8-5-1968

Two Young Italian Teachers and a Wig

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Recommended Citation
"Two Young Italian Teachers and a Wig" (1968). News Releases. 3363.
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DAYTON, Ohio, August 5, 1968 — Take two vivacious young Italian teachers, add one silver frosted brown wig that both consider a real bargain and you've got spirited dialogue ranging from heated Italian to broken English. This was the scene recently at the wig counter at Rikes in the Salem Mall but due to a little American ingenuity the situation came to a happy ending for all.

The story began when 10 Italian teachers came to the University of Dayton to spend a week as part of an Experiment in International Living program. One evening the University hosts took the women on a tour of Salem Mall. Mrs. Jean Huart of UD's Graduate Studies Office accompanied two teachers who were friends from the same hometown of Alessandria, Italy. Frances Volante and Renata Berti wandered through the Mall taking pleasure in comparing the prices of imported Italian goods with the price they would bring "back home." But when they spied the wig counter at Rikes, the young women were amazed at how much less wigs cost here. They spent a lively session trying them on until both found one that suited them perfectly. Unfortunately it happened to be the same wig and there was no duplicate to be found in the store. The "harried" salesgirl called the other branch store and couldn't locate one there either. At this point, Mrs. Huart stepped in with a promise to locate a duplicate wig at the main Rikes store when it opened the following morning.

The girls were delighted even though the decision to buy the wigs would cause them to spend half of the money they had been permitted to bring to America under the program. But in typical European fashion they wanted to make a good bargain even better by bartering with the salesgirl to get the price lowered since they were buying two. It took a bit of explaining and hurried paging through the English-Italian and Italian-English dictionaries Mrs. Huart and the teachers had brought along, to convey the idea that barter is not practiced in American department stores.

But with a little finagling, and the intercession of UD the girls finally got their wigs, and at a discount too. On the day before they ended their week's stay at the University the identical wigs were delivered and given to the two excited teachers. For them, it was on to New York for the last leg of their American visit and home to Italy with their stylish new wigs from the United States.