw's 'Arms and the Man,' Ibsen's 'Hedda Gabler,' Sophocles 'Trachinian Women,' Congreve's 'Way of the World.' Shakespeare Society produced 'A Mid Summers Night's Dream' during our junior year, as well as providing a welcoming a gathering place away from the dorm. Several classmates enjoyed similar social spaces in the "societies" near the lake.

There were a whole range of other extracurricular activities that offered diversion from studies: The singing groups Tupelos, Widows, Blue Notes; and Choir, Carillon and Chamber Music; Art Club, Dance Club, AA (athletics), Outing Club, Swim Club; journalism and literary groups Wellesley News (Pat Daily editor), Legenda (editor Joan Marx), Keynote and Press Board; Chapel, Forum (and its subsidiaries Young Democrats, Young Republicans, and International Relations Club) and Service Organization. Also, Cos Club, Psychology, and language groups Slavic Society, Classical Club, Centre Francais, German Corridor, and Circolo Italiano.

Isabel recalls French Corridor: *"Instead of practicing French verb forms of an evening on the French Corridor with my 'copains' in Tower, it was much more fun to swoon over whispered stories of M. Carlo Francois' purported adventures in the Resistance during World War II."*

These organizations and others—Vil Juniors, Dorm Presidents, College Government Association—gave opportunities for leadership that we would not have had at a co-ed college.

All of us have memories of Wellesley traditions: Step singing on the Chapel steps, Hoop rolling for seniors (though no one remembers who won), and Tree Day. We elected five attractive women to descend the hill below Jewett Art Center in flowing gowns, including Judith Turner as "Queen," with Jeanette, Isabel, Dottie Sparks and Margaret Stander as members of her Court. Sophomore Father's Day—or Parents' Day-- was another tradition. Pauline adds a unique perspective on that event:

"Having spent much of my life, most of the time comfortably, in a very white environment, it was at Wellesley I formed my first close friendship with another Chinese woman, Alice Huang. I still remember clearly how pleased I was to see our mothers, both dressed in Chinese -style chi

pao, sitting together chatting away during what must have been Sophomore Parents' Weekend. The irony is of course we became friends because of Nancy Stearns—our mutual friend. Today, we probably would have met because of heightened Asian-American consciousness on campus."

For some students, "extracurricular activities" took them away from the campus into the town of Wellesley. Judith recalls attending the Congregational church. *"My father was a Congregational Minister, so I felt some obligation to be involved in the church, which I actually really liked because it took me off campus. I helped with teaching Sunday School. One of the memorable sessions was a group of 7 or 8-year-old on a Sunday morning. We were talking about the Reformation and Martin Luther's 95 theses that he had tacked to the door of his church. One of the little boys says "95 thesis? My father is having trouble with his!" I of course totally cracked up, but the poor 7-year-old didn't really appreciate the irony."*

In addition to churches, the attractions in the town included a branch of Filenes and some very nice dress shops, a restaurant or two (Connie recalls *"eating buttery English muffins in a restaurant on Main Street {Howard Johnson's?}"*), a Woolworths, a bank, and of course Hathaway House.

Some of us managed to get into Boston to enjoy the rich cultural life of that city: the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Sarah Caldwell's operas and the various museums. Mary: *"Without cars or easy transportation, only the most determined made good use of Boston and other area attractions. I did not."* It was sometime during our tenure that the 'T' was extended to the Riverside station in Newton; this made it easier for us to access Boston even though we had to take a bus to the station.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

Considering the emphasis on "health and wellness" at today's college campuses, the provisions for this aspect of our lives were inadequate. We went to Stillman Infirmary on the edge of campus near Bates Freeman if we got sick. The 1956-57 Bulletin discusses Health: *"The College emphasizes preventive medicine. The services of four college physicians, one of whom is a psychiatrist, are available to students without charge. The infirmary, which is in the charge of the Resident Physician, consists of an outpatient clinic, a modern 29-bed hospital, and a residence wing for physicians and nurses. When a student is admitted as a bed patient, a routine notice is sent to her parents."*

In our Freshman year, the campus was hit by the Asian flu of 1957-59 that killed 116,000 Americans. Myra recalls: *"I was in the infirmary and then sent to a specialist in Boston. I finished recovering back home in Connecticut."* Rose's appendix burst while she was in the infirmary. She notes *"They got real doctors after that."* Mononucleosis was not uncommon among a college age population and may have gone undiagnosed.

