

WOMEN AND CLEMSON UNIVERSITY



*Two 1973 members of the Capers' Fourth Regimental Headquarters,
the coed affiliate organization of the National Society of Pershing Rifles.*

WOMEN AND CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Excellence—Yesterday and Today

Dr. Jerome V. Reel, Jr.

University Historian

Edited by Dr. Alma Bennett



CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

DIGITAL PRESS

2006

An online version of this work is posted on our website (www.clemson.edu/caah/cedp/cudp%20home.htm), Wayne K. Chapman, Curator. The present edition was produced in the offices of the Center for Electronic and Digital Publishing at Clemson University, using Microsoft Word 2003, Adobe Photoshop 5.5, and Adobe InDesign CS. It was designed and set in Garamond, and is printed on demand by University Printing Services, Office of Publications and Promotion Services, Clemson University, using the computer-automated technology of a Xerox 6115 Docutech printer.

Every effort has been made to trace all copyright-holders, but if any have been inadvertently overlooked, the publisher will be pleased to make the necessary arrangement at the first opportunity

Copyright © 2006 by Clemson University

ISBN 0-9771263-6-6



CLEMSON UNIVERSITY
DIGITAL PRESS

Book design by Beth Amato Morgan, editorial assistant at the digital press. Completed and supervised by Wayne K. Chapman, executive editor.

Cover Design by Eve Gibson, Clemson University Publications and Promotion.

Published by Clemson University Digital Press at the Center for Electronic and Digital Publishing, College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina. The Center superintends the trademark and publishes the following academic journals: *The South Carolina Review* and *The Upstart Crow: A Shakespeare Journal*. For information, visit the Center's website (www.clemson.edu/caah/cedp), write to the Director, or call 864-656-5399.

Table of Contents



PUBLISHER'S NOTE	VI
FOREWORD	VII
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	IX
COLHOUN~CALHOUN~CLEMSON FAMILY TREE	X
CHAPTER 1: CLEMSON WOMEN YESTERDAY	1
CHAPTER 2: CLEMSON WOMEN STAFF AND FACULTY	9
CHAPTER 3: CLEMSON WOMEN STUDENTS	19
CHAPTER 4: CLEMSON WOMEN IN ORGANIZATIONS	33
CHAPTER 5: CLEMSON WOMEN AND EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMICS	51
CHAPTER 6: CLEMSON WOMEN AND EXCELLENCE IN ATHLETICS	61
CHAPTER 7: CLEMSON WOMEN AND EXCELLENCE IN ADMINISTRATION	71
EPILOGUE: CLEMSON WOMEN TODAY	81
ENDNOTES	86
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	88



Publisher's Note



Ordinarily, the Contents page of a book will be followed by a List of Illustrations. Because of the great number of photographs and digital images obtained or produced from Clemson University sources, we forego that formality here in preference to crediting an antecedent and important part of the book's logic. In effect, this book fulfills a promise implied in an article that appeared in a themed issue of *Clemson World* entitled *Welcome Coeds: A Celebration of 50 Years of Clemson Women* 58.1 (Winter 2005), a version of which is archived on the *Clemson World Online* website (<http://cworld.clemson.edu>). The article is called "Clemson Women, the Early Years," attributed to "a longer history that sheds light on the female influence during those early years, written by Jerome (Jerry) Reel—historian, professor and a true Clemson treasure." (See <http://cworld.clemson.edu/archive/2005/winter05/features/earlyyears.htm>.)

Like that themed issue of *Clemson World*, the undertaking to publish Dr. Reel's "longer history" under the aegis of the Clemson University Digital Press involved work considerably beyond the original manuscript and the year 1955. Professor Reel and Professor Alma Bennett (our volume editor for the project) and CEDP's student layout designer Beth Amato Morgan had the salutary examples of Nancy R. Martin, "A Tale of Her Own: Mary Katherine Littlejohn, 1921-2001"; Liz Newall, "In the Game" (on women's athletic achievements from the 1950s to the present); and a general profile of teaching and research endeavor, entitled "Big Improvements," by an unsigned staff writer or writers. Newall's story is especially to be credited as the primary source for content in Chapter 6. *Women and Clemson University: Excellence—Yesterday and Today* hopes to emulate the example of such fine journalism while making no claims to thoroughness or to the last word on the subject. This modest book is more comprehensive than its antecedent, but, taken together, the two publications remember and celebrate the women who have made Clemson a stronger institution of higher learning.

Other recommended reading should include President James F. Barker's "Clemson Women: Partners in Progress," linked as the "President's View" in the themed issue of *Clemson World Online* and excerpted on the back cover of the book. The Center for Electronic and Digital Publishing is grateful for President Barker's particular interest in and financial support of this project.

