

CHAPTER V

The Apogee of Teacher Education 1945 to 1962

The end of World War II transformed the College. Students on military leave were allowed to reenter almost as soon as they were mustered out, and many additional veterans were quickly admitted. The three-year surge of returning veterans meant that the percentage of male students on campus rose from eight percent in 1945 to 29 percent in 1947.

The expanded enrollment caused a serious housing shortage. The College made a plea to the community, and Albany householders provided rooms for rent to at least 118 students. The Salvation Army even provided temporary dorm space for thirty-five men in 1946. The Alumni Association operated two group houses for men, Sayles Annex and Vanderzee Hall. The latter provided the male students with housing that would have seemed luxurious (gilded bath fixtures, for example) except for the number of students assigned per room. Married students, an entirely new category of undergraduates, had to fend for themselves.

Campus life was transformed by the return of men. Handholding

(Opposite) The 72,000-volume Hawley Library was small and crowded, but efforts throughout the 1950s to win funding for new buildings were unsuccessful. (*Pedagogue*, 1940.)

and public displays of affection called for promulgation of new rules of etiquette. Single women complained that married males did not always wear wedding rings, complicating their task of identifying suitable social partners. Sororities had flourished throughout the war, but now fraternities revived. Men were now on hand to play the male roles in the plays presented by Agnes Futterer's Advanced Dramatics class and to make possible a resurgence of intercollegiate athletics.

Most veterans had their college costs paid for them under the G.I. Bill, and the lack of tuition charges made the College a desirable choice for those who had to stretch allowances farthest. Some GIs may have seen the College more as an opportunity to get an inexpensive liberal education than as professional preparation for high school teaching. But the curriculum was not altered for them; all took the required professional sequence in addition to the liberal arts course. The returning GIs were well-motivated and able students, considered by the faculty who taught them as among the ablest and most stimulating students they had ever had.

The return of men to the College after the war caused a serious housing shortage. Below is Vanderzee Hall which was operated by the Alumni Association. Opposite, men play pool in Vanderzee Hall. It was luxuriously appointed but very crowded.

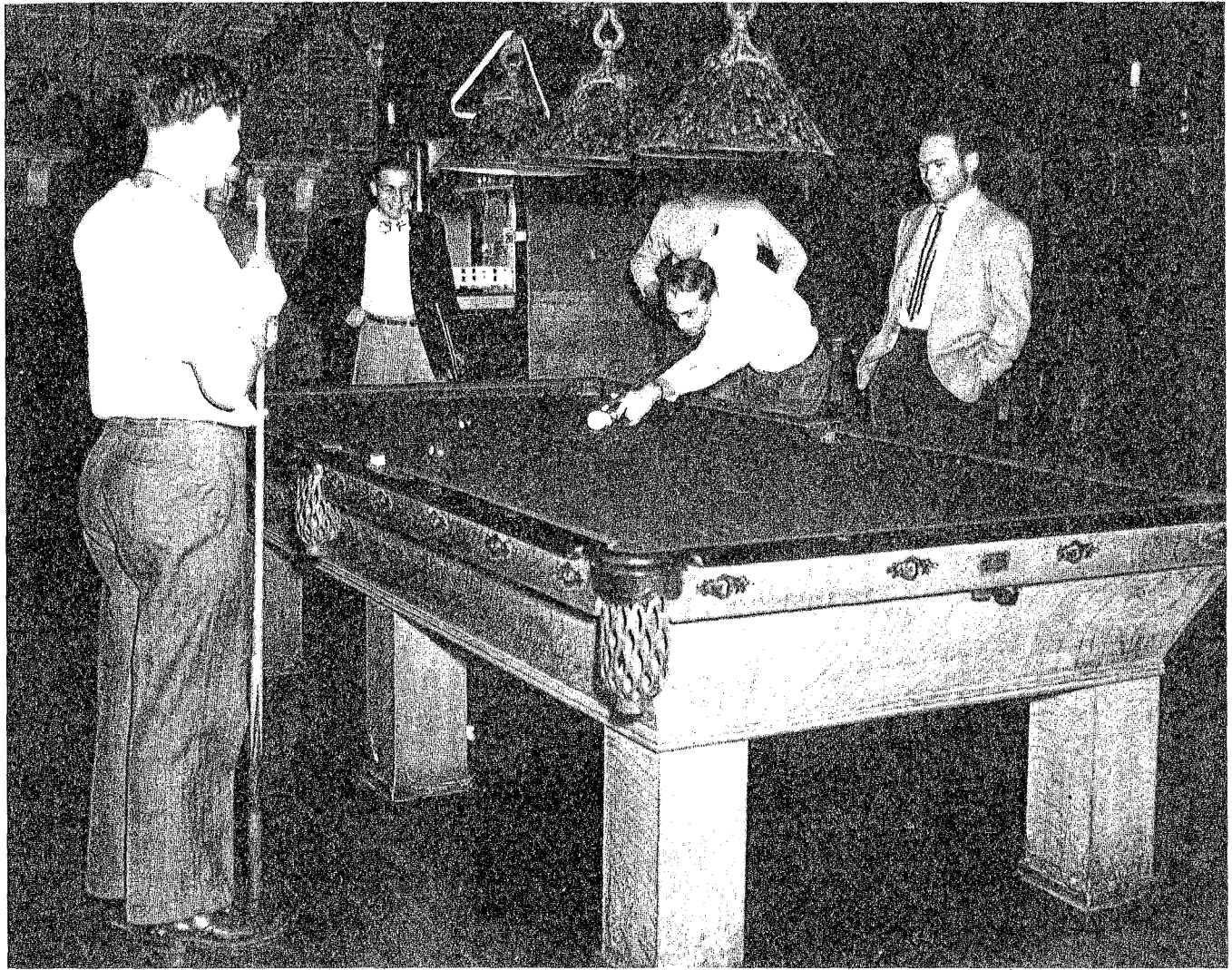
The immediate post-World War II years brought new leadership to the College. John Sayles, President since 1939, fell ill in 1947 and hastened his planned retirement. Dean Milton Nelson stepped into the breach and served as Acting President for two years while the Regents

searched for a replacement.

