

Columbia College Today

*Columbia
women*



Winter 1992-93

Within the Family

A splendid milestone

There will probably come a time near the middle of the 21st century when the surviving alumni of the all-male Columbia College will be a quaint curiosity, like the old Society of Forty Niners—those men who had attended Columbia at its 49th Street campus before the institution headed uptown for the (literally) greener pastures of Morningside Heights in 1897.

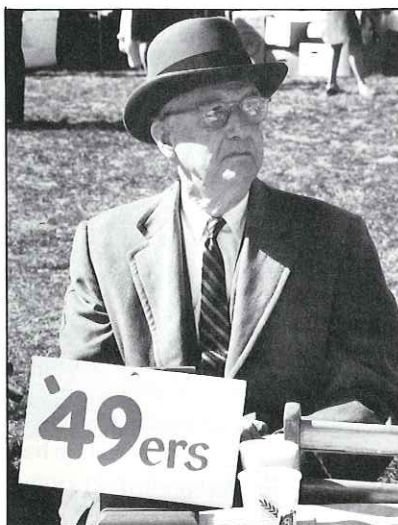
As a quick glance at our Class Notes and Obituaries will confirm, the Columbia College alumni rolls are still about 95 percent male. However, each year since the advent of coeducation in 1983, the College has welcomed another class without prejudice for boys or girls, and the population has taken another small step toward its eventual 50-50 state of equilibrium.

The present time therefore offers us the pleasure of taking part in a momentous, if gradual, transformation of alumni life. Or, you might say, alumnae life. Or perhaps you favor the vowelly “alumni/ae” or “alumnae/i” solution—which Jessica Raimi has called the “alumni-eeyi-eeyi-o” form—a sure sign that the lawyer side of your personality may be gaining dominion over the musician side. (Clearly these terms were not invented by folks who have to say them very often in the course of their daily work.)

Signs of the Columbia College alumnae presence begin to abound. On February 25, Caitlin Bilodeaux-Banos '87, the former

NCAA champion who led American women fencers at the Barcelona Olympics, will become the first alumna to receive the College's John Jay Award. On April 23-25, Columbia College Women, an alumnae organization, will convene its second annual women's weekend, to mark the tenth anniversary of coeducation. Earlier suggestions that 1992-93 be dubbed the “Year of the Woman” at the College were dismissed by several of the group's leading members. “It's pretty pathetic to think of it that way,” said Liz Pleshette '89. “It's like trying to call it ‘The Year of the Monkey.’ After all, we're half the population—we shouldn't need a special year set aside to acknowledge our existence.”

CCT's small contribution to the ten-



year commemoration is to include a special section in this issue devoted to the theme of women at Columbia. We do so without any pretense that we have addressed or even identified all the principal issues of concern. But in seeking the expertise and feelings of a large number of interesting people, we have attempted to put together an issue worthy of the splendid milestone the College community now celebrates. In his graceful and enlightening essay on the changes wrought by coeducation (*page 29*), former College Dean Carl Hovde '50 puts it simply: “The admission of women immeasurably improved an already fine institution, and my only regret is that it took so long to bring it about.”

We have many to thank, especially our hard-working contributors—deans, professors, alumni, students, friends and freelancers—who give us more than we can acknowledge or repay. And a special thanks to our new CCT colleagues—part-time Assistant Editor Robyn Griggs McCabe, and student work-study assistant Elena Cabral '93—whose infusion of skill and effort revived our ability to produce a more ambitious and comprehensive magazine for the amazingly supportive readers we are privileged to serve.

Jamie Katz

World War II undergraduate days, physics was not such a popular subject. We did not have a system of formal majors, but only three in our graduating class were considered to have a concentration in physics. They were Salvatore Dorsa, Wouk, and myself.

Jerome Kurshan '39
Princeton, N.J.

Team spirit

As a master's degree holder (Columbia '55) with a Ph.D. from St. John's University, and as the mother of Desmond

Werthman, captain of Columbia's football team, I am writing to protest Dean Greenberg's critical and uncalled-for remark in *CCT* about the Palo Alto student who gave “the football team” as his reason for attending Columbia. The Dean quipped: “He may write the next Varsity Show.”

Columbia's whole attitude toward football is a disgrace. Desmond, an All-Ivy player, has faced all sorts of ridicule despite the fact that he is an honors student at the College. Columbia undercuts the athletic budget, uses its players as scapegoats, and with its

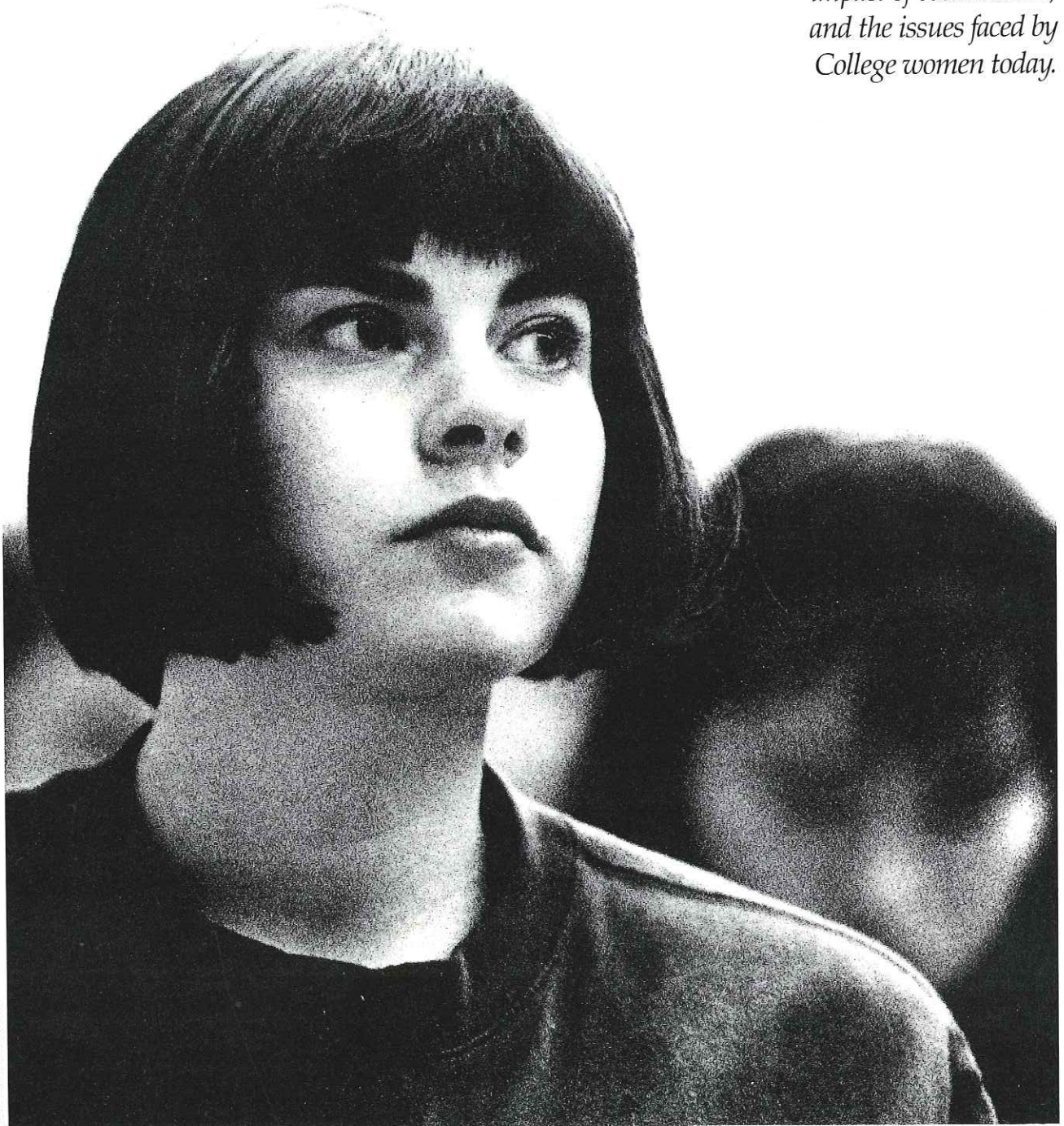
usual intellectual snobbery belittles the sport of football and those who risk injury every week for Columbia. (As I write, my son is recovering from an operation at St. Luke's.)

The players don't get paid! They don't get supported by fans! I often wonder, what motivates them to play? It is their personal loyalty to the University, to the sport—to themselves. If the Dean of the College doesn't support them, who will?

I hope in a future issue to see you write something positive about Columbia's forgotten football players. It takes

Women at Columbia College: The first ten years

*A special report on the
impact of coeducation,
and the issues faced by
College women today.*



NICK ROMANENKO



NICK ROMANENKO

Columbia women: A natural and integral presence

The first decade of coeducation has transformed the College, but serious challenges remain.

by Kathryn B. Yatrakis
Associate Dean of the College

"The day that women were admitted to Columbia College, our world changed." I heard a senior faculty member make this remark a few weeks ago, and I realized that I could not fully appreciate nor even understand what he meant by it because I have never known a Columbia College without women.

In 1989, when I was appointed Associate Dean, women had been part of the College for more than six years and it was impossible for me to even imagine the Columbia world without them. When I was a member of the Barnard faculty, women, of course, were very much a part of my professional life not only as my students, but as faculty and administrative colleagues as well. This is why it was difficult for

me to imagine a college community without women, and in order to fully appreciate what changes have occurred in the ten years since women were accepted into the College, I had to engage in some historical research of my own.

In 1983, Columbia College welcomed its first full class of women, 44 percent to be exact, which was the largest fraction of women of any Ivy League school in the first year of coeducation. It turns out that this was not an aberration, nor a function of our coming to coeducation a bit later than our Ivy peers, but rather an early indication that women would continue to make up from 45 percent to 50 percent of every new class since 1983 and would fundamentally

change every aspect of life at the College.

Many faculty members talk about the changes immediately felt in the classroom. "When I came here in 1967, never having taught other than coed classes, I felt as though I had entered a monastery, and the atmosphere was decidedly monkish," remembers Jim Mirollo, Parr Professor of English and Comparative Literature and chairman of Literature Humanities. "In 1983, things changed: We now became Rabelais' anti-monastery, his Utopian Abbey of Thélème, the most glaring innovation of which was housing both women and men! The change in the classroom was, for me, back to normal. But the biggest change was in the men students. While the women, if anything, seemed a bit annoyed at our overly solicitous concerns with making them comfortable, the men instantly adjusted their dress, manners, and demeanor—all for the better. For years I had been teaching in my Renaissance courses that one of the clichés of that culture was its insistence upon the civilizing effects of women on men, but here it was, happening before my very eyes, a cliché come true. Needless to say, I felt vindicated, relieved, liberated, and exhilarated, all at once."

