

SINK OR SWIM

By Colleen Kinney '90



Colleen Kinney (left) on the morning of Sharkfest with her Olney Hall porchmate Heather Brown.

I was about to turn 40, and didn't feel especially happy about it. But heck, since the milestone was unavoidable, I decided I may as well commemorate it. The big question was, How?

I opted to take part in Sharkfest 2008, a 1.5-mile swim in San Francisco Bay from Alcatraz Island to the city's Aquatic Park, sans wetsuit, in 57-degree water.

It had been more than 20 years since I swam at Hellman Pool for coach Karen Koshak. So much has changed at Mills and in my own life. Hellman pool has been replaced by Trefethen Aquatic Center, and I have become a sleep-deprived, stressed-out, stay-at-home mother of four healthy, active youngsters. Triplets Jack, Mary, and Ben were almost two years old when baby Ivy came along. I admit I was feeling old. Luckily, I discovered that swimming a few times a week helped keep me sane. I started training with Central Iowa Aquatic Masters and took part in several open water races, including a five-kilometer swim in Lake Michigan.

So when I initially heard of Sharkfest, the spontaneous side of me thought, "Why not be daring?" Yet the rational side of me thought it was absurd, even suicidal.

But many other women have done it, some of them decades ago. Anastasia Scott, 17-year-old daughter of a staff sergeant stationed at Alcatraz, was the first woman to complete the swim, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle* on October 18, 1933. The reporter even noted that Scott did it "without batting a dusky eyelash."

Some 75 years later, on June 28, 2008, I nervously boarded one of the two ferries at Pier 41 and headed to Alcatraz with about 800 mostly wetsuit-clad swimmers. Apprehensively, I questioned why I was there.

When it was my turn to take the plunge, I hesitated slightly before diving into the brisk water. Anxious and cold, I focused on other remarkable female swimmers in history, such as Olympic medalist Gertrude Ederle. Skeptics said Ederle would fail in her attempt to cross the English Channel and "that women must

admit that they would remain forever the weaker sex" (*America's Champion Swimmer* by David A. Adler). Ederle proved them wrong in 1926, when she became the first woman to swim the Channel—and shattered the men's record in doing so.

There were some rough parts during the swim from Alcatraz. I'd completed races at longer distances in midwestern lakes, but the bay felt like a deep chasm of immeasurable depth. I tried to keep my stroke strong and my breathing regular despite the waves that drenched me each time I turned for air. Gulping seawater, I thought of open-water sensation Lynne Cox, who swims throughout the world in extremely frigid, rough water. At 16, Cox captured the world record for crossing the English Channel. When the cold bay waters chilled me through, I thought, "C'mon, this isn't the South Pole."

Looking up every few meters, it was difficult to make out San Francisco landmarks, such as Coit Tower, because although it was a typical foggy morning, smoke still lingered from the California wildfires. I was concerned about missing the entrance into Aquatic Park, which would have meant the unbeatable current would have pulled me too far to swim in. It would also have meant that I would have to be brought back to shore on a boat, a huge disappointment. When I saw the Ghirardelli Chocolate sign, one of my landmarks, I raced as fast as possible. My heart was pounding. Once I made it past the jetty walls, I sprinted to the finish.

It's been 20 years but Koshak's mantra, "You know yourself," still sticks with me, whether I'm going bonkers raising four youngsters or training for a swim. Her words remind me of my potential—and limitations—in working to achieve a goal. The challenge of completing Sharkfest was exhilarating and unforgettable. I finished the race in 44 minutes, emerging from the water with salmon-colored skin and numb feet, and earned first place in my age group.

Not bad for an old lady. Now what will I do to celebrate my fiftieth?

I dedicate this swim to Sydney Silverman Lindauer '31, 1909-2005, who led an active life for over nine decades. Until her death, Mrs. Lindauer wrote a weekly column for the daily paper in Red Bluff, California, participated in many community causes, and swam almost daily. It is my hope that my life will be half as fulfilling. —Colleen Kinney

Alumnae Club Report

Alumnae as far from Mills as Saudi Arabia and China enjoyed opportunities this past spring to meet with President Janet L. Holmgren in their home towns, hear the latest news about Mills, and catch up with each other. President Holmgren—accompanied by Executive Vice President for Institutional Advancement Ramon Torrecilha and Vice President for Development Virginia Rivera—travelled to **Jeddah** to join alumnae in the Middle East for dinners at the homes of Maha Al-Juffali-Ghandour '82 and Deema Al Sulaiman Kabani '82 on March 9 and 10. On May 10, the President attended the **Los Angeles Mills College Alumnae's** spring general meeting (more news on this event below). In Hong Kong on May 21, President Holmgren, College officers Torrecilha and Rivera, and 30 Mills alumnae and friends gathered for a festive **Hong Kong Mills Club** dinner, hosted by Carol Chiu '63 and arranged by Lillian Chan '76.