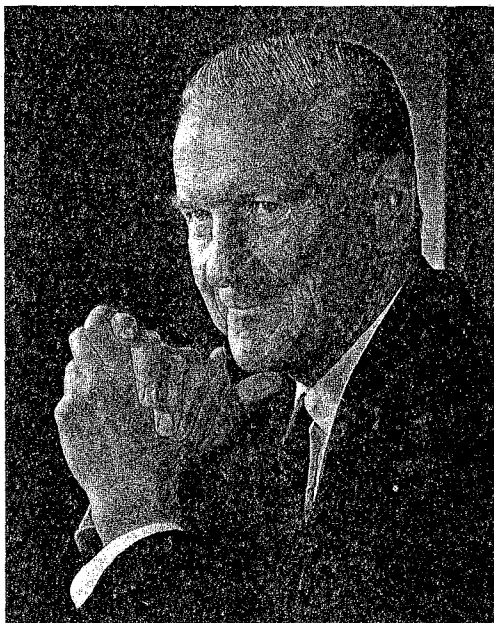
The new President who arrived in the summer of 1949 was thirty-eight-year-old Evan Revere Collins. Educated at Dartmouth and Harvard, he came to Albany after three years as dean of the College of Education at Ohio University. He believed in the mission of the College and was also an exceptionally attractive person: charming, patrician, combining an Ivy League air with personal warmth and accessibility.

Collins was a strong administrator, observing that every





administrator was at heart autocratic, making the final decisions and “reserving the right to make his own mistakes.” When Milton Nelson retired in 1952, Collins chose as dean Oscar Lanford, a chemistry professor from the Albany faculty who for nine years provided vigorous academic leadership and a strong sense of academic standards. At the same time, Collins picked Edgar Flinton to become Director of Graduate Studies to oversee a growth area in the 1950s. Mathematician Ellen Stokes, who had earlier succeeded Anna Pierce as Dean of Women, was joined by David Hartley as the school’s first Dean of Men. The administrative structure in the 1950s remained modest, with decision-making centralized in Collins’ office. The relatively small size of the College and the limited secretarial assistance encouraged informal administration and held down the paperwork.



Evan Revere Collins, President from 1949 to 1969, led Albany for two decades as it became, first, a premier teacher education institution and later a research university. President Collins and his wife, Virginia, created a close sense of community among students and staff. (Bottom photo by Karsh, Ottawa.)

Monthly general faculty meetings were most often informational, but there were sometimes lively debates over curriculum or student academic standing. Meetings just prior to graduation to pass on the qualification of graduates often produced vigorous discussion of particular cases, and faculty sometimes made last-minute accommodations to permit individuals to graduate. Three councils carried on much of the day-to-day business of the College. The Academic Council, made up of administrators and department heads, oversaw academic matters. The Student Personnel Council, composed of personnel staff with some faculty members, dealt with student life issues. The elected Faculty Council was concerned with a variety of faculty welfare issues.

Enrollment increased from the 1,555 full-time students when Collins arrived in 1949 to just over 4,000, including about 1,100 part-time students, in 1962. The College's budget rose four-fold in the same period. Still, such enrollment and budget increases were not so great as to require Albany to abandon the atmosphere and practices of a small college.

Rising enrollments accentuated long-standing space problems. The most immediate issue was student housing. The system of residence halls begun in the late 1930s was expanded in the 1950s through the State Dormitory Authority. Brubacher Hall was dedicated in 1951, and what is now Alumni Quadrangle was completed with Alden Hall in 1958 and Waterbury Hall in the following year. Yet the demand was such that the College several times used lotteries to allocate the precious rooms.

Residence halls were supplemented by smaller group houses; the number fluctuated, but the College directory in the Fall of 1960 listed seven such houses for women. In the same year eight sororities and three fraternities provided living quarters for their members. Others occupied rented rooms in the surrounding community. The housing problem was so persistent that in 1958 the College appointed as its

first full-time housing coordinator R. Keith Munsey, later Albany's first track coach.

Academic space was also inadequate. A sizable addition to Draper Hall, occupied in 1951, and an annex to Richardson Hall in 1956 only temporarily eased the shortage. Physical education facilities were hopelessly inadequate. The small gym in the basement of Page Hall with its undersized basketball court had to be shared with Milne students. The 72,000-volume Hawley Library was small and crowded, and library hours were a persistent issue of student concern. Throughout the decade the College eagerly sought new buildings but to no avail; the problems were to grow worse before they got better.

The faculty at the end of World War II was a good one; in 1945-46, thirty-three out of forty-six professors and assistant professors (there was no associate professorial rank) had the doctorate. While the College often looked to its own graduates when seeking new faculty, in 1947-48 only one out of four faculty in the two higher ranks had an Albany degree. Some had served the College for many years; thirteen faculty active in 1945-46 had been appointed before 1920. By 1960 the faculty had grown to 190 full-time people; over half held earned doctorates from thirty-eight different institutions.

Albany recruited able faculty members in the 1950s because it was an attractive place to teach in the depressed academic markets of the time. By the late 1940s, tenure was awarded after a relatively brief three years of probation. Albany salary schedules were competitive, roughly similar to those at California state colleges at the time. And faculty benefited from good health and retirement plans, the former relatively new in the 1950s.

On the other hand the rigidly structured ranks and salary grades made faculty advancement slow. Teaching effectiveness seems to have been the primary criterion for salary increases. Teaching loads were substantial. At the

Oscar Lanford

Whoever has the impression that chemists spend most of their time in labs should take a look at the life of Oscar Lanford: Starting at State Normal College as a chemistry professor, Lanford then became chair of the department, and was later tapped to be Dean of the College, a position he held from 1952 to 1961 during the school's transition to university status.

Lanford, who earned a Bachelor's degree from Virginia Military Institute and a Ph.D. in chemistry from Columbia, turned his exploratory nature toward new ideas for growth in education while he was dean. He coordinated the development of several doctoral programs and helped to create the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center atop Whiteface Mountain in the Adirondacks, where cloud sampling is still done today. He also served from 1942 to 1944 as consultant to the Manhattan Project, and was director of a research effort on nuclear energy sponsored by the Atomic Energy Commission.

A genial, soft-spoken Southerner who enjoyed gardening, riding and photography, Lanford went on to become president of the college of education at Fredonia. He held that post for a decade and then became vice chancellor for campus development at SUNY Central and manager of the State Construction Fund. His son William is now a professor in the Department of Physics at Albany. Lanford expressed his feelings about knowledge in the 1959 *Student Handbook*:

"Education is a wonderful thing, but it is well to remember that nothing which is really worth knowing can be taught."



end of the decade more than a quarter of the faculty taught fifteen or more hours per week, and almost half had four or five preparations. Under such circumstances faculty research was difficult, and the 1961 Middle States accreditation team noted that limited travel funds and state regulation of their use hampered faculty development. While the College prided itself on its faculty's research and publications, outside observers noted that many of the publications were "not research types of writing."

The mission of the College remained unchanged: preparing young people to become secondary school teachers. Most planning during the decade assumed that the mission would not change. Entering students were asked to commit themselves to becoming teachers; few publicly demurred. If newer faculty were oriented more toward their discipline than toward teacher education, all were encouraged to think of themselves as engaged in the common task of training teachers.

