

Historically Speaking.....

Kappa Kappa Gamma Fraternity

April 2002



KAPPA KAPPA GAMMA - WOMEN AT THE FOREFRONT

Kappa Kappa Gamma has presented Alumnae Achievement Awards to outstanding alumna members since 1946 in recognition of their contributions in their careers and professional lives. The presentation of these awards is an outstanding feature of each Biennial Convention.

When exploring the arduous journey of the modern woman in the United States and Canada, it is impossible to ignore the early milestones of the women's movement. From the founding mothers who nurtured our country's revolutionaries to the modern female work force, the mark of the woman is indelible upon our society. One of the earliest struggles for rights and representation was to enroll women in colleges and universities. The women's movement is closely linked to women's experiences in higher education. Enrollment as a college woman was not always a statement of independence or reform, however. More likely the woman was the product of an enlightened family or community that embraced the value of education and rarely underestimated the abilities of a woman.

Many major contributors to the women's movement, both subtle and prominent, were also part of Greek-letter fraternities for women. The Founders of Kappa Kappa Gamma upheld a vision of academic, social and human excellence. Even more simply, they sought to form a system of support for each other.

A comprehensive list of outstanding achievements by the women of Kappa Kappa Gamma would include hundreds of names in addition to the following. Some have been recognized by Alumnae Achievement Awards – many have not. These Kappas who have left their mark upon the progress of women in history are but a few of those whose lives bear notable witness to the ideals of our Fraternity.

Mareta West - Beta Theta, *Oklahoma*, was the first woman astrogeologist to be hired by the United States Geological Survey. She had been a petroleum geologist before entering the new field of astrogeology. She mapped the moon-landing site of the Apollo II flight which put the historic first man on the moon in July 1969. Six prospective sites were submitted, but hers was chosen. *1970 AAA recipient*

Sarah Lee Lippincott - Beta Alpha, *Pennsylvania*, was research associate and lecturer at Sproul Observatory at Swarthmore College. A member of the American Astronomers Society and the International Astronomical Union, she co-authored *Point to the Stars*. Her scientific papers were published in the United States, Holland, France and Canada. She did research in astromeric study of nearby stars, double stars and planet-like companions to nearby stars. *1966 AAA recipient*

Frances Sutton Schmitz - Beta Delta, *Michigan*, was in the private practice of architecture with her husband in the firm known as *Herbert and Frances Schmitz*, Detroit, Michigan. She was consulting architect for Kappa for nearly 30 years. While she was working with **Kay Kelder Walz**, Beta Delta, *Michigan*, on the Fraternity Chapter House Building and Financing Committee, nearly 53 houses were constructed or remodeled. Frances was the first woman architect to become registered in Michigan by examination. *1962 AAA recipient*

Patty Berg – Chi, *Minnesota*, having won every major amateur golf title available, turned professional and joined the Wilson Sporting Goods Company advisory staff in 1940. During WWII, Patty served as chairman of the women's physical fitness commission for the Minneapolis Civilian Defense Council and later joined the Marine Corps Women's Reserve as a second lieutenant. Patty won the U.S. Open in 1946 and was crowned the World Champion of Women Professionals at the 1954 Tam O'Shanter Tournament in Chicago. Her brilliant playing won her the Associated Press award of "Woman Athlete of the Year" in 1955. Her books, *Golf* and *Golf Illustrated*, are great contributions to the field. Patty was the first woman to syndicate a golf column. *1956 AAA recipient*

(Eliza) Jean Nelson Penfield – Iota, *Depauw*, served as Grand President of Kappa Kappa Gamma. She had an outstanding record as a platform speaker, parliamentarian, lawyer, and leader in the cause of voting rights for women. She toured the West with Carrie Chapman Catt to work for ratification of the women's suffrage amendment (Susan B. Anthony Amendment). With Catt she helped to found the League of Women Voters in 1920. *1950 AAA recipient*

Shirley Ellis – Gamma Omega/Beta Nu, *Denison/Ohio State*, was a trustee of the American Christian Trust, Washington, D.C., and a member of the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem. She was a director of the Volunteers for Israel and traveled frequently to aid the Israeli Army. Beyond learning the repair and operation of heavy artillery with the Israeli Army, Shirley led tours to Israel for other volunteers and organized events for guests such as the Prime Minister of Israel in Washington, D.C. Her work during the scud missile attacks in 1991 brought her an award of appreciation from then Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin.

Emily Gorman – Psi, *Cornell*, was appointed the director of the Women's Army Corps, Washington, D.C., in 1962. She earned the rank of lieutenant colonel. After a period of teaching and personnel placement work, Emily joined the Fifth Officer Candidate Class of Fort Des Moines, Iowa. Her years of service in the Army, principally in the field of training and administration in the United States and abroad, prepared her for her responsibility as chief of the 10,000 WAC officers and enlisted personnel on active duty. *1962 AAA recipient*

Madelyn Pugh Martin Davis – Delta, *Indiana*, is a television scriptwriter. She worked on the Tom Ewell TV show and created "My Favorite Husband," and "I Love Lucy" for Lucille Ball. She was nominated for an "Emmy" for television writing in 1955 and received the Sylvania Award for TV writing in 1952. *The Los Angeles Times* named her "Woman of the Year" in 1957. *1960 AAA recipient*

(Ellen) Jane Froman – Theta, *Missouri*, one of the nation's most admired singers, had skyrocketed to fame and was the first performer to accept President Franklin Roosevelt's call for talent to entertain the U.S. servicemen overseas during World War II. En route to that assignment, her plane crashed near Lisbon, Portugal, in 1943. This tragic accident left her with significant injuries, and her brave determination to recover brought her the love and admiration of the nation. The 20th Century-Fox musical, *With a Song in My Heart*, is the fairly accurate story of her life. Jane returned to Europe and, on crutches, made a 30,000-mile tour of G.I. camps. *1954 AAA recipient*

Virginia Gildersleeve – Beta Epsilon, *Barnard*, dean of Barnard College for more than 36 years, was regarded as one of the country's foremost educators. Dean Gildersleeve had an intense interest in foreign affairs. Her country recognized this when she became the only woman delegate from the United States to the 1945 conference in San Francisco to draft the United Nations Charter. She had a voice in selecting the organization's name and was a creator of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Later she served a brief time as an alternate delegate to the General Assembly. In addition, Dean Gildersleeve was a founder of the International Federation of University Women, an original trustee of the Institute of International Education, member and later chairman of the Advisory Council of the WAVES, chairman of the board of Reid Hall in Paris, and decorated with the medal of the French Legion of Honor. *1946 AAA recipient*

Ruth Leach Pollock – Pi Deuteron, *University of California Berkeley*, had the distinction of being the first woman vice president of International Business Machines Corporation. At the time of her election to this corporate office, she was the manager of the entire IBM systems service. *1948 AAA recipient*

Excerpts, *First Things First* - scripted by Kylie Towers, Omicron/Simpson, Fraternity Archivist/Curator

Mary Ruddick Silzel
Fraternity Historian

