

History of Hunter College

Hunter College had its origin as a part of the movement to provide for the education of teachers. In 1851 the Board of Education of New York City was authorized to organize "normal schools for the education of teachers." In 1854 a grant of power was made to the Board of Education to continue the Free Academy (now City College of New York) and to establish a similar institution for females. Attempts were made soon thereafter to establish normal school training but without success until the organization of The Normal and High School for Females was entrusted to Thomas Hunter by the Board of Education in the fall of 1869. Dr. Hunter was an able schoolmaster fired with zeal in his undertaking and definitely committed to the need of more basic liberal education for the teachers of the city.

With a total staff of twenty-seven (including President Hunter) the Normal and High School had its formal opening on February 14, 1870, St. Valentine's Day, in leased quarters at 691 Broadway, corner of 4th Street. The tenants on the lower floor had a carriage store and an armory used the upper floor! The student body numbered 1105, all admitted by competitive examination and of these 300 proved capable of doing high school work.

The first graduating class completed its work in July of 1870.

Rapid growth proved the need for more adequate quarters and after a period of overcrowding and much detailed planning by President Hunter, appropriations were made for a college building at 68th Street on the site of Hamilton Park. Shortly after the formal opening of the institution the name was changed to Normal College of the City of New York and it was by that name that the Gothic building on Park Avenue was dedicated on October 28, 1873.

Through the years that followed, Dr. Hunter was the inspiration to a growing staff and student body. During the early years the curriculum was gradually expanded from a three-year course to include courses of college grade in addition to the methods courses which continued to be most important in fulfilling the major purpose of the college. As early as 1905 a system of majors and minors, required work and optionals was introduced.

Although the students in the first classes were very young (a regulation was made in the second year to establish fourteen as the minimum age of applicants), with the expansion of the curriculum and increase in length of course the graduates were very soon young women in their later teens and taking their places as high school teachers.

Following Dr. Hunter as president came George S. Davis who had already won recognition as superintendent of New York City schools. In his first commencement address he suggested a change of the name of the college to Hunter College to honor its first president and to add to the prestige of the college which had come to be considered by some as just a technical school for training teachers. With the help of the Associate Alumnae, President Davis succeeded in bringing about this change of name on April 4, 1914 by Act of the Legislature of New York State.

During the presidency of Dr. Kieran, who had for many years been professor of Education at college, Hunter's Bronx Buildings were erected on the Jerome Park Reservoir site and for the first time, Hunter students enjoyed the advantages of campus life.

One of President Colligan's first undertakings was a reorganization of the curriculum to give more freedom to students in choice of studies. During his period of office the construction of the new modernistic building on Park Avenue was begun.

Dr. Shuster's installation was coincident with the dedication of the new building on Park Avenue. His term of office has likewise included the dedication of the Sara Delano Roosevelt Houses to a program of Interfaith activities and experience in democratic living and the release of our Bronx Campus to the Navy for use as a Naval Training Station for the Women's Reserve.

In spite of the limitations put upon the college by the circumstances of war Hunter continues its progress.

History of Hunter College

NAME:

- 1869 - Normal and High School
- 1870 - Normal College of the City of New York
- 1914 - Hunter College of the City of New York
By Act of State Legislature
1. To honor the first president and founder, Thomas Hunter.
 2. To insure the prestige of the college which had come to be thought of only as a technical school by many.

PRESIDENTS:

- 1869-1906 Thomas Hunter
- 1906-1907 Joseph Gillet - Acting President
- 1907-1908 Edward S. Burgess - Acting President
- 1908-1929 George S. Davis
- 1929-1933 James M. Kieran
- 1933-1939 Eugene Colligan
- 1939- George N. Shuster

DEANS:

- | Date | Name | Title |
|-----------|-----------------------|--|
| 1870-1888 | Lydia Wadleigh | Lady Superintendent |
| 1888-1901 | Eliza Woods | Lady Superintendent and Professor of Ethics |
| 1901-1906 | Laura E. Leal | Woman Superintendent and Professor of Ethics |
| 1906-1934 | Annie E. Hickinbottom | Woman Superintendent (later changed to Dean) |
| 1934- | Hannah M. Egan | Dean (later changed to Dean of Students) |
| 1941- | Ann Anthony | Dean of Students |
| 1927-1936 | Lewis D. Hill | Dean of Studies |
| 1939-1940 | George N. Shuster | Academic Dean |
| 1941- | Eleanor H. Grady | Academic Dean (later changed to Dean of Faculty) |

