



'CITY GIRLS' RETURN

Four Years on Campus, a Lifetime of Friendship

A close-knit group celebrate the bonds that brought them together six decades ago.

For 62 years, about a dozen “City Girls” have been getting together just about every month. At first, they met to play bridge, but over time it was just to stay connected.

Nine of them returned to the River Campus in June for a student-led tour and some cake, a fitting way to acknowledge their friendships and their 80th birthdays, which they all celebrate this year.

The group adopted the City Girls moniker while they were City of Rochester residents enrolled at Rochester, from 1956 to 1960. Most commuted to campus for their classes. Doing so made it financially possible for them to attend the University.

Ann Weintraub '60, '69W (MA), a young education major at the time, helped form and lead the City Girls, which was formally recognized in 1959 as a campus organization. Although they lived off campus, the City Girls participated in a variety of clubs and activities, including sororities, student government, *Interpres*, the Glee Club, and the Modern Dance Club.

“We had some of the best professors,” says Weintraub, who recalls taking a class from historian Arthur May. “He had this booming voice, and he talked with such authority. One day, he asked us—so seriously—to look out the window and to tell him what we saw. We anticipated and expected an inspired, intellectual take on something, but then he said, ‘That, students, is the sun, and you might not see that much around here.’ We all just laughed.”

Ruth Danis '60, a history major, was president of the Young Democrats, a group that, at the time, had only men as members.

HALL TALK: “City Girls” Ann Weintraub, Mary Moody McNulty, Linda Lakeman, Catherine Henn, Nancy Grouse, Nancy Van Hooydonk, Emily Osgood, Jeanette Musliner, Ruth Danis visited what’s now Susan B. Anthony Halls, where, as Rochester residents, they sometimes stayed overnight when the building was the Women’s Residence Halls.

“When John Kennedy came to campus, we had the opportunity to sit down and talk with him for about 30 minutes, about global politics,” she says. “I will never forget that.”

On the occasion of their 50th reunion in 2010, the City Girls committed funds to establish the Dean Ruth Merrill Award, a women’s leadership award given annually through the Susan B. Anthony Center for Women’s Leadership. The need-based award is given to a Rochester-raised undergraduate woman committed to community service. To date, six students have received the award.

The women say it was important to establish the award in honor of Ruth Merrill who, as dean of women, was their dean. Merrill identified space in what was then the newly opened Women’s Residence Halls (now Susan B. Anthony Halls), where they could, for about 50 cents each (and their own linens), stay overnight. That way they could study, participate in events and activities, and be more connected to the campus community.

“Dean Merrill set aside two rooms for us that each had three double-decker beds in them,” says Weintraub. “She wanted to make sure we felt like we were part of campus. She was a real trailblazer when it comes to inclusivity.”

The women recall their Rochester experiences with fondness and say their time as students was the catalyst for their lifelong friendships. “I still dream about my time here,” says Emily Good-year Osgood '60, a fine arts major who now volunteers as a docent at the Memorial Art Gallery. “Those four years really made a difference in our lives.”

—KRISTINE THOMPSON