Counseling for depression was in its infancy. The Bulletin suggests a warm and supportive environment for those in need of academic or personal counseling that does not equate with our memories: *"The student is expected to take the initiative in planning her program and in*

meeting her academic and residential obligations. At various times before reaching decisions she may need counsel or may wish to talk freely with an older person about her academic or personal life. At such times she can turn easily to her class dean who keeps in constant, unobtrusive touch with her academic progress and her personal welfare, or to the teachers of her courses, the chairman of her major department, the resident head of her house, the director of the Chapel, or the college psychiatrist or resident physicians." Few of us can imagine finding much comfort in time of crisis from Dean Jean or even the austere Austrian, Dean Theresa Frisch, who had reportedly escaped the Nazis by skiing over the Alps.

SOCIAL LIFE

As a women's college, social life off campus presented the challenge of meeting men. How did we do that? Some had friends from high school who introduced them to their friends; some went to mixers on campus (Virginia: *"so much excitement, so few rewards"*) or were invited to weekends at Princeton or Dartmouth or Yale. Harvard and MIT as the closest schools were the site of social life for many. We nearly froze waiting for the bus into Cambridge in our wool dresses, stockings and heels, and then nearly broke our ankles teetering in those heels on the slippery brick sidewalks in Cambridge.

Carolyn: *"As a high school senior at an all-girls' school, I was trying to decide between Wellesley and Swarthmore. I asked my older sister, who had attended Wellesley from 1950-51 before marrying her roommate's brother, about dating. She answered, 'Oh there are always plenty of men on campus.' But when I got to Wellesley, I discovered that the men on campus were typically someone else's date."* Joan does remember "the Yale Whiffenpoofs serenading us from the courtyard at Tower Court."

If it was hard for a white Californian to develop a social life at Wellesley in our era, the challenge was many times greater for the pair of black students in our class. Isabel recalls a carload of black male undergraduates from Dartmouth turning up at Freeman because they'd heard there was a woman of color there whom they wanted to meet. That turned out to be serendipitous and led to an expanded social life and several life-long friendships. But she also recalls another, painful experience:

"I remember fleeing, alone and weeping profusely, well after parietals across campus late on the night of a mixer in Alumnae Hall to which I had gone by myself. A young white man from Worcester Polytech had apparently been directed/told by some well-meaning soul to ask me to dance. As we very awkwardly moved onto the floor, he began to stutter through an explanation to me of his obvious discomfort/resentment at having been asked to do so. I was so devastated that all I could think to do was run from the insult and humiliation at the end of our turn around the floor. Though alone after hours, I made it across campus, high heels and all, back to Freeman without incident or question by campus security."

“Fast forward to 2016, when I found myself in that same area of campus on a sunny September morning, waiting in line as a former trustee to join the glorious and celebratory inaugural procession of Dr. Paula Johnson, the first woman of color appointed to lead Wellesley.”

At Wellesley today, according to the website, 52% percent of the class of 2023 identify as students of color. Some 18% of that class will be the first generation in their families to graduate from college.

With expectations typical of the 50's of marriage and children, some of us became engaged (or in several cases married) by senior year. The Wellesley News for October 1958 listed marriages and engagements of women still studying at Wellesley—a fairly long list, most to Ivy League men. By the News issue of October 1959, the list was shorter. Among our classmates, 30 were married at the time of graduation. Our 5th Reunion Record book reveals another 30 students of the 353 respondents who left Wellesley to graduate at another institution—most because of marriage.

The 1956-57 Bulletin: “Ordinarily married students may not live in residence, because the College believes in general that women should postpone marriage until they are ready to establish their own homes. If such students can commute from their own homes, they may register as non-resident students. In special circumstances, if weighty reasons exist for not postponing marriage until a household can be established and if permission to live at the College has been requested and received from the Dean of Students considerably in advance of the marriage, a married student may live in residence.”

