

Ward-Belmont



Memories

by Julia D. Day (Judy Dunham '43)

Ward-Belmont has stayed in my consciousness for all these years. It was so unique, so "deep South," so many new experiences for a California beach kid. To this day, when I wax a bit proper (as I seldom do!) serving as an example for my daughter or son, and come through a smitch stuffy, my kids will tease: "Mom's being very Ward-Belmont!"

My husband and I visited the campus last summer, incognito, didn't want to bother anyone or disturb any dusty ghosts, and it has changed, academically probably for the better. It has caught up with its century — the buildings, the students, the grounds, very well maintained and spiffy.

Where oh where, however, did we find the old riding stables where Star MacDonald tried to bite off my arm before every class? Full of ping-pong tables — a wonderful recreation hall. Beyond it, what happened to the Tennessee woods we galloped through under the tutelage of a small martinet of a riding instructor? Woods where I, stirrupless and with a slipping cinch, went banging into the trees — now, houses and stores.

Where are you now, Le Roy the porter? I remember you running along with me, trying to keep me aboard my horse, Bless you! I see you now, helping me mount with the aid of a mounting block. (How Southern lady can you get?)

My suitemates, Ferris Parks (gone now) and Marge Smith, giggling at the edge of the ring, knowing I was stiff with fear before every class, my heels almost dragging the ground as I rode the tiny mare, Cigarette.

I remember the English instructor, dear Minnie Wells, (who turned me on to my career as a College English Instructor) asking us to pick up our books and smell and feel them. (Sensory perception, book lover's delight.) And Professor Donner in Spanish class, too much of a gentleman to

reprimand us when we pretended to fall out of our chairs.

I remember Miss Casebier when I went to protest the T.O.P.S. organization inspecting our bureau drawers (I had nothing to hide but resented the military aspects of the group!)

The dress-for-dinner rules and the concerts where young virtuosi appeared. Was it really Rudolph Serkin we escorted up those stairs after a concert? Maybe Yehudi Menuhin? Memory wanes.

The trips to town, white-gloved and hatted for sundaes at the Crossed Keys, (weren't they Andrew Jackson's stables or am I lost again?)

The wonderful food — those chocolate crisps filled with ice-cream; the friends who laughed with me in the dark, after-hours snack gatherings; the trip to the Great Smokies with Ann Massey and two

instructors whose names are gone. We sat singing hymns, looking over the mountains. The day Betty Arthur and I broke out and rode bikes, daringly unchaperoned, to the Parthenon. Ah me, our innocent transgressions, our shared confidences.

Here I am an astonishing sixty-four years along, sitting in the Arizona mountains with my also retired physicist husband, with three families of children and five grandchildren in Phoenix and Tucson. Not possible — I am just getting off the train from Los Angeles, after a chaperoned stop at the Palmerhouse in Chicago. Tall, handsome Dr. Burke is there to welcome. I am about to move in with Mickey Marshall, be homesick, flunk chemistry, join Agora, and build some of the most colorul and cherished memories of my life. W.B., I learned from you. I loved you. I do still.



"Belles" arrive at school. (Note hats and hat boxes.)