On May 4, the Oakland–Berkeley Branch... The **Santa Barbara–Ventura Mills Alumnae Branch** enjoyed a walking tour of Lotusland estate and botanic gardens on May 3. Branch President Aliza Shima '59 and ten other people attended this event to raise funds for Mills scholarships at the unique 37-acre garden created by opera singer Ganna Walska. Afterwards, the group happily lunched together at a restaurant overlooking the Santa Barbara Bird Refuge.

On May 4, the **Oakland–Berkeley Branch** enjoyed the company of classmates and students at the Mills College Art Museum when they gathered for a sneak peek of the MFA Exhibition prior to the opening reception. Museum Director Jessica Hough gave the group a private tour and introduced alumnae to the artists.

The **Phenomenal Women of Color** event drew alumnae back to campus on April 18 to honor Mills seniors of color. Courtney Donnell '08 received the Ethnic Studies Outstanding Student Award, Silvia Kim '08 was honored with the Reaching Beyond Award, and the Spirit of Dolores Huerta Award was presented to Maria Dominguez '08. The event was co-sponsored by the Alumnae Association of Mills College Alumnae of Color Committee and the Ethnic Studies Department. Alumnae had the unique opportunity to view the last academic year in pictures through the Ethnic Studies Department slideshow, and all participants left the event inspired after

hearing featured speaker Amina Mama, Barbara Lee Distinguished Chair in Women's Leadership.

The **Los Angeles Mills College Alumnae** held their spring general meeting at the Skirball Cultural Center, one of the world's most dynamic Jewish cultural institutions, on May 10. A group of over 40 guests gathered to enjoy networking with alumnae representing five decades of Mills classes and to meet President Janet L. Holmgren, Alumna Trustee Susan Brown Penrod '71, Vice President for Development Virginia Rivera, and newly appointed Director of Alumnae Relations Laura Gobbi. The day's activities included a luncheon and a private tour of the exhibition Bob Dylan's American Journey, 1955–1965. A special thanks to the many who organized this event, including Laurel Burden '68, Julia Casey '92, Bonnie Leaver '58, Nangee Morrison '63, and Barbara Werlin '50.

An intimate group of alumnae met for a delicious breakfast at The Cottage in Laguna Beach on June 28. The breakfast, organized by Julia Almanzan '92, was followed by a docent-led tour of the visiting exhibition at the Laguna Art Museum. Enthusiasm was high for the re-establishment of the **Mills College Club of Orange County** and planning began for a summer board meeting at a local alumna's home.



Maha Al-Juffali Ghandour '82 with President Holmgren in Saudi Arabia.

President Holmgren enjoyed the hospitality of the Hong Kong branch. From left: Carol Chiu '63; Cecil Leong, P '80, '83, '86; Vice President for Development Virginia Rivera; Mary Leong, P '80, '83, '86; Shin-Chak Chiu; President Holmgren; and Lillian Chan '76.

The Santa Barbara–Ventura Branch at Lotusland.

This year's Phenomenal Women of Color award winners with Professor Julia Sudbury (at far right).

In Los Angeles, Nangee Morrison '63, President Holmgren, Laurel Burden '68, and Julia Casey '92.

Want to get involved with your local branch?
 Contact alumnae-relations@mills.edu or 510.430.3363 to find out who's in your area.



In Memoriam

Notices of deaths received
April 2–July 1, 2008

Alumnae

Rowena Stadtmuller

Beeghly '30, February 7, in Woodland, California.

Aubrey Kennedy Ingraham '32

January 30, 2007, in Clovis, California. She was a member of the Oakland community for nearly 70 years and was active in the Women's Athletic Club and the Piedmont Community Church. She is survived by three children and eight grandchildren.