Myra, who married after junior year, recalls: *“Married students had a room at the very top of Founder where we could leave our bookbags—no backpacks in those days, just green bookbags—and eat our lunch which all of us had brought from our respective homes. There were some seniors who had transferred from other Seven Sister schools as they were married, and it was nice to socialize with them as part of our little group of ‘outcasts.’”*

“Marriage lectures” introduced juniors and seniors and engaged sophomores to the mysteries of our future life. They included advice on budgeting and sex. A sample: “Never say ‘no’ to your husband when he wants sex...” We seethed over an article in the Harvard Crimson that labeled Wellesley graduates “tunicata”—placid fish that sit on the sea floor and breed—but raising a family was part of the future most of us imagined. If we were gay, we were closeted—and risked being expelled (despite the number of “Boston Marriages” among certain members of the administration.) Married women faculty members with families were rare.

THE WORLD OUTSIDE WELLESLEY

Many literary and political luminaries spoke on campus during our years, for example the poet Robert Frost and the legendary socialist Norman Thomas. But Wellesley in our years was not yet a hotbed of agitation for social and political change. The Eisenhower years reflected a desire to return to normalcy after the war and for many, the McCarthy period of the early 1950's had

cast a pall over political activism. A classmate suggests that the label ‘the Silent Generation’ was used about that period.

Yet, as the 1950’s merged into the early 1960’s, there was among us a burgeoning concern for the world beyond the campus. We had been aware of the Soviet Threat because of the launching of Sputnik in 1957 and the Hungarian revolution the previous year. And some on campus were especially aware politically, including Madeleine Korbel [Albright] ’59, an editor of the Wellesley News our sophomore year, and Diane Silver [Ravitch] ’60, an astute Texan who later became an outspoken educational reformer.

Our junior year, some of us learned that the College had planned a Symposium on Africa that would feature Jules Nyrere of Tanganyika (later Tanzania) and UN Under Secretary Ralph Bunch. A small group met weekly that fall to teach ourselves about the African countries seeking independence in the momentous year of 1960, in preparation for the Symposium. We later lobbied for courses on Africa, producing a seminar on developing countries in fall semester senior year. Second semester, a white South African presented in vivid detail the history of that beleaguered country, still handcuffed by apartheid. Abby recalls that he *“changed my Eurocentric view of history and gave me the intellectual tools to later shed the US centric view of business and the law.”*

Some of us heard Fidel Castro address a huge crowd at Harvard’s Dillon Field House on April 26, 1959. It was the last stop of a 12-day tour of the East Coast, four months after leading the Cuban revolution.

The summer of 1960, the Wellesley-Vassar Washington interns met Eleanor Roosevelt at her home in Hyde Park on our way to D.C. (She had spoken at a University of California event in San Diego during our spring break, where Carolyn met her and as Wellesley intern chair, wrote asking her if we could visit.) Our first seminar speaker was Dean Acheson, whom Nan Overholser deftly and knowledgably introduced. Other seminar speakers included Barry Goldwater, Vice President Nixon’s press secretary Herb Klein, and Bobby Baker (Lyndon Johnson’s eminence grise—recommended by Judith Richards). While some of us became masters of the Xerox machine, Nan wrote speeches for Senator Kefauver and Barbara Guss made such an impression on Senator Clark that she later got a job in his office.

Ellen remembers the Washington internship: *“My assignment was to work at the Kennedy-for-President Committee. Many of the key players were already out campaigning, but it was still fascinating and fun to see all the office work that undergirded the process of selecting a president. My job was to keep a set of 3x5 cards about all the Convention delegates. When I returned to Wellesley as a senior, I was torn between wanting to understand more about politics and wanting to study Russia and Russian as much as possible.”*

Senior year, Forum hosted a debate on nuclear disarmament between Edward Teller and Hans Bethe. We raised funds to Support Southern Students in their sit-ins in the south; Pat Daily, Anne and Lynn remember picketing the Woolworth’s in the town of Wellesley, even though it

was integrated, to show solidarity with the students in the south. Forum also sponsored a survey of students regarding their interest in a potential Peace Corps; the 5th Year Reunion Book lists about five classmates who joined the Peace Corps when it was created.