BUILDINGS:

1. 1870-1873 - Third floor of building at Broadway and 4th Street. (The fourth floor was used as an armory; the lower floor as a carriage store.)
2. A newly constructed Gothic building was erected on site of Hamilton Park - 68th-69th Streets; Lexington to Park Avenues - dedicated in 1873 and in constant use up to 1936 when fire destroyed it on the college birthday, February 14, 1936.
3. Incidental leased quarters on 85th, 29th and 32nd Streets for temporary use during period from 1926 - 1940 to relieve overcrowding and to supplement space and facilities after the fire of 1936.
4. Bronx Campus Buildings 1931-1943. Now used by the Navy for the Waves.

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- Page 2 -

BUILDINGS: (continued)

5. 1940 - New modernistic structure on Park Avenue.

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GOVERNING BOARDS:

1870-1915 Board of Education
1915-1929 Board of Trustees
1929- Board of Higher Education - in charge of all Municipal Colleges.

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DEVELOPMENT OF COURSE:

1870 Established in 1870 with three year course covering six grades with specific purpose of giving "broad foundation of a liberal education." Work was in great part of that level now included in High Schools with pedagogy in the third year.

1879 Course extended to four years.

1888 College authorized to grant the usual degrees and diplomas in arts. Course extended to an enriched five-year course for those not planning to teach.

1897 Course expanded to seven years (High School and College) which was planned to follow an eight-year elementary school preparation.

1902 The College was accepted on same plane as private institutions.

1908 Liberalized curriculum introduced by President Davis.

1916 Summer Session started.

1917 Evening Session - established and College authorized to grant B.S. in Education; M.A. and M.S. in Education - these last two graduate degrees.

The
20's Broad expansion - wider opportunities for specialization;
gradual introduction of vocationalized curricula, provision
and for vocational guidance as well as training.
30's

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HUNTER in the WARS:

World War I - Special courses for radio and X-ray technician were established in a War Service Training School in which 1200 women were trained for government work.

Hunter students were released from classes for a three-week period to serve on Draft Boards.

Hunter students served as volunteer recorders for the census; raised funds for an ambulance; sold Liberty Bonds.

World War II - Many of Hunter's staff and graduates are serving their country. No account of the countless numbers in the Allied services is available.

The college curriculum has been modified to provide for War Service Areas.

Students and staff have assisted in C.D.V.O. activities within and without the college.

Special courses have been given in cooperation with the Federal Government for special services.

The Bronx Buildings have been in use since February, 1943 by the United States Navy as U.S.S. Hunter Naval Training Station - Women's Reserve.

War Bonds have been sold.

HONOR SOCIETIES:

Phi Beta Kappa
Sigma Tau Delta - English
Alpha Chi Alpha - Social Science
Eta Sigma Phi - Classics
Sigma Delta Pi - Spanish

Pi Mu Epsilon - Mathematics
Sigma Epsilon Phi - German
Theta Mu Tau - Physics
Phi Sigma - Biology
Kappa Mu Epsilon - Music

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A FEW OUTSTANDING ALUMNAE:

Elsie Ferguson
Julia Richman
Margaret Deland
Amelia Josephine Burn
Alice Glasgow
Marguerite Marington (author)
Ella Titus Werner - first woman to be admitted to the New York Bar

*James Cagney
Regina Remick
Frances Farnum
Pearl Primus*

ITEMS OF INTEREST:

Approximately 40,000 graduates

As early as 1870 there are gifts recorded of money to be used as awards for scholarship.

First free kindergarten in United States established at Normal College in 1874.

Alumnae organized in 1872.

Since 1870 Model School (elementary school) has been maintained for observation and practice.

First Free Concerts in City were made possible by a contribution of \$10,000 to Hunter College in 1910 by Pulitzer of "The World."

College motto "Mihi Cura Futuri."

On the first day of college in the Park Avenue building the students wearing the long billowy gowns of the period and led by Miss Wadleigh, paraded up Park Avenue to the new building. Horse car and stage coach were the means of transportation for the girls in the early years.

*Lump Hill
Patricia Seino
Northrup Camp
Scholarships - Prize
Organ
Salary in Bureau of Oc.
75 Anniversaries - Plans - Gifts*

*Piano - Records
Roosevelt House
furnishing -
Parker
Lan -*