



Mary Yee

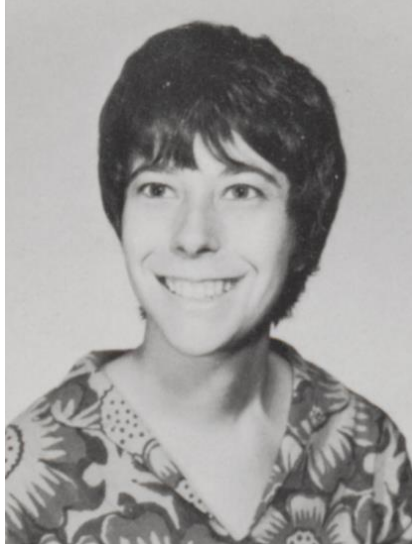
1970

Educator/  
Community  
Activist/  
Asian Arts  
Initiative Board  
Member

I came to Princeton in 1968-69, the year before coeducation, as a Critical Languages student in East Asian Studies. One of my earliest recollections is of a Confederate flag hanging over the archway entrance of a dorm on my way to class. Coming from socially conscious Bryn Mawr, I was stunned by the overt racism. Like most of the Black and Asian students, I felt the social stigmatization of not being White. Eschewing club culture, I usually ate at an African American table in Wilson College.

Academically, I found Princeton fantastically stimulating. Moreover, the East Asian Studies Department was a nurturing community for us sojourners. There was a weekly departmental guest lecture and tea, a chance not only to catch up with the other classmates but also to informally mingle with faculty. Princeton afforded me the opportunity to explore my Asian heritage and to ground my identity by learning language, culture, and history—knowledge which eluded me as a child of immigrants.

The most transformative experience for me was during the 1970 Spring Strike against the Vietnam War. The Asian students coalesced into an informal group and bought a full-page ad in the DP denouncing the War. Furthermore, we built friendships and shared articles about the growing Asian American movement and fight for community self-determination. Following the Black students, many of us also committed to fighting discrimination in our own communities. This was the beginning of my political education, which has propelled me towards social justice causes since.



Jane Samuels  
Herbst

1971

Happily/  
Retired/  
Bubbe

Moving in day - a scrum of journalists and cameras- "What's it like to be one of the first women at Princeton?" Walking through an archway for a Welcome to New Jersey film, I certainly felt welcomed!- Pyne Hall triple where I had the smallest room-was it the servant's long ago? One roommate already sequestered in her room- the other padding around the suite in tiger paw socks- what have I gotten myself into? The other women around me seemed more intelligent, more together, just more! Rumours about each of us abounded: I am frigid, insatiable, married to one of the professors. (I always wondered to whom?)

Welcoming younger faculty: Karen, Henry, John. Driving a group of us to a gas station on the NJ Turnpike where the owner served delicious Chinese food. Working on a teach-in with them on the War in Vietnam. Classes under the trees in springtime, magnolia petals falling down. Moving from Pyne to Wilson College my senior year. A brick thrown through my window - now and then you could still hear "girls go home!" Much more intimidating though was the thought of my senior thesis...

Junior year the large lecture hall with the venerable Professor Jansen morphed into senior year's small seminar with Professor Levy and Duna, his Hungarian sheep dog . GREs, grad school applications and the professor who was pleased I applied for a master's program, not a doctoral one, because "I was such a sweet girl that I should get married in a few years" ... I never knew if he was joking...

As a counterpoint to everything: working on my senior thesis....Finally graduation. Impossible to recap 2 years at Princeton in 250 words!



Judith Simpson  
White

1972

Equity Advocate/  
Spouse/  
Retiree

As a transfer student in 1970, being a “first” often meant being the only woman in a group. The English Department, with fifteen women of 115 junior majors, gamely tried to have at least two women in each precept of its large classes. Still I was the only woman in the 30-person Literary Theory class where, when minutes late, I was gently but invariably greeted with “Good morning, Miss White.” My exchanges were less formal with Princeton’s first and only woman English professor, Ann Douglas Wood.