—Wayne K. Chapman

Foreword



IT'S TIME TO TELL THE STORY

by CATHY SAMS,
Chief Public Affairs Officer

It's time to tell the story of women at Clemson, maybe way past time. After all, you could say that Clemson owes its origin to a woman. The estate that Thomas Green Clemson bequeathed to South Carolina to found a college came into his possession through his wife, Anna Calhoun.

Anna's role extended far beyond her family fortune and Fort Hill. She shared her husband's vision of economic progress through scientific education, and often used her own influence and family contacts to lobby legislators and influential friends to support the idea. Richard Simpson, executor of Clemson's will and member of the school's original Board of Trustees, once wrote that Anna should receive equal recognition with her husband for founding the school—a rare tribute in a day when a woman's opinion was generally not highly regarded or valued.

Perhaps the memory of Anna explains why Thomas Clemson—who otherwise planned the college in great detail, down to naming the first members of the Board of Trustees—never specified who should, and should not, be permitted to study at the institution. Although the school opened its doors as an all-male, all-white, military school, Clemson's will made no reference to race or gender. Because of this pivotal omission, later trustees were not shackled by legally binding documents that barred the admission of non-white students and women.

It's also not an exaggeration to say that Clemson owes its financial survival to women. When the Board of Trustees decided in 1954 to make Clemson a civilian, coeducation college, it was as much a business decision as a pedagogical one (see chapter three). For the most part, a generation of young men who had fought World War II had no desire to attend a military college. Trustees worried that the school was becoming “irrelevant” and would not be financially sustainable unless it opened its doors to the other half of the population.

With a few exceptions among the staff and faculty, women did not arrive in large numbers until that “sea change” took place—more than 60 years after the school opened its doors. Current President James F. Barker has said that each time Clemson has made such a major change, it has emerged as a stronger institution.

Although women were welcomed by most students, faculty and staff, it took time for women to be fully integrated into the life of the campus and to enjoy all the rights and privileges of their male classmates. Early pioneers tell stories of being barred from a class by a faculty member who refused to teach women (and being “rescued” by another faculty member who said he wasn't “afraid of girls”). There was no on-campus housing in those early days, and few gathering spots where coeds felt completely at ease.

But all of that was temporary. Today, Clemson has a woman serving as Provost, the university's chief academic officer; a woman leading the Faculty Senate; and a woman leading the Student Government. Thanks to progressive leaders who ensured that women had full access to faculty and staff positions, and women students to a wide variety of academic majors, student organizations, athletic teams, and opportunities, there are few barriers left to be broken.

Women have changed Clemson, and Clemson women are changing America. And what a story it is!



*Beth Kunkel, Faculty Senate President 2006-07, receiving the gavel from
Connie Lee, Faculty Senate President 2005-06.*

Acknowledgments



Many people helped with this project. Students Jim Tyrell, Lindsay Tapp, Greg Miller, Brian Parsons, Drew Land, and David Dickerson tracked down elusive enrollment data and researched information in *TAPS* and *The Tiger*. Faculty who helped include Liz Newall, E. M. Lander, Don McKale, Timothy Bourret, and George Bennett. Other important help came from the librarians and staff of the Clemson University Libraries' Special Collections, especially Alan Burns, Jim Cross, Linda Ferry, Shanon Hays, Susan Hiott, Mike Kohl, Carl Redd, Dennis Taylor, and Laurie Varenhorst. The staff in Institutional Research, the Calhoun Honors College, International Affairs, and National Scholars provided data as well. Barbara Rogers and Linda Bridges lent much needed secretarial support. A special thanks to the Communications Center, especially Glenn Spake, Jeff Bennett, and Al Littlejohn, who taped all the interviews. Thanks also go to Bob Becker and Clinton Whitehurst in the Strom Thurmond Institute for conceiving the *Through Their Eyes* series and to Don McKale for conducting the original interviews. To all those interviewed, grateful thanks for sharing memories by tape and by letters. To Alma Bennett, an English and humanities professor who served as volume editor; Wayne Chapman, the director of the Center of Electronic and Digital Publishing and executive editor of the digital press; Susan Hiott from the Special Collections unit of the Clemson University Libraries; and Beth Amato Morgan, an M.A. in English graduate student who served as editorial assistant, I give big thanks for their work. I appreciate the support that James F. Barker, Clemson's fourteenth president, and Doris Helms, Clemson's first woman provost, have given to this project. Finally, to my wife Edmee Franklin Reel for her support of Clemson women students (including nearly forty-three years as a sorority advisor, making countless biscuits, and advocating for her students), and to our children, all Clemson alumni, my love and thanks.

—J. V. Reel, Jr.
May 2006



Colhoun-Calhoun-Clemson Family Tree

