

My whole life I have heard it said that the library is the heart of the college or university. I contend that for many of the people I encountered during my four years as a student at Western College for Women, historic Kumler Chapel was the heart of the campus -- not the library. The library was the center for cognitive research and rigorous concentration. Kumler Chapel was the place for one's heart, one's inspiration, religion, beautiful music, moral values, meditation and reflection, and dreams of a good future. I enjoyed singing in the choir. In four years I never missed a Sunday.

Did you realize the Freedom Summer students worshipped in this chapel, as did the World War I and World War II students? Modeled on a 9th-century church in Bazouches-au-Houlme, Normandy -- an exact replica, indeed -- Kumler Chapel was completed in September 1918. The chapel has excellent acoustics and includes many meaningful stained glass windows. Look at the Brice Window, which was created in 1892 by Mary Elizabeth Tillinghast. It depicts a young woman wearing a robe. You might wonder why this woman is wearing Greek attire. Well, I found out this stained glass window is the subject of a Ph.D. dissertation by Lisa Kay Suter, who proved that Victorian clothes, including whalebone corsets, constricted women so severely that they were impeded from

moving, breathing, and speaking. In contrast, togas permitted elocution, a progressive, self-improvement method that developed at the turn of the century. During the 1800s women were not treated as equals under the law. They did not have the right to vote. Because education for women was sporadic at best, they had less access to books, schools, and advanced study (except for the privileged few). I am so proud to stand here today, because Western College provided an excellent education for women and made my career in publishing possible. My interest in women's rights and the Civil Rights Movement expanded here at Western. This brings me to the main point of my speech: the struggle for social justice.

Throughout my life social justice has occupied an important part of my thinking. I will explain why. Born in Washington, D. C., as World War II raged, I experienced many rapid-paced changes. My father, who was the minister of St. John's Episcopal Church in Mount Rainier, Maryland, joined the Navy in July 1945 at the advice of the church. I learned to walk on Christmas Day 1945 just as my father completed the Navy Chaplain School at William and Mary College in Williamsburg, where my family quickly relocated. My father subsequently was stationed as a military chaplain at a hospital on Guam. Again, because Hiroshima shortened his naval career, my father had to make a quick decision. He learned that Oxford University offered a unique mentoring program, to which he applied

and was accepted for the autumn of 1946. Dr. Leonard Hodgson, the Theological Secretary for the Faith and Order, who was an expert on the ecumenical movement and had corresponded with Dietrich Bonhoeffer in 1939, mentored him during the two years of study to earn the Ph.D. in theology.

Oxford, a medieval city, was an environment filled with geniuses and world-class intellectuals. However, the arrival of Princess Elizabeth in Oxford on May 25, 1948, to receive the degree of Doctor of Civil Law really caused a stir. The ceremony in the Sheldonian Theatre was proper, solemn, dignified, and conducted with great civility. I stood with my family in front of Christ Church College. Wearing a white-veiled hat with pink and white roses, the princess smiled to everyone. It was a very happy occasion. The princess gave a speech at Oxford University that stressed liberty over the dark forces of dictatorship and England's leadership responsibility to prohibit the spread of fascist propaganda in the universities of Europe where the Oxford graduates would be professors. Thus, she advocated that the university had a mission to advance democracy, which applies today to all universities, and is strongly evident here at Western College. I was very impressed and influenced by the environment at Western.

To emphasize this point, similarly, during the 1930s Dietrich Bonhoeffer had written about the mission of the church to counter the antidemocratic and antireligious policy of the Nazi regime. In his major work, *Life Together*, he

outlined the importance of moral courage against evil, rather than unthinking forgiveness. Instead of exiting, he advanced the concept of the ecumenical church and the gift of life. Dr. Hodgson really emphasized his outreach to my father and underlined the importance of the ecumenical movement to counter the German genocide.

After the deprivation of two years of rationing and the sight of the capital of England in ruins, my family returned to the United States. My father turned down a position in Geneva, Switzerland, as well as an opportunity in Oxford to work as a professor in St. Luke's Episcopal School of Theology of the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee.

My mother noted that after about two months in Tennessee, we children exchanged our British accents for a deep Southern drawl. The school system was organized according to the cotton picking calendar and therefore began early in August because of the agricultural work in the spring. Due to the Cold War we practiced air raid drills and learned to duck under our desks.

