

Round Robin Letter Keeps Group of Alums Connected over 30 Years

Many college freshmen arrive on campus with the anticipation of meeting interesting new friends. For one group of women, that is exactly what happened when they arrived at Millersville and their friendship has stood the test of time over the last three decades.

A group of 14 women met in the early 1970s when most were residents of Gilbert Hall, now known as Lehigh Hall. Many of the students were pursuing a degree in elementary education, with others studying English or art.

After graduating in 1972 and 1973, the group would get together once or twice a year at each other's houses and that's when the idea of creating a round robin letter was born. Twelve women participate in the round robin to this day.

"I started the letter, but I'm not sure it was my idea," Marilyn Barmore '73 said with a laugh. "I organized it geographically. When you get the pack of letters, you take yours out and add a new one to the pack.

The letters include information on many diverse topics. "It's what's happening in our lives, with our kids and our husbands," she explained. "Our thoughts on life. The art major, she's always good for putting some philosophical questions in there. Sometimes they get answered, sometimes they don't."

The letters would circulate about twice a year. In the late 90s, the tradition got lost amid everyone's busy schedules. Barmore started it back up and now the round robin rotates about three times a year. Around 2010, the group tried to move into the digital age and created a website, but that was short lived.

"People like the hard copy," says Barmore. "But we continue to use the website to communicate, as well."

When the letter started, everyone but one member lived in Pennsylvania. Today, four women live outside of the state including Barmore, who lives in Florida.

In May, nine of the women traveled to campus. For some it was the first time they had been back in years. They enjoyed a student-guided tour of campus and special arrangements were made so they were able to walk through Gilbert and see their old rooms.

"Of course, we were disappointed that the residence hall is no longer named Gilbert. The fact that the name has been changed, really upset some of us," says Barmore.

Millersville has played a significant role in the lives of all of these women. It's where they met their close friends. Three of the women have children who attended MU, as well.

We feel like one another are very special," Barmore said of her friend group. "How many people have 14 friends that stay connected to this extent?"



May 2017 - Pictured in front of Gilbert Hall (now Lehigh)

R1: Marilyn Deloplaine Barmore '73, Rosemarie Tuscano Dobbs '73, Jan Musselman Johnson '73, Susan Border Medasia '73, Joy Hartman Wolfe '73.

R2: Marcia Wenger Kreider '73, Gail Weinman Harker '73, Donna Johnston Hutchinson Force '72, Martha Henry Wittstruck '73.