

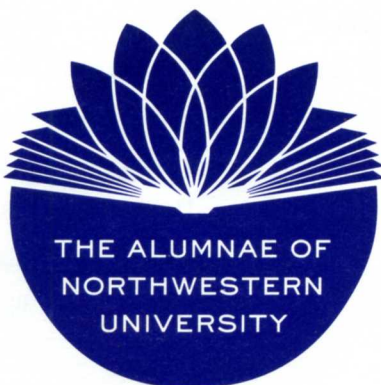
75

IN THE BEGINNING

There were no women at Northwestern University in 1855 when the new school opened the doors of its modest frame building at Davis Street and Hinman Avenue in Evanston. This was not surprising. The idea of men and women attending the same college was rarely discussed in the mid-19th century. However, in that same year, a women's college began holding classes just a few blocks away in a much more impressive structure. Its name was similar, Northwestern Female College.

The paths of the two new Northwesterns would eventually cross and become one. On that road stood the important educator Erastus Otis Haven, president of the University of Michigan, who was

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S SERVICE



offered the Northwestern University presidency in 1869. But Haven stated he would not think of leaving Michigan, so much larger and more famous than Northwestern, unless the doors of Northwestern were “flung wide open” to women.

On June 23, 1869, the University board of trustees elected Haven president — and adopted a motion to admit women. Rebecca Hoag enrolled at Northwestern that same year, becoming the University’s first female student. Five years later, Sarah Rebecca Roland became the first female graduate when she received her diploma in June 1874.

Meanwhile the Northwestern Female College transferred its charter to a group of Evanston residents who had founded a new school, the Evanston College for Ladies. In 1871, Frances Willard was elected the first president, and construction began on a college building. In 1874, the University absorbed the essentially insolvent college and resumed construction on the building, which was named the

Women’s College of Northwestern University. For many decades that Victorian brick structure has served as the School of Music administration building.

With the graduation of Sarah Rebecca Roland, the University became a coeducational institution of higher learning — almost a century before its Ivy League counterparts. Northwestern’s contribution to equal and not separate educational opportunity for women and men was a pioneering effort of which its alumni can be proud.

The number of women graduates grew steadily in the years after 1874. In 1916, some four decades later, a group of these alumnae founded the Associate Alumnae of Northwestern University — realizing that together they could be a force for the continuing growth of their alma mater on behalf of all Northwestern women.

SERVING THE UNIVERSITY

The group was formed, in fact, to support the plan to erect a Women’s Building on campus — a facility that was to have included lounges, a grill, offices for student organizations, and clubs and rooms for commuter women to gather. That was in 1916, just a few years after the Women’s Athletic Association first envisioned such a special place.

Some 30 alumnae founded the group — originally named the Associate Alumnae of Northwestern University, holding the organizing meeting April 16, 1916, at Marshall Field’s Tea Room in Chicago. Very soon they put down their tea cups and busied themselves with a variety of money-making enterprises, from selling



Sarah Rebecca Roland



Erastus Otis Haven



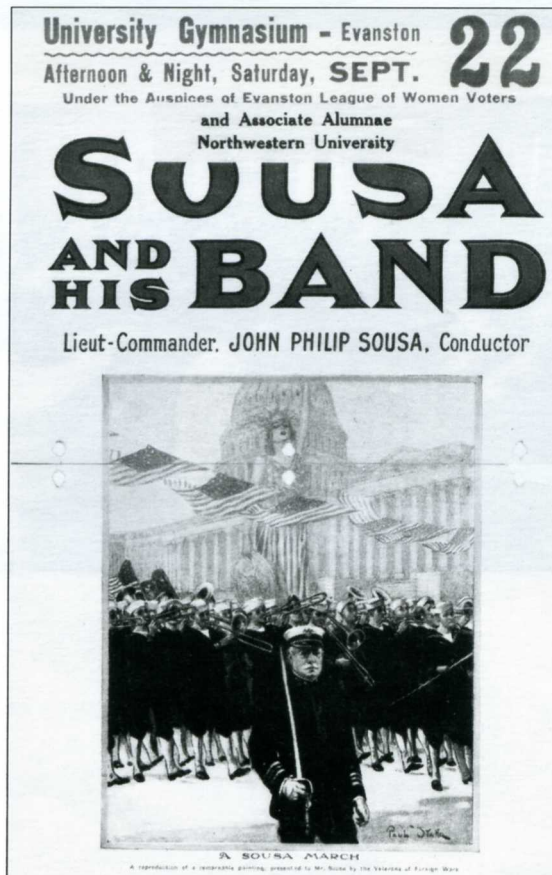
Frances Willard

purple pencils and homemade sandwiches, to issuing a record featuring “Go U Northwestern” and the “University Hymn” and running a women’s employment agency.