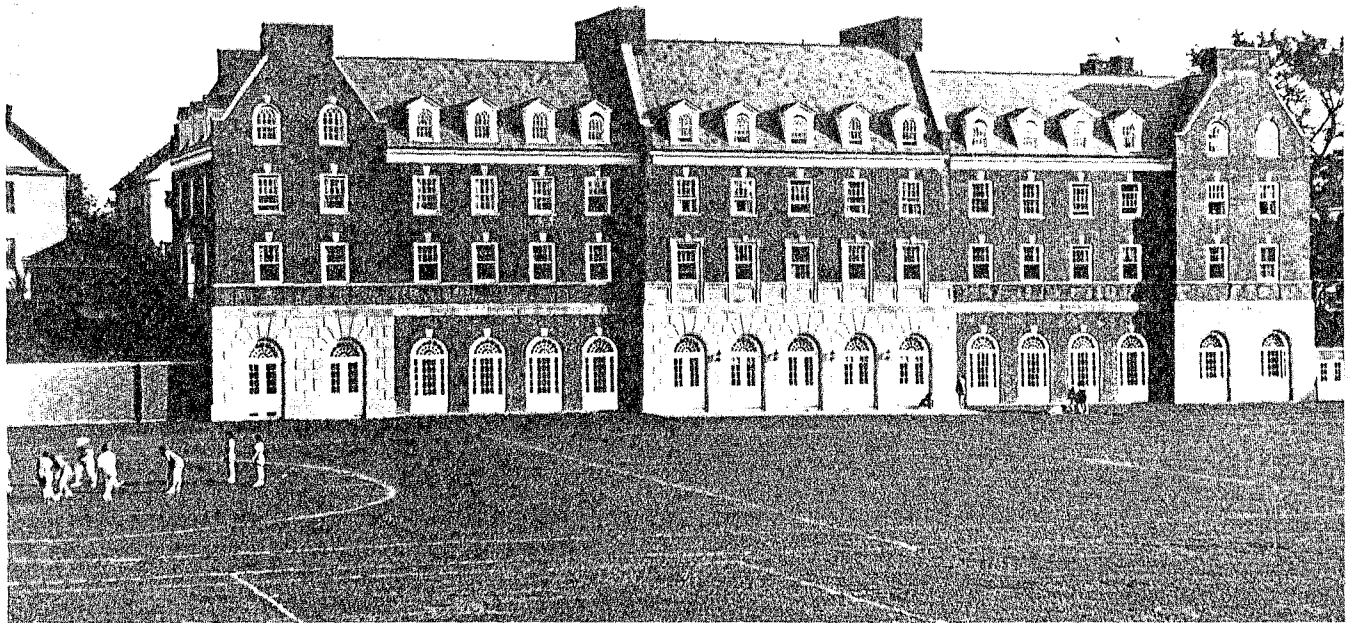
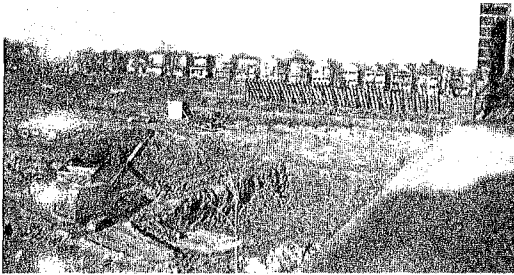
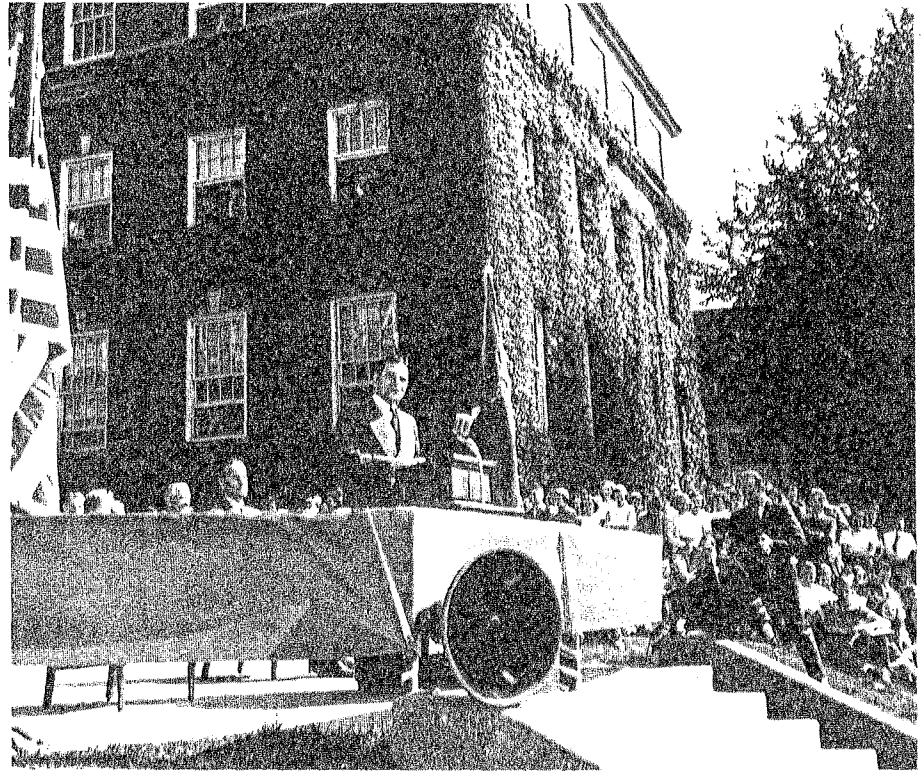
Programmatic changes in the 1950s reflected both traditional liberal arts commitments and changes in the teaching profession. Liberal arts work still made up 85 percent of an undergraduate's work. Psychology and philosophy were added to the offerings in the 1950s in response to student demand, not for professional reasons. Yet some of the liberal arts were shaped by professional goals. For instance, students majored in social studies rather than history or sociology because secondary school curricula were organized around the former. The professional sequence culminating in the student-teaching experience made up the remaining 15 percent of the coursework. Enrollment increases meant that the Milne School could not handle all of the student-teachers, and in 1947 some began going off campus for their teaching component. In 1950 the state began requiring thirty credits of graduate work beyond the baccalaureate degree for permanent certification of teachers, and Albany's graduate enrollments rose sharply. Most graduate students were employed teachers, seeking master's degrees on a part-time basis to win higher salaries and protect their certification.

