

# CHANGING THE FACE OF VCU Milestones for Women on the MCV Campus

- 1917** Women are allowed to take classes at the Medical College of Virginia as special students
- 1918** As a war expedient, the Board of Visitors of the Medical College of Virginia opens all schools to women, allowing them to formally matriculate in medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy
- 1920** **Innis Steinmetz** is the first woman graduate of the School of Medicine and **Hilda Saunders** is the first woman Pharmacy graduate
- 1922** **Esther M. Cummins, Constance O. Haller,** and **Tillie Lyons** are the first women graduates from the School of Dentistry
- 1923** Drs. **Mary B. Baughman** and **Charlotte C. Van Winkle** are the first women instructors in the School of Medicine  
  
Phi Chapter of Alpha Epsilon Iota, Professional Medical Fraternity for Women, is established
- 1926** Theta Gamma Upsilon is organized for women students in medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy
- 1928** First women's basketball team at MCV is organized  
  
Cabaniss Hall is the first campus building named in honor of a woman
- 1931** **Vivan Bridges** is the first woman at MCV elected to Rho Chi, Pharmacy Honor Society
- 1932** **Mary Elizabeth Johnson** is the first woman elected to the Brown-Sequard Honor Society
- 1933** **Myrtle Kraus** is the first woman instructor in the School of Pharmacy
- 1935** **Virginia Anne Carmines** is the first woman to receive a bachelor of science degree in pharmacy
- 1936** *The X-Ray* has its first woman editor-in-chief
- 1939** **Sarah Elizabeth Covey** is the first woman to receive a master of science degree from MCV
- 1942** Alpha Chapter of Delta Kappa Phi, Professional Pharmaceutical Fraternity for Women, is established at MCV
- 1945** **Frances A. Hellebrandt** is the first woman to hold the rank of Professor in the School of Medicine
- 1948** **Margaret McClure** is the first woman director of the MCV Library
- 1950** *The Skull and Bones* has its first woman editor-in-chief
- 1951** **Nora Spencer Hamner** is the first woman to receive an honorary degree from MCV
- 1953** **Nora Spencer Hamner** is the first woman appointed to the MCV Board of Visitors
- 1957** **Jean Harris** is the first African-American student graduated from MCV
- 1957** **Ann May** is the first woman to receive a masters from the School of Hospital Administration
- 1959** **Marion Waller** earns the Ph.D. in Clinical Pathology, the first woman to receive this degree from MCV
- 1964** **Marianne Krop** is the first woman president of the Student Government
- 1966** The Panacea Chapter of the American Medical Women's Association is organized on June 1st
- 1974** **Marylne G. Cain** and **Virginia R. Jarman** are the first women to receive postgraduate certificates in patient counseling
- 1979** **Jane N. Towner** is the first woman instructor in the Department of Health Administration
- 1980** **Anne C. Adams, Becky D. Austin,** and **Betsy Ann Hagen** are the first women faculty members of the School of Dentistry

In the early days of the institution women were limited to a few gender-specific roles, primarily as nurses. They were excluded from all educational programs until the end of the nineteenth century, when the school established a formal training program in nursing. Although numerous health professional schools had opened their doors to women, the Medical College of Virginia held steadfast to its exclusionary policy. During World War I, the MCV Board of Visitors was forced to make a change, as many of the male healthcare providers were supporting military operations in Europe. Women were finally admitted to all MCV educational programs in 1918.

Once the institution admitted women students it also opened its doors to female faculty members, although they rarely held a rank higher than instructor. Women formed clubs, organized professional societies, and participated in intercollegiate athletics to make life more comfortable on the male-dominated campus.

Additional opportunities for women came during World War II, when shortages of healthcare professionals and instructors opened new doors. By 1975 women were no longer anomalies in the pharmacy, dental, and medical classes. As the twentieth century came to a close, women had moved from securing access to education to advocating for their place as leaders within academia and the profession at large. A dominant issue of the 21st century remains the specific goal of improving the health of women.

**1988** **M. Caroline Martin** is the first woman president of the Cardwell Society, a group of Health Administration alumni.

**1990** **Dr. Karen S. Rucker** becomes the first woman department chair in the School of Medicine

**1992** Women in Science, Dentistry, and Medicine Faculty Organization (WISDM) is established

**1999** The VCU Institute for Women's Health was established to promote standards of excellence in women's health care, advance cutting-edge research, foster community outreach and collaboration, enhance women's leadership, and provide training and education toward the goal of improving the health of women.

**2000** The School of Medicine Women in Medicine Program receives the Association of American Medical Colleges' Leadership Development Award. The award is presented in recognition of institutional commitment to helping women realize their potential and to improving the environment for women in academic medicine.

**2003** The VCU Institute for Womens' Health is designated a National Center of Excellence in Women's Health by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, one of only 20 in the nation.

**2007** **Women now make up 51% of the student body in Dentistry, Medicine, and Pharmacy.**

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