Many of the alumnae volunteers also took their turns serving in the tea room, which was opened in 1917 in the basement of University Hall by the Women’s Building Association. The Associate Alumnae started a tea room of their own several years later in 1923. Typically 100 students and faculty gathered each day At the Sign of the Purple Oak, 721 University Place. The Associate Alumnae also opened a gift shop, The Purple Acorn, in the North Shore Hotel.

No Women’s Building was ever constructed, however. The group switched its sights in 1924 when University President Walter Dill Scott announced plans for the Women’s Quadrangles of

Right: Scott Hall grill, 1948. The Alumnae made a significant contribution to the construction of this building, as well as to others built on campus. Below: A poster advertising the 1928 Sousa Concert co-sponsored by the Alumnae to raise money for the Women’s Building Fund.



sorority houses. The Alumnae pressed for open dormitories to be built there at the same time, and the contribution of \$11,000 from the Women’s Building Fund laid the foundation for Rogers and Hobart Houses.

By 1938, the Associate Alumnae coffers held \$167,382, a significant contribution to the construction of Scott Hall, which would offer both women and men students many of the facilities that were a part of the Women’s Building plans. The architectural designs for the auditorium and many other rooms were, in fact, those originally proposed for the Women’s Building. The

Associate Alumnae also financed a room of their own in Scott Hall, the Alumnae Library.

In the years since, the Associate Alumnae have continued to develop projects that contribute to the growth of the University. In 1976, the name changed to the Alumnae of Northwestern University, dropping "associate" to reflect the equal status of this group with other alumni groups. In this 75th anniversary year, the members find focus for the future in the words that for many years they have used to define their organization: "Dedicated to serving the University and its community through alumnae participation."



Above: The registration desk at Scott Hall on the first Women's Day, November 3, 1965. Left: Bernard Dobroski, center, recently named dean of the School of Music, "conducted" a continuing education course in 1986. Above right: A student meets with Elizabeth Dipple, professor of English and a frequent continuing education lecturer.

FURTHERING EDUCATION

Silver ink shimmered on the purple cover of the bulletin announcing the 25th annual NU-Day scheduled for October 25, 1989. "The Silver Anniversary of Sterling Service" proclaimed the banner type. It was, indeed, a time to celebrate.

The daylong program of mini classes, sparkling entertainment, and an honor award to an accomplished alumna drew more than 600 participants to campus, capping a quarter century of effort on the part of the Alumnae to offer an outstanding yearly glimpse of the best that is Northwestern to area residents and alumnae.

Early planners of the event, originally named Women's Day at Northwestern, sought to rekindle the interest of women in their alma mater. "We wanted them to see for themselves what was happening, to learn about the many facets of life on campus, and to motivate them to greater support of the University," recalled one alumna.

From the first, the faculty presentations drew acclaim. The women who attended clamored for more, and organizers increased the lecture options. The anniversary year offered participants eight seminars to choose from, on topics that dealt with such contemporary concerns as Japan's economic success, problems of the global environment, and the prospect of a national youth service.

NU-Day turned out to be more than just a tremendously successful program, however. It also generated an even more ambitious effort. One alumna wrote, "Can we start some classes like these throughout the year?" on her NU-Day evaluation form in 1966. The request energized board members who soon enlisted the support of William Bradford, associate dean of faculties, who helped them structure a continuing education program and recruit faculty.



Two classes were offered in the fall of 1968, a seminar in literature and a survey course that examined the root causes of the revolutionary changes in societies throughout the world. Tough stuff—which is precisely what the women wanted. "Women were stirring then," recalled one of the organizers. "We felt that women who didn't choose to go back to school full time deserved a chance at continuing education without credits—but with the same serious intent and course content."