At Albany during the 1950s most classes remained small, and students received a good deal of individual attention. There were occasional complaints about the quality of instruction. A *State College News* columnist argued in 1951 that Albany professors should be

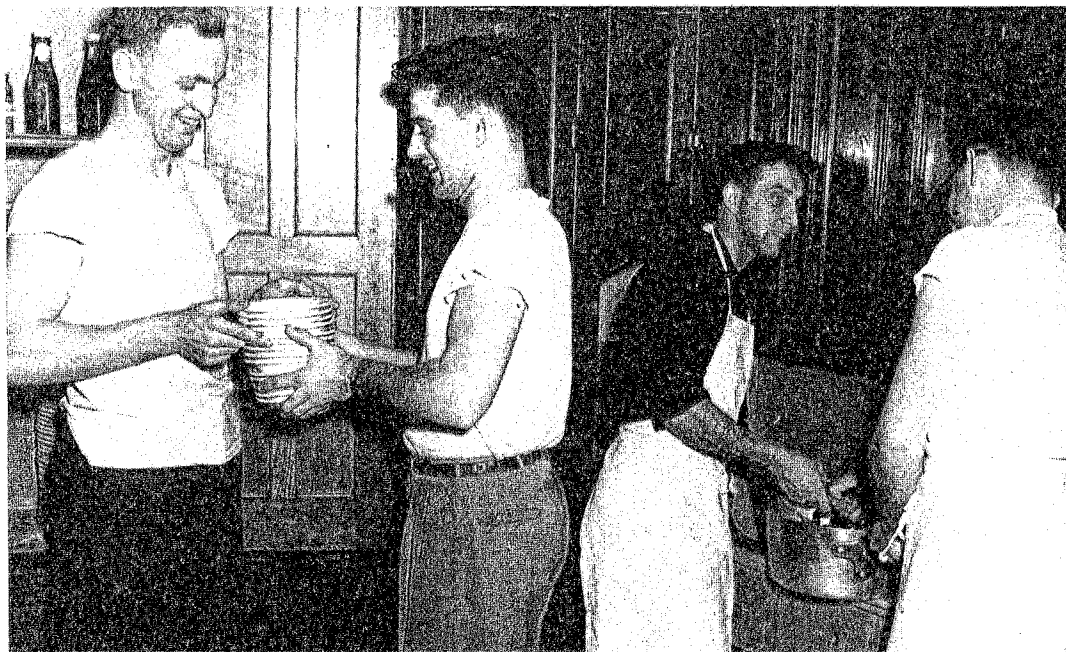
Academic leaders for the decade included Edgar Flinton, Director of Graduate Studies; and Ellen Stokes, Dean of Women. (Dean Stokes photo from *Pedagogue*, 1944.)



At right, Governor Thomas E. Dewey visited the campus in 1950 to inspect the construction of Brubacher Hall, the first dormitory built with State funds, and the new Draper Annex fronting Washington Avenue. The original dormitories, including Pierce Hall, bottom photo, which had been built by alumni(ae) in the 1930s and 1940s, were not bought by the State until the 1960s. All new dormitories after 1950, beginning with Brubacher, were built by the State Dormitory Authority. Below, the beginning of Brubacher construction, which was completed in 1951. (From the scrapbook of Ruth Boynton, '50.)



“graded” as student-teachers in Milne were. But such public grumbling was rare. Course examinations were rigorous (they were reduced from three to two hours only in 1956), and grading practices suggested there were few easy “A’s.” Most graduates became successful teachers, but a 1963 national study of the undergraduate origins of doctoral students



Life in the dormitories: (top) women in the late 1940s in a room in Sayles Hall, (below) and men cleaning up the cafeteria at Sayles Hall. Originally built for men, Sayles was used as a women's dorm from 1941 through the Spring of 1951.

also showed that Albany ranked Number 1 among institutions of its type and size between 1920 and 1962 in sending graduates on to successful doctoral study.

A profile of the student body in 1960 characterized it as largely lower middle class and ethnically heavily second and third generation Americans. Women made up between 53 percent and 62 percent of the undergraduates. Students came in roughly equal numbers from rural and urban backgrounds, and three-quarters were first generation college students. For many, becoming secondary school teachers was a means of moving up the social scale. Many came to Albany because of the low costs; most worked summers to earn a third of their annual living costs.

Admissions were relatively selective. The class of 620 that entered in the Fall of 1959 had been chosen

from 2,160 active applicants. The vast majority came from the upper quarter of their graduating classes, and entering freshman classes included substantial numbers of students who had won various kinds of high school honors. Pre-admission testing began in 1954, and test scores of

incoming students slowly rose. Faculty remember these student generations as earnest, hard-working, and somewhat conventional, typical of America in the 1950s.

The student culture of the 1950s showed strong similarity to that of the 1930s. While students and editors periodically complained about student apathy in the pages of the *State College News*, there was still a high rate of participation in student life. Student Association conducted its affairs through weekly assemblies, although by the late 1950s the growing size of the student body made that kind of "town meeting" democracy increasingly difficult. Annual elections of student officers were the highlights of the school year.

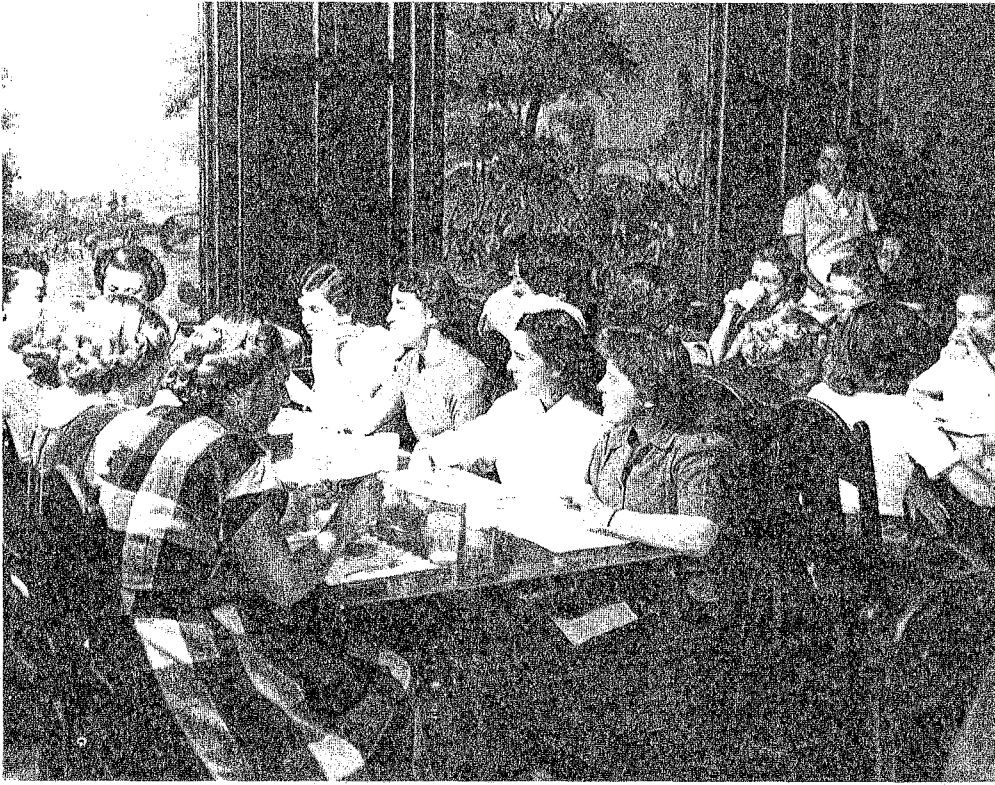
The entering class began its integration into the student body with a freshman camp, usually held at a nearby lake. Upperclass students served as student guides for the frosh, leading them through the various school-opening activities, culminating in the annual reception by the President. The process continued with Rivalry, a year-long series of competitions between freshmen and sophomores that included elaborate musical and/or dramatic productions.

