

**Hollins University  
Alumnae Reunion 2011  
June 4, 2011**

**50<sup>th</sup> Reunion Remarks  
By Tennie Rasch Eisler  
Class of 1961**

June 1961 ----- has it really been 50 years!!!! In some ways it seems like just yesterday, and yet so much has happened that it can't be!!! I don't feel as ancient as 72 seemed to me when I was a Hollins senior... mentally I still think of myself as 21...well maybe 31... but my body seems to tell me otherwise!!!

I was born and raised in New York and unlike the rest of my family who attended Ivy League colleges in the Northeast, I decided that I wanted to go to a different part of the country as it might be my only chance and it was. My parents were skeptical but a family vacation to Virginia was planned for the summer of 1956 and all the necessary appointments were made at Sweet Briar. Someone told us, when hearing of our plans, you should really stop and look at Hollins College while you are in the area. So late one Friday afternoon, we drove into the parking lot so that we could take a quick look around. Dean Smith was just leaving for the day but convinced us to spend the nite and she would have someone show us around the next day. When we arrived back the next morning, Dean Smith herself was waiting for us with her miniature dachshund. My brother and I had grown up with a miniature dachshund and it was a family favorite --- even my brother took this

campus tour!!! Dean Smith spent over four hours with us and when we left there was no question that Hollins was where I wanted to go!!!

It was a choice that I have never regretted, and to this day it still annoys me when asked where I attended college and I proudly reply Hollins – most say where??? I loved the “where-in-the-hell-is-Hollins-College” bumper sticker and how appropriate for me – it was proudly displayed on my car bumper and office wall for many, many years!!! On that dreary September day in 1957, when my Mom flew down with me to help me get settled and make my bed on the third floor of East, I must admit that I was scared to death. But the four years that I spent here were four of the happiest years of my life and a time that I will never forget!!!

I remember Hollins for its traditions. We took a lot of it for granted when we were here but in looking back now, they become more meaningful and stand out in my memory. Tinker Day (do you think that it will be tomorrow?), May Queen (how beautiful Nancy looked), Miss Blair’s Christmas stories, The Hambones (the best group ever), Cotillion weekend with The Four Freshman, the Freya walks, the Senior Section (which our class moved from the back of the dining room to the round tables in the center), and who will ever forget Miss Chevraux and her sweater or Mr. Freitag carrying tiny Mrs. Freitag thru the snow ---- and so many more.....

We were the first class to graduate under President Willard James --- poor over- worked Mr. James --- he was also Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Board of Trustees that year. The administration and faculty – Dean Smith, Dean Wheeler, Miss Splitstone, Miss Eldridge, Bobbie Hunt Burton, Miss Durbin, Mr. Grogan, Mrs. Freitag, Dr. Steinhardt, Mr. Talmadge (to whom we dedicated our yearbook), Mr. Rubin, Miss Neiderer, Mr. Goodsell, Miss Chevraux, the Zeldins, Dr. Hanna – to name but a few. They taught us well, but most of all they were our friends. For so many years, as long as they were able, I exchanged letters and Christmas cards with several of them. My years at Hollins were wonderful ones – a time of sharing together and forming of lasting friendships. We had a marvelous class and we sure did have the best of times.

Hollins prepared me well for the future. I received a well rounded education but most important of all I learned to think for myself, form my own opinions and be able to make decisions. It prepared me to be able to be hired by IBM (right out of college) where I worked for 30 years many in management, marry and raise 5 children, volunteer and serve in my community in a variety of rolls, and toughest of all face the death of my husband and raise two adolescent girls by myself.

*But do you remember* ---15 cent hamburger, a week's groceries for \$10, a used car for \$1000, cigarettes were 20 cents/pack, 5 cents to mail a letter, minimum wage was \$1, gas was 25 cents/gal, \$2 to spend a nite in a hotel and \$15 a day in a hospital.

*And how about* – 45 RPM spindles, green stamps, metal ice cube trays, roller skate keys, drive-in movies and restaurants, Studebakers, Fuller Brush man, Burma Shave signs and the Brownie cameras and flash bulbs.

*So many things have changed* since our time at Hollins.....to mention but a few....

We survived being born to mothers who smoked or drank during pregnancy.

Our baby cribs were covered with bright colored lead-based paint.

We had no child proof lids, rode our bikes without helmets & hitchhiked.

Rode in cars with no seat belts or air bags – had to walk over to the TV to change channels – drank water from a garden hose not a water bottle.

Closets were for clothes not coming out of....girls wore Peter Pan collars and thought cleavage was what butchers did.

Cigarette smoking was fashionable, grass was for mowing, Coke was a refreshing drink, and pot was something you cooked in.

We did not have Playstations, Nintendo's, X-boxes, video games, 100+ channels on cable, movies on tape or DVD's, no surround sound, no cell phones, no personal computers, no internet or internet chat rooms or social networks..... time sharing meant togetherness...

Children fell out of trees, got cut, broke bones and there were no lawsuits.

Little league had tryouts & not everyone made the team...those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment...imagine that.

The past 50 years have been an explosion of innovation and new ideas...we had freedom, failure, success and responsibility and we learned how to deal with it all.

I know that the class of 1961 joins me in thanking everyone who helped make this reunion such a success and especially Annabelle Campbell Barkman, Fran McCall Lewis, Joyce Neiditz Snow, Libbie Gummy Cluett, Berry Powers Robison, and Jerry Hardy FitzGerald. I have seen many colleges over the years, but wherever I go, none can compare with the beauty of Hollins. What a thrill it is to spend a few days here again with so many dear friends.