Relda Levy Eschen '33, April 20, in San Rafael, California. A dedicated volunteer for Camp Fire Girls and the American Red Cross, she is survived by two daughters and four grandchildren.

Katrina Wallingford Ettlinger '33, March 29, 2007, in West Hurley, New York. An accomplished pianist, she performed with the USO in Europe during World War II. With her husband, Don, she co-wrote episodes of the television series *I Remember Mama*. She is survived by three children and four grandchildren.

Helen Thom Francis '33, MA '34, February 16, in Twain Harte, California. She was a church organist, supervised school music programs, and conducted research on early American music. Survivors include her son, Richard.

Margaret Shaffrath Hollingsworth '33, January 10, 2007, in Portola Valley, California. A botany major at Mills, she worked as an elementary school teacher in Bakersfield for several years.

Georgia Thomas Peel '35, June 24, 2007, in Tucson, Arizona. Survivors include her niece Heather Walker Wentworth '68 and great niece Amy Wentworth '94.

Eleanor Mitchell Fortin '36, January 15, in Seattle. She started

the Vernell Candy Company with her husband and served as vice president for a chain of grocery stores. An avid golfer and supporter of community organizations, she is survived by her husband, Lavern; three children; and three grandchildren.

Eileen Kelly Johnson '36, April 5, in Riverside, California.

Hazel Willis Quinlan '36, March 16, in Saint Paul, Minnesota. The matriarch of the family, she provided guidance to many. Survivors include her husband, John; five children; and 16 grandchildren.

Margaret Fisher Hubbell '37, May 8, in Mesa, Arizona. A long-time resident of Pasadena and Glendale, she is survived by her husband, Frank; three children; and eight grandchildren.

Margaret Hawkins Houghton '38, March 24, in Hollister, California. She was a schoolteacher and a member of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Republican Women, and Native Daughters of the Golden West. Survivors include a nephew and several cousins.

Joelle Kaufmann Kornell '39, February 5, in Healdsburg, California.

Mary Fisher Moller '39, October 16, 2007, in San Diego. She was a well known artist who worked in a variety of media, often reflecting her San Diego environment or her travels to Spain, Mexico, and Brazil. A member of The Artists Guild of the San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego Art Institute, and the Clairemont Art Guild, she is survived by a daughter and two granddaughters.

Elizabeth Minnes '40, March 15, in Sonoma, California. After retiring from teaching high school in 1979, she enjoyed extensive global travels. Survivors include a nephew.

Mary Holmquist Peters '40, February 10, in Oakland, Nebraska. She was deeply

involved with Girl Scouts, establishing a scout camp with her husband, was vice president of Holmquist Grain and Lumber Company, and provided musical accompaniment for her church choir for 50 years. She is survived by her husband, Robert; four children; and seven grandchildren.

Carolyn Buchmann Parks '41, January 21, in San Francisco. She was a professional ballet dancer in the 1930s, toured with her own company throughout Europe and South America, and directed the Academy of Ballet in San Francisco. She was also instrumental in founding the Marin Civic Ballet and consulted with the Kirov Ballet School. Survivors include her husband, Richard; three nieces; and many members of her extended family.

Helen Gay, MA '42, April 16, in Rockwood, Michigan. She received her PhD from the University of Pennsylvania and worked as a cytogeneticist for 40 years. She was a professor of zoology and biology at the University of Michigan, was a member of numerous professional organizations, and contributed to many scientific journals.

Harriet Bradley Tegart '42, January 7, in Lake Oswego,


Oregon. She worked as a medical lab technician and later operated a dairy farm with her husband. She was the first female board member at Physicians and Surgeons Hospital and volunteered for many organizations. She is survived by her daughter, Lee Ann Tegart Labby '75; a son; and two grandchildren.

Elaine Brimberg Dundy '43, May 1, in Los Angeles. Born Elaine Brimberg, she took the stage name Elaine Dundy when she decided to become an actress. She played small parts in Europe and soon married the critic Kenneth Tynan, with whom she frequented London's elite social and artistic circles. She wrote the bestselling novel *The Dud Avocado*, as well as two more novels and several biographies, including her 2001 autobiography, *Life Itself!* She is survived by her daughter.

Helen Ford Mahaney '43, April 17, in Sacramento. She was a devoted wife and mother, painter, and equestrienne, and was involved in several charitable organizations. She is survived by her husband, John; five children; and 11 grandchildren.