Moving-Up Day was an elaborate affair by the late 1940s. Shortly before graduation each year the entire student body gathered in Page Hall. Student election results were announced and the winners were "tapped" by outgoing student officers. The frosh symbolically "moved up" to sophomore status by coming down from the balcony and taking seats on the main floor. Students exited by class and watched outgoing seniors plant ivy, and the day concluded with a variety of social activities.

Rising enrollments and

The drawing room in Pierce Hall circa 1947. Pierce's elegant formal areas were deliberately designed to elevate the sensibilities of the women students.





The dining room in Sayles Hall. Originally built for men, the design was meant to suggest an English country manor, a proper atmosphere to train young gentlemen.

absorbed a quarter to a third of the Student Association budget. The weekly *State College News* and the College yearbook, the *Pedagogue*, continued to thrive. Intramural athletics for both men and women involved large numbers of students. The principal intercollegiate sport was basketball, and during the 1950s Richard "Doc" Sauers began coaching his teams to a series of non-losing seasons, still unbroken in 1994. Both wrestling and baseball became intercollegiate sports at Albany during the decade, but another of the periodic attempts to introduce intercollegiate football in 1951-52 fell victim to inadequate finances and facilities.

Publications and athletics took the majority of student funds, but enough remained to support an impressive array of cultural organizations and activities. The local academic honorary, *Signum Laudis*, was highly visible. Faculty members organized a Philosophy Club that met regularly in the friendly environs of the Boulevard Cafeteria; its success played a role in the creation of a philosophy department in 1952. Touring lecturers such as Andre Siegfried or performing artists such as the Bach Aria Group and Margaret Webster's Shakespeare group stopped at the Albany campus regularly. The music department and Music Council

increases in the student tax meant larger budgets for Student Association. A \$23,700 expenditure budget in 1946-47 rose to nearly \$60,000 in 1959-60. Periodic surpluses enabled Student Association in 1956 to buy 700 acres of Adirondack land that became Camp Dippikill. A Faculty-Student Association was organized in 1950 (although it would be long without student representation on its board) and used revenues from various service operations on campus to finance group housing.

Typically, publications and intercollegiate athletics each

put on productions of Gilbert & Sullivan operettas in the early 1950s. Agnes Futterer's Advanced Dramatics class continued to present high quality performances. Student Harold Gould, '47, went from playing Sheridan Whiteside in *The Man Who Came to Dinner* at Albany to a distinguished acting career in stage, screen and television. English faculty member Paul Bruce Pettit established a highly successful arena-style summer theater in the Page Hall gym in the early 1950s.

Traditional social activities continued to be an important part of undergraduate life. The *State College News* during 1956 reported on twenty dances, six class banquets, twenty-three College-sponsored social events, six trips, thirty-seven sorority-sponsored events, sixteen fraternity-sponsored events, seven films, and eleven social events sponsored by religious groups. Major occasions included State Fair, the Junior Class weekend, Moving-Up Day, Campus Chest, and Rivalry.

Student dress of the 1950s became more informal. A 1958 survey of attire preferences showed that only eight percent of the men wore suits, 80 percent were without sports coats, and 67 percent preferred khaki slacks. The women were a bit more conservative; although they preferred skirts to dresses by a four-to-one margin, half said that among dresses they preferred the full-skirted variety and 80 percent favored high necklines in any event. No one mentioned slacks or shorts.

Student culture continued to value female beauty and grace. The College community glowed with pride when Mirjam Sanderson, a junior English major, became Miss New York State in 1958, but two years later, students also selected a campus "king," voting as they contributed to the annual fundraising venture, State Fair.

Students were attracted to fraternities and sororities largely because of the social life they

A favorite activity in the 1950s and early 1960s was a visit to the Brubacher Snack Bar.



The faculty of the 1950s: (top) Ralph Tibbets, MA, '42, (education); (bottom) Vivian Hopkins (English and comparative literature); (opposite page, top) Paul Pettit (English and comparative literature); (opposite page, bottom) Josiah Phinney (economics).



offered. Some, notably the Edward Eldred Potter Club, were local, but many in the late 1940s had national affiliations. The Greeks came under fire during this period. A survey of the attitudes of freshman women in 1945 showed that nearly two-thirds did not want to join a sorority because of their "lack of democracy." One sorority, Beta Zeta, quickly amended its constitution to remove religious qualifications for membership. Seven years later the sixty-one members of the local chapter of Kappa Delta Rho resigned from the fraternity because of racial and religious discrimination in the national organization and then promptly reorganized as a local fraternity, Alpha Pi Alpha.

A decisive resolution of the issue came in 1953 when the State University of New York (SUNY) Board of Trustees ruled that no organizations on SUNY campuses could bar students because of race, creed, color, religion, national origin or other artificial criteria, and additionally barred fraternities or sororities with national affiliation from SUNY campuses. The ban held despite legal challenges. Although national fraternities and sororities disappeared, local groups continued to flourish.

Albany students often seemed politically conservative on state and national issues. Republican candidates for New York governor or U.S. President won every College mock election conducted during the 1950s. At times, students seemed politically oblivious, as illustrated by an incident during the Presidential election campaign of 1952. In October of that year, out-going President Harry Truman stumped upstate New York in support of Democrat Adlai Stevenson. At Truman's Albany rally, George Warnock, son of an RPI math professor and a student at Albany, appeared wearing an Eisenhower-Nixon button and carrying an "I Like Ike" banner. He was quickly arrested by Albany police on a charge of disorderly conduct. Warnock's hearing was twice postponed, and the case never came to trial; Warnock himself died tragically a year later in a Troy car accident. The revealing part of the incident was that there was nary a mention of the student or his arrest in the *State College News*.

Yet students often took relatively liberal positions on issues concerning student life. One observer wrote that "State has gone democratic (small 'd') with a vengeance in 1945. Since the beginning of the year all assembly programs have contained at least one motion for change of an

undemocratic rule or group or organization." Myskania, because of its self-perpetuating character, became one of the targets. On March 25, 1946, Myskania dissolved itself and burned its constitution and records; however, some of the members of the dissolved body joined with other student leaders to recreate Myskania, with members chosen more democratically, and it continued to thrive throughout the 1950s.

