

**Hollins University
Alumnae Reunion 2009
May 30, 2009**

**50th Reunion Remarks
By Florence Fowler Peacock
Class of 1959**

President Gray, esteemed faculty, administrators, honored guests, the class of 1959, the class of 1984, other returning alumnae, friends:

It is an honor to be here with you today!

When the class of 1959 entered Hollins in 1955, the Age of Affluence in America was in full swing:

1. Young people entered the work force later, thus, college attendance rose.
2. “Teen-ager” was a relatively new term describing a distinctive culture based on adolescence (We were “teenagers.”)
3. Elvis Presley popularized Rock n Roll.
4. Television technology moved into homes.
5. It was the golden age of musical comedy.
6. The fight for full Civil Rights for African Americans grew stronger.

Our classmate Judy Paterson wrote in an essay published in 2002 the following:

“One day in the summer of my junior year in high school, I looked up from my reading long enough to hear a young woman a few years older than I singing the praises of Hollins, a liberal arts college for women in Roanoke, Virginia. I had never heard of it before. I knew I’d had enough of splitting myself between being a good student and acting the straw-brained southern belle so many of us were raised to look like in those days. A college for women 700 miles from Montgomery struck me as a very good idea. The school took the education of women seriously, she said, and valued the intellectual and emotional growth and fulfillment of every student who went there. In one surprising jolt of adolescent impulsivity, determination, and insight, I made up my mind to go there.”

College attendance rose at Hollins. 235 women enrolled in our freshman class. Randolph Hall, the newest dormitory, was occupied by freshmen. The remaining 143 were distributed among East, West, and Main.

The increase in numbers of students forced changes in the dining system. Cafeteria style service, with various specified arrival times, took the place of seated meals. (Nevertheless, skirts and heels remained the proper attire.)

Our first year we were required to take Humanities and Social Studies, later a laboratory Science, also, an exit exam in a foreign language, and two years of physical education.

Our intellectual and handsome president, John Everett, with a Ph.D. from Columbia and a Bachelor of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary, was a good and wise leader.

The faculty were superb. My classmates especially remember:

Frances Niederer

Herta Freitag

John Wheeler (our class sponsor)

Mary and Jesse Zeldin

Kermit Hunter

Arthur Sackett Talmadge

Louis Rubin

Dorothy Montgomery

Paula Levine

Lewis Thompson

John Allen

Cary White

Ralph Steinhardt

Oscar McCullough

John Diercks

There was excellent leadership among our classmates. Our class presidents were:

Lawrence Cook, freshman year

Puzzle Riddle, sophomore year

Mimsy Wood, junior year

Susie Eaves, senior year (and the 50 years following)

During our senior year:

Mimsy Wood held the position of Student Government.

President, Diana Dowler and Barbara Griffin served on the Executive Council,

Sally Durham chaired the Joint Legislature, and Eleanor Oppenheimer was Chair of the Honor Court. Polly Barksdale chaired the House Board and

Phyllis Brooks led the Christian Council.

The Grapheon Literary Society was led by Katie Letcher.

Lyn Stafford and Jane Winston Carpenter edited the Spinster yearbook.

Hollins Columns editor was our angel, Nelle Carter, with special assistance from Elizabeth Milton.

Nina Terry worked with the Philosophy Club.

Mima Tally chaired the Forum.

Janice Feller worked with the Drama Association and Orchesis Dance group.

Construction of this beautiful chapel was carried out during our sophomore and junior years. Herr Holtkamp and his son carefully installed the organ in the rear of the Sanctuary and a small organ in the Prayer Chapel. For 52 years this edifice has been a house of worship, of meeting, and of singing.

Many of you classmates who sang in the Hollins Chapel Choir are here today: Anne English, Ginnie Beeks, Lynn Beveridge, Bettie Pollard, Sue Thompson, Ann Tutwiler, Jane Wyatt, Gale Peck, Eleanor Oppenheimer, Joanna Hackman, and Gail Walker.

The Scholastic Honor Society Pi Epsilon Mu has six members from our class with us today: Anne Stewart Fiske, Sally Durham, Polly Barksdale, Joanna Hackman, Diana Dowler, and Jane Wyatt.

Our outstanding athletes present today are: Lou Elam Sally Pouch and Bettie Pollard.

Our May Court beauties with us are Barbara Griffin and Gale Peck.

Hollins Abroad during the year of 1957 proved to be an extraordinary experience for its participants. Elise Robinson says her “fondest memory was Hollins Abroad” while Judith Knights said “Hollins Abroad was the best year of my life.” 26 of our classmates spent spring semester of their sophomore year in France, the summer touring Europe, and fall semester of their junior year back in France.