We had not settled in Tennessee for long before a major controversy erupted. In the fall of 1951 the report of the Christian Social Relations Department of the Provincial Synod of the Episcopal Church recommended that the southern seminaries be racially integrated, which is the mission of the church. After the resolution was adopted by a vote, the Episcopal Church advised the University of

the South that St. Luke's Episcopal School of Theology would be racially integrated. Because separate but equal was the law, the University Board of Trustees chose not to admit African American students. The Episcopal Church believed it was unethical to build a separate theological school for African Americans, who deserved the mainstream and the best preparation possible to successfully navigate the reality of racial tensions. Remember that World War II had been waged in order to terminate Adolph Hitler, a racist dictator bent on the genocide of Jews and a fierce opponent of religious freedom. The small town was in an uproar with both sides of the dispute over integration furious. Fortunately, my father was not singled out for character assassination. Other faculty members, however, were harassed. The atmosphere turned very nasty. We experienced the hatred of racism.

In October of 1952 the entire faculty of St. Luke's School of Theology, including my father, resigned in protest on principle, but also to prevent the trustees from firing any one of them. The professors agreed to complete the academic year. Significantly, the liberal wife of the university president invited me for tea and sandwiches and a game of Chinese checkers to try to alleviate the unpleasant situation. My father interviewed at Yale University to find another position quickly to support our family of seven.

Acclimatizing to New Haven was not difficult, because I was so used to moving. Now my friends were the gifted and talented daughters of liberal Yale professors and professionals. I was nine years of age when the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* on May 17, 1954, that the “separate but equal” educational policy was unconstitutional. This ruling prompted the passage of laws requiring the desegregation of public schools and embodied not only -- moral -- force. This decision vindicated the resignation of the St. Luke’s faculty in Sewanee. This reflected favorably on my family. Our lives had improved as a result.

After four years at Yale, in 1957, my father became the Dean of the Berkeley Divinity School, which today is part of the Yale School of Theology. He influenced us by talking to us about the Civil War: the terrible loss of life, the abolition of slavery, as well as the importance of the Civil Rights movement and the ecumenical movement, all of which sparked my interest in social justice. My parents attended the World Council of Churches conference in New Delhi, India, in 1961. Growing up I experienced the value of diversity. On August 28, 1963, my parents attended the March on Washington. For history I wrote a paper, titled “Sherman’s March to the Sea” to indicate how the North won the Civil War.

In 1958 I entered Foxcroft School in Virginia. There I participated in military drills under the command of a Marine Captain twice a week, a required

program for fitness and character. The school introduced the study of Russian, a step obligated by the Cold War. The school also built a new biology lab. In connection with the study of mathematics, I studied astronomy. In my sophomore year I won first prize for younger girls' prose for "An Aspect of English History." The courses I did well in prepared me for a major either in English or science. In the summer of 1961 I worked for the Good Shepherd Episcopal Mission in Fort Defiance, Arizona, on a Navajo Reservation, an experience of Christian commitment with diversity. In addition, I assisted the Navajo Indian Art Instructor teaching the young children, and I sang in the choir, just as I was to sing in the choir the next autumn at Western College.

During the ordeal of very competitive college interviews, Western College for Women was recommended to me as the Mount Holyoke of the Midwest, a seven-sister-level college that was also a leader in international education with a strong emphasis on diversity, which was meaningful to me.

Breakfast with the college president, Dr. Herrick Young, was a highlight of the Western College for Women Freshman Orientation. Kippers were served. We felt very privileged. Dr. Young, formerly a missionary in Iran, gave us a better understanding of how peace may be achieved in the Middle East. The president set the tone for four years of study that included a focus on one continent per year to learn world culture, two semesters of required intercultural studies, and an

atmosphere of inclusion with many international students. The environment really resonated with me, first, because of my experience of having lived in Europe, second, due to my early exposure to the Civil Rights movement, and third, because of my experience working with Navajo Indians. One of the courses I studied in 1966 was Africa in Modern Times, a course that in the 1960s was not part of every college curriculum.

In addition, I was very impressed to hear the many assertive students who spoke up distinctly to participate in student government. In contrast to the reserved, conventional way I had been brought up, they spoke in a forthright manner about their qualifications. Furthermore, the political activists, who represented the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee spoke in a practiced, professional manner with confidence. This was a new experience for me, because I had been taught traditional female skills. Furthermore, my former school had stressed silence to teach concentration. At both schools I had the full benefit of education designed to empower women. Empowerment of women continues today even with coeducation.

I enjoyed meeting new friends: Halima Baalawy from Zanzibar, now Tanzania; Gabriele Hagelstange from West Germany; and Dzintra Salme from Lithuania, to name a few.



Autumn semester of my freshman year I started out well in Analytic Geometry and Calculus, where I earned one of my best grades. I credit Professor Charles Herms, a career Navy man, who taught in a very clear manner. For me the class was a beacon of teaching with distinction. There was a steady and firm, focused atmosphere in the classroom. Overall, the faculty focused on teaching in such a way as to enlighten and empower the students. Classes were never led by inexperienced graduate assistants. Meticulous and professional are two words that describe the confidence-building Saturday morning Chemistry lab. Anyone who worked in that lab was prepared to perform professional lab work for a salary. By the end of freshman year I had earned an A in English and went on to declare my major in English.