Princeton facilities in 1970 were not intended for us. The one women’s room in McCosh required a trip outside to enter the basement. I helped liberate the department chair’s centrally located restroom for “co-ed” use. At the pool, I had to remember “women’s hours.” Other hours were for men, who swam naked.

I was well aware that my ’72 classmates were the last men who had come to Princeton expecting it to be all male. Most were welcoming, but visiting alumni freely shared their objections to the travesty of our admission.

I most warmly recall the “older” women on campus who offered their support. Women’s dean Halcy Bohen was a ready advocate. Prominent feminists came to speak. Women “in town” hosted gatherings. Our being at Princeton constituted their victory too. Indeed, I realized early on that I owed being a “first” to more than my successful application. My debt was to the women and men who had prepared the way for all of us.



Robin Herman

1973

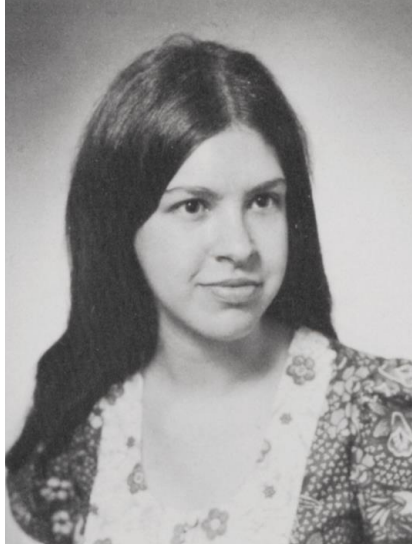
Artist/Writer/  
Former journalist

We set foot on the campus in Sept 1969, just three weeks after Woodstock: 101 bold and enthusiastic freshman girls facing a phalanx of TV cameras. The times were a changin' and I was eager to be part of that social change. But with a male-female ratio of 20 to 1, Princeton had only technically become coed. And many alumni considered coeducation merely "an experiment."

I felt like an anthropologist as I wondered at this "old-boys' school's" antique notions. The Princeton administration, for example, placed all the girls in one dorm - Pyne Hall - with locked entryways and a buzz-in system for our "protection". We promptly broke the locks. Meanwhile on the courtyard's stone walls idle boys perched like crows, offering occasional whistles as we passed by, something I'd never experienced in public school. Other intimidations awaited such as walking the long aisle of Commons eating hall where boys banged spoons on the wooden tables if they liked how you looked!

"Historic" firsts came with my every step, whether working in chem lab or joining The Daily Princetonian. In precepts, I was guaranteed to be the only girl. With no female singing groups, no sports teams (but for tennis), no co-ed eating clubs, and a scarcity of bathrooms, much of what we needed we had to lobby for or create.

But by senior year we were no experiment. We'd ended with a better cumulative grade point average than the guys and with the first female Pyne Prize winner to boot. As for me, my anthropology work completed, I'd morphed into a loyal Princeton Tiger.



Deborah Joan  
Goldstein

1974

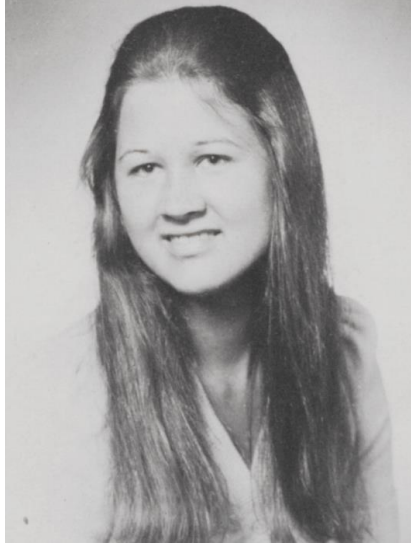
Attorney/  
Board Member/  
Volunteer

One of the many ways Princeton changed me is by teaching me to speak Mandarin Chinese.