Constance Irvine McVey '43, May 9, in Walnut Creek, California.





McVey was a member of several volunteer and social groups, including bridge and book clubs, as well as the Great Expectations Investment Club of Santa Maria, which she started in 1997. She is survived by three children and four grandchildren.

Cornelia “Connie” Dodge Fraley ’44, December 21, 2006, in Chester Springs, Pennsylvania. She supported the Natural Lands Trust, the Chester County Mental Health Clinic, the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and the Pennsylvania Ballet. She is survived by four children and eight grandchildren.

Delphine Sparks ’44, May 15, in El Cerrito, California. She earned a teaching credential and worked as a physical education teacher.

Elaine Walker Lis ’45, March 2, in Beaverton, Oregon. She earned a PhD in nutrition at UC Berkeley, studied the effects of war on soldiers in Korea, and operated a lab at the University of Oregon Medical School. Survivors include her sister Marilyn Walker Decker ’40 and three children, including her daughter Victoria “Vicky” Lis ’84.

Therese Froelicher McKinney ’45, June 13, in Randolph, Vermont. She was an x-ray technician in New York City before moving to Vermont, where she taught kindergarten as well as community college. Survivors include four children and nine grandchildren.

Georgiana Michael ’45, May 8, in Murphys, California. As a young adult, she worked at Western Sample Company, and was always an enthusiastic collector and crafter. Survivors include two cousins.

Frances Martin Andrews ’46, February 4, 2007, in Phoenix, Arizona. She generously gave her time and energy in support of the auxiliary at Scottsdale

Healthcare for more than 25 years. She is survived by eight children.

Catherine Corneau Lenox ’46, June 1, 2007, in Santa Cruz, California. She was a teacher at the Mills College Children’s School and led English language and literacy GED classes; later, she taught adult education classes in long-term care facilities. She is survived by four daughters and seven grandchildren.

Jean Dold Youngling ’47, January 31, in Hillsborough, California. She was president of the Auxiliary for the Children’s Hospital at Stanford and led fundraising efforts for that organization. She is survived by her husband, George; two children; two grandchildren; and her sister Jeannette Dold Bernhard ’49.

Barbara Berkey Kiser ’48, February 13, in San Diego. She was a dedicated volunteer for several museums, an active outdoorswoman, a poker player, a musical enthusiast, and an avid shell collector. She is survived by her husband, John; three children; and two grandchildren.

Marcia Cole Saville ’49, February 27, in Topeka, Kansas. Throughout her life, she was a volunteer and leader for many local and regional organizations. She is survived by three children and five grandchildren.

E. Alison Kay ’50, June 9, in Honolulu. She completed her PhD at the University of Hawaii, Manoa, where she became a researcher and faculty member. An expert on marine mollusks, she updated Charles Edmondson’s *Hawaiian Marine Shells*. A species of cowrie, *Cypraea alisonae*, was named after her. A pioneering environmentalist, she lobbied to make Diamond Head Hawaii’s first state monument. She is survived by her brother Gordon.

Gynne “Jean” Stern ’50, May 23, in Tiburon, California. She had a 20-year career in teaching

and counseling before joining an ad agency, where she collaborated on radio spots, including the famous “Farms? In Berkeley?” slogan. The author of the book *The Dark Goddess*, she is survived by two daughters.

Marion Tonkon Kaufman ’51, May 31, in Dallas. She enjoyed art, ballet, her garden, and her family. Survivors include three children and two grandchildren.

Dorothy Roller Brewer ’55, March 20, in Reston, Virginia. She was a gracious hostess, an intrepid traveler, a docent at the Art Institute of Chicago, and hosted more than 20 high school exchange students. She is survived by her husband, Bob; three sons; and four grandchildren.

Robert Coleman, MA ’55, March 16, in Angels Camp, California. He was a professor of art at San Jose State University, specializing in jewelry making and goldsmithing. Survivors include his wife, Mary, and two children.

Sarah “Sally” Renner Farr ’55, October 18, 2007, in Denver. She is survived by her husband, Robert; a daughter; and two grandchildren.

Nancy Laston Gilmore ’68, May 21, in Portland, Oregon. She was an avid reader and an energetic volunteer for the Beaverton Library in Portland. Survivors include three daughters.

