

Going to College

I don't know when I started planning to go to college. I often heard the subject of college discussed at home, but we didn't talk about my going to college or, indeed, about my siblings' going, either. I remember being vaguely interested in hearing about different colleges, an interest that grew as I grew. Then, when the Great Depression became a reality in our family, I don't remember thinking about college at all until way past grade school. I was always interested in whatever school I was in and genuinely liked school and the subjects I was taking.

When I entered the first grade, I was seven years old, the standard age for beginning school in those days. I was already an avid reader, thanks to the efforts of my grandmother. After Christmas I was moved to the second grade. Later I skipped the first half of the fourth grade, a move made possible because of the crowding of Robert E. Lee Elementary School which was located in a fast-growing section of north Dallas. I missed being introduced to decimals, an area in which I still don't feel entirely comfortable; I tend to convert decimals into fractions, a much easier concept for me to grasp. After the seventh grade, I went with all my classmates in January to high school, for four years.

In January 1937 I graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School. I never considered going straight to college in midyear nor did I want to. Instead, I went to the Shamburger Business School to learn shorthand and typing, feeling that those skills would come in handy no matter what I did. The shorthand method had been invented by the proprietors of the school; it was such an easily learned method that the entire course took only six weeks. All graduates were assured of a job when we entered, not an easy assurance in those days. The job I got was in an employment agency which was just opening its office in Dallas. I was the general secretary, receptionist, and bookkeeper along with the manager, also new. Our office consisted of two desks, four chairs, a file cabinet, a typewriter, and a phone. The woman I worked for was a charming, ambitious young woman who was a fast learner, and the agency thrived, although we had many more people seeking a job than we had jobs for them. After a month, I received my first raise -- to \$30.00 a month. I felt wealthy, for a time, but wasn't too sure how that money was going to get me to college.

In the meantime, two of my high school teachers urged me to apply for two scholarships, one given by the College Club, the local name of the American Association of University Women, the other offered by A. Harris and Company, a Dallas-based department store. I followed the directions of my teachers and entered both, although I was sure that I was wasting my time, with no hope of receiving either, particularly the A. Harris Scholarship for four years' tuition and fees at Southern Methodist University. I also entered a contest held by Philipsons, a local women's clothing store. It called for a hundred-words-or-less slogan for the store. I had fun working out possible slogans on the way to and from work. I easily forgot the applications for the scholarships as soon as I had submitted them.

Much to my surprise, the A. Harris Scholarship committee called me for an interview in April, at which I was scared to death and felt, afterward, that I had not conducted myself very well. The committee did their best to put me at my ease, but I was sure that I had made a poor impression.

When they asked me what news I looked for in the daily newspaper, I blurted, "I read the funny papers to my little brother and sister." Later, I didn't remember any of the other questions, but I was sure that my answers were equally undistinguished. During that time, I was seriously investigating the possibility of attending Texas State College for Women (TSCW) in nearby Denton. There was a co-op program for dormitory living and some small scholarships also offered, all of which I applied for.

One Saturday morning in May, I received a call from the College Club scholarship committee, saying I had been awarded the thousand dollars. I was more excited than I'd ever been before; that was a great deal of money then and could easily cover four years at TSCW if I lived in the co-op dormitory. That afternoon Mr. Philipson called me; I had won the hundred-dollar clothing prize at his store. To his obvious pleasure, I was so excited that I was scarcely coherent, but he managed to make a date for me to come to his store on Monday to select my wardrobe. I had never tried on so many clothes as I did that morning at Philipson's. While I was trying to make up my mind which garments to choose, Mr. Philipson asked me to try on a full-length muskrat coat in shaded pelts of dark gray at the hem to light gray at the top. I had never before worn a fur coat; I was completely dazzled. Mr. Philipson told me that the coat was somewhat more than the hundred dollars of the prize, but I could have it and a hat, too. He was primarily a furrier and obviously was pleased with my admiration of the coat. I couldn't believe I had such a magnificent coat. It was to keep me warm through four years of college and a number of years beyond. The College Club had made a small announcement in the Dallas papers about my scholarship from them, and Mr. Philipson ran a quarter-page ad with my picture and winning slogan. Could any sixteen-year-old expect any more?