Students also felt strongly about academic freedom. In 1946 a student came to the defense of sociology professor Ted Standing when Standing was charged with exposing students to "crass materialism" and "sniping at religious beliefs." Albany's would-be teachers were also concerned about the 1949 Feinberg law which sought to eliminate alleged "subversive" teachers from New York schools.

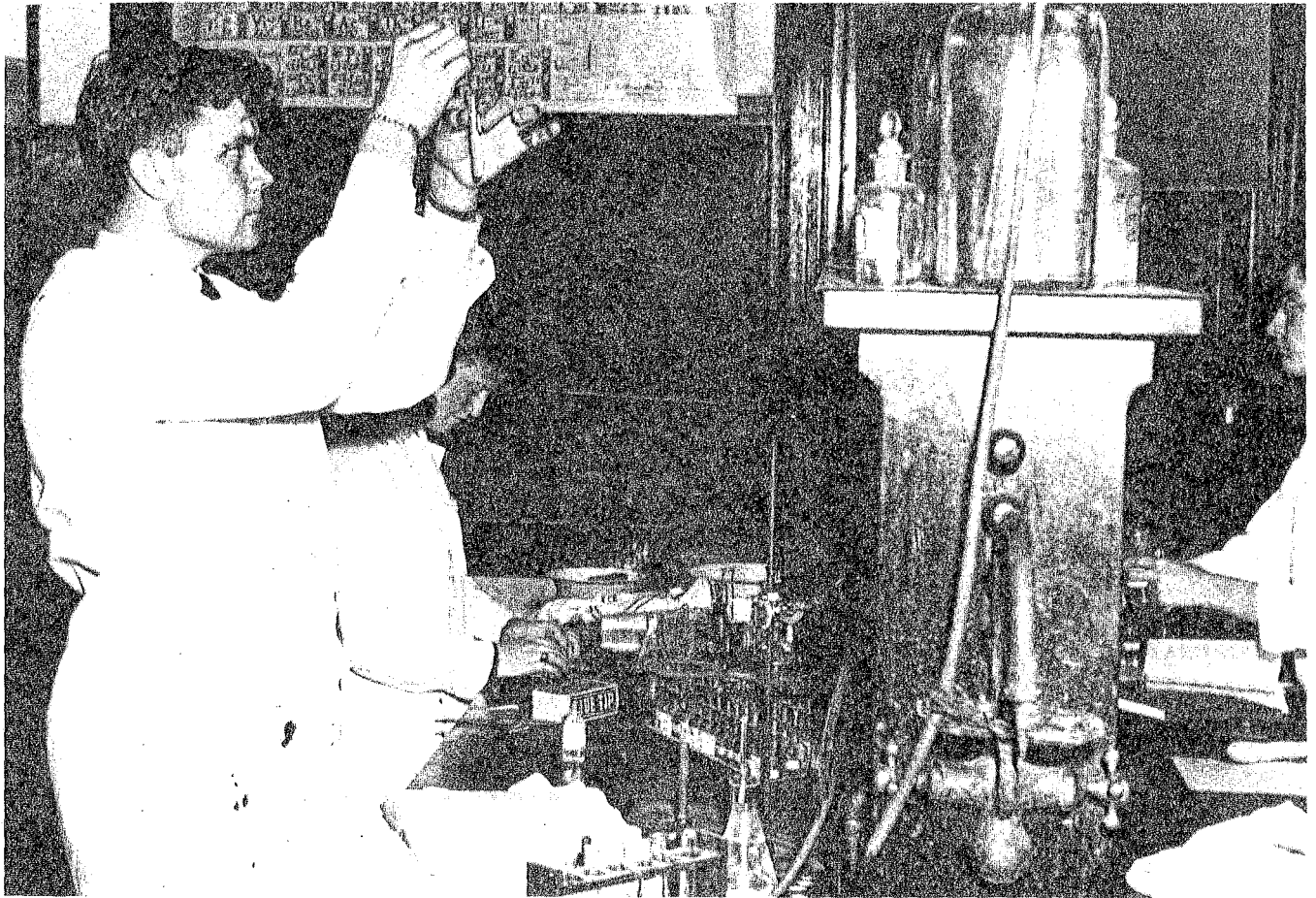
By World War II, students were showing concern for issues of discrimination. In 1944 the College participated in a nationally funded study of intergroup relations. One feature of the study was a student-run Conference in November 1944, titled "Inter-Group Relations," attended by students from various colleges and featuring a talk by Eleanor Roosevelt. In the following year, students organized the Inter-Group Council on campus "to offer opportunities for culture, contact and understanding among members of every race and nationality in the community." These anti-discriminatory attitudes showed up in other areas of campus life as well. In 1946 the College community watched an Advanced Dramatics class performance of five scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* with a white Romeo (Arthur Collins, '48) and an African-American Juliet (Mary Cheatum '49). The overwhelmingly white student body twice elected African-Americans as president of Student Association during these years—John Jennings, '49, in 1948-49 and Clyde Payne, '57, in 1956-57.

In 1962 the College received national recognition in a lengthy article in the *Saturday Review*. Author David Boroff summed up his conclusions by observing that "Albany State has a distinguished history. As liberal arts college go, it is a good one. As teachers' colleges go, it is superb." The accolades were well-deserved. But they arrived just as the institution was facing its greatest challenge: transforming a "superb" teachers' college into a public research university. The process was getting under way at the very time Boroff summed up the achievements of the College for Teachers.