Adds Michael Rosenthal, former Associate Dean of the College and now Professor of English and Comparative Literature: "It's hard to imagine back to the days when you walked into a Literature Humanities class and there were 24 men staring at you." Of course it was Dean Rosenthal who, in 1982, was charged with preparing for the admission of women by Arnold Coltery, then Dean of the College.

The change in the student body made a sudden and significant impression on the curriculum. The core curriculum, while still firmly rooted in the traditional texts, now also includes such classics as Sappho, Jane Austen, and Virginia Woolf. Similarly, the appearance of gender issues and themes has enriched many courses throughout the curriculum, making the intellectual life of the College much more vital, intense, and yes, profound. The last nine years have also seen the development of a strong and vibrant women's studies major with a curriculum drawn from courses in many departments and across disciplines. A sampling of the courses which are now an established part of the College curriculum would include such offerings as History of Women in America; Females and Males: A Psycho-Biological Perspective; Women and Power: India's Images of the Feminine; Modern Women Writers; Women in the Middle Ages; Women and Politics; and Major Texts of the Feminist Tradition. The Institute for Research on Women and Gender, a thriving center of intellectual activity, supplements the women's studies curriculum with a full program of films, lecture-

series, workshops, conferences and research seminars.

It is natural, I think, that at an academic institution, intellectual life would immediately respond to the presence of women on campus, but it was not, of course, just the academic life of Columbia that changed.

I was interested to read in *Columbia College Today* that in 1983, the College hired a Coordinator of Coeducation whose job it was to ensure that women were "thoroughly engaged in the academic, social, athletic and residential life of the College." While I am sure that it was important to make this appointment during a transitional period, I was not surprised to discover that this position was short-lived, and I think that this was in part because of the commitment and enthusiasm with which the entire Columbia community accepted women. Today there is no need for such a position because all administrators and staff members see to it that women are thoroughly engaged in the life of the College. How could they not carry out this charge when women constitute nearly half the student body?

Probably the area that saw the most dramatic and immediate change with the arrival of women on campus was student life. If there ever was a "monkish" atmosphere in the dorms, it was gone forever. No sooner had Columbia College women moved into the dorms, than they moved out to take their place in campus activities of every description. The number of student activities doubled, and theater groups exploded from two to eight. In a way not seen before, students considered extracurricular activities to be important to their lives. Women established sororities, helped create coed fraternities, got involved in athletic activities, and initiated discussions of issues related to gender.

The administrative office that responded to the introduction of gender issues with a complete structural and substantive reorganization was Health Services. Ten years ago, most of the women who were seen at Columbia's Health Service were either graduate students or older students enrolled in General Studies. With the admission of Columbia College women, the whole service changed to accommodate younger women. A Women's Health Service was created, a health education program was established, and issues such as birth control, sexually transmitted diseases, and self-care were addressed by women doctors and nurse practitioners. Today, the health education program is well established and both women and men students are increasingly interested in such issues as healthy sex, nutrition, eating disorders, and sexual harassment and assault. Take Back the Night has become an important campus event, and a rape crisis center was

The texture of the College, from its academic core to its student life, has irrevocably changed and significantly improved.

recently founded after students vigorously insisted on its creation.

Another area that experienced an immediate and structural change after the admission of women to Columbia is athletics. The Barnard-Columbia Athletic Consortium was established and women's intercollegiate teams moved from Division III Seven Sisters League play to Division I Ivy League competition. With coeducation in athletics came national recruiting, which naturally leads to high-level national competition. Though we have some of the youngest programs in the Ivy League in women's crew, soccer, and volleyball, we have already won a national championship in fencing and we are consistently improving our records in other women's sports.

In addition to intercollegiate sports, there now is a full slate of club sports including women's lacrosse, softball, and field hockey. When I



ARNOLD BROWNE

Kathryn B. Yatrakis, Associate Dean of the College since 1989, is the highest-ranking woman administrator in the school's history. A 1967 graduate of Cedar Crest College, she earned her M.A. at N.Y.U. in 1971 and her Ph.D. at Columbia in 1981. She taught political science at Barnard from 1977 to 1989, having previously served as an assistant dean and acting dean at the Regional Learning Center of SUNY's Empire State College; she has also chaired the joint Columbia-Barnard urban studies program. Dean Yatrakis, whose chief scholarly interests are American politics, urban politics, and women in politics, is the co-editor of *Women and the American City* (1981).

come out of my Hamilton office, I am just as likely to see a women's field hockey group practicing on South Field as I am to see a group of men playing volleyball. I was interested to learn that in intramural sports, women's participation equals that of men.

To accommodate all these active and talented women athletes, our facilities have seen some significant changes and improvements in the past nine years. The gymnasium was upgraded with locker rooms for women, a new weight and Nautilus facility and new dance and fitness space. Basketball fans will even see some unfamiliar lines painted on the gymnasium floor. These volleyball boundaries, now painted on the court, in some ways symbolize how far women's athletics at Columbia have progressed.

This status report on women ten years later is, in large part, a report on success. The texture of the College, from its academic core to its student life, has irrevocably changed and significantly improved. This does not mean, however, that all the challenges have been met.

Sarah Wolman '92, a co-founder of Columbia College Women, talks about Columbia as instantaneously accomplishing one of the most elegant and smooth transitions to coeducation, but adds that this sudden and remarkable change was somewhat deceptive because Columbia was led to believe that it had fulfilled its obligation to its women students. "I felt extremely privileged and lucky to be part of the Columbia tradition, but also, I felt somewhat excluded from that tradition," Ms. Wolman says. "Women are not yet an integral part of the alumni structure nor are they perceived to be part of the decision-making structure of the University."

Other women students point to some insensitivity on the part of faculty members. Oftentimes, they say, professors will challenge the male students and push them to the limits, while they thank women for their comments but do not engage them intellectually.

Karen Blank, Associate Dean of Students, recalls that her first few years at Columbia were spent working with Career Services, the Athletic Advisory Committee, and other organizations on gender issues, and that many women did not want to be identified with women's issues. She says, "Perhaps it was because women wanted very much to be accepted into this institution that was not designed for them, or that being the high achievers that they were, they were not aware of some of the gender issues which defined the larger world and did not want to shake up the place." Today, Dean Blank finds that women are more comfortable raising issues that are important to themselves. Also, she feels that more men are willing to acknowledge that such issues are important for



NICK ROMANENKO

After a smooth and elegant transition to coeducation, does Columbia believe it has fulfilled its obligation to women students?

all students. Though she spends less time on gender issues these days, she believes nevertheless that we must continue to be vigilant in supporting women.

At a recent committee meeting of tenured women faculty members, it was clear to me that Columbia's women faculty need support as well. Though more numerous than before, they are still overextended and burdened beyond measure. In even the largest departments, there are only a few senior women faculty members and being so few, they are typically called upon to serve on a myriad of committees both inside and outside their departments; they are often the only faculty members who can sponsor graduate projects on feminist theory. I also have heard women faculty say that they feel the need to be fully available to respond to the intellectual and sometimes emotional needs of students.

When I was explaining this phenomenon to a friend recently, he asked, somewhat ironically, if there weren't any underburdened women faculty members. I took his query seriously, thought for a moment, and responded that I did not know of one. There are just not enough of us yet. Until then, we must be wary that we do not burn out some of our best and brightest faculty.

As a former member of the Barnard faculty, I was on the "other side of Broadway" when the discussions between Barnard and Columbia were initiated. We knew that these discussions would result either in the merging of the two institutions or the renegotiation of the intercorporate agreement to allow Columbia College to

admit women. From the Barnard side, one thing seemed very clear: There was no one who wanted Barnard to go the way of some of the other great women's colleges—Jackson, Pembroke, and Radcliffe—and be swallowed up in the male-dominated university.

On the other hand, what was not so clear was agreeing on the definition of the essence of a women's college. What was it that could not be compromised or merged in order for Barnard to retain its own special identity? This, of course, became a moot issue when Columbia announced that the College would admit women. Though there was much uncertainty on the Barnard side as to what this decision would mean for Barnard, I think that in the ten years since, many of the troubling issues that had loomed large between Barnard and Columbia College have receded into the background.

To be sure, there are still some knotty problems, such as agreeing on a way to handle cross-registration between the schools which allows students to benefit from the rich educational resources on both sides of Broadway while satisfying the budget wonks that all's fair on the account books. And there are still those departments that do not have much to do with each other. But on the other hand, the Barnard-Columbia Consortium is getting stronger each year; there are several departments such as religion, anthropology, and mathematics in which there is a high degree of cooperation; the undergraduate arts majors in drama and theater arts, music, film, and visual arts are quickly becoming integrated majors, and the Columbia College Committee on Instruction

has just approved a dance major that will be administered by Barnard.

As we move closer to celebrating ten years of women at Columbia College, there is much to be proud of. Women are a natural and integral part of the College and University community as never before and their presence is becoming even stronger. Are there challenges yet to be met? Of course. We must take stock of exactly what today's women's needs are; we must build our alumnae base; we must put more resources into such areas as combat-

ting sexual assault and harassment; we must recruit more women faculty, and we must see to it that women are represented in greater number in the upper levels of University decision-making.

We know, however, that meeting challenges is what a healthy and vigorous institution does as it prepares to enter the 21st century, and I am confident that if the next ten years are anything like the past ten years, Columbia College will be in fine shape to meet the year 2000 and beyond.



Perspectives on a decade of coeducation

Some personal statements occasioned by a milestone in the College's modern history.



MARTIN S. KAPLAN '61
Chairman, Massachusetts Board of Education; attorney, Hale & Dorr, Boston; Columbia College alumni leader:

I remember feeling that Columbia had finally come of age when the decision was made to go coed. I felt that the College had finally entered the world of the future in which I saw a society of men and women socializing, working, and competing as equals.

It gave me equal pleasure when my daughter entered the freshman class in 1985 and loved the College as much as I loved it.

MARTHA HOWELL
Professor of History; Director, Institute for Research on Women and Gender:

It took me about five minutes after I arrived here in the fall of 1989 to realize that there was something special about the women at Columbia and about the extraordinary educational possibilities of this place.

