

WOMEN AND CLEMSON UNIVERSITY



Margaret Marie Snider, Chemistry major and first Clemson woman graduate.

Chapter 5

CLEMSON WOMEN AND EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMICS





The new English-Mathematics complex (later called Mauldin Hall), c. 1962.

Electrical Engineering students, 1974-75.



WOMEN RAISE THE ACADEMIC BAR

In addition to the emergence of women in student government and the campus media, women succeeded in academics at Clemson. President Emeritus Walter T. Cox, Dean of Students in 1955, was pleased by the competition the women offered the men in the classroom. Their attention to their studies, their diligence, and their brightness elevated the classes.⁸²

Data on gender academics were first calculated in 1973 when the men's grade point ratio was 2.41 and the women's was 2.69. Between 1973 and 2004, the all-male grade point ratio never surpassed that of the women. By 2004, the all-male grade point ratio was 2.78 and the all-female was 3.09. Even by 1965, however, it was clear that Clemson University's women students were academic pace setters. Of the 134 women in the student body, fifty had grade averages above 3.0. Those who did were also campus leaders. *The Tiger* reported, "Ande Mitchell of Columbia, South Carolina (3.81) is Miss Clemson University and a cheerleader. Mary Trout of Coral Gables, Florida (3.62) served as secretary of the freshman class and a member of the school's Mixed Chorus; Jane Amick of Orangeburg, South Carolina (3.41) was the piano accompanist for the Glee Club and Mixed Chorus and became an active member of the radio staff."⁸³

Most women at first pursued degrees in education, liberal arts, horticulture, and later medical technology and nursing. Slowly their options opened up. In 1967, the first engineering graduates were Martha Jean Robinson (B.S. Mechanical Engineering), Mary Bell Trout (B.S. Civil Engineering), and Ayse Nurseli Cezayirlioglu (M.S. Civil Engineering). *The Tiger* noted that half of the



Ande Mitchell, 1968.



Mary Bell Trout and Jane Amick, 1965.

1965 Architecture student.



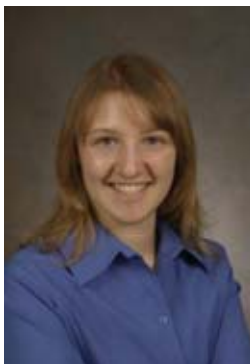
The first women to receive engineering degrees at Clemson, 1967. Martha Jean Robinson [right] earned a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering, and Ayse Nurseli Cezayirlioglu [left] earned an M.S. in Civil Engineering.

fifty women who were honors students in 1965 earned their grades in arts and sciences. The remaining half were scattered through such curricula as architecture, metallurgical engineering, medical technology, electrical

*[Left to right]
Georgia Keenan,
Silvia Gilbert, and
Fran Oakley, the first
women to receive
degrees in Electrical
Engineering, 1975.*



engineering, mathematics, physics, and horticulture.⁸⁴ In 1970, Georgia Keenan, Silvia Gilbert, and Fran Oakley graduated in electrical engineering. All three received honors for their work. In 1980, Clemson's then College of Engineering sponsored a summer program to stimulate female interest in engineering. Twenty-eight women from Anderson, Oconee, Pickens, Greenville, Spartanburg, and Cherokee counties took part in the first program. Nonetheless, in 1980, only twelve women of the 185 engineering students graduated. That year, there were 257 women and 2,197 men in the Clemson engineering program.⁸⁵ By 2005, the College of Engineering and Science enrolled 3,817 undergraduates of whom 914 are women. Of those students, 552 women are in engineering.⁸⁶



*2005 National Scholars: (top) Achieng Adongo, Kristina Catani, Suzanne Sawicki, Lesli Kiedrowski,
(bottom) Laura Kulikowski, Lori Pindar, Shannon Edd.*

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

The academic excellence of the woman, both undergraduate and graduate students, has continued unabated. In the autumn of 2005, a new class of National Scholars arrived at Clemson from various regions. Six were male and seven were female. These seven women were Achieng Adongo, from Orangeburg, an Engineering major; Kristina Catani, from Sewell, New Jersey, a Business major; Suzanne Sawicki, from Tallahassee, Florida, an Engineering major; Lesli Kiedrowski, from Sheboygan, Wisconsin, a Genetics major; Laura Kulikowski, from Laurys Station, Pennsylvania, a



Three Women National Scholars in the medical field: Ashley Dahl, 2000 National Scholar, University of Alabama; Ashley Neal, 2000 National Scholar, Yale University; and Clarice Seifert, 2001 National Scholar, Medical University of South Carolina.

