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## Women's History at UD: College of Women Opens, Making UD a Coeducational Institution

Kristina Schulz  
*University of Dayton*, [kschulz1@udayton.edu](mailto:kschulz1@udayton.edu)

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TUESDAY MARCH 6, 2018

# Women's History at UD: College of Women Opens, Making UD a Coeducational Institution

By Kristina Schulz

In 1935, 31 female students were admitted to the newly formed College of Women at the University of Dayton. The admission of women to the campus of UD was an experiment, the brainchild of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, who wanted to build a Catholic college for women on their property. The temporary nature of the agreement with UD administration to hold classes for women on the campus turned into the full admission of women to the University (*Alumnus*, March 1960, p. 4).

## IMMERSED IN CAMPUS LIFE

The first two years of women on campus were full of firsts. Isabelle Eck represented the coeds on the Student Council; Monda Hott became the first honorary captain of the ROTC Pershing Rifles; and Lillian Sheeran was named the first homecoming queen. During the 1936-37 academic year, 12 women earned recognition on the Dean's List. As the women's presence on campus increased, so did their participation in clubs and athletics (*Alumnus*, March 1960, p. 16).

Women joined the staff of the student newspaper, authoring columns such as "Down in the Valley," "Credit Hours via the Midnight Oil" and "June Jingles," chronicling campus life, news and gossip from the night school (*U. of D. News*, 1935-37, various issues). In a more serious journalistic turn, two coeds interviewed Eleanor Roosevelt on a lecture tour that brought her to the Van Cleve Hotel. On March 12, 1936, Eck and Sheeran took part in a press event with other Dayton-area journalists in a reception with the first lady.

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## A NEW CHAPTER IN FLYER ATHLETICS

Women were active in athletics from the first semester on campus. In September 1935, the Women's Athletic Association elected officers, and Sheeran served as president. Early athletic offerings for women included tennis, volleyball, basketball, riding and hiking. Five coeds earned a D monogram in 1938 for athletic achievement.

## CONNECTIONS CONTINUE

The University bade farewell to the first coed class with the 89th commencement in June 1939. Sixteen of the original 31 coeds returned to UD for their sophomore year; nine graduated in 1939 — two with honors. Shortly after graduation, the original coeds formed an alumni group named "Serosis" to continue their association with the University and to provide a link for future graduates.

— *Kristina Schulz is assistant University archivist.*

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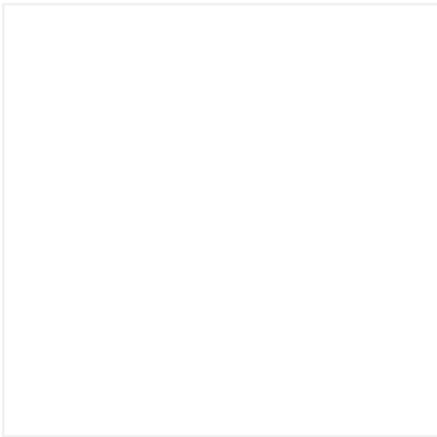


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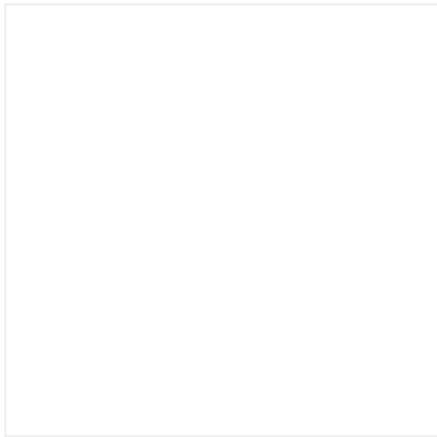
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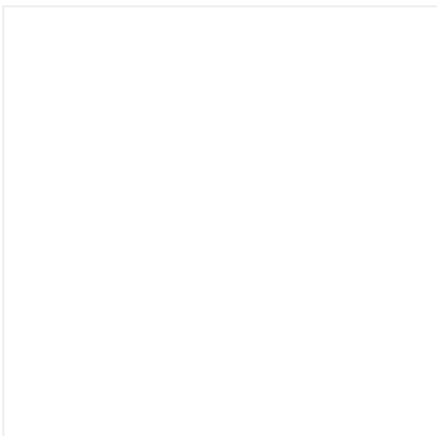
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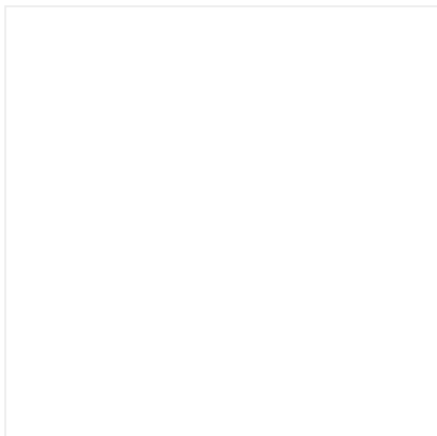
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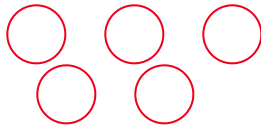
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