Barbara Jacobson ’68, January 8, in Medford, Oregon. She worked as an occupational therapist in London for many years, designed jewelry, and played violin in the North State Symphony Orchestra. She is survived by a sister.

Madelain Urrere ’75, June 20, 2007, in Santa Cruz, California.

Toyoji Tomita, MFA ’86, April 17, in Oakland. He was an accomplished trombonist and a music instructor at Mills, as well as president of TPT Gardening, a sustainable landscaping firm.

He is survived by his wife, Marianne, and his mother.

Christin Irwin Stock ’95, February 24, in Port Angeles, Washington. A child development major at Mills, she completed a master’s degree in education from the University of Phoenix. She is survived by her husband, Steve; two daughters; her parents; and a brother.

Marilyn Kolakowski ’01, March 29, in Oakland. A successful self-employed graphic artist, she was a resumer at Mills and had a black belt in karate. She is survived by her partner, Rick Schiller; a sister; and three brothers.

Family

Joseph Del Aragon, father of Anita Aragon Bowers ’63, April 18, in Danville, California.

Norick Bizé, father of Sheryl Bizé-Boutté ’73, January 31, in Stockton, California.

Harold Daubenspeck, father of Elizabeth Ann Daubenspeck Marks ’71, May 21, in Seattle.

G. Donald Flaith, father of Rachel Flaith ’80, MBA ’06, March 25, in Pennsylvania.

Robert Gaspich, father of Mary Gaspich ’73, April 17, in Los Altos Hills, California.

James Harper, husband of Nancy Martin Harper ’80, father of Kristin Harper Bush ’78 and Kim Harper Brooks ’90, uncle of Marian Harper Weldin ’62 and Nettie Harper ’65, May 7, in Pleasant Hill, California.

Charles Muller, husband of Patricia “Pat” Peregrine Muller ’57, April 8, in Denver, Colorado.

Guy Neely, husband of Eleanor Stauffer Neely ’38 and uncle of Caroline Fahlen ’69, December 29, 2006, in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Brenton Palmer, father of Michele Palmer Price ’81, March 31, in Boulder Creek, California.

Forrest Riegel, husband of Frances Barrington Riegel

Gifts in Memory of

'51, March 1, 2007, in Palos Verdes Estates, California.

William Ryan, husband of Sally Diekman Ryan '51, April 10, in Los Altos, California.

Neil Westen, husband of Elizabeth Barnes '74, March 25, 2007, in Oakland, Oregon.

Erwin White, husband of Emma-Jane Peck White '35 and uncle of Elizabeth Peck Hutchins '47, November 19, 2007, in Walnut Creek, California.

Robert Wills, husband of Melanie "Lani" Kask '68, April 8, in Ukiah, California.

Christina Wolfe, mother of Shannon Wolfe '96, October 31, 2007, in Seattle.

Friends

Warren Callister, April 3, in Novato, California. A nationally known architect who brought a warm, organic feeling to modern design, he was known for crafting buildings with special attention to their site, function, and the people who would use them. He created the Mills College Chapel, which he last visited in December 2007 (see winter/spring 2008 issue of the *Quarterly*) and referred to the sanctuary as one of his favorite projects in a 2004 interview with the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He is survived by two sons and four grandchildren.

George Jewett Jr., May 23, in San Francisco. A Mills College Trustee from 1967 to 1970, he was also a trustee of the Academy of Sciences, helped establish the Asian Art Museum, and supported the San Francisco Ballet. He was a director of the Potlatch Corporation and chaired five America's Cup syndicates for three yacht clubs from 1973 to 2000. He is survived by his wife, Lucille; two children; and four grandchildren.

(Received March 1–May 31, 2008)

Joseph Del Aragon P '63, by *Nangee Warner Morrison '63, Virginia Rivera*

Dorothy Profant Artaud '43, MA '44, P '70, by *June Holden Schneider '43*

Laura Balas, MA '92, by *Helen and Arne Hovdesven*

Sheila Weibert Ballantyne '58, by *Margaret Roberts Tomczak '58*

Mary Helen Barrett, by *Roussel Sargent*

Vesta Berger, mother of Barbara Berger Pratt, by *Barbara Berger Pratt '53*

June Bilisoly '54, by *Anna Lou Fields Ford '52*

Barbara Bundschu '38, by *Katharine Gregg, Roussel Sargent, Nancy Kenealy Soper '51*