After learning about Princeton's Chinese language instruction from freshman year roommates in 1970-1971, I started Chinese my sophomore year in Fall 1971. At the urging of Princeton's Chinese instructors, I also enrolled in total immersion Mandarin Chinese courses at Middlebury College Summer School for the summers of 1972 and 1973. The 1973 Classical Chinese summer course was taught by Princeton lecturer Mrs. Nai-ying Yuan Tang, renowned in U.S. Chinese language teaching circles for her outstanding method of teaching Classical Chinese in Modern Chinese, and her brilliant husband Mr. Hai-tao Tang. Mrs. Tang also taught me Chinese during my junior and senior years, when I spent countless hours after class in her office working on Chinese. Whether at Princeton or Middlebury, it always seemed that Mrs. Tang liked nothing better than to spend time with her students improving their Chinese.

At graduation in 1974, when I introduced Mrs. Tang to my non-Chinese speaking parents, I realized that this was the first time I had ever heard her speak one word of English. This was not surprising, because a Princeton student was expected to speak only Chinese before starting the courses taught by Mrs. Tang.

Due to the outstanding Chinese language instruction I received at Princeton and Middlebury summer courses, I still can speak Chinese comfortably more than 45 years after graduating.



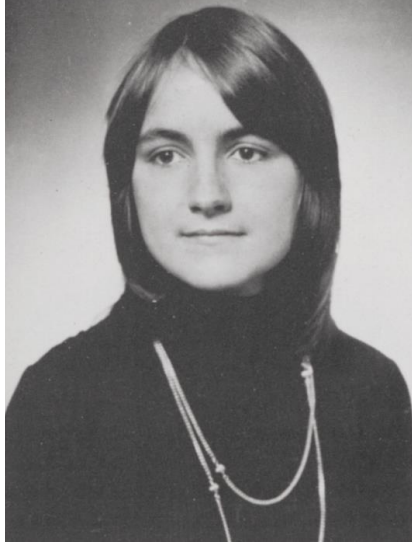
Lisa Schmucki

1974

I arrived at Princeton, the daughter of a '41 alum, from a girl's day school in NJ, to the Princeton Inn Annex, and felt like I had landed in heaven. Every moment on campus, every course, every person I met, was new and exciting. I felt left on my own and free to explore this new world. It was an exciting time, a magical time, a more hopeful time, with endless possibilities.

Each year brought continuity and change, kicked off with room draw, the excitement of finding your new place for the next year's experience. I joined Cap and Gown for my last two years and it became a "home-away-from-home" and the place where many lifelong friendships were formed. Every corner of the campus was beautiful and inspiring, and uplifting on a tough day.

Looking back on a life of being a woman who was a "first" in many circumstances, especially in business, Princeton helped me feel equal and valued, more than some of the places that followed. Princeton opened up a world of opportunity after graduation, and has help me keep focused on what's most important, and on having a life filled with purpose. Thank you, Princeton!



M. Kathryn  
(Kathy)  
Taylor

1974

Writer/Editor/  
Retired Director,  
Princeton Alumni  
Affairs

Freshman year: Arrive disoriented, mourning the recent death of my father, Jim Taylor '39. We were to have enjoyed Princeton together, and now he was gone. Members of his class, including his friend Fred Fox '39, quickly reach out to console and comfort, giving me a connection to my father and helping to get me re-oriented.

Sophomore year: The Tigerlilies, Princeton's first female a capella group, take me as a first alto. Rehearsals in Murray-Dodge and arch sings in East Pyne or 1897 often the highlight of my day. A warm and wonderful world of music and friendship. And those friendships still thrive.

Junior year: Start my two years as an English major without an advisor as my original assignment skipped out in August when he didn't get tenure. The eminent medievalist D.W. Robertson graciously volunteered to pick up an advisee or two - and I was one of the lucky ones. Best academic gift I could ever have had. To find out what medieval English was, I take Intro to Anglo-Saxon and am hooked.