I was invited to co-sponsor a ceremony at Butler Library, at which a banner painted with the names of great women writers was to be hung over the male names permanently etched in stone on the building's façade. I was glad to join in the event, for I thought the young woman who had made the banner deserved to be honored for her wit and supported in her effort to unsettle the stolid traditions of male learning at Columbia. I was also surprised—and quite amused—to learn that the young woman had originally tried to hang the banner during graduation ceremonies, but had been foiled by an alert security guard. Rumor had it, in fact, that only the intervention

of some high University officials had kept her from being carted off to jail.

Yet here she was, a few months later, not only being allowed to hang her banner but being celebrated for doing so. What kind of a place is this, I asked—full of such cheeky women students, full of teachers and deans who seem to admire cheekiness, possibly even full of academics who encouraged critical inquiry about intellectual and pedagogical matters.

Three and one-half years later, I am still wondering. The male names are still there; the banner is gone. But its spirit abounds. My undergraduate classes are full of women eager to offer their own ideas about curriculum, astonishingly articulate in their analysis of this society, amazingly adventuresome in exploring other cultures, unafraid of their own future, and solicitous of the hopes of others. I wish that we read fewer of what the students call "dead white males," that we read other things more. I wish that banner had greater effect on the structure of this place. But I don't wish for different students.

RONALD C. D. BRESLOW
University Professor and Samuel Latham Mitchill Professor of Chemistry:

When Dean Arnold Collery asked me in 1980 to become the chairman of a committee to look into the possibility of turning Columbia College coed, I was delighted to accept. I was concerned with our future as an all-male school, and also had a personal reason—my two daughters had not been able to attend Columbia.



Joe Pineiro

It was quickly clear to me that the major barrier was the widespread belief that a coed Columbia would doom Barnard to extinction. This was the reason that all previous efforts had focused on merging Columbia and Barnard, a merger resisted with admirable resolution by the Barnard administration and faculty.

We decided to look into the question of whether comparable moves in other institutions—where the brother school had gone coed while the sister school remained for women only—had really posed a problem to the sister school.

There were a lot of examples, and in every case the pattern was the same. Before the change there had been widespread predictions that the sister school would die; after the change, there was surprise and relief that the sister school was still alive and well. We thought that this would be the happy result at Columbia also—especially since it seemed likely that the women attracted to Columbia would be drawn away largely from other coeducational schools such as our Ivy League competitors, not Barnard. We produced a document supporting this conclusion, and it was accepted by the Columbia administration and trustees.

Happily, we were right. Barnard has flourished—in part because of several changes that make it even more attractive. Coeducation at Columbia College has brought in bright and interesting students of both sexes who have made the College even better than it was. I wish that all the reactions we try in the chemistry lab would turn out as well as this experience did.

ROBERT E. POLLACK '61

Professor of Biological Sciences; Dean of Columbia College, 1982-89:

On my way up the steps to Low for the convocation of the first coed class in September 1983, a reporter from ABC News asked me why Columbia had admitted women. Staring into the blazing lights of her camera, I blurted out, "The faculty insisted, because they knew that half the smart people in the world are women."

The quote played on the news that night, but more importantly, it became the shorthand for the College's policy toward the admission of women during my tenure as Dean: total equality of standards; total equality of opportunity. We knew the policy was working when the Class of '87 graduated with as many women as men having majored in physics, music, English and all the rest. Ten years after the fact, the thousands of women who have graduated from the College and gone on to establish themselves in a rich diversity of careers tell us that this initial policy was wise, albeit expensive.

SHAWN LADDA

Women's Soccer Coach:

1993 marks the 10th anniversary of coeducation, and of the athletic consortium—unique in Division I—which allows women from Columbia College, Barnard College, and the Engineering School to compete as one unit representing Columbia University.

Ivy League soccer now presents an interesting slice of women's history: from the rich tradition at our own institution—Barnard being one of the first institutions of higher learning for women in this country—to Brown University, which fielded the first varsity women's soccer team in the United States in the mid-1970's. Our own program has become much more competitive in the Ivy League, and I'm excited that both Columbia and Barnard students are contributing to the team.

I really believe in the "sound mind in a sound body" philosophy. I think research has shown that women who have been involved in competitive athletics—especially in team sports—tend to have higher self-esteem. A rigorous athletic experience truly helps prepare our young women for the future.



Eileen Lianezzi/Sports Information

PADMA DESAI

Gladys and Roland Harriman Professor of Comparative Economic Systems:

Last year, a young woman in my Principles of Economics class told me that she held back from asking questions in the classroom because she felt intimidated by the men. I told her that, maybe, she set high standards for herself: perhaps she wanted to ask a perfect question or come up with the final word on a subject, whereas the men often held forth without saying much that was profound or relevant or even correct. The important step, I told her, was to start talking.

After a decade of going coed, how many women feel that way? I wonder.



Christopher Butt

ANNA KORNBROT '75, D.M.D.

Oral and maxillofacial surgeon, Philadelphia; first woman graduate of Columbia College:

Let me tell you how, ever so quietly, the citadel fell.

I was a student in the Engineering School's Class of 1974. In 1973, I read about a joint-degree program that allowed a qualified Engineering student to enroll in the College for an extra year and receive both a B.S. and B.A. degree. I wanted to take additional liberal arts courses, and so I applied.

My application immediately caused a flurry of panic and distress among administrators at both Columbia and Barnard. The University Provost told me I would single-handedly undermine the College's future, and he said



Columbia would be legally obligated to build a separate gym just for me! He suggested I settle for a diploma from General Studies. Officials at Barnard's admissions office offered to waive their course requirements and assured me of a diploma, even though Barnard did not offer a joint-degree program with Engineering. They feared Barnard's demise if I were admitted to Columbia College.

The only visionary I encountered was Peter Pouncey, then Dean of the College. He was in favor of coeducation at the College, and, I believe, took a diabolical delight in the predicament my application presented to the University. His support for my application was extremely helpful.

As it turned out, there was no valid reason to refuse my admittance, and so in September

1974, I enrolled in the College as its first female student, and in 1975, I was the first female to graduate from the College. Despite all the dire predictions, no new gymnasium was built for me (although a new gym was completed in 1975), and neither the College nor Barnard collapsed.

I enjoyed my one year at the College. It allowed me to take various broadening and enlightening courses before donning the blinders of professional school. I also took several courses at Barnard, and saw how important it was to have female role models. Such models were sorely lacking at the College and Engineering School.

And that is how the citadel fell, ever so quietly.



Why Barnard has thrived: An interview with Anna Quindlen

Columbia's sister school will remain vital as long as sexism pervades society, says this noted Barnard alumna.

by James C. Katz '72

For more than a century, Barnard College has been the sister institution of Columbia College, a relationship imbued with no small amount of warmth and loyalty, as well as moments of jealousy and competition.

Barnard was founded in 1889 as a women's college and named for Columbia's leading advocate of coeducation, President Frederick A. P. Barnard. The founding of the college in his name was doubly ironic because he would have preferred to see women side by side with men in Columbia's undergraduate classrooms.

Over the years, Barnard College established itself as one of America's most distinguished undergraduate institutions, a leader in women's education; though affiliated with the University by an intercorporate agreement, it has always had a distinct existence, with its own campus, faculty, president, trustees, and alumnae organization.

By the late 1960's and early 1970's, single-sex men's colleges were rapidly becoming an anachronism, and Columbia began to explore ways to include women more fully in its undergraduate life. One restraint—again, ironically—was the affiliation agreement with Barnard, which forbade Columbia College from admitting women until the pact was renegotiated in 1982, paving the way for full coeducation at Columbia a year later.

Our conversation with Anna Quindlen—Barnard alumna, trustee, and Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper columnist—picks up at that delicate moment in the two institutions' history when Columbia was seeking more rapid change while Barnard sought to defend its identity.

CCT: *In 1981-82, when Columbia and Barnard were renegotiating their affiliation agreement, many assumed that the admission of women to Columbia would be harmful if not fatal to Barnard in the long run. History seems to be showing otherwise. Why do you think Barnard has survived so well?*

Anna Quindlen: There's a two-word answer for why it has not been more harmful: Ellen Futter. I don't think you can underestimate the difference that really strong leadership meant when we needed it more than ever before. And we had the combination of a president and a board of trustees who were strongly committed to women's education. They felt we should not consider admitting men to Barnard or merging with Columbia College.

My own perception—and I have a very warm relationship with Columbia College, not the least of it a relationship by marriage—is that Columbia College never had a coeducation problem, it had a public relations problem.

Columbia was about as much a men's college as the University of Pennsylvania or Brown. Once coed housing was implemented—and I was very involved with that effort as a student—Columbia College was already, for all intents and purposes, except for the freshman core classes, more or less a fully coeducational institution. But rather than deal with the public relations problem, which was communicating that reality to high school seniors, Columbia consistently saw it as a coeducation problem.

We intuitively knew that the kind of woman who was going to choose Barnard might well be a different kind of woman than one who wanted to go to Columbia, in much the same way that Swarthmore and Penn often draw from different applicant pools. And that in fact has turned out to be the case.

CCT: *When you were an undergraduate, there was already a strong push on Columbia's part to remain in the educational mainstream by achieving coeducation—and there was equally strong resistance on the Barnard side to the notion of merger. Do you remember the attitude you and your fellow students brought to these issues?*

AQ: I think that attitude exists to the present day, and that was basically an either/or mentality: Either there was going to be this complete merger in which, not coincidentally, the women's college was going to lose its identity, perhaps even its name (as happened at Brown)—or you were going to have completely separate institutions. And it always seemed to me that, as in any dialectic, the synthesis would be better than the thesis or the antithesis. And the synthesis was cross-registration, coed housing, and other communal arrangements that benefit both schools. That sort of sharing—one that doesn't feel somehow threatened by the woman keeping her own name, her own checkbook, and her independence—is really the best way to go. It's better for the women, and it's better for the men.

CCT: *Students today are often astonished to learn that in 1968—a year known for more public upheavals—the fact that a Barnard student was sharing an apartment with a Columbia student made front-page news in the New York tabloids. Do you remember the air of scandal that once attended the idea of coed dorms?*

AQ: The Linda Leclair story does seem so incredibly anachronistic now, and I think that at many schools, including Barnard and Columbia, actually living in the same dorms was a great benchmark. The sense was, okay, if you want to do this wild, crazy thing, maybe juniors and seniors could handle it, but what about the freshmen, and more important, the freshman parents! That was such a big part of it.