On May 31, 1959, 124 of us processed in caps and gowns into the new chapel to receive our degrees. President John Everett gave the address. Dean Mary Phlegar Smith handed us our diplomas.

Each of you has lived a wonderfully creative life, working hard to maintain yourself and your family, be that children, spouse, partner, or parents.

Permit me to mention a few careers followed by our classmates:

1. Mary Page Hilliard is a renowned professional artist, spending many summers painting in France
2. Carolyn Bolton taught biology, chemistry, reef ecology, and scuba diving.
3. Ann Tutwiler, having lived and studied in Japan for 4 years, returned to teach Japanese language and literature at Washington and Lee University.
4. Leta Sue Brann lives in Cork, Ireland with her husband Michael Brady, where she has reared 5 children, is helping to rear 10 grandchildren, and is “Minister of the word” in her church of St. Vincent de Paul.
5. Sue Thompson was a biochemist clinical laboratory technician for 28 years.

6. Roberta Gagnon is a store owner of high end boutiques in New York City and Manhasset, NY.
7. Anne Harrington is a real estate broker, teacher, and Navy wife, who has adapted to and enjoyed many different living locations.
8. Susan Gilbert is a professional artist, writer, and speaker.
9. Lucy Kennedy was certified to teach and taught inner city children in four states: Texas, Colorado, New Jersey and Alabama.
10. Joanna Hackman is a medical doctor and practiced for many years with the Virginia Dept of Health.
11. Doreen Kau worked for the Veterans Administration Hospital and Jewish Community services.
12. Sallie Millis Hunter having worked for Reynolds and Company in New York City returned to Winston Salem and became Secretary to the President of Wake Forest University.
13. Sandy Gray is an antique appraiser and a dealer in antique silver.
14. Marian Mysing is a lawyer and partner in a law firm with her husband; Marian recently brought a case before the Supreme Court and won!
15. Eleanor Boylin is owner and president of A Choice Nanny in Tampa, Florida.
16. Lynn Cole lived in New York City and was assistant to the president of the Worth Collection.
17. Lynn Beveridge is a psychotherapist.
18. Sally Pouch owns and operates Deerfield Riding School and Camp.
19. Bettie Pollard is a nationally ranked player in racquetball.
20. Katie Letcher was an English professor at Southern Seminary in Virginia for 25 years and is a prolific writer, presently working on book #21.
21. Gail Walker has honored her son, a commanding officer in the navy, by creating at Hollins the Walker scholarship for daughters of military.
22. Mona Brown, with a Master's Degree in Education, ran an on-grounds school for troubled teens for 16 years.
23. I particularly wish to welcome back to Hollins: Camille Jennings Johnson, joined by husband Chuck, Betty Griffith Olson, joined by husband Don, and

Martha Graham Quay, who has 6 grandchildren and a Hollins legacy: and Martha Luck Robertson.

Here are two memorable quotes from our Memory Book questionnaire:

Ethel Collins says, “Being well rounded in my education in the liberal arts had brought me much happiness,” and Lillian Lee Campbell says, “I learned at Hollins that I was just as capable, as coherent, and as effective as those around me.” Lastly, a quote from Millie Taylor: “Humor has been a great staple in my life.”

Now, my dear colleagues, we move into the last 15 to 25 years of our lives. Our big job will be to maintain our physical bodies and keep our minds alert and working.

1. Mary Crouse walks every day with neighbors.
2. Mary Todd Hutter plays duplicate bridge, which is reputed to promote longevity of the brain cells.
3. Barbara Baker is involved in 14 different volunteer commitments and gives fascinating story telling performances.
4. Elizabeth Milton “hangs out with homeless women” at church every Thursday.
5. Many of us are helping to care for our grandchildren.

Our Nation has moved from the Age of Affluence to an age of financial uncertainty. Industrial power in the world has shifted to China and India.

There is great unrest and fighting in the Middle East, South Asia, and several African nations.

Our world is facing a dwindling supply of food with an increase in population to 8 billion by 2025. Even now, starvation is a huge issue in West Africa and Bangladesh.

In the USA most citizens do not face starvation. We are, however, facing major fiscal problems which have led to loss of jobs, loss of homes, loss of health care, loss of support for the Arts.

It is a great time in history to do good things, either globally, by helping with world hunger and helping to create peace among warring factions, or locally, by contributing our energies and our funds to national, state, and community needs.

Now, my dear friends, I close my remarks by saying how much I appreciate this opportunity to speak for the class of 1959. Please know how much I admire you and, yes, how much I love you.

Hollins gave us a great education and instilled in us the strength and motivation to pursue our passions. May we continue to pursue our passions and continue to show our gratitude to this unique and most extraordinary institution, Hollins University!