Offering the courses without credit allowed the costs to be kept low. The University provided classrooms at no charge. "We wanted every woman to come and not be held back by lack of funds," this organizer emphasized. The tuition for the first 10-week classes was just \$30. They attracted 146 participants and produced a profit of nearly \$2,000.

Since that relatively small beginning as a back-to-campus program, the daytime courses have grown to a year-round enterprise offering four courses during each of the three academic quarters, along with two summer

classes, and registering nearly 1,700 participants from throughout the Chicago area. Faculty from almost every Northwestern school and department have taught classes. For their sponsorship of the Continuing Education Daytime Courses, the Alumnae of Northwestern University have twice received the Exceptional Achievement Award of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education in recognition of "significant contributions to the advancement of American education." Fees still are modest, \$75 for a 10-week class, but its popularity has made the program very profitable. Typically \$90,000 is raised annually. The Alumnae use these funds for fellowships to graduate women and for gifts and grants to University faculty and departments.

PROVIDING FUNDS

The Great Depression brought financial hardships to students, and with characteristic can-do, the Alumnae took up their cause. By 1931 they had set up an emergency student loan fund, supporting it with benefit card parties and style shows. The commitment to providing financial assistance, however, didn't end with the Depression. In 1946, the Waa-Mu Patron Project was begun, offering contributors prime seats at the school's renowned variety show. Project earnings since then have become a primary source of student aid funds, along with continuing education proceeds, enabling the Alumnae to give more than \$570,000 in scholarships and fellowships.

For many years, the awards were full-tuition, four-year scholarships for four undergraduate students. By the mid-1970s, the focus shifted to the particular

needs of doctoral students, and fellowships with stipends have been granted to women scholars who show promise of distinguished academic careers. The Alumnae continue to seek out women who need special support, showing preference in granting the fellowships to women who return to academic study after an absence. One faculty member has commented on this policy: "For the 'returning woman,' the space of free time and opportunity you create with your support may be for her the first and only chance to devote full attention to advancing her career."

More than 60 women have been Alumnae Fellows. Many now teach at colleges and universities across the country. Others work in public service areas, industry, and the arts.

The Alumnae have also contributed nearly \$600,000 directly to the University, beginning with their donation in 1927 to help construct Hobart and Rogers Houses and including substantial contributions to Scott Hall,

Kresge Centennial Hall, and Norris Center. Now a donation of \$50,000 is making possible restoration of an architecturally significant reception room in Harris Hall. Funds have also been used to purchase equipment, from a new sound and lighting system for Cahn Auditorium to computers.

But the support hasn't been limited to bricks and mortar and materials. Some gifts from the Alumnae have funded campus conferences—on Russian literature, art history, language and cognition, philosophy, African studies, foreign languages, and women's studies. Others have answered wide-ranging needs: underwriting an issue of *TriQuarterly* on South African literature, purchasing sculpture, providing travel money for the University Symphony, and supporting the Children's Clinic of the Dental School. Alumnae grants have enabled faculty to attend significant conferences, conduct research, and develop new courses.



CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

As the 75th anniversary year of the Alumnae of Northwestern University approaches, the tradition and mission of undertaking ambitious projects continues. The 1990-91 celebration builds on an impressive record of serving the University by raising nearly \$1.2 million for graduate fellowships for women and for support of numerous special University projects.

After 75 successful years, it's characteristic that the Alumnae Board honor their anniversary by setting a new challenge, this one for the entire membership — all women who have ever

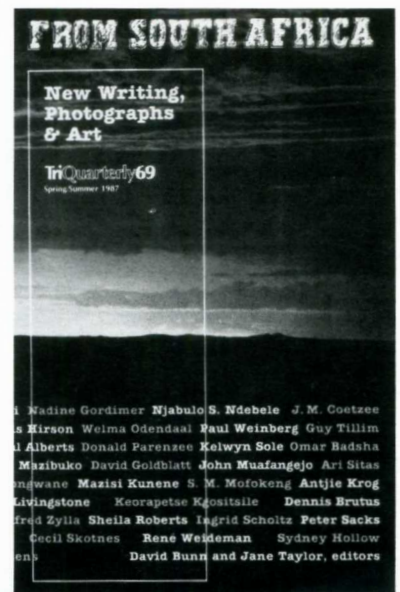
enrolled in a degree-granting program at the University. They plan to raise \$300,000 to support two endowments: the Alumnae Professor Award for Curriculum Development, to stimulate development of innovative courses, and the Alumnae Grant for Academic Enrichment, to bring eminent scholars and artists to the campus.