Well, actually, more did happen. The following Friday was graduation day at Woodrow Wilson High School, and my friend Virginia Neher, whose father taught math there, invited me to go to the ceremony with her. I was delighted, for tickets to a June graduation were not easy to obtain. We sat in the last row of the balcony. After I watched my friends from the June class receive their diplomas, Mr. Ashburn, the principal, announced that there was a January graduate in the audience who needed to come to the stage -- and he called MY name! As I rushed down the stairs I couldn't

imagine what I'd done, surely nothing bad enough to have me stand before that big audience. I met a great many smiling faces as I worked my way to the stage, including my English teacher, Myra Brown, who had nagged me to apply for the A. Harris Scholarship. I had no inkling. Mr. Ashburn had apparently said something while I couldn't hear the public address system, for the audience applauded as I walked on stage. I had received the A. Harris Scholarship! And I'd be going to Southern Methodist University for the next four years. It was stunning news. I don't remember anything more of that evening until I reached home quite late to a celebration with a tearful mother and father and clamorous brothers and sisters. I returned the College Club scholarship and gave up my idea of going to Denton to school. I had never really wanted to go to SMU, but of course, I didn't even consider not accepting the A. Harris Scholarship. Once September came and I started to school, I quickly fell in love with SMU, the campus, the professors, my classmates, and my classes. AND I had a fur coat to wear through four years of the cold, windy, wintry days on the SMU hilltop.

Scholarship Students Entertained at Dinner



Members of the committee of judges for the A. Harris & Company four-year scholarship awards to Southern Methodist University are pictured with the students who have received the awards at the first gathering of students and judges, at a dinner given by Arthur L. Kramer Friday night at the Hotel Adolphus. Top picture, left to right, are the committee members, Mrs. Alex W. Spence, Zellner Eldridge and Miss Eva Allen Freeman. Below are the students, left to right (front row), Mary Frances Hickman, Betty Wolfe, Jessamine Ruth Parker, Barbara Corkern; (back row), Ben N. Ramey, Ed Rowe, Percy D. Williams and Vincent Baker. Officers for a permanent organization, to be known as the A. Harris Scholarship Club, were elected.

to S. M. U. was held at a dinner given by Arthur L. Kramer, president of A. Harris & Co., Friday evening at the Hotel Adolphus when officers for a permanent organization of the scholarship students, to be known as the A. Harris Scholarship Club, were elected. Officers are: President, Ben N. Ramey; vice president, Mary Frances Hickman; secretary-treasurer, Ed B. Rowe, and historian, Jessamine Ruth Parker.

Guests at the dinner included Vincent Baker and Barbara Corkern, graduating from S. M. U. this year, who received the awards in 1936; Ed B. Rowe and Mary Frances Hickman, winners in 1937; Ben N. Ramey and Jessamine Ruth Parker, 1938 winners, and Percy D. Williams, Jr. and Betty Wolfe, 1939 winners.

studies next year. Miss Corkern has the lead in the senior class play, "As You Like It."

Ed B. Rowe, a junior, is a member of Alpha Phi Omega, honorary service fraternity; of Phi Eta Sigma and is president of the Biology Club. Miss Mary Frances Hickman has been elected to Mortar Board, top honorary organization for senior women.

Ben N. Ramey, sophomore, is opposed in his race for editor of the Rotunda, college annual. Miss Jessamine Ruth Parker is a member of the Y. W. C. A. and president of the League of Evangelical Students.

Percy D. Williams, Jr., was chosen president of the Cycen Fjodserfs, composed of the ten outstanding freshmen. Miss Betty Wolfe has been elected to the freshman honorary scholastic society.

Special guests were Dr. Umphreys Lee, president of S. M. U., and Mrs. Lee, Mrs. Margaret Evans and the three members of the committee of judges for the award, Mrs. Alex W. Spence, Miss Eva Allen Freeman and Zellner Eldridge.

At the conclusion of the dinner, especially designed keys were presented to the award winners.

The 1940 award will be made during the June high school commencement exercises.

Annual Award.

Each year the award is made to a boy and a girl graduate from the high schools of Dallas, University Park or Highland Park. Their need for financial assistance in acquiring further education is one of the first considerations, Mr. Eldridge said. Their capability as students, indicated by their standing in class, is another, but high grades do not form the sole basis for selection. Mr. Eldridge emphasized the time spent by the committee, first in eliminating the applications on basis of scholarship and reports from faculty members to a workable number and then in personal interviews with each student. Mr. Eldridge said much attention is given to emotional quality and stability of students interviewed, the main thought and purpose of the committee being to select students for the scholarship awards who give best indication of ability to turn back to the community in worth, while citizenship and contributions of merit and progress, value received from expenditure on an education. The only obligation of these students is to do the caliber of work which will best enable them to fulfill their promise to the community.

"The continuity of this scholarship is the factor which makes it such a fine thing," Mr. Eldridge said. "The scholarship award pays full tuition for the student who receives it for the four school years. Thus the student may see ahead to the completion of his plan and may pursue the full course of his college education with complete assurance."

All the winners not only have maintained good scholastic averages but have been leaders in student activities, it was pointed out. Vincent Baker and Barbara Corkern, who received the first awards four years ago and will thus be the first to graduate, both are leaders in senior activities. Baker is president of the student association and has received a graduate scholarship from the university to continue his