Georgine "Greni" Porter Caldecott '39, by *Cynthia Lowell Wallace '39, P '77*

Members of Class of 1968 no longer with us, by *Kristen Reasoner Apgar '68*

Evelyn "Peg" Deane '41, by *Mary Hart Clark '42*

Chester Dorman, husband of Sterling Loftin Dorman '47, by *Janet Hopkins Richards '36*

Relda Levy Eschen '33, by *Diane Meyer Keebaugh '59*

G. Donald Flaith, father of Rachel Flaith '80, by *Heather Summers '80*

Allyson Fremouw, grandniece of Anita Aragon Bowers, by *Anita Aragon Bowers '63*

Barbara "Bobby" Coleman Frey '68, by *Katherine Coopman '68*

Helen Odell Gilbert-Bushnell '43, by *Madeleine Ebbesen Davis '46*

Eleanor Hadley '38, by *Kazuko "Koko" Tsunematsu Tajima '69, MA '71*

Elizabeth "Betsy" Rulison Harrington '40, by *Helen B. Smith*

George and Helen Hedley, by *Sara Matthews Buchanan '64*

Sally Bubb Holland '43, by *Helen Elizabeth Porter Hussman '43, Helen Metz Lore '43, Palo Alto Area Mills College Club, Kate Morrow Whitley '43*

Muriel "Tex" Johnston '42, MA '46, by *Alice Gonnerman Mueller '42, Helen Haigh Mills '46, Betty Taves Whitman '46*

Bennett King, husband of Elizabeth "Betsy" Church King '50, by *Margaret Clarke Umbreit '49*

Michael C. T. Kwok, husband of Mildred Ho Kwok '52, by *Betty Chu Wo '46*

Elaine Walker Lis '45, by *Elizabeth Laurens Merritt '84*

Naomia Little, grandmother of Lori Hardacre, by *Lori Hardacre '85, MA '92*

Helen Ford Mahaney '43, by *Jean McMinn Greenwood '43*

Boitumelo "Tumi" McCallum '07, daughter of Teboho Moja, by *Steven Burrell, Teboho Moja, Mary-Jane Malebye, Jane Letsebe, Sharon Mozgai*

Eleanor "Ellie" McDonald Meyer '36, mother of Nancy Meyer Neal, by *Nancy Meyer Neal '70*

Madeleine Milhaud, by *Imogene Fluno Whipple '43*

Benjamin Moore, by *Peggy Kiehlbauch Woodworth '53*

Charles Muller, husband of Patricia Peregrine Muller '57, by *Myrna Bostwick Cowman '57, Barbara Hunter '57*

Kate Slade Murty '59, by *Ellen Locke Crumb '59*

Margaret McMinn Phillips '41, sister of Jean McMinn Greenwood, by *Jean McMinn Greenwood '43*

Dorothy Jane McVeigh Raney '45, by *Madeleine Ebbesen Davis '46, P '71*

Carolyn Nissen Rathbun '68, by *Gayle Rothrock '68*

Flora Elizabeth Reynolds, by *Roussel Sargent*

Forrest Riegel, husband of Frances Barrington Riegel '51, by *Nancy Kenealy Soper '51*

Jane "Jinx" Rule '52, by *Roussel Sargent*

Lawrence Shrader, by *William Eaton, Watson Laetsch*

Nancy "Emily" Edgar Stafford '34, by *Laurie-Sue Ptak Retts '69*

Susan Magoffin Stoker '49, by *Carol Blundell Miller '49*

Toyoji Tomita, MFA '86, by *Masako Sakai Hamada '58*

Cynthia Weintraub Weber '69, by *Susan Roe Lathrop '69*

Dr. Reynold Wik '74, by *Sara Matthews Buchanan '64*

Arnold Wolff, husband of Ann Sulzberger Wolff '42, by *Chicago Area Branch*

Mary Swift Wuerthner '51, by *Palo Alto Area Mills College Club, Nancy Kenealy Soper '51*



Pearls of Wisdom

Traditions Tie Generations of Mills Women Together

By Pamela Wilson



In 1902, a young Mills student sketched a design for a pearl-studded “M” brooch for her classmates. She took her sketch to then-president Susan Mills, who approved the design. For many years, each student who wished to own the symbol of enduring ties to their alma mater had to travel to the shop of a particular San Francisco jeweler with a letter signed by Mrs. Mills confirming her status as a Mills College senior before a Pearl M could be made for her.