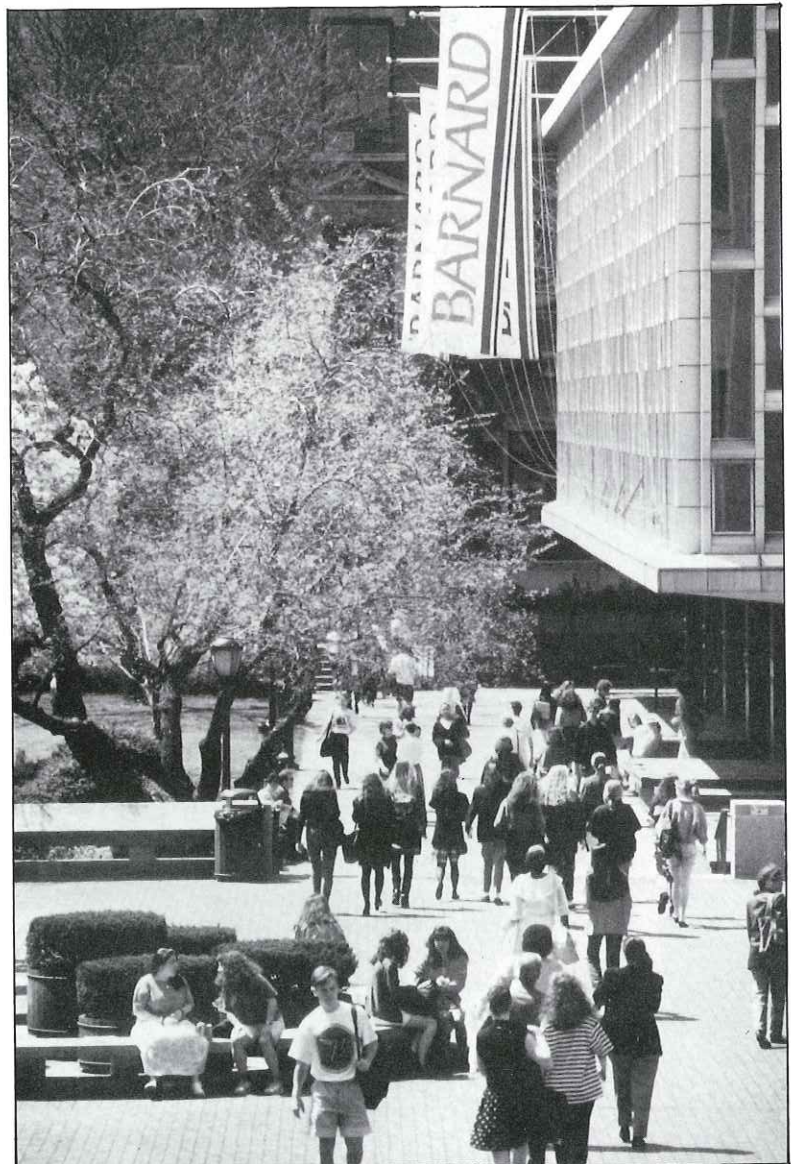
Now you have very few students who come out of college without knowing what it's like to

live with someone of the opposite sex in a totally platonic, "Do you have yogurt? Can I borrow your toothpaste?" situation. I think that puts them a whole ten yards ahead of us in terms of looking at men and women. But I don't necessarily think it's an argument for coeducation. I think it's an argument for not being separatist. And that really was when the separatist walls came tumbling down—when we first started having coed dorms and coed eating halls.

Everybody made a big deal about cross-registration, but I never learned a whole lot about guys by seeing them down the row in art history. It really was those two living arrangements, and, to a lesser extent, the coeducating, if you will, of campus institutions like *Spectator* and the Board of Managers, that I think helped to defuse some of the tensions between Columbia and Barnard.

CCT: *If the Barnard experience today is largely coeducational on almost every level, where is the vessel of its "single-sexness," if you will?*

When things start to boom on one side of Broadway, it's inevitably good for the other side. I think that goes both ways.



COURTESY OF BARNARD COLLEGE

In the last twenty years, we got comfortable with the idea of choice on every level—that different women make different choices.



NICK ROMANENKO

AQ: Well, first of all, most Barnard students still take the majority of their coursework at Barnard, where the faculty has a higher proportion of women and the classes are overwhelmingly female in composition. The base from which they move out to see the rest of the world is an institution that's run by women, for women. And I think that teaches them something important. It certainly taught me something important.

By the time I graduated from Barnard—and I've got to add that I didn't always like it there by a long shot, partly because of the unremitting femaleness of the place—but by the time I left, any attempts to convince me that women were second-rate at anything were in vain, because I had been taught by the smartest group of women I ever met. And in most of my classes I was surrounded by women who were equally smart and able.

A friend of mine who's a female rabbi says that the worst thing Barnard did for us was to convince us that we could do anything. And there were certain *sub rosa* givens about the world that you just couldn't accept. I mean, it's nonsensical to try to convince me in any way, shape or form that women are unfit for leadership positions, because of what I saw when I was there.

CCT: As a Barnard trustee, how do you go about taking the school's temperature? What are the vital signs that you consider most important, and accord-

ing to those criteria, how would you assess Barnard's strengths and weaknesses right now as an institution?

AQ: Well, taking the temperature is the easy part. Ellen Futter reports to us at every meeting, and we have learned to trust and rely on her to an enormous extent. There is zilch tension between us and her. Aside from that, I have a fair number of private conversations with faculty members, some of whom I've known since college. We meet with students on a fairly regular basis, at dinners and cocktail parties and such. I read the *Barnard Bulletin*. I read *Spec*. I try to arrive 15 minutes early for trustees' meetings and read the bulletin boards—you can find out a lot from bulletin boards about what are the cutting-edge issues and what's going on. And I eavesdrop as much as I can when I'm on campus.

One of our great strengths at this point is that Barnard classes tend to overwhelmingly be small seminar classes taught by full faculty members, either assistant, associate or full professors in the school. Another is being fully residential. We felt it was an extraordinary act of hubris when we did it, but building Sulzberger Hall was a stroke of genius. And building it to look the way it looks was another stroke of genius. The school is much less fragmented because of it.

Finances are a serious problem for us, like many colleges, because the median income of

our families is comparatively low and our endowment is comparatively small. People incorrectly stereotype Barnard as a rich school for rich kids, which drives me crazy because the truth is that historically, we've been the leg up for the daughters of working class families, particularly in New York City.

I feel very strongly that we ought to offer qualified applicants need-blind admission to Barnard College. I want to be able to let every qualified applicant attend the College with any package of help we can put together for her and not start knocking people out of the box because they don't have the money. That would change the character of the whole school.

CCT: *Barnard has shown a lot of spunk, vitality and growth over the past ten years. Did coeducation at Columbia in fact have a good effect on Barnard rather than a negative effect?*

AQ: Yes, I definitely think there has been this misconception that if it's good for Columbia, it's somehow bad for Barnard. I never thought that Columbia's coeducation was going to be disastrous for Barnard. I think when things start to boom on one side of 116th and Broadway, it's inevitable that it's going to be good for the other side. I think that goes both ways.

CCT: *When the Barnard/Columbia affiliation agreement comes up for review, would you like to see it altered in any way or do you think this is a workable arrangement for the long term?*

AQ: My impulse is to say that I think the arrangement as it stands is pretty good, but in terms of the nitty-gritty of it, I am very pleased to leave that to Ellen, who I think knows more

about it than any living person on earth, except maybe Mike Sovern. The relationship they've had is very cordial and has been fruitful for both institutions.

CCT: *Since your husband is a Columbia College grad, we have to ask if that dualism colors your life in any special way.*

AQ: We don't fight about it the way we used to. We're still friends with the people we were friends with in college and a lot of them are Columbia/Barnard couples. I think Gerry doesn't—well, how could he?—follow Columbia as closely as I follow Barnard as a trustee.

CCT: *Well, men are late bloomers.*

AQ: Yeah, but he does have a deep feeling of love and gratitude for the College, not unlike the one that I have for Barnard.

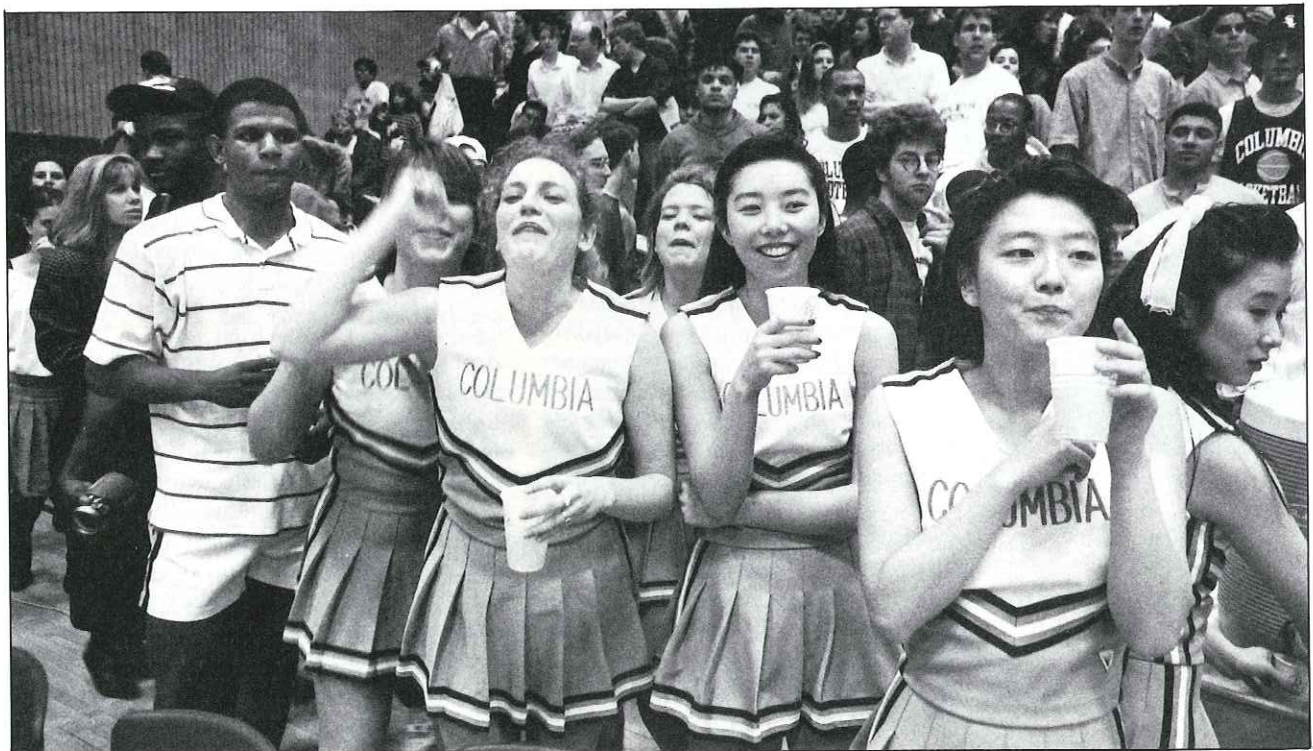
CCT: *Do you think Columbia men are more or less likely to marry Barnard women—now that there are Columbia College women?*

AQ: Gee, I don't know, has anyone ever done a fast statistical study? We used to joke about how Columbia College guys never used to miss an opportunity to say a mean thing about us and then, about a year after graduating, they proposed.

