

The Early Years of Coeducation at Yale College



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On view until April 28, an exhibit at Sterling Memorial Library highlights the research of four exceptional Yale students. The research of Helen Price (Davenport College '18) examines the early years of coeducation within Yale College. Price developed her display from research she conducted for Professor Jay Gitlin's course *Yale and America*, taught through the Department of History.

By 1965, seventy-five percent of U.S. colleges were coeducational. Recognizing that Yale was arriving late to a national trend, the school announced that women would be admitted to Yale as undergraduates starting in the fall of 1969. In many ways, however, the university was largely underprepared for the inclusion of women. The first class of female undergraduates had to overcome obstacles in academics, athletics, and housing, and Price examines each of these issues and describes how the women reacted and sought change. "Archival research showed me that...the first female undergraduates were pioneers rather than victims," says Price. "[These women] showed tremendous ingenuity and resourcefulness in paving a way for themselves." Her display also highlights the notable contributions of several extraordinary female students who attended and graduated from Yale College during the initial years of coeducation.

Throughout her research, Price relied on various materials held by Yale Library's Manuscripts and Archives, including student questionnaires, letters and memos from the university administration, local news articles, and photographs. Price also acknowledges librarian Bill Landis (Manuscripts & Archives) as particularly helpful and supportive throughout her process. To learn more about Price's research, stop by her display in the Sterling Memorial Library Exhibits Corridor!

By Hilary Purrington

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