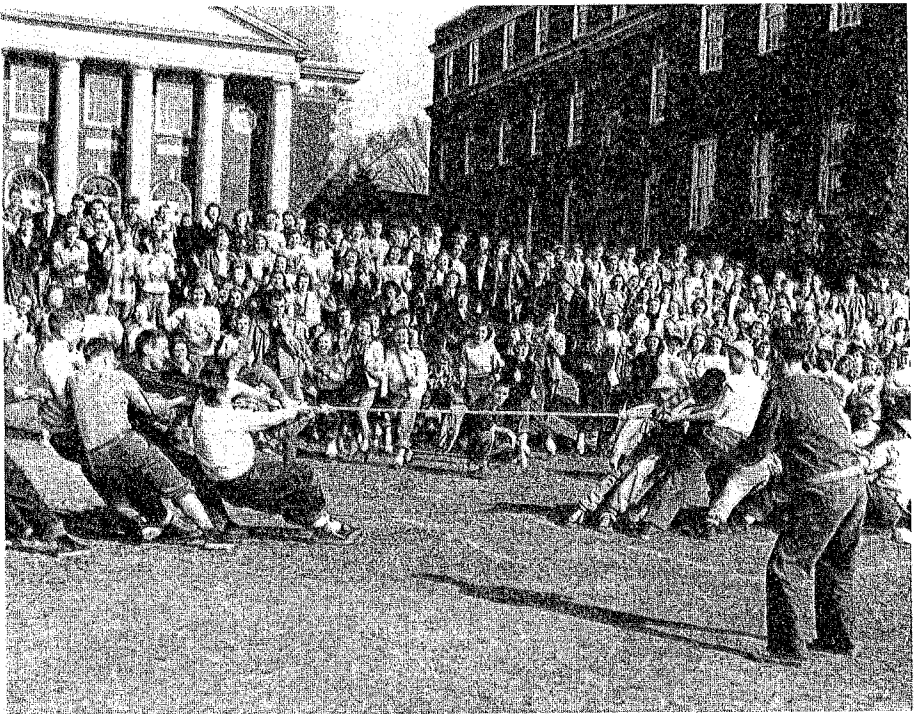


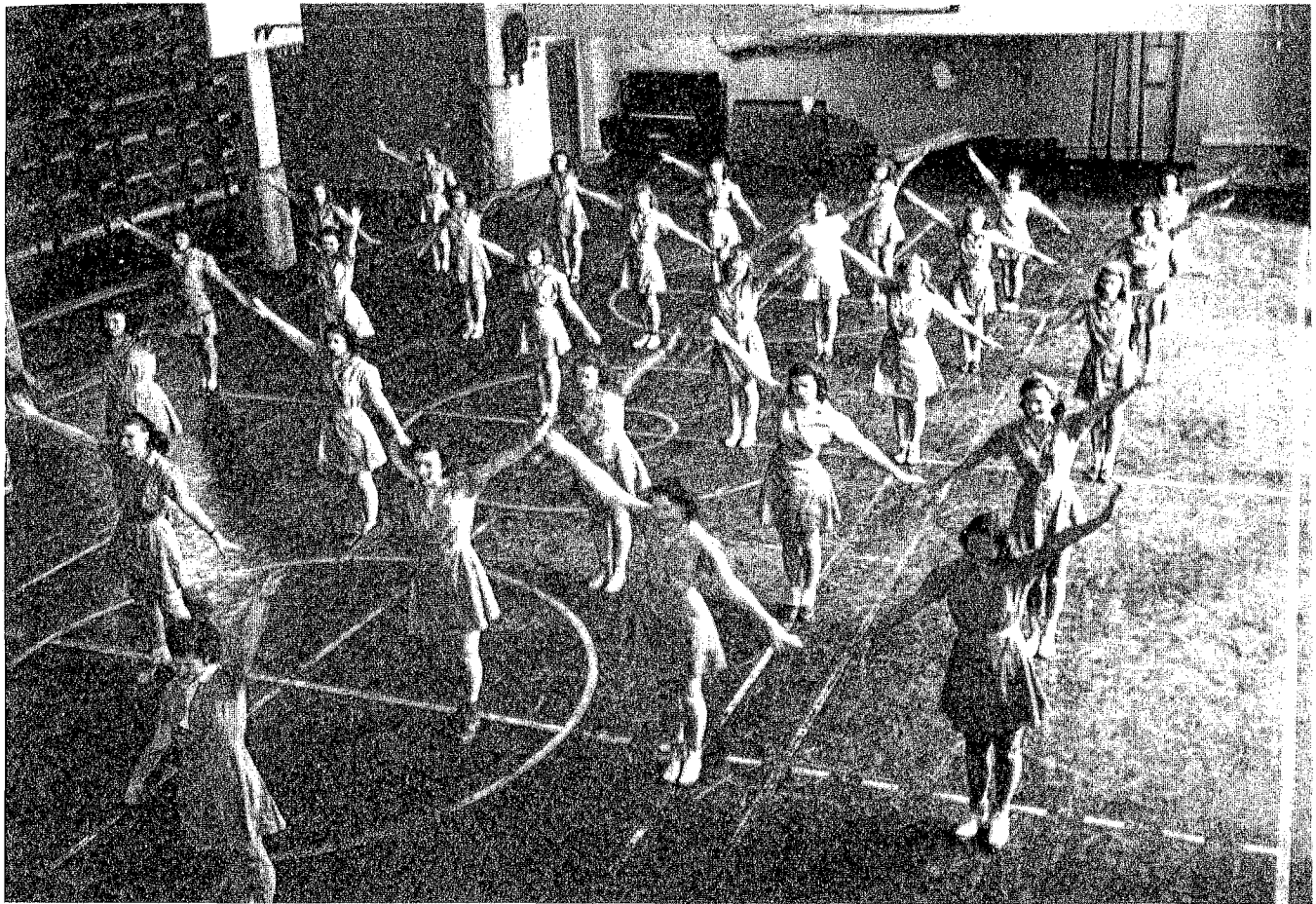
Naoshi Koriyama, '54, returned to Japan where he became a professor of English at Toyo University. He is a noted poet in his homeland, writing predominantly in English. His works have been published in the United States, Canada, and Australia and translated into Italian. In his books of poetry, he acknowledged Vivian Hopkins' influence in suggesting that he write in English. He was one of the first international students at Albany since the 19th Century. (*Alumni Quarterly*, January 1958.)



The academic program was rigorous and Albany was the top college in the nation among institutions of its type and size in sending graduates on to obtain doctoral degrees from 1920 to 1962. Here are biology and chemistry laboratories from the late '40s to early '50s.

"Freshman Camp" circa 1950, below, where upperclass students served as guides for new students, usually at a nearby lake or in the Helderbergs. "Rivalry," at right, begun in the 1920s by Myskania to build school spirit, lasted through the mid '60s. Initially continued all year between the freshman and sophomore classes, it later took place during the first weeks of school.





Intramural sports for both men and women thrived in the 1950s. Women's sports were supervised by the Women's Athletic Association. Pictured are a 1946 women's gym class in the Page Gym and a 1948 softball game.

The Boulevard Café was the meeting place of the Philosophy Club, whose success, in part, led to the creation of a philosophy department in 1952. (*Pedagogue*, 1940)

Social activities, such as dances, continued to be an important part of undergraduate life in the 1950s. Pictured is a December 1947 "Christmas Formal" sponsored by the Inter-Sorority and Inter-Fraternity Councils.





Agnes Futterer continued to teach dramatics and stage productions in the 1950s. Above she fences with student Arthur Lennig, '55, who later became a faculty member in the Art Department. At left, her most famous student, Harold Gould, '47, who went on to a successful stage and television career.



Founded in the early 1940s, Hillel offered Jewish students a forum for cultural programs. This 1948 photo is of Marvin Wayne, '49, and Rabbi Moseson, the group's advisor.