Senior year: Spend many wonderful hours on B Floor of Firestone, either in my little metal carrel or in the Scribner Room, writing my thesis on the Arthurian legend, from Geoffrey of Monmouth to Sir Thomas Malory—to this day the most concentrated and disciplined work I have ever done.



**Deborah Lois  
Smith**

**1975**

**Resilient/  
Determined/  
Persevering**

A time of excitement, experience, and expectation! Fabulous opportunity to explore new worlds, new topics, new experiences, new friends:

- Being a member of the first Women's Crew Team
- Taking up Fencing as a Junior
- Travelling to, and performing in, new places in the US and outside the US through Glee Club: Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Jamaica, Mexico
- Studies in the Woodrow Wilson School
- Being a part of an institution that had and continues to graduate leaders, 'house-hold' names in our global communities
- Forming fast and lasting friendships which continue to this day
- Experiencing things as a 'co-ed' in an environment/culture trying to change similar to being a racial minority in a majority world . . . it's all about adapting to change and gaining exposure. Curious that the issues/challenges are the same as our society becomes less a predominant culture society. Or, more so, resistant (?) in certain instances
- Learning resilience, confidence, being a pioneer
- As a pioneer at Princeton, being well prepared for life . . . socially, academically, and intellectually
- Fond memories from all my associations and engagements on campus: Crew; the Glee Club; Cap and Gown; Fencing; the Woodrow Wilson School
- Being proud today to be an Alumna of the third class of co-education of the 'Best Damn Place of All . . . '





Terri Jo  
Pauline

1976

Mother/  
Grandmother/  
Project manager

I was one of “the thirteen” women who entered the Engineering School in the fall of 1972, as Dean Jahn called us.

I was typically the only woman in my upper level classes. I was so focused on my studies that I didn’t notice the men noticing me. Only at recent reunions have I learned from several male classmates how they viewed me. However, I did enjoy the 5 to 1 male to female ratio when it came to dating – upper class men of course.

I should have roomed with other women engineers; my liberal arts roomies couldn’t relate to getting up early for math, chemistry and physics before lunch.

It was hard, it was amazing, it was all worth it.



Marsha  
Rosenthal

1976

Person/Woman/  
Optimist

September 1970: 7 am. Princeton Inn. Joni Mitchell singing “Morning Morgantown”. Smell of mildew in the old carpet and furniture (!) Excited and ready for the new day, for the rest of my life. 11 am, standing up campus, looking at Firestone, East Pyne and Chapel, saying to myself, “I’m actually here. I’m at Princeton.” Princeton was transformative: from an ordinary suburban high school, to its stunning intellectual environment. First semester: Ancient Art, Latin, Philosophy 101, English 201 (Met a sophomore guy. Together 49 years this October. 2 sons. Who’d have thought?) Days and nights in Firestone and McCormick. Loved my carrel, main Reading Room, Faculty Lounge.

Second class (1974) of freshman women (later, joined class of ’76): Princeton still unprepared for women; tried to make my contribution – Women’s Center, S.E.C.H., peer counseling, U.S.G., resident advisor. Wrote English jp’s and senior thesis on three 20th century women authors: Mansfield, Wolff, Lessing.

Spring 1972: Sit-ins at Nassau Hall and WWS to protest Princeton’s involvement in Vietnam War. Proud to be represented at University hearing by civil rights attorney, John Doar ’44.

Princeton was hard: like most important things (marriage, parenthood, work). Gave me tools for the wider world, and a career in corporate management, policy, research, teaching. Majored in English; took graduate degrees in health policy and medical sociology.

Princeton was also fun: made strong friendships with other women, but also with men. (Helped later when facing rooms full of men!)

1974-76: hosted weekly “spaghetti nights”; led to a lifetime of hosting meals for friends and family.