Veterinary Science major; and Lori Pindar, from Sumter, majoring in Communications. They joined a group of twenty-two men and nineteen women who proved that these young people, among America's brightest, are also campus leaders. At this time, of the eight women National Scholars who had previously graduated, three of them (Ashley Dahl, Ashley Neal, and Clarice Seifert) are in the medical field, studying at the University of Alabama-Birmingham, Yale University, and Medical University of South Carolina respectively. The quality of the women who are National Scholars is exceptional. From all of them we can expect exceptional achievement around the nation and the world.

The same is true for the Clemson women who, over the years, have made up nearly half of Clemson University's Calhoun Honors College. In 2005, for instance, 194 freshmen women began their studies in Honors. They were joined by a slightly smaller group of men. Since the program began in 1962, it has helped attract many women to campus, which in turn has enhanced Clemson's intellectual environment. Proof of that campus-wide enhancement can be readily found in these young women's honors theses. A typical, recent sampling of their completed theses includes: "The



Katherine (Katie) Brock, spring 2003 honors graduate, who double-majored in Biochemistry and Visual Arts.

Cost of Irresponsible U.S. Foreign Policy in Chile from 1970 to 1973,” “An Evaluation of Thin Piezoelectric Sensors for Contact Stress Measurement in Prosthetic Test Sockets,” “Primitive Spider Silk Gene Study,” “The Lion’s Roar: Winston Churchill’s Words and Vision in World War II,” “One Sweet Whirled: Ben and Jerry’s Ice Cream Environmental Efforts Related to Cause-Related Marketing,” “A Timeless Rebel: Sophocles’s *Antigone*,” and “A Novel Cyclophilin-Like Protein Involved in Surface Molecule Expression in *Trypanosoma Brucei*.”

A third program in which women have achieved high goals is Cooperative Education. “Coop” students, as they are called, are recruited by businesses, engineering firms, and industry from all over the country. They spend the summer after their freshmen year at work on site, return to school for the fall of the sophomore year, are at work in that spring semester, in school the next summer, and at work the next fall. A remarkable representative of these students is industrial engineering major Kerry McGuire who, during the second of her three co-op stints at NASA’s Johnson Space Center in the summer of 2004, received NASA’s Co-op Special Achievement Award. Others serve as student teachers, student nurses, and Parks, Recreation, and Tourism interns. These fields enroll many more women than men. In addition, women and men in the Language and International Trade program spend at least one summer either working or studying in a country where their language predominates.



Kerry McGuire

ACADEMIC AND LEADERSHIP SOCIETIES

The ultimate academic society for junior and senior undergraduates was Phi Kappa Phi, which historically counted women as many of its members. The first Clemson women were tapped for membership in 1957. It, however, was an exception. Dean Delony led the movement to add Alpha Lambda Delta, a scholastic honorary for first-year women, and Mortar Board, a leadership honorary for junior and senior women. Women began to gain in position on campus, much of it due to Dean Delony’s leadership. Beginning in the mid-1970s and into the early 1980s, other leading honor societies at Clemson—such as Omicron Delta Kappa leadership honor society, Blue Key International Honor Society, and Golden Key Honor Society—began to elect women into membership as well as leadership roles. Since then, chapters of many more honors and leadership societies, as well as service societies, have been established for Clemson men and women.



[Above left] Patsy Wertz, the first woman inducted into Clemson’s chapter of Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society, 1958. [Above right] The Order of Athena Honorary Sorority was organized in the spring of 1968 as the sister organization of Blue Key. In the spring of 1969, The Order of Athena sponsored the organization of Phi Sigma Omega, a freshman honor society for women.

WOMEN'S STUDIES

For the past twenty years, the Women's Studies Program has been an important catalyst for change and awareness at Clemson University and in the greater community. It was begun in the summer of 1986, when Judith Melton (Professor of Languages) and Judith Stanton (Assoc. Professor of English) received a curriculum development grant from the Ford Foundation through the Duke-North Carolina Women's Research Center. Like the field itself, Clemson's women's studies program, directed by Judith Melton until 2004, focuses on the role of women in all facets of human endeavor. Specifically, it examines women's lives and accomplishments in the contexts of history, sociology, psychology, medicine, economics, law, politics, as well as in the arts, music, and literature.

The first Women's Studies course at Clemson was team-taught by Melton and Stanton in the fall of 1987. The next semester, the women's studies minor was developed and accepted by college and university curriculum committees. The minor includes two core courses. All other courses are drawn from different departments. As a result, Clemson students (women *and* men) have the opportunity to study a wide range of issues in courses led by faculty from many different departments. Some examples: Gender Communications (Department of Communication Studies); Feminist Literary Criticism and Women's Literature (Department of English); Women in Antiquity and American Women's History (Department of History); Sex Roles (Department of Sociology); and Women and Psychology (Department of Psychology). In the spring of 1996, the program celebrated its tenth anniversary with panels by current students and Clemson alumnae, as well as a keynote address by Eleanor Baum, Dean of Engineering, at Cooper Union. Eight years later, Elisa Kay Sparks, an Associate Professor of English who had been teaching the core courses since 1990, succeeded Melton as the director of the women's studies program.