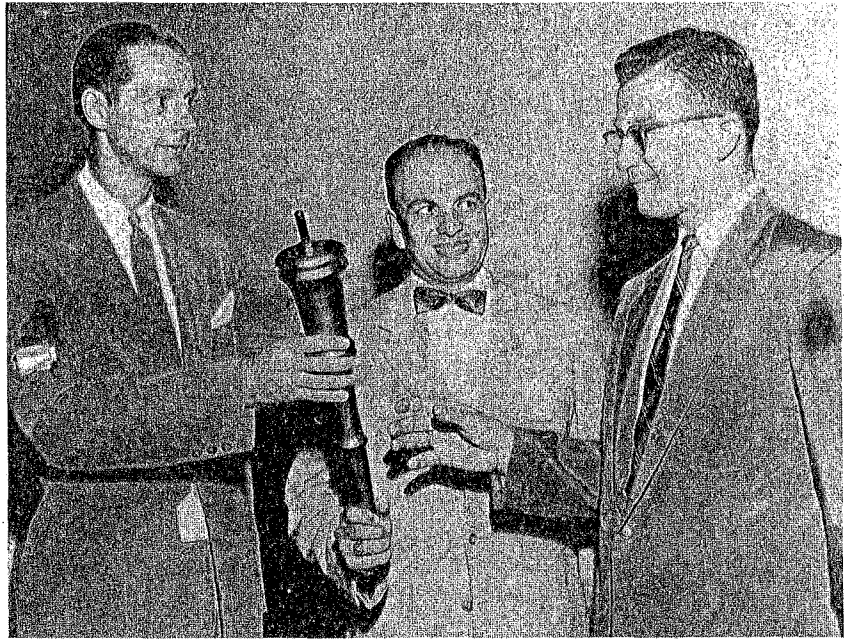
Dorothy De Cicco, '52 (Gamma Kappa Phi), Joan Reilly, '53 (Chi Sigma Theta), John Stevenson, '51 (Sigma Lambda) and David Wetherby, '51 (Potter Club), follow student tradition and "meet at Minnie" in Draper Hall.

(Opposite) Queen Audrey Koch, '50, and her court in 1949. The tradition of selecting a campus queen—and occasionally a king—continued through the 1970s.



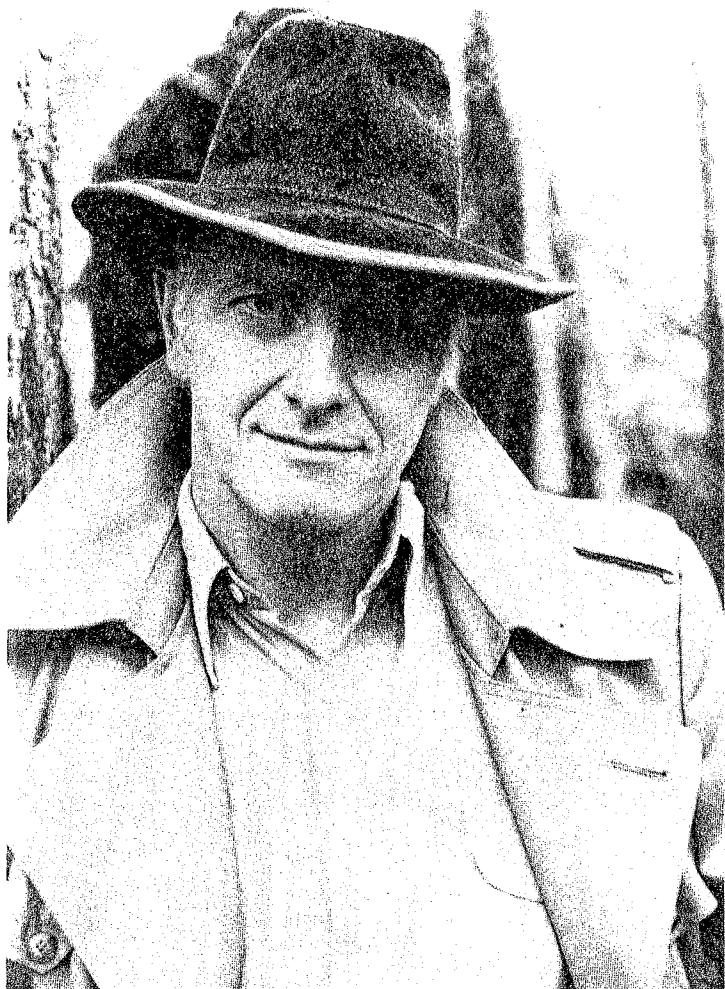


From the *Alumni Quarterly*, July 1956: "One of the most cherished traditions at Albany is the Torchlight Ceremony. It originated in 1930 when the torch was first passed to Louis Wolner (left), president of the graduating class. Leonard E. Friedlander, '39 (center), president of the Alumni Association, passed the torch this year to Sigmund Smith (right), president of the Class of 1956."



John Jennings, '49 (center), the first African-American student elected president of the Student Association (1948-49), presents Donald Ely, '51, leader of the victorious Green Gremlins, with the Campus Day Cup as Harold "Sparky" Vaughn, '50, leader of the Yellow Jackets, looks on.





(Left) Joseph Persico, '52, became a speech writer for Nelson Rockefeller and published several books including a biography of Edward R. Murrow and a study of controversial FBI Director William Casey.



(Above) Clarence Rappleyea, '57, became a successful lawyer and politician, serving as Republican Minority Leader of the New York State Assembly.



(Left) Betty Duda, '59, was one of many Albany graduates to become a Peace Corps volunteer. She taught secretarial skills in Jamaica, and prior to joining the Peace Corps taught business subjects in Morrisville and Hamilton, New York.

(Left) Harvey Milk, '51, was a student on the G.I. Bill and later became a gay rights activist and a city supervisor in San Francisco until his assassination in 1978. (*Pedagogue*)

Edith O. Wallace

One of the University's cornerstone buildings on the Uptown Campus is the Edith O. Wallace Humanities Building, named after the first chairperson to administer the Division of Humanities, a woman whose dedication to the students of the College and University made an indelible mark both in and outside the classroom.

A member of the University faculty for forty-seven years, Edith Wallace, '17, was first appointed in 1918. In 1928 she was made chair of the Department of Ancient Languages, and three years later assistant professor of Latin, eventually rising to the rank of full professor. Wallace also created a course in humanities, that later developed into a Department of Comparative and World Literature.

Outside of the classroom, Wallace was a charter member of both Myskania and the Student Council. She served as chair of the curriculum committee and both the college and federal loan program committees. A 1913 graduate of the Milne School, she was a president of the Alumni Association. When she had time left over from her University duties, she relaxed with photography and weaving.

Before devoting herself to the education of thousands of University students, Wallace had completed her own education with an M.A. in English literature and a Ph.D. in Greek and Latin literature from Columbia University.



David Boroff's positive *Saturday Review* article brought national prominence to the College just as it was beginning its transition to a University.

(Opposite) Between classes, the crowded portico connecting Hawley and Draper circa 1955.