Now, over a century later, those delicate jewels still represent the bonds of intellect and emotion that tie Mills alumnae together. They’re easier to obtain—Pearl M pins are sold at the College bookstore. But some pins are earned, not bought. The Alumnae Association of Mills College holds a small cache of very special pins donated by alumnae for a unique purpose. Each spring at the Pearl M Dinner, which kicks off Commencement celebrations, the AAMC presents a vintage pin to a graduating senior to honor her exemplary service to the Alumnae Association and the College.

Rita Faletti ’81 is one student who received such recognition when she was awarded a Pearl M contributed by Joyce Lobner ’13. Faletti researched Lobner’s life and found that, while each generation sees its struggles as unique, the model of the Mills woman who finds her voice and the confidence to stand up for her beliefs was already in place at the turn of the last century. Lobner’s pin—which Faletti still wears and cherishes—is a powerful sym-

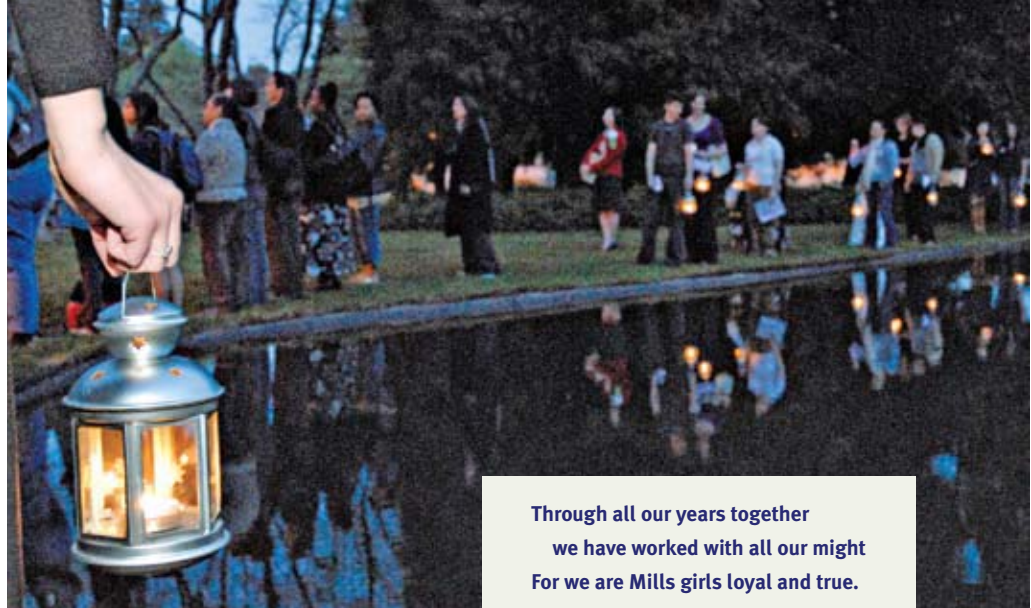
bol of the elements of the Mills experience that stand the test of time.

At this year’s dinner in April, Faletti, now a member of the AAMC Board of Governors, passed the tradition on to the newest generation of Mills alumnae when she presented Alison Lazareck ’08 with a Pearl M donated by Ann Winsor Doskow ’57. Doskow, an English major, considered it a “stroke of luck” to find Mills as a transfer student. Like so many alumnae, she remains in close touch with her Mills friends, who came together last year for their 50th Reunion.

Lazareck, a psychology major who minored in English, served the AAMC and the College while working at the *Quarterly*, the Mills College Annual Fund, and Reunions. She exhibits many additional qualities that hold value over a lifetime: “Alumnae and College staff describe Alison as a dedicated Mills woman who is bright, hardworking, and cheerful,” Faletti said during the presentation.

Lazareck, who began a new job as a development associate for a private primary and middle school in July, reflects, “Receiving the pin was a tremendous honor. I hugely enjoyed working with alumnae, and to be recognized for something that gave me so much pleasure and on-the-job experience was a great capstone to my time at Mills.”

After dinner, with daylight fading from campus, an array of tiny lights flickered as seniors and alumnae joined together in the Lantern Ceremony. Dozens of women



Through all our years together
we have worked with all our might
For we are Mills girls loyal and true.
But now we must be parting
with our lanterns for our light;
We may wander,
but we’ll always think of you.