The program sponsors and co-sponsors speakers, forums, performances, and events on campus and in the community. Outstanding past speakers, for example, include Shari Benstock, whose lecture at Clemson turned into the ground-breaking book *Women of the Left Bank*; Sarah Weddington, one of the lawyers who argued *Roe v. Wade*; Sandra Gilbert, who first presented *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* at Clemson; and Alex Sanger, grandson of Margaret Sanger, who introduced his new book, *Beyond Choice*, at Clemson. The Women's Studies committee also awards an annual prize for the best undergraduate research project on a topic related to women's issues. Recently, the committee inaugurated a Graduate Student Research Forum with monetary prizes for first- and second-place presentations.

WOMEN'S COMMISSION STUDENT AWARDS

The President's Commission on the Status of Women also honors graduate and undergraduate students who have made outstanding contributions. The first graduate student award, which



2006 Women's Commission Award winners: Courtney DeBruin [left] and Kelly Boyd [right].

in 1994 helped mark the 40th anniversary of the arrival of women students at Clemson, went to Deborah Valerie Pence in Mechanical Engineering. Since then the graduate student recipients have included Betsy K. Gerwig, Agricultural Engineering (1996); Amy Donahue, Counseling and Educational Leadership in Student Affairs (1997); Amy Liann Johnson in Physics and Astronomy (1998); Sheri Wimberley, History (1999); Brett Lamb, English (2001); Tatyana Sergeyavna Vshivkova, Entomology (2002); Maria Anderson Whitehead, Forest Resources (2003); Keisha Walters, Chemical Engineering (2004); and Renee Keydoszins, Environmental Science (2005).

Undergraduate student recipients have been Catherine Reith Evans, Secondary Education and English (1994); Megan Noreen McEnery, Education (1996); Sybil Virginia Metz, Communication Studies and Psychology (1997); Laurie S. Reid, Entomology (1998); Kendra Worley, Communication Studies (1999); Rita Bolt, Political Science and Communication Studies (2000); Britannia Jennings, Microbiology and Molecular Medicine (2001); Marija Zoric, Economics (2003); Meredith Russell, Physics (2004); Stephanie Hequembourg, Mechanical Engineering (2005); and Courtney H. DeBruin, molecular biology (2006). Also in 2006, Kelly Boyd was the first Clemson student to receive the Women's Commission newest award, the Thea McCrary Student Award for Outstanding Service.

STUDENT NORRIS MEDAL WINNERS

One of the two most venerable and coveted awards in the Student Body is the Norris Medal. Established in the will of original life trustee D. K. Norris, the Norris Medal is given annually to the graduating senior whom the faculty selects as the most outstanding senior. In 1970 Martenza L. Jones of Columbia became the first woman student to be awarded the honor. Five years later, Nancy Ellen Jacobs, editor of the *Tiger*, received the medal. The next two winners were Patricia L. Warren (1977) and Verna Gardner (1978). Several years later (1985), Harriet Allison Smith was chosen. The following year, Lisa Schwartz received the medal at her graduation. The medal winners in 1987, 1988, and 1989, were, respectively, Tallulah Fellers, Mary Elizabeth Poole and Tracy Tran Malcolm. The 1992 winner was Aletha Orfanedes of Greer. She was followed by Catherine Evans (1994), Kristin Anna Henderson (1995), and Leighanne De Marzo (1997). To date, the most recent women students to have received the award are Rita K. Bolt (2002), Kaycee Fulton (2004).



Nancy Jacobs, 1975. Jacobs was also the first woman editor-in-chief of The Tiger, 1973-1974.

STUDENT TRUSTEES MEDAL WINNERS



*Carol C. Faulkenberry,
1960-61.*

Another coveted undergraduate award is the Trustees' Medal for Oratorical Excellence. In 1959, Carol C. Faulkenberry won the Trustees' Medal. Since then eighteen other women students have received the Trustee Medal, which was first given in 1903. Nina Dulin won in 1967, Patricia Warren in 1975, Cynthia Hall in both 1976 and 1978, Ellen Perry in 1977, Gwendolyn Logan in 1980, Lisa Ann Mendenhall in 1983, Lena Partlow Hester in 1984, Sangeetha Reddy in 1986, Kimberly Lewallen in 1988, Jennifer Connors in 1990, Tracey Templeton in 1991, Shana Cloer in 1992, Ashley Cooper in 1993, Elizabeth Coward in 1994, Elizabeth Garrison in 1995, Ashley Torrance in 2000, Nichisha Woodward in 2001, and Anne Snipes in 2003.

*Ashley Torrance, Trustee Medal
Winner, 2000. Torrance addressed
the graduating seniors with her
winning talk "My Blood Runneth
Orange."*