CCT: *Is Columbia dependent on Barnard in some way that isn't immediately obvious but is in fact fundamental to the relationship?*

AQ: Sure, Barnard makes Columbia University look like a much more feminist institution. There is perhaps no institution in this country,

During a certain period in your life, it's advantageous to have a safe place that teaches you that you are valuable, and that you are strong, and then you are capable of achieving.



with the exception of Wellesley, that is as constantly interested in, involved in, and concerned with the lives of women as Barnard College is. It's seen as a primary feminist source in this country, and by having Barnard College attached to Columbia University, it gives Columbia this aura of being a feminist place—a place of feminist scholarship, a place of feminist thought, and a place of feminist sensibilities.

CCT: *For many years, there's been a strong argument for single-sex education among women, but no similar demand or argument for it among men, although perhaps that will come forth eventually . . .*

AQ: There is no similar argument for white men. There is still a strong argument for single-race education for black men and women, and even single-sex education in some instances for black men and women. It's germane to the question of single-sex education.



© JOYCE RAVID

Anna Quindlen is a 1974 graduate of Barnard College and a member of Barnard's board of trustees. Her widely syndicated column, "Public & Private," appears each Wednesday and Sunday in *The New York Times* and won the 1991 Pulitzer Prize for commentary. She has worked in a variety of reporting and editing roles for the *Times* since she joined the newspaper in 1977, and her writing has earned her the Columbia Journalism School's Meyer Berger prize and other honors. She has also published a collection of essays, *Living Out Loud* (1988), a novel, *Object Lessons* (1991), and a children's book, *The Tree That Came to Stay*, published this fall. Ms. Quindlen still describes herself as a "full-time mother"—indeed, she was once named as one of America's outstanding mothers by the National Mother's Day Committee. She lives in Hoboken, N.J., with her husband, Gerald Krovatin '74, and their children, Quindlen, Christopher and Maria Krovatin.

Look, when the world starts to treat women as full participants in society, and accords them equal respect with men, there will be no need for institutions specifically devoted to doing so. But it doesn't, and that's why you still need single-sex colleges.

I understand perfectly the argument that this is not what it's like in the real world. Your family is not what it's like in the real world either. Church organizations are not what it's like in the real world. Sometimes during a certain period in your life, it's advantageous to have a safe place that teaches you that you are valuable, and that you are strong, and then you are capable of achieving. The work of Carol Gilligan at Harvard alone suggests that the world is a place that doesn't send that message to young women, and that it starts sending them contrary messages very, very early on.

Once we work out parity, and once we work out equality, and once no one looks at a woman on the job anymore and thinks, "I'm not sure about this promotion, doesn't she have a lot of family responsibilities?" then I will be the first person to say, if it happens in my lifetime, that there is no longer the same need for women's colleges or women's high schools. But I have to be honest—I no more think that's likely than I think that we'll all become good people and churches will go out of business.

CCT: *That's an explosive thought: that if Barnard actually succeeds in the long run, its raison d'être will evaporate—like the Marshall Plan.*

AQ: I've always known that. If, in fact, sexism no longer is a major part of our society, and I still believe it is, just as racism is, there really will be no compelling need for women's colleges. But as I said, it's a highly unlikely development.

CCT: *Among young women choosing a college on Morningside Heights, while many may prefer the more supportive, if you will, feminist environment at Barnard, there are clearly many others who want to plunge into the whole competitive thing right now, as if Columbia were a better simulation of the world they will actually enter.*

AQ: There's plenty of the competitive thing at Barnard College. It's not a sense of competition. It's a sense of personal growth and intellectual growth. I honor the differences in those choices. In fact, when I meet young college-bound women who have gone to excellent girls' high schools and are leaning toward a coeducational college, I don't feel exactly the same urgency. There are some young women who have already gotten the confidence they need. I still feel we have something special to offer them, but I'm not quite as focused on the all-female factor.

I myself did not go to Barnard because it was

a women's college, but because it was an excellent small college in the city where I wanted to work when I graduated—New York was a big lure. And I never, during my formative years, felt any lack of confidence. Yet I still feel like I owe Barnard a big chunk of this job I have now, because we still live in a world where it's very hard for a woman to stand up on her hind legs and say, "This is what I think, and this is why I disagree with you, and here are the ways I'm going to argue with you." At Barnard, I felt my opinions were not only valued, they were required, and that made a big difference for me.

CCT: *Do you think Columbia women should feel somehow unsafe in asserting themselves?*

AQ: Oh, I would never say that. One of the great things about what's happened in the last twenty years is that we got comfortable with the idea of choice on every level, that different women make different choices. This one was really right for me, and I think it's really right for lots of other women. We'd be fooling ourselves if we believed, because of the incremental gains of the last twenty years, that we don't need that anymore.



A portfolio of alumnae

CCT catches up with a cross-section of the College's earliest women graduates.

by Elena Cabral '93

To accompany *CCT's* coeducation coverage, we thought it might be a good idea to speak to a number of women who have graduated since the first fully coeducational class popped Commencement champagne in 1987.

We tracked down a fairly random sampling of College alumnae in a variety of fields all over the world—women whose experiences and accomplishments are not unlike those of many of their fellow graduates.

Here are some of their stories:

After graduation, **CATHERINE PAWSAT '89** bought a plane ticket to Kyoto, Japan, without any idea of what she would do when she got there. "I just got on a plane and left. If you are a curious person, Japan is the place to be."

Ms. Pawsat is now a freelance reporter for the *Japan Times*, the largest English language newspaper on the island. She recently finished a two-year Japanese language program at a private school in Kyoto and works as a translator and interpreter for an international art center. "I'm trying hard to master the language now," she says. "It's amazing to me how much Japan is misunderstood by Westerners. I don't think it gets the credit it deserves."

CHERIE RUBEN '87 is a clinical psychologist at a Jewish family clinic in Buffalo, N. Y. After graduating summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from the College, she went on to earn an M.A. and Ph.D. in psychology at Syracuse University. Dr. Ruben says her interest in the dynamics of interpersonal relationships is shared by many women in her profession.

"Clinical psychology is one of the fields that

attracts women because it involves relating to people in a nurturing way," she says. "It means dealing with people one on one. For me, it's close to non-work type of work."

Dr. Ruben also sings and plays keyboard in a rock band called Man against Mauve, which plays the local bar scene. Having been a singer in Columbia's Metrotones, she says she wanted to reconcile her vocal talent with her career. "When I was applying to graduate schools, I sort of thought of myself as becoming the singing psychologist."



Catherine Pawsat '89

DESIREE DELVALLE '89 is an aspiring filmmaker and actress with strong political motivations. An English major who performed in several productions for the Columbia Players, Ms. DelValle says she fell in love with filmmaking while taking classes as an undergraduate. A native of Brooklyn, she moved to San Francisco a year ago to work for an international film distributor, with the goal of making films herself.

"I didn't want to work in a market where you have to worry about whether there is enough sex and violence in your film in order to sell it," she said. "I wanted to deal with issues that were important to me as a person of color and as a lesbian." The films she distributes present portraits of AIDS victims and the often violent history of the homosexual community's struggle for equality. Ms. DelValle is currently pro-



Cherie Ruben '87

Elena Cabral '93, an American History major from San Antonio, Texas, has just completed a year as News Editor of the *Columbia Daily Spectator*.



Tawana Davis '87

for more than 3,000 Haitian refugees detained at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. The case, now being appealed to the Supreme Court, marked the first time a U.S. court extended constitutional due process rights to non-citizens.

Ms. Davis, a native of Queens, abandoned private practice to work in one of the busiest courthouses in the city. From postal robberies to drug cartel and mob cases, the Eastern District, which Ms. Davis calls "one of New York's most exciting places," was the setting for the famous John Gotti trials and the controversial RU-486 abortion pill smuggling case.

RIVKEE TWERSKY '88, a former mathematics major, is now balancing more than equations. She is finishing her post-baccalaureate pre-medical courses at Columbia's School of General Studies while raising her two children, three-year-old Devorah and nine-month-old Michael.

Ms. Twersky was initially turned off by the idea of a career in medicine, after losing her father to cancer 10 years ago. "I was so disgusted with the medical profession, I didn't want anything to do with it anymore," she says. But the birth of her first child gave her new motivation. Ms. Twersky, who lives on Manhattan's Upper West Side with her husband, a stock trader, says her daily life involves a demanding balancing act of studying, work, and children. "It's definitely a lot harder than anything I ever did in academia," she says.

A Russian regional studies major at Columbia, **ELIZABETH SMEDLEY '87** went on to spend eight months studying post-glasnost journalism at Moscow State University, on a grant from the Institute for International Education.

After her return to the U.S., Ms. Smedley worked for World Monitor Television, an international news program affiliated with the

Christian Science Monitor, and returned to Moscow in 1991 to cover the August coup. "With all of the changes going on, it was frustrating that there was not much I could do to help except tell the world about it. I wanted to feel like I was contributing something real."

Ms. Smedley is currently working in Minsk, Belarus, as a program coordinator for the New York-based Soros Foundation, which seeks to facilitate the transition of the former communist bloc to a market economy and open society. Ms. Smedley's concern lies primarily with establishing an independent press: By recruiting Western journalists to the region, she helps introduce new techniques in news gathering and management to her Russian colleagues. "The situation here is very bleak," she says. "It is going to take so much time for change that you can't be naive and unrealistic about expected results. But in a small way, by putting people in touch with new ideas and facilitating contact with the West, that is really something."