The Alumnae Board has pledged a Leadership Gift of \$150,000 towards these new projects and has embarked on a campaign to secure the goal of \$300,000 or more by mid-1991 by inviting alumnae nationwide to support this campaign, the first ever

Above: The Alumnae began the Waa-Mu Patron Project in 1946 as a source of funds for student aid. Right: The Alumnae underwrote the Summer 1987 issue of TriQuarterly, From South Africa, a timely forum for South African writers and artists.

directed towards women to gain support for projects initiated by women of the University. Those who pledge \$1,000 each will become members of the Alumnae Honor Society. These projects will be gifts from all alumnae.

The Alumnae have always made bold plans! And they continue to do so by presenting the first Alumnae Week at the University, **October 23-27, 1990**. All alumnae are welcome to join the Alumnae Board in a weeklong **"Celebration of the Arts at Northwestern and in Society,"** which will showcase the wealth of arts offerings and educational opportunities on the Northwestern campus and in Chicago. Save the dates!



RECOGNIZING EXCEPTIONAL ALUMNAE

A decade before Northwestern University was founded — and three decades before the first woman was graduated — the French statesman and author Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in *Democracy in America*: “If anyone asks me what I think the chief cause of the extraordinary and growing power of this nation, I should answer that it is due to the superiority of their women.”

Tocqueville’s assessment was not only perceptive, it was prophetic. Imagine him meeting the 60,000 women who, like 1874 graduate Sarah Rebecca Roland, would come to study at the University and then go forth to contribute to the nation’s development in so many diverse fields! Each in her own way and in her own time has fulfilled the promise of being a Northwestern woman — to the benefit of her profession, her family, her community, and her alma mater. Every one is a “superior woman.”

The Alumnae recognize

certain ones among this number who have had a particularly significant impact in their areas of endeavor. To honor their accomplishments, the Alumnae of Northwestern University Award has been presented to one outstanding alumna since 1976, who “fulfills the promise of a Northwestern woman.”

ALUMNAE AWARD RECIPIENTS

1989

Sherry Lansing, S66

Founding partner of Jaffee/Lansing Productions and former president of 20th-Century Fox Studios
1988

Wendy Lee Gramm, G71

Chairperson of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission
1987

Neena B. Schwartz, M50, M53

William Deering Professor of Neurobiology and Physiology and director of the Program for Reproductive Research, Northwestern University
1986

Lois Kroeber Wille, J53, GJ54

Editor of the *Chicago Tribune*’s editorial page and two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize
1985

Barbara Staner Uehling, G56, G58

Chancellor of the University of Missouri

1984

Maria Comninou, GTI71, GTI73

Internationally recognized researcher in solid mechanics
1983

Mabel Murphy Smythe, G40

Former deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs and former ambassador to Cameroon and Guinea
1982

Ardis Krainik, S51, H84

General manager of the Lyric Opera of Chicago
1981

Georgie Anne Geyer, J56

Author and syndicated columnist on international affairs
1980

Patricia Neal, S50

Academy-Award winning film actress
1979

Olga Jonasson, CAS54

First woman to chair the surgical department of a major U.S. hospital (Cook County Hospital, Chicago)
1978

Carole Kamin Bellows, L60

Circuit court judge and first woman president of the Illinois State Bar Association
1977

Joan Wagner Beck, J45, GJ47

Author and syndicated columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*
1976

Lee Phillip Bell, CAS50

Television program host and commentator

Northwestern has lauded the professional achievements of still other women, granting the Alumni Association’s Medal Award to 5 and its Merit Award to 117. The contributions of 154 others to the University have also been recognized with the Service Award. All across the country women are active in alumni clubs, many serving as officers. Eight alumnae now sit on the University’s board of trustees.

Remember, in the beginning — in 1855 — there were no women at Northwestern. This year 3,600 women constitute nearly half of the full-time undergraduate student body of 7,400, and almost 40 percent of the 5,800 enrolled full-time in the graduate and professional schools.

For these women, this really is only the beginning. As they join the 60,000 alumnae, they will continue to share in the proud tradition of achievement and service of Northwestern University women.