

WARD-BELMONT HYPHEN

Volume XCIV

Nashville, Tennessee, July, 1994

Special Edition

Historic Exhibit Receives First Gift

by Mary Kay Carmichael

Marion Shindel Ferenbach ('30) kicked off the Ward-Belmont Heritage Project with a gift of \$1,000 in March, 1994. The gift made it possible to hire a consultant to pull together the research that has been done, and begin to curate photos and items for the exhibit.

Susan Knowles, an independent museum curator, is working with Mary Kay Carmichael and Kelly Coplin of the Alumni and Development Office. Kelly and Mary Kay are enamored with the Ward-Belmont years and love the alumnae that they have met. They say, "We want to meet all of the ladies and write articles about them."

Mrs. Ferenbach and Mary Kay talked over the phone. Mrs. Ferenbach lives in Johnson City, Tennessee, which is on the way to Linville, N.C., where Mary Kay vacations. They plan to have tea before long.



Marion Shindel in 1930

Typical of Ward-Belmont alumnae, Marion Ferenbach was gracious and full of personality on the phone. She said that she was from Pennsylvania and had been sent to Ward-Belmont to try to recover from a long illness. To her parents' delight, she gained twenty pounds in the first year and had a wonderful two years in Nashville. Her two younger sisters, Katherine Shindel Hall and Margaret Shindel Weaver, followed her to Ward-Belmont and graduated in 1932 and '36, respectively.

Mrs. Ferenbach and her husband moved to Johnson City in 1952. They grew to love the mountains and the beauty of the place. When he died ten years ago she had no thought of moving. Mrs. Ferenbach, 83 years old, is a vibrant lady. I look forward to meeting her. She may be reached at Colonial Hills Retirement Center, 615-283-4498. *

Heritage Project Is Underway!

It's finally underway. The long-awaited Heritage Project is off the ground. The Heritage Project celebrates the distinguished history of "Belle Monte", built in 1853. It will trace the spirits of progress, innovation, and tradition that have coexisted upon its site to the present.

Ward-Belmont alumnae and faculty have been consulted about the historic exhibit on several occasions. Future meetings are planned in which alumnae and faculty will be able to contribute valuable information and be involved in the structuring of

the project. Volunteers who can give photographs, artifacts or their time are encouraged to call the exhibit directors.

The exhibit is scheduled to open in late Spring 1995. Oversized photographs, period graphics, quotations, and facsimile handwriting will combine to create an exhibit that visually communicates the spirit of the era.

From the days of Belle Monte's builder, Adelicia Acklen, an unusually bold and accomplished woman, to the twenty three year tenure of Misses Heron and Hood, distinguished teachers who

founded Belmont College for Women according to the ideals of the Progressive Movement, those who lived, learned, or taught on the Belmont campus garnered admiration and interest from the surrounding community.

As Nashville moved into the 20th Century, Belmont College for Women's merger with Nashville's prominent girl's preparatory school, Ward Seminary, created a nationally distinguished school for young women named Ward-Belmont. The traditions associated with schooling at Ward-Belmont and the love and loyalty inspired by the place itself live on in the hearts of alumnae all over the country. In 1951, the school was purchased by the Tennessee Baptist Convention and Belmont College became a co-ed, four-year institution carrying on the legacy of strict moral and academic preparation.

Using college catalogues, memory books, scrap books, and personal recollections, the Heritage Project exhibit will present faculty and students alike whose words recount and whose actions represent the campus-wide ideals that have made Belmont College for Women, Ward-Belmont, and Belmont College unique.

The project, headed by Assistant Development Directors Mary Kay Carmichael and Kelly Coplin, builds upon extensive research and writing already carried out by Belmont Publications Director Joan Yarborough. The following local community consultants have been involved in conceptualizing the project: Dr. Nancy Ransom, founding director of the Margaret Cuningim Women's Center of Vanderbilt University; Anne Reynolds, executive director of the Metro Historical Commission; Carol Bucy, independent historian and author; and Elaine Goetz, Ward-Belmont alumna.

The first phase of the Heritage Project will focus on the prestigious and academically rigorous Ward-Belmont school. From 1913-1951, Ward-Belmont attracted boarding students from all over the United States to a program

Persons to be featured in the Heritage Project exhibit

Beloved Leaders

Misses Hood and Heron
Dr. John Diell Blanton
Andrew B. Benedict
Dr. Joseph Burk
Dr. Robert Calhoun Provine

Popular Faculty Members

Miss Annie Allison
Mary Armstrong
Gertrude Casebier
Martha Annette Cason
Mary Elizabeth Cayce
Martha Ordway
Frances Ewing
Lucie Fountain
Lawrence Goodman

Louise Gordon
Jackie Hay
Arthur Henkel
Louise Herron
Nelle Major
Catherine Morrison
Mary Norris
Betty O'Donnell
Ellenn Ransom
Lawrence Riggs
Dr. Kenneth Rose
Emma Sisson
Susan Souby
Amelie Throne
Pauline Sherwood Townsend
Elizabeth Wall

A Son Remembers His Mother, Helen Rogers Neely

Nashville businessman, Ben Rechter and his brothers, Sam and Rick, added their contributions to those of Ward-Belmont alumnae to make possible the restoration of the dining rooms in Founder's Hall. Their mother, Helen Neely, was honored when one of the rooms was named for her.

Ben Rechter is very clear about what his mother gave him: appreciation for a wide variety of things in life ("There is never a day that I am bored."), love of learning, independence and self-reliance and an extremely close family.

Helen Rogers was born in 1914 in Bloomington, Indiana. I asked Ben Rechter how his mother happened to come to Ward-Belmont. He said that her father wanted her to go to boarding school because she was extremely independent. As he traced her life over the next sixty years, it became apparent that her strong personality



served her well in times of adversity.

What started as a storybook life became a life rich in challenges and full of both joy and tragedy.

Son Ben Rechter recounts that story:

"My mother was twenty when she got married. She had graduated from Ward-Belmont, attended Indiana University and De Pauw, but didn't graduate. She married Benjamin

Wolfe Rechter from Rochester, New York, who was with the U.S. Forest Service. They lived in Brownstown, Ind. for a year, then moved to Bloomington. He went into business with my grandfather who owned a mining and construction business and before long had expanded into four states. My father became a senior executive and my mother became the devoted mother of Ben and Sam (the twins), Rick (two years younger) and daughter Pat (two years younger than Rick). Actually, they were both devoted parents.

"My parents were people with broad interests. My father studied music at the Rochester Conservatory and played semi-pro basketball. My mother, the socialite of Bloomington, had rich and varied interests. She was a voracious reader, a sports enthusiast, a connoisseur of fine art, and an avid fisherman. She involved her children in all of these interests and she and my father were involved in all of our activities, too—Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, school activities, sports teams, etc.

"My mother was sophisticated in many ways, but she was very happy having no frills. She was crazy about fishing—canoe fishing all day with a bunch of kids at a small lake. We came home dirty and smelly to our respectable neighborhood, cleaned the fish in the back yard and had a big fish fry. It is one of my fondest memories from childhood.

"I was amazed that my mother was the first woman to have her pilot's license in the state of Indiana. She taught my father to fly. When W.W.II broke out they took all the pilots. My father volunteered, but was turned down because he was 4-F. He found a way to get around the restriction and serve anyway, but the Navy ordered him to stay and complete the construction crane ammunition depot that was crucial to the war effort.

"So both of my parents made contributions during the war. My mother took over management of the Bloomington Airport until the

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