Since beginning her career at Columbia's Center for the Study of Human Rights as an undergraduate, **Ji WON PARK '87** has worked for such organizations as Amnesty International and Asia Watch, a division of the New York-based Human Rights Watch. In the summer of 1990, she worked to improve labor conditions and legal rights of women in South Korea as a legal intern for the Korea Women's Associations United, a national federation of progressive women's groups. Ms. Park is now in Washington, D.C., as a legislative correspondent in foreign policy for Senator Edward M. Kennedy. She is also pursuing a law degree at Georgetown University, where she is a Public Interest Law Scholar.

Immersed in the world of policy makers, advocates and ambassadors, Ms. Park dismisses many of the myths about life on Capitol Hill. "When I was in college, I was told it was an intimidating atmosphere, but I found a lot of other young people here who possessed a real energy and willingness to work. You get to do a lot more around here than you think."



ARNOLD BROWNE

Rivkee Twersky '88, with her children, Devorah and Michael Kengmana.

A note to all College graduates (especially in recent classes): Please keep in touch with your friends and your alma mater by keeping us up-to-date on your current address. To do that, or to obtain further information on such groups as Columbia College Women, the Young Alumni of Columbia College, or the Columbia College Alumni Association, please write to the Office of Alumni Affairs and Development, 475 Riverside Drive, #917, New York, N.Y. 10115, or call (212) 870-2288.

Personal and career news updates can also be sent directly to your CCT Class Correspondent (see Class Notes).

Our long-sought community

Coeducation is the single most important development in the College's intellectual and social life since World War II.

by Carl F. Hovde '50

Professor of English and Comparative Literature

When asked to write about coeducation and Columbia College, I agreed at once since it is a subject dear to my heart. As I started to do so, I found to my surprise that I was being autobiographical, and I wondered if I should avoid that. I finally decided that on this subject I could not. My excuse is that I think my own experience has been characteristic of many other Columbia people as well. Too, as Henry Thoreau remarked at the beginning of *Walden*, "I should not talk so much about myself if there were any body else whom I knew as well."

I first entered the Columbia campus in the summer of 1946, fresh out of the infantry. I had been discharged too late to apply for admission that fall, but Columbia like other schools was doing its best for the returning military, and was taking applications for another large group to be admitted in mid-year. Entering for the spring term, I was delighted to be in college at last, and did not overtly protest as I realized that virtually all my classes were composed of men. I of course had known that the College, like the infantry, was a male preserve, just as Barnard was for women, but I had expected some mix in the classroom; except for a few graduate courses I took, that was not to be.

I felt that the separation of the sexes was artificial and uncivilized. Prior to the army I had attended mixed public schools and looked on coeducation as the natural thing, a view only strengthened by army service. That the human race was coeducational was one of the reasons for my pleasure at being a civilian again.

To be sure, Columbia had long provided easier social circumstances than a good many other schools, particularly the single-sex colleges off by themselves. When I was a graduate student at Princeton that university was exclusively male, and the weekends often gave rise to travel worthy of animal migrations. Columbia and Barnard, on the other hand, were just across Broadway from one another, despite the storied width of that avenue. A little personal initiative had the possibility of making one's social life a little brighter. Nevertheless, there was a feeling that this was not

enough, in part because for many of us the years in the military made the usual undergraduate dating game seem rather strained and strange. We thought there ought to be a mixed community in which association was the daily routine because we were all part of the same course of study.

In saying all this I should stress the obvious and say that I am expressing my own preferences; I am much in favor of single-sex colleges for those who prefer them. It is perfectly understandable that a number of women's colleges have elected to remain so; the arguments for them are sound, and ideally it should



ARNOLD BROWNE

Carl F. Hovde '50 was an early and forceful advocate of coeducation at Columbia College. Dean of the College from 1968 to 1972, he has taught in the English department since 1960, specializing in 19th- and 20th-century American literature, especially Emerson, Melville, and Thoreau. He has also been a visiting professor at universities in Germany, Brazil, and Sweden. A former chairman of Literature Humanities and current chairman of the Lionel Trilling Seminars, he is the recipient of the Great Teacher Award and, in 1986, the Alexander Hamilton Medal.



JACK M. LEWIS

The Lion's Den, after Columbia-Navy basketball, 1939

A certain amount of romance and marriage is work, and experience carries the possibility of making one better at it.

always be a woman's choice—and a man's—for one arrangement or the other. In practice, however, there are now severe economic constraints for those wanting single-sex education since these institutions are for the most part private, and hence expensive and becoming more so. Among the private women's colleges Barnard's situation is special and advantageous—it offers many mixed classes and coeducational dormitory possibilities, while remaining at the same time a predominantly women's community.

When in 1960 I joined the Columbia faculty ten years after graduating from the College, I became more vocal in my preference for coeducation, and I found that most other faculty agreed. For a long time it did not occur to us as likely that women could be admitted directly into the College; the obvious thing, we thought, was much closer cooperation between the College and Barnard—which had after all been established in part because women were not permitted to attend the College. There were two periods of discussion towards this end. The first followed the events of 1968; there was a joint committee which looked at the relationships between parallel departments at Barnard and the University, with an eye to

possible closer cooperation. We found everything from sweet harmony to relationships defined largely by their absence. These consultations helped to move the College and Barnard towards the arrangement that a student at either school could take for graduation credit almost any course at the other one. This was progress, but again many of us thought that it was finally not enough; in practice many restrictions remained because of differing requirements.

Along with this curricular movement, the social scene improved through the establishment of coeducational dormitories on both sides of Broadway. This happened when I was in the College Dean's Office (1968-1972), and aside from the political excitement of those years, it was one of the early issues that the College administration had to address. The College and Barnard worked up a proposal, but when the University's Board of Trustees learned of it, I was asked to appear at a meeting of the Trustee Education Committee to present the case.

To understand the trustees' level of concern, one should know that while the College Dean sees a lot of the trustees in relatively informal situations, it is rare that the Dean is asked to attend a formal meeting. In my four years it happened twice, probably a high number. I was interviewed by the full board before the members would act on my nomination to the position (a sensible precaution given the atmosphere of '68 and after), and again by the Education Committee on the issue of mixed residence halls.

I went to the latter meeting carefully prepared and made three arguments: that a mixed dormitory was not a new idea, having worked well at several other campuses; that mixed halls would provide good experience for those who wanted such arrangements; and that in some measure it would happen either with their permission or without it, and that on this score it would be better to have it authorized than not. Most persuasive was the second reason, pointing to the experience as valuable. I stressed that mixed halls would tend to counter the American advertising view of romance and marriage: that extended residence near other people always requires patience, accommodation, and compromise if good relationships are to be nurtured, and college is not too early an opportunity for men and women to practice these arts in their living arrangements as well as in the classroom and the organized activities outside of it. A certain amount of romance and marriage is work, and experience carries the possibility of making one better at it. This view seemed to strike home with the largely married and middle-age trustees, and they approved the proposal.

During the time leading up to this, a number of the students pressing for the change objected to the involvement of the trustees. The language of demand was a frequent style at the time, and their largest demand was that absolute authority in dormitory policy be turned over to the students. I argued that this would be unwise in itself, but also pointed out that the very legal structure of the University made it impossible: final authority always rests with the trustees, though they delegate to others the ordinary conduct of the institution. The trustees were right to want more information about the proposals for coeducational dormitories, and once the mixed halls were established, the students' procedural objections fell away. The program was popular and successful from the start, and remains so.

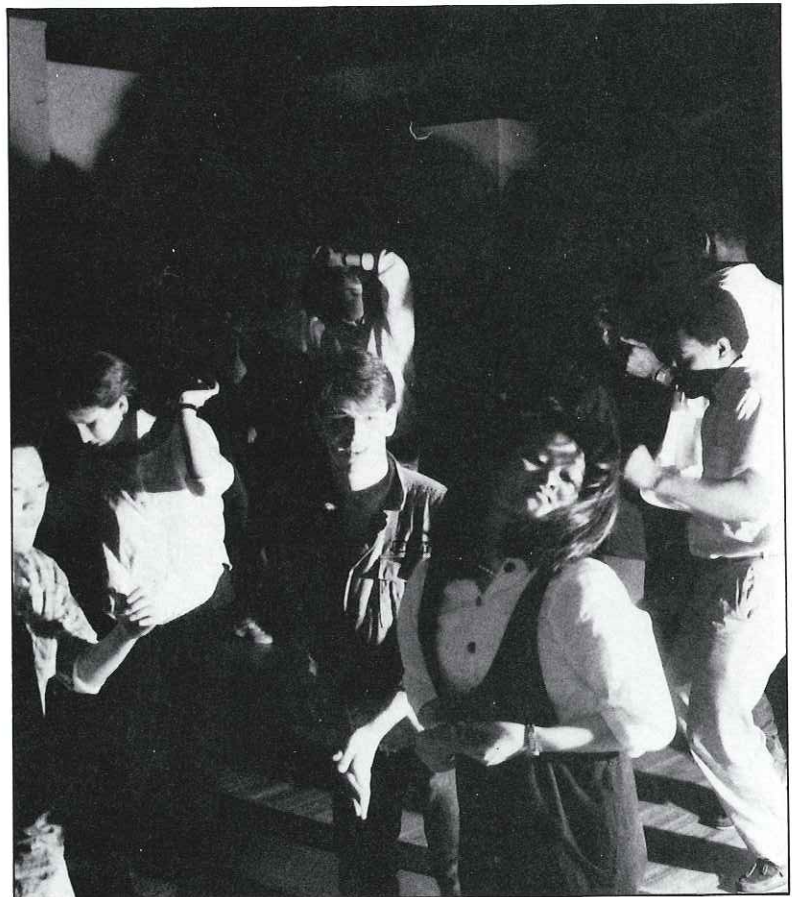
The second period of talks with Barnard, now along with serious discussions within the University itself, led up to the 1982 decision by President Michael Sovern and the trustees enabling Columbia College to admit women on its own; this came about in significant measure because of the vigorous advocacy of the late Arnold Collery, the College Dean at that time. This was of course a large shift in the relationship between the two schools, much the most important since Barnard was founded. One immediate benefit of the change was that the occasionally irritated relationship between the College and Barnard soon returned to its earlier amiability since neither side was asking for things which the other did not want to do. Financial arrangements between Barnard and the University continue to be an issue from time to time, but they have nothing to do with coeducation *per se*.

For the College, the change has been of the greatest importance, and in two directions. First, at a stroke coeducation dramatically improved the intellectual quality of the entering class. For a few years before that, the students in the bottom fifth of the all-male admissions were not as strong as they should have been, and that serious problem simply disappeared. Second, over the first four years of the change the College became the kind of social community which many of us had long sought: a place where personal relationships reflected the world which the graduates would be living in, to the extent a residential college can provide that.