—The Lantern Song

young and old carried lanterns to the Music Building pond, where Jane Cudlip King ’42 led the group in songs commemorating the shared experiences of Mills women, regardless of class year or course of study: a love of learning, the strength of friendships forged, and the desire to go forth and create positive change in the world. And so a new group of women completed the transition from undergraduate student to Mills alumna that so many have undergone before, and that many more will undergo in the future.

If you would like to hand down your Pearl M to a future Mills senior, please contact AAMC President Anita Aragon Bowers ’63 at AnitaAragonBowers@alumnae.mills.edu or 510.430.3374.



Passing the pin: Rina Faletti ’81 presents a vintage Pearl M to Alison Lazareck ’08 (above); the Lantern Ceremony creates a magical landscape (top).

ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION OF MILLS COLLEGE PRESENTS
THE GREAT JOURNEY
THROUGH EUROPE

June 15 to 25, 2009

From approximately \$3195 per person (plus airfare)

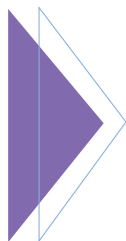
Explore the cultural and scenic treasures of the heart of Europe on this unique cruise and rail itinerary tracing the Rhine River from the Swiss Alps to the North Sea. Begin your “grand tour” in Switzerland, with two nights in a deluxe hotel in the beautiful lakeside town of



Lucerne and two nights in the classic alpine resort of Zermatt, nestled beneath the craggy profile of the Matterhorn. During your stay in Switzerland, you will experience the soaring majesty of the Alps on three of Europe’s most spectacular rail journeys—the Mt. Pilatus Railway, the Glacier Express and the Gornergrat Bahn. Travel overland to Basel and board the deluxe M.S. AMADEUS SYMPHONY for a five-night voyage down the Rhine River through France, Germany and Holland to Amsterdam, passing Gothic cathedrals, medieval castles, terraced vineyards, rustic villages of half-timbered houses and the legendary Lorelei Rock. A special Amsterdam Post-Program Option is also offered.

*For reservations or more information, please contact the Alumnae Association of Mills College:
Tel.: (510) 430-2110 • Fax: (510) 430-1401 • Email: aamc@mills.edu*

AAMC



WE WANT YOUR VOTE ON AAMC BYLAWS REVISIONS

Saturday, September 20, 9:00 am to 10:00 am, Lisser Hall

A number of proposed changes in the bylaws of the Alumnae Association of Mills College (AAMC) need ratification by alumnae at a vote to be taken at this meeting during Reunion.

All alumnae are welcome to attend; registration for Reunion is not required. You may read the proposed changes and amendments online at http://www.mills.edu/alumnae/aamc_bylaws.pdf or you may request a printed copy. Send your questions and comments to Anita Aragon Bowers '63, AAMC president, at AnitaAragonBowers@alumnae.mills.edu or 510.430.3374.

On view at the Mills College Art Museum

www.mills.edu/museum
510.430.2164

September 6–December 7, 2008

The Offering Table:

Women Activist Artists from Korea

Curated by Linda Inson Choy '96

OPENING RECEPTION: Saturday,

September 6, 4:00–6:00 pm

REUNION MUSEUM TOUR: Registered Reunion participants are invited to join curator Linda Inson Choy '96 for a guided tour of The Offering Table on Saturday, September 19, 1:30–2:30 pm or 3:00–4:00 pm.

Ginger Wolfe-Suarez:

As Long As You Live I Will Live

Curated by Jessica Hough, Mills College Art Museum director, this exhibition pulls together the artist's solo works and works made with her mother.



Angelina Gualdoni, *Reflecting Skin 1* (2004) from the exhibition *Painting the Glass House: Artists Revisit Modern Architecture*; Collection of Asya Geisberg

January 21–March 22, 2009

Painting the Glass House:

Artists Revisit Modern Architecture

Curated by Jessica Hough and Mónica Ramirez-Montagut, assistant curator of architecture and design, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

OPENING RECEPTION: Wednesday, January 21, 5:30–7:30 pm

**Museum
Hours:**

Tuesday–Sunday
11:00 am to 4:00 pm

Wednesday
11:00 am to 7:30 pm

Monday closed

Admission is free

Mills Quarterly

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