Most of us seniors were able to listen to the Kennedy-Nixon debates and vote in the Kennedy-Nixon election. Virginia: *"It was the first time that many of us could vote and needless to say there was excitement not only about [voting] but the promise of a new young man heading the government (except for Republican stalwart)." On January 20, 1961, we watched the inauguration on TV's in our dorm living rooms and thrilled to the young President's stirring words: "The torch has been passed to a new generation."*

Abby: *"I remember vividly listening to JFK's inauguration at lunch during January midterm exams, walking back into a US History exam and finding a question in which I could use the phrase 'Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country.' And then agonizing that it was way too gimmicky and dreading that I would be dinged. I do not remember the outcome."*

Several classmates recalled that Senator Kennedy had previously spoken on campus, perhaps during our freshman year. Connie remembers: *"Kennedy had come out to Wellesley to give a speech in Alumnae Hall. He didn't seem to have read it beforehand or project any special political talent so far as I could see. I couldn't understand when Sigrid told me he was a 'comer,' but he did come right along, and I was later glad to see how it was possible for all of us to improve our public speaking."*

Our Commencement speaker was not memorable, though the day was—we enjoyed a sunny one on the edge of purple blooming rhododendron in the dell next to the library. After 377 of us received our degrees, we sang America the Beautiful by alumna Katherine Lee Bates, heard a benediction by Chaplain Charles Hall, and recessed to be congratulated by our families.

Our memories of the Wellesley campus endure—of brilliant fall leaves, Severance Green and the hemlocks sheltering the spoon-holders blanketed in snow, the Arboretum adorned with flowering trees in spring, and always the sparkling lake. But our most vivid memories are of the intellectual stimulation of small classes with inspiring professors and inquiring students and the friends we made at Wellesley—many of them gone now, some much too young.

Connie: *"In the final weeks of senior year, a dozen of us Mungerites took to biking around the Lake every evening. It quickly became a gathering that we didn't want to miss, an honoring of something that we couldn't name at the time, but I now realize was a recognition of our great good fortune. Weren't we lucky?"*

CODA: FIVE YEARS LATER

We were born as the flames of World War II began to engulf Europe. We were raised by depression era parents, relieved to see the end of the war, with mothers returned to the home front in a culture that encouraged the stay-at-home wife and the nuclear family. We had few

role models of women with professional careers other than teacher, librarian, nurse, social worker or secretary. At Wellesley, few of the women faculty members were married or raising children in view of students as an example of combining career and family.

The median age of marriage for women in 1961 was 20.3. For men it was closer to 23.

For many of us, we had expected when we entered Wellesley to meet our future husbands and become happy –EDUCATED—housewives and mothers. Leafing through our 5th Reunion Record Book, it is clear that at least five years after graduation, that trend prevailed. [Note there was no survey for that reunion year, so the “data” collected from the 5th Reunion Record Book respondents is approximate!]

Thirty of us had married while at Wellesley and attained a Wellesley degree; another 30 or so finished their BA’s at another college where their marriages had taken them. Over 300 respondents (about 85%) were married and of those, over half had started on their families. A sizable number were working or in graduate school despite being married. Our husbands were a high-powered lot with graduate degrees and professions launched in medicine, law and business, or academia.

Many of the 5th- year Record Book responders listed “housewife,” “wife and mother,” “homemaker” or “Mommy mostly” (Two or three, remembering that article in the Harvard Crimson, termed themselves “tunicata.” Many took the role of wife and mother as seriously as they had taken their studies. Most respondents sounded happy with this role, which included for several “nesting” by remodeling or decorating houses and caring for toddlers.