Why was the faculty so interested in coeducation? It felt that the College would be a better place socially, for the reasons given. Also, it was immensely interested in making the College as intellectually vibrant as possible. It was obvious that the College could be more selective if roughly the same number of students were drawn from an applicant pool twice as large as earlier. The measurable indica-



ALAN EPSTEIN/COLUMBIA COLLEGE TODAY



ARNOLD BROWNE

(Above) Low Plaza, 1967; (below) The 'Plex, in Ferris Booth Hall, 1985.

The reporter asked Mr. Belknap what he was doing at a panty raid. He replied, "I'm a Dean, and I'm here to take a dim view of things."

tors such as high-school records and SAT scores were bound to be higher, but this was only part of the story.

As modern gender studies have been showing, men and women in some ways feel and think differently from one another, the result of differences in both nature and nurture. One must of course be careful in maintaining that there are, or are not, gender differences beyond biology: much still needs to be done in sorting out a biological inheritance from a cultural one; work continues on these complicated relationships.

Nevertheless, I am convinced that in humanistic study at least, a class of men and women is potentially more interesting than a single-sex group in either direction. In saying this I am not pointing to gender differences in what we normally mean by "intelligence," and particularly not as measured by standardized tests—surely there are no such differences. I am thinking of the variety and complexity of

response born of differences in the natures and backgrounds of the students in the room. Men and women inevitably speak from varied experience, and hence provide salutary surprises for one another from time to time. It is to extend this point only a little further to say that the same kind of reason makes the College's large minority population intellectually desirable as well as socially so. The diversity in backgrounds and experience can make for more interesting life on campus not only outside of the classroom, but in it.

During the years leading to coeducation the issue was periodically raised in College faculty meetings. On one occasion the College Faculty passed a resolution in favor of admitting women to the College, and then-President William McGill opposed it, calling it a political move. This provoked the reply that while the action was indeed political, political action is after all the shape which real interests take. Now and then a faculty member wondered if the desire for coeducation among the College students was not a function of simple lust. It was not: like the vast majority of their teachers the students felt that coeducation would be a more natural and agreeable atmosphere.

I don't mean, of course, that the more earthy attraction of the sexes played no role among the students. In the spring of 1969 there was a panty raid in which the College and Barnard students lofted greetings to one another between the street and the dormitory windows at Claremont Avenue and 116th Street. Those of us in the College administration looked on the event with disapproval diluted by relief, since it seemed to signal a return to standard undergraduate highjinks after our bitter political troubles of the year before. On the scene of the event was Professor of Russian Robert Belknap, who had heroically agreed to serve as Dean of Students that year. A newspaper reporter noticed that he was not seventeen years old, and asked him what he was doing there. The quotable Belknap replied, "I'm a Dean, and I'm here to take a dim view of things." That was the perfect tone. The highly ritualized panty raid genre disappeared with coeducation because daily association made such silliness seem silly: common acquaintance drove out such brief encounters.

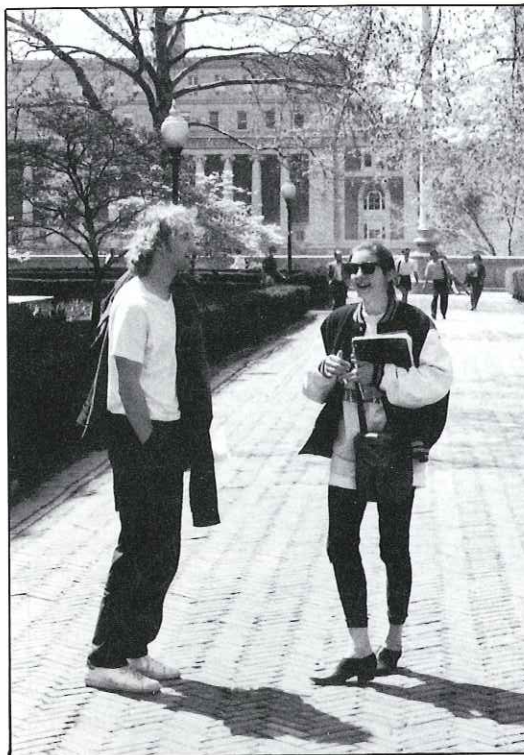
When I try to describe what I see in the College now, compared to the one I attended in the late 1940's, I return to the word I used near the beginning: it is markedly more civilized than it was. I found the College thrilling as a student, but that was almost entirely for intellectual reasons; there was little sense of community in those years after the war except for that created by the curriculum itself—though that was and remains very important.



NICK ROMANENKO

Columbia was then primarily a commuter school: most students spent a lot of time on the subway, as I did between the campus and Greenwich Village, where I lived. The College residence halls were Hartley and Wallach (then Livingston) and only three floors of John Jay: no Furnald, no Carman, no East Campus, no Schapiro Hall. Whatever the problems with Ferris Booth now, it at least exists; in my senior year it was only an architect's sketch published in the *Spectator*. The increase of residential space was necessary for a more developed College community, and was particularly important for the success of coeducation. Students and parents think about security in New York, and undergraduate women would naturally be even more reluctant than men to rely on the scattered private housing market. Dean Robert Pollack's administration helped see this development through, and it was essential for the College's welfare.

In my time here, coeducation has been by far the most important single development. The admission of women immeasurably improved an already fine institution, and my only regret is that it took so long to bring it about.



NICK ROMANENKO

Speaking for themselves . . .

Conversations with Columbia College women about the core curriculum, the rape crisis center, and other issues.

by Suzanne C. Taylor '87

Nearly ten years have passed since the College first admitted women to a freshman class. Relative to the school's long history it's a mere blink of the eye. Alma Mater has yielded gracefully to most of the changes brought about by the presence of women, and as society matures to accept women at all levels, she will undoubtedly evolve even further. The vast majority of alumni are men. If you're an alumnus, put yourself in a woman's shoes—not stilettos because they're too dangerous on College Walk—and think for a moment about what your College experience might have been. Now compare what you've envisioned to what some of the Columbia College women we've talked with recently had to say about their experiences.

For starters, were the core curriculum stuffed into a time capsule, its finders would probably conclude that women had very little to do with the intellectual and artistic underpinnings of our civilization.

"How can anyone not be a feminist after

reading these books?" asks Stephanie Ellis '93, a pre-med major with a concentration in sociology. "How can you not be absolutely outraged that women have been treated this way? Look at how embedded sexism is in our culture. How can that not spur you to challenge it?"

She adds, "I certainly think there are ways to use what's there in the core and take it further. Use the ideas presented in the works to think about problems that face us today and make an issue of the fact that all these texts are so sexist. The same could be applied to issues of race. I don't want to make it seem like there has to be some way to indoctrinate everyone into the liberal state of mind, but expose us to alternative voices in the core."

Amanda Kahn '95, a staff writer for *Spectator* and the daughter of a Class of '59 alumnus, views the required texts more favorably. "I think the core is great," she says. "I don't think I'd change it. The core curriculum should accurately reflect Western tradition, which has evolved from these roots, and yes, it has excluded women. But you don't just stick a



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woman into the curriculum just to say 'Well, we've solved the problem now.' That's covering things up—like using 'first-year' instead of freshman. There should be real discussion of why women weren't included. Maybe they should institute a third core semester entitled Women We've Ignored."

Do College alumnae value the core as much as their male counterparts? Shelly Friedland '87, a staff member at the Population Council in midtown Manhattan, acknowledges that the core was one of the reasons she chose Columbia. She still supports the core, but agrees there is room for reform. "In Lit Hum we read *Frankenstein* because it was a good book—not with attention to the writer's gender. That's the way it should be," says Ms. Friedland. "Tokenism is very dangerous in any situation. It demeans the person or thing being included. I would not

want to be promoted because I'm a woman. It would make me question my abilities."

"I support the core, but I also support a curriculum of inclusion," says Susan Dreyer '87, who teaches at New York's Satellite Academy High School of Science & Social Studies. "Issues of gender are worthy of the core and should be discussed. These are primary themes in human history. For many of my friends, interest in feminist studies grew because they didn't find any women in the curriculum. Even if things were available to us, I didn't feel it was pointed out to us."

Associate Dean of Students Karen Blank, who joined the College administration in the fall of 1984, believes the ongoing dialogue about the core is useful, and cites the establishment of the new Cultures and Issues requirement—which replaced the "remoteness" requirement—as a good starting point. "Those individuals involved in the core are working to make it more inclusive," she comments.

Dean Blank expresses other concerns about women in the school. "My own sense is that there are departments that have not paid attention to the fact that their presentation of material or their presentation of themselves as faculty members may be alienating to women. It's the kind of effort we haven't been able to give much conscious, institutional attention to that we would all benefit from," she says.

"When I was first hired it was with the understanding that I would be kind of a watchdog and that I would focus on women's concerns. Over the years I'm afraid that with the exception of sexual harassment and sexual assault issues—which are no small issues—I just haven't had the time," she allows. "It's something I feel very bad about."

Dean Blank notes that in her student days at Syracuse there were deans of women, and that she applauded when that position eventually gave way on many campuses to deans of students. "It's interesting how my thinking has changed over the years," she says. "Now I think there was some virtue in having a person in a position who was responsible for women's—or now we might say gender—issues."

The fear of sexual assault—and Columbia's response to that issue—concerns nearly all of the women interviewed. Many are alarmed by what they see as the high incidence of date rape, often involving fellow students. Although University administrators feel they have been sensitive and conscientious about these issues, they cannot reach everyone.

One sophomore, who wished to remain unidentified, said she had received a number of sexually harassing phone calls and felt powerless to do anything about it. "I didn't

know where to go or how to deal with it. I was reluctant to go to the administration to talk to a dean because I really thought people would say 'You didn't report it right away,' 'You let it happen more than once' and 'You didn't approach this correctly, so there's nothing we can do.'"

Many students have expressed concern that the year-old Rape Crisis Center in Butler Library is inadequate. They have formed a Rape Crisis Coalition to gather signatures to petition the school to honor its commitment to the center.

"People are waiting in line to sign the petition," says Vanita Kumar, a first-year pre-med and women's studies major from Dayton, Ohio. "There's a lot of frustration. The school wants the center to be a referral place rather than a place for therapy. The center is only open four days a week for four hours a day. Last semester alone 300 women visited the center seeking support. The majority of those cases were acquaintance assault. Many women have complained that when they called the center for help, it was closed.