Creative Writing provided me the opportunity to compose different types of prose and poetry to submit for publication. This course was similar to an internship. Professor Ruth Limmer, a published author, demonstrated the specific, concrete steps involved in pursuing a professional writing career. This had a direct impact on my future publishing career. She taught us to think “So what?” to define our purpose, theme, or claim. How is the reader going to benefit by reading your article or poem or novel? She offered a Creative Writing seminar to simulate graduate study and professional dialogue.

I knew at Western that I wanted to write nonfiction books. I had first-hand experience of major social justice themes: World War II, the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Women's Movement, beginning with the emphasis on advanced education for women, the increased entry of women into the workforce, and the struggle for wage parity. Today we even have a woman running for president.

At Western it was evident that we were part of the quest for world peace, civil rights, and gender equality despite the obstacles presented by discrimination and the backlash against women. However, I also learned never to assume that lofty ideals lead directly to productive, rewarding work. On a practical level, each person has to take a stance and make life decisions. Will working for an NGO be more constructive than entering missionary work or teaching? I felt very proud to learn that the Freedom Summer workers were oriented on this campus. The summer of 1964 my college really took a stand with important results. This is one of the most significant legacies of Western College.

During my senior year I applied to the Radcliffe Publishing Procedures Course. I remember waiting to hear from the course. Professor Limmer, who had taught us editing, assured me that I would be admitted. I was!

The Radcliffe Publishing Procedures Course consisted of lectures and dialogue-oriented activities. The students worked in teams. The world of

communication unfolded before me. One assignment was to read a manuscript and decide whether it should be published. On job day I read the postings. There was an opening in the Law Department of Little, Brown & Company. Because my grandfather was an international lawyer, I said to myself, “This job suits me.”

My introduction to the workforce began with typing zip codes into the customer mailing list. Soon I learned how to design advertisements for law books. When I was promoted to the Production Department after three months, I worked on 40 different tasks for the Production Editor.

During my tenure at Little, Brown, the CEO conducted an analysis of the entire company to study tasks and wages. The female employees knew that their salaries were lower than those of their male colleagues. We were told that men are the heads of households and thus deserve higher pay. Of course, women are also heads of households: single women, widows, and single mothers. However, equal pay for equal work was still in the future. Still, after filling out the three-page form, I felt that for the first time my work was professionally valued. This may have been one of the most important days of my three years at Little, Brown.

The atmosphere at Little, Brown was like a think tank, on the one hand, and also, a very positive and constructive environment on the other hand. With the goal of producing the best law books, we worked hard with good morale. My modern boss made certain that we had a purposeful, social outlook. With an intelligent and

professional appearance, she was outgoing and represented the civil society. In the Law Department of Little, Brown, the theme was always justice.

I got married in 1968 in New York City at St. James' Church, and my husband and I now have two sons and five grandchildren. He went to work for Sullivan & Cromwell, an international corporate law firm based in New York. I became a freelance editor for Harper & Row, E. P. Dutton, and Dodd Mead.

To return to the theme of social justice, I will briefly mention the Long Island Historical Society, where I worked for ten years both professionally and as a volunteer. Standing in a vault, I assisted the librarian who was in charge of cataloguing the collection of rare books written during the American Revolution, which were filled with all of the principles of democracy. I was elected a Director before the organization undertook a million-dollar renovation. Then fast-forward to the M.A. that I earned in International Affairs at Drew University in 1988. During the required United Nations semester, I wrote about the peacekeeping force in Cyprus. Because civil war between the Greek Cypriots in the southern part of the island and the Turkish Cypriots in the northern part necessitated intervention by the United Nations, the citizens lost their human rights.

Studying the situation in Cyprus has provided me with a perspective on the problems confronting women in the United States involving prejudice and backlash. In my latest research for my dissertation, one chapter of which will be

published soon by *The Journal of Cyprus Studies*, I discovered empirical evidence that Cypriot women during the 1960s were not paid even 50 percent of the amount that men were paid. I am proud and thrilled that this article will be published by *The Journal of Cyprus Studies*. This can be considered a breakthrough in social justice, because although I stressed the point that in Cyprus, churches and mosques restrict women, I was not turned down. I hope to publish the dissertation next.

My advice is to pursue your intellectual interests, always balancing your life with wellness, religion, fitness, and friends. Concentrate on your passion. For me it is social justice, which began in my youth, was enhanced at Western College, and has continued throughout my life.

Margaret Wilmer Bartlett 1966