

THE HUNTER COLLEGE ALUMNI NEWS

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MRS. SAMUEL ABRAMS

OUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

For eighty-five years our Alumni Association has been engaged in good works for the benefit of the College and the community. Through all these decades the Association has undertaken a wide variety of activities to supply the funds and services needed by the College to supplement its educational program. The City has not always been able to supply all the necessary funds, the necessary services.

A backward glance at the history of our Association will reveal some of the many activities undertaken so successfully in the past. We may indeed take pride in the record of the Alumni Association's achievement, as we take pride in the careers of our graduates.

The idea of kindergarten education is a commonplace today, but it was a group of graduates of our College who organized the first free kindergarten in this City. The establishment of kindergarten classes in the City public schools—just 58 years ago—was a direct result of the efforts of our graduates.

One of the largest settlements in the City—Lenox Hill—was originally organized, as I am certain most Hunterites will remember, by a group of College Alumni, as was the Alice Rich Northrop Memorial Camp, which continues to provide a country vacation annually for about 80 children.

Early in the history of the College our Associate Alumnae founded the College Library and provided support regularly. Funds were later allowed by the City for the Library, but many gifts have been made to the Library from time to time by Alumni groups which have filled vital needs.

The Bureau of Occupations, as it was called in its early days, was established and maintained for a number of years entirely by our Associate Alumnae. It was this office which secured part-time employment for undergrad-



DR. GEORGE N. SHUSTER

OUR COLLEGE

Hunter College has become a renowned institution, from some points of view almost breath-takingly so. This is certainly not due to neon lights put up around it by public relations experts, for we have always had too little of that kind of help. What accounts for it? We have not won major football games, nor have we worn an aura of social glamor. Perhaps the presence on the Bronx Campus for some years first of the Waves and then of the United Nations Security Council meant a little in terms of vicarious advertising of our existence, but certainly only a very little.

The cornerstone of our reputation is the "brainy woman". This stone, as I have learned from a number of graduates, is sometimes bulkier than one might wish it to be. People in all parts of the country, and indeed of the world, think this a College harder to get into than most others and still more difficult to get out of again with a degree. It is curious that all our Sings, functions, dances, and club activities leave little or no dent on the public mind as compared with what the Hunter student presumably does in the classroom. On the other hand we do deserve to have that sort of cornerstone—more than those of us who teach often think. The number of our graduates who go on to university study, or receive fellowships and comparable awards, is surprisingly large. This achievement cannot be divorced from the scholarly activities of the Faculty. In many fields the total contribution is, for a college, genuinely remarkable. We are also able to recruit able and promising young scholars, so that the future seems reasonably assured.

Second, we may as well frankly admit that it helps to have a building on Park Avenue. When we first opened shop in what was the earliest example of the "glass house" in New York, some people looked upon us as raucous upstarts. I recall being told by the president

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of the Union Club across the street, quite ruefully, that the size of our building made the Club's fuel bill higher by shutting out the sun. My retort was that the feminine scenery we provided compensated by making the members feel warmer inside. As of now I think it is safe to say that if we were not here the neighborhood would be campaigning for something like Hunter. Here is its favorite concert hall, its most distinguished meeting place, and its haven in time of sudden academic trouble. The College is for many, many thousands an easy place to get to and a pleasant one after arrival. And since our environment grows steadily more international in character, as well as more scholarly (witness, for instance, the Council on Foreign Relations and the Institute of International Education), we cannot help coming into close association with the life that courses through these. In short, being on Park Avenue makes it possible to offer service in ways that otherwise would be out of the question. Naturally there are some disadvantages. Our students probably think they have to dress up more than they would otherwise, we have no acres of green campus (though we seem to have adopted Central Park), and we receive a great many visitors. But on balance our address is a gilt-edged asset.

Third, as a result in part of our physical situation, we have become a quite unique community intellectual center. I doubt if there is another college which has so effective an Adult Education Program. Here I am referring not so much to formal courses, good though most of them are, but rather to two phenomena of unusual interest. The first is the quality of what the College provides for the general public through its Concert Series, its Opera Workshop, its student concerts, its Theater Workshop. These activities bring steady streams of men and women to our doors. The Concert Series in particular is not merely an artistic achievement of the highest quality, but an advertisement as valuable as a full-page daily in the *New York Times*. The second phenomenon is the bundle of activities, scholarly, civic, and aesthetic, which we encourage the public to undertake of its own initiative. The annual roster is most impressive, not merely for quantity but also for quality. By working with any number of these groups and by making our facilities available to them, we have vastly increased the number of our interested friends. It is perhaps not too much to say that from their point of view Hunter would have to be invented if it did not exist.

All this means that a Hunter degree is an excellent thing to have. That degree is of course intrinsically worth no more than an individual student puts into earning it, but it does no harm to realize that there are extrinsic values as well. Our job is to be the right sort of College in the right place. We all know that we could be a better one in a still better place, but for the time being we shall grin and bear our fame.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER, President

uates. The demands made upon the office grew to such proportions that the City finally provided funds for the establishment of the present Placement Bureau.

To mark the Fiftieth Birthday of the College, the Alumnae raised, in the '20's, a sum of \$125,000 for an Alumnae Hall, a memorial to the founder and first President of the College, Dr. Thomas Hunter. Today the income from this fund helps to maintain Alumni headquarters at Roosevelt House.

In 1949, the Alumnae embarked on a campaign to raise \$250,000, the income of which was to be used for grants to undergraduates in need of financial assistance. This is the most important piece of work which our Association is doing today. Over \$100,000 has been collected, and more than 250 students have already received Alumni aid.

I have referred only to a few of our more important activities. Again, older Alumni will remember our Association's services to our country during both World Wars—and various other outstanding undertakings in the past.

At the present we are engaged—among other activities—in preparing a record of all graduates of the College to date, in the hope that an Alumni Directory can be published in 1960 to mark the 90th birthday of the College. The task of bringing up-to-date the names and addresses of all of our graduates is a tremendous one. We now have about 13,000 correct names and addresses. Our goal is the correct listing of all our 50,000 graduates.

Our Alumni Association serves as a link between you and the College. This Association can be mutually beneficial. More and more, Colleges throughout the country are recognizing the value of an active Alumni Association; and more and more, Alumni are recognizing the extent of the debt they owe their Alma Mater.

In the last 10 years Alumni contributions throughout the country have multiplied tenfold. Classes and Chapters and other Hunter Alumni groups have given generously in the past, but we too can undertake today to multiply our contributions to our College. Our effectiveness depends in great measure on our strength in numbers. I cannot urge too strongly that all of you who are not members join us, to the end that we may in some small measure repay the debt we owe Hunter.

Working together we can build for the future; we can raise additional sums to maintain larger Alumni Quarters, to increase our staff, to make grants to graduates as well as undergraduates for continued study, to provide for various graduate and undergraduate needs. Continuing Alumni activities is evidence of the pride we should rightly take in being Hunterites.

My good wishes to all who read these lines, and a hearty welcome to all graduates to our Alumni Association.

FRANCES ROTH ABRAMS '22, President