"I don't know where I'd go or who I'd talk to if something were to happen to me," she says. But she is not a passive consumer of the Columbia experience. "By nature I am very competitive and assertive—especially when I notice that a lot of males are asserting themselves," Ms. Kumar says. "But I haven't felt that

need here in this environment because I feel we're getting equal time."

Some declare that it's not easy being a feminist on this campus. For many people, "feminist" conjures the image of a raging, militant man-hater.

"It really disturbs me to see intelligent women not speaking up because they think guys will think poorly of them," says Amanda Kahn. "Am I a feminist? Depends upon how you define it. I'm not militant, but I definitely believe women and men are equal. The whole thing about Hillary Clinton bothers me. I think she should be president. And to see articles denigrating her for being such a strong, vocal woman—it really makes me think about the country I'm living in and the whole point of my education. Why am I going through all of this to become a second-class citizen?"

"At Columbia, if people know you're a feminist I think they assume they know everything about you," remarks Stephanie Ellis. "Like if you're one of 'those' that means you find this funny, but you don't find that funny. You think this about the core curriculum, and you think this about language. You get put into a category. Sometimes in class you feel as if you're the token feminist: 'Now let's turn to Stephanie for the feminist point of view.'"

Ms. Ellis did not become a feminist until she arrived at Columbia. "The Women's Center has

"It really disturbs me to see intelligent women not speaking up because they think guys will think poorly of them."

—Amanda Kahn '95



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provided me with a lot of real consciousness-raising," she says. "If you're a little girl growing up in a society that refers to God as 'Him' all the time, you think that doesn't have an effect on you? Give me a break. What if it was always 'Her'? Then I'm sure men would have a problem with it. These sorts of things I had no clue about until I started going to the meetings at the Women's Center. That happened at Columbia, so I can't say that Columbia does nothing for women."

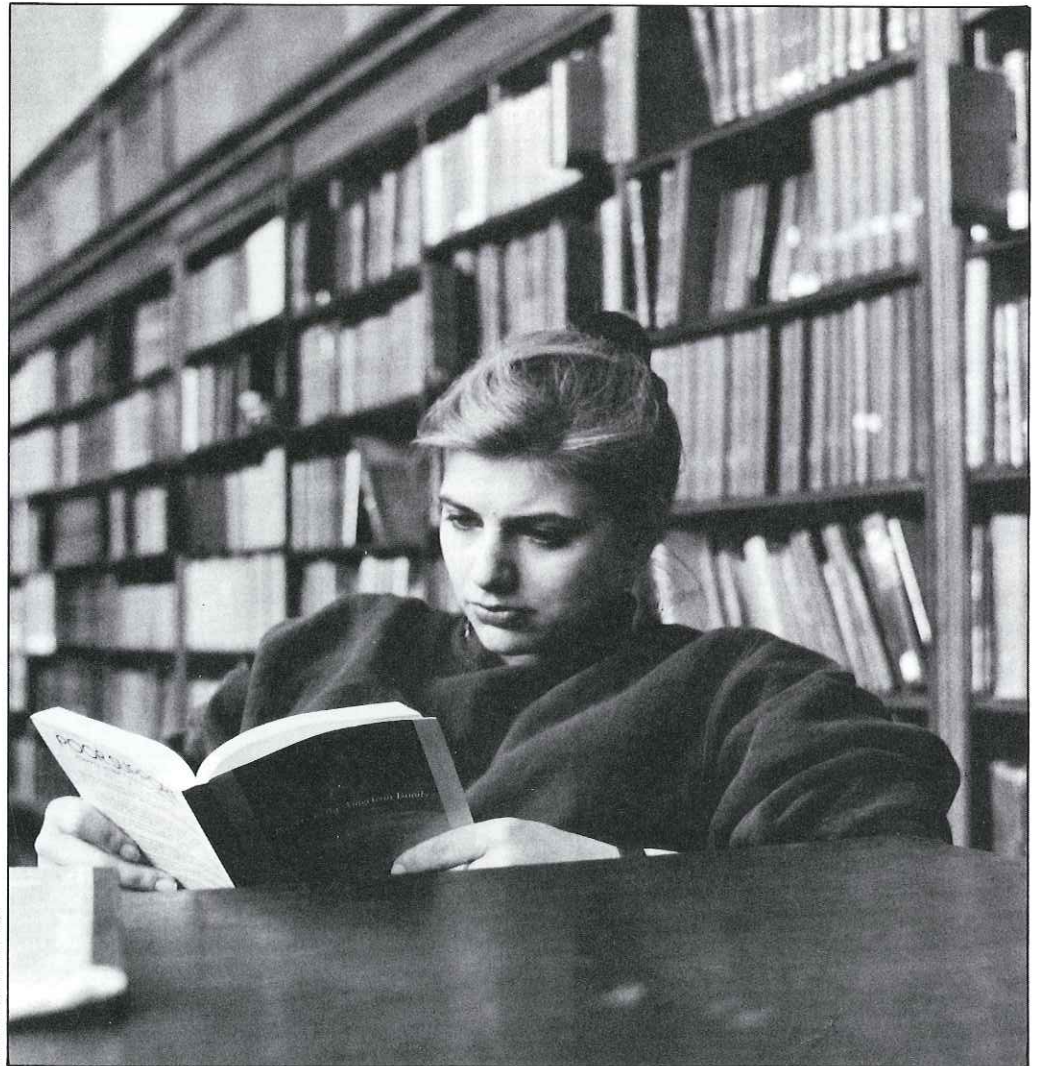
"Some women here drive me nuts with their obsession with body image and their complete lack of awareness of gender issues," exclaims Ms. Kumar. "I have more male friends here, which is odd for me. They think of me as a radical, raging feminist because I'm always making comments. Like in ballroom dancing we're always having fights about who is going to lead. Can you be as good a ballroom couple if the woman leads?"

Dissatisfaction with body image gives rise to eating disorders, and eating disorders often go undiagnosed and under-recognized.

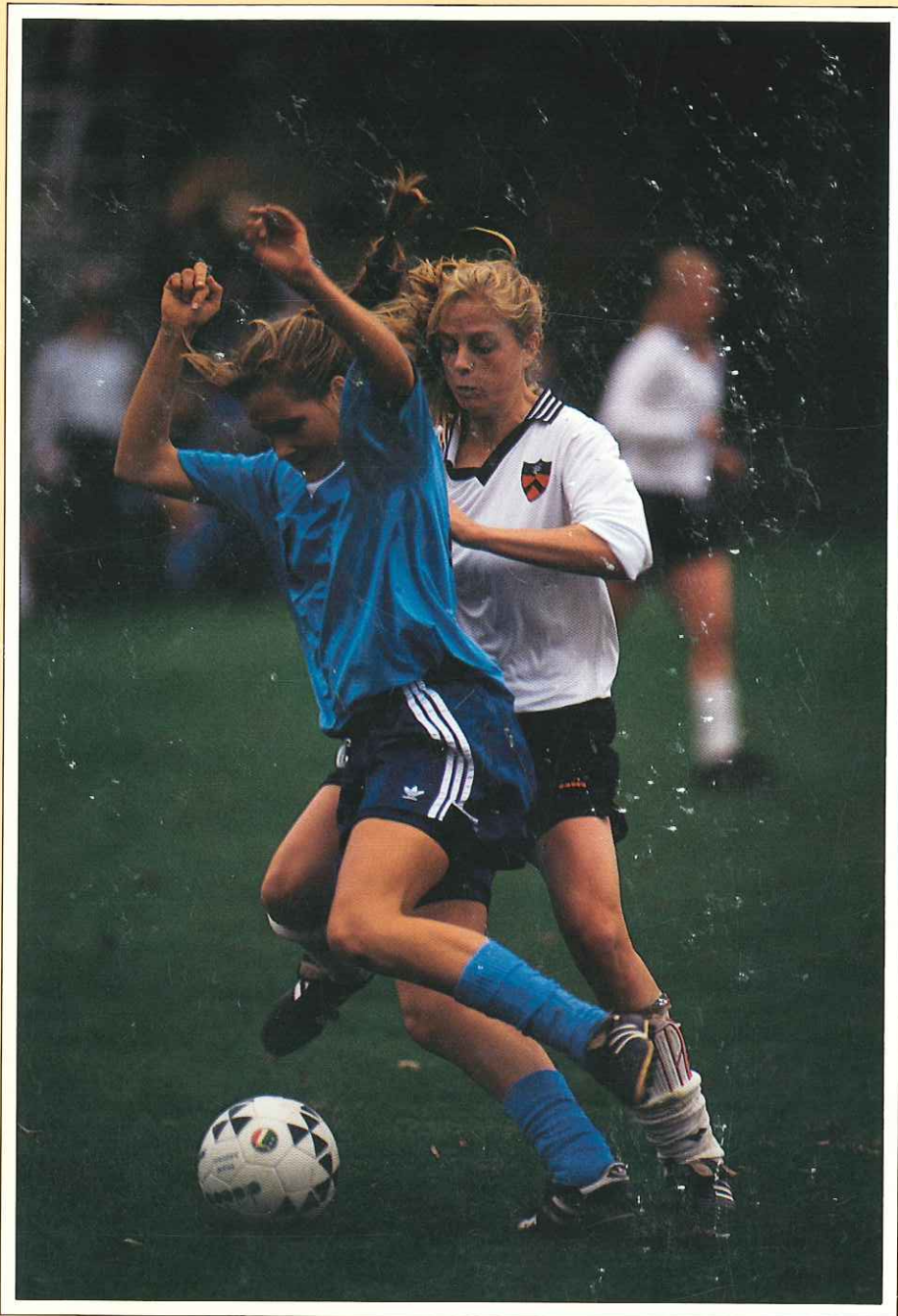
"There's only so much the University can do," says Ms. Ellis, "because it's a societal problem. I think it was a couple of years ago they had this poster at the gym's entrance. It was Christie Brinkley talking about how she was so fat when she weighed 160 pounds. This is a woman who is nearly six feet tall and big-boned. These posters are extremely irresponsible. What an issue this is for women! It's not a little thing. It's huge, really huge. The Women's Center had a rap session on body image at the beginning of this semester, and they packed the room."

The search for identity goes on for Columbia College women, and it sometimes involves a touch of serendipity as much as conscious programming.

"During my first week here," recalls Ms. Kumar, "I was looking for a bathroom in Schermerhorn. The elevator door opened on the seventh floor, and there it was in big letters—Institute for Research on Women & Gender. It was like a dream. I want to do this, and I can."



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