Beth Randall: *“Obviously much of my time is devoted to wiping cereal from behind a little girl’s ears and related activities, and my concerns are about raising a physically and emotionally healthy child in an atmosphere which will stimulate her presumed intelligence.”*

Charlotte Paton: *“I have discovered in my babies and my husband an enormous source of satisfaction, and as I am obsessed with the transiency of time, I try to remain intent on savoring every minute of this best of all possible worlds in which by some miracle I find myself.”*

Carol Wently Beveridge, noting that she had worked until her husband finished law school and his bar exam, wrote: *“I then retired to my preferred occupation as wife and mother. I may be a classic ‘tunicata’, but I enjoy this life - keep my mind from rusting in dish water and diapers by activity in the League of Women Voters.”*

Susan Dworetz Ralston spoke for many when she noted *“my immediate concern is with my home, husband, and children...have found it best to postpone any career or volunteer activities until my children are in school—partly because I dislike being dependent on paid help, but mainly because I enjoy bringing them up more than anything else I could be doing.”*

A few expressed some frustration with not being able to use their education. For example, Lynn Kramer, who had received an MBA, wrote *"I'd love to discover how I could 'use' my education professionally at home, while tending my child."*

The 1956-57 Bulletin had suggested that we could prepare to enter professional schools to train for careers in architecture, law, medicine, social service administration, teaching. Bulletin sections covered Preparation for Teaching, Preparation for Medical School, Preparation for Hospital and Public Health Work, and Preparation for Civil Service.

According to the 5th Reunion Record Book, over half of respondents had or were taking graduate level courses or had already received a Master's-level graduate degree (predominantly an MAT in teaching or MSW in social work or MLS in library science and at least two MBAs). Around 30 had attained a Ph.D. or were pursuing one; nine or ten had received the MD degree or were in med school, and another 10 or so had a law degree or were in law school.

Most of us had been employed in a variety of short-term jobs in the five years, especially in teaching or social work; some supported the academic work of their husbands (e.g., typing dissertations), or worked in university departments or in secretarial jobs before starting a family, and a few had more permanent jobs as part of future careers. A few were becoming artists and one was an entertainer. In addition to taking classes in a range of subjects—either as part of degree programs or just for personal enjoyment, several pursued some kind of volunteer work including in both Democratic and Republican campaigns.

Barbara relates how she got her first job after graduation: *"Senior year, as a geology major, I took the US Geological Survey exam, geared to PhD's. I of course flunked it and went on to apply for fashion jobs in NYC. Though accepted for these jobs I declined and returned to my home in Philadelphia. A few weeks later I got a call from the USGS. The caller asked if I could come to D.C. for an interview. Surprised, I answered 'Why do you want to interview me? I flunked your exam.' He replied 'yes, but you did better than anyone else.'"* Barbara worked for USGS from 1961-64.

Those members of the class who were gay did not so identify or have love relationships that could be acknowledged in 1966. The Record Book for the 25th Reunion included the results of a questionnaire. The classmate who prepared it (Karen Ida Peterson) acknowledged "Our lesbian classmates had no category in which to respond to the lifestyle questions on the questionnaire." She apologized for the oversight and expressed her regret "that some classmates' views are not included in our survey due to that failure."

Of the 308 classmates who responded to Karen's questionnaire for the 25th reunion: "Two thirds are married—for the first time (64%) or for the second or third time (11%). One classmate in seven is divorced or separated (14%) and only one in twenty has never married (5%). A large majority have children and/or stepchildren (89%), with an average of 2.63 children per family."

Regarding paid and volunteer work 25 years after graduation: “Nearly all of us (97%) indicate that we spend time volunteering with organization of different types...Fully eight in ten of us are working outside the home—more than half in full time work (58%), with sizeable minorities in both part time work (18%) or freelance work (11%).

Regarding the Women’s Movement according to the 25th reunion book: “Nearly all of us have favored the women’s movement. A few are leaders (4%) or active members (12%) while most are sympathizers (71%). Most of us feel that the women’s movement has positively affected our self-image (68%) while very few see a negative effect (4%).

Karyl summed up our trajectory in her comments to this Memory project. We’ll let her have the last word.

“At the beginning of freshman year, President Clapp shared with the class that what we would learn during our experience at Wellesley was the beginning. The goal was to open our eyes to future learning—how much there was to be explored. It was my belief that many of us concurred but, going one step further, envisioned graduation, perhaps graduate school, working for a few years, finding a mate, then spending the remainder of life’s journey as a wife and mother—brought home by glancing through our 5th Reunion Record Book. Open to almost any page to see the word “housewife.” Rather, we became lawyers, physicians, economists, educators, authors, executives, elected officials, governmental appointees. How we and the world changed!”