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ALICE FAIRCHILD HEATH '52

- 1) Because I was born and raised in Bloomington and my mother, cousins, uncles, aunts, and great aunts were all graduated from IWU, my responses will be slanted from that perspective. It was understood that my parents expected me to go to college and to IWU. Should I wish to go elsewhere, it would be up to me to apply for scholarships, etc. However, I never entertained any desire to go anywhere else as I loved my remote experiences with IWU and took piano lessons from age 7 on through high school at Presser Hall. I felt the warmth, friendliness, and interest of the students whom I met as well as the music teachers with whom I came in contact.

- 2) The culture shock that I experienced came about as I was 17 years old when I entered IWU as were a majority of the students. However, there were many students also in the freshman class who were WWII veterans and not only 4-5 years older, but had experienced a horrible past few years such that we could not possibly imagine. They were most kind and tolerant of our naivete and lack of knowledge about worldly behaviors and ways of surviving war-torn cities. I had never spent a lot of time with people that much older than myself.

- 3) The custom was that all incoming freshmen would wear green beanies with a white W front and center of the beanie. I do not know if this custom still exists and if not, when was it removed. However, it was fun and harmless.

- 4) One memory that stands out was a testimony to our major professor, Dr. Samuel Ratcliffe, sociology professor. At the time I was a student, the campus was using Quonset huts and army barracks as additional classroom space until additional classroom buildings could be built following WWII. One bitterly cold winter morning, probably February, at 8:10 a.m. our assigned classroom building caught on fire and was still burning prior to our 9 a.m. class. Would you believe that Dr. Ratcliffe found a classroom (even though all were at a premium) and somehow got the word to all the classmates of the new location? We were all in our seats at the start of class. (This before cell phones and other technologies for immediate information.)

- 5) The biggest change is the wonderful national, international student learning in chosen fields for students to study their majors abroad or elsewhere in the U.S. short term or long term. Also for other students to come to IWU to study in specialized studies and live among the students. I would have loved such an opportunity.

6) I would suspect such stratifications sadly did exist but I came from a family who did not recognize differences in peoples and as a sociology major, would not tolerate any discriminatory verbalization or actions. Probably a lot of negative stratification comments did not come my way as people may have known I would not accept such conversations. Also, IWU at that time had a fair number of students from other countries who were sons/daughters of Methodist missionaries and several were in my sociology/psychology classes. I personally found such interactions very interesting and that has carried through my adult life. My husband and I were members of Foundation for International Cooperation, had an AFS exchange student, followed Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, etc.

7)Sorry, I have no such memories other than being really interested in the lives/culture of my sociology major friends who were from other countries. I felt truly gifted that they were so willing to share their life stories with me. NOTE: Not at IWU but the following year after graduation (1952), whenever time permitted I was deeply affected by the radio programs with Sen. McCarthy and the hearings and damage to people and careers that was perpetrated by that person. Also the talent and skills of those careers destroyed would never come about.

9)A college degree from IWU led to an enrichment and enjoyment of my personal life and interests – know how skills to use for my community volunteer work and my major/minor field led to a very interesting job combining multiple diverse courses. Even the 2 hour “filler” courses came in handy in my position as Volunteer Services Coordinator in a state residential facility for mentally ill adults, developmentally disabled citizens, and children/adolescent units.

There has never been a month, sometimes a week, and sometimes days in a row when something I learned at IWU does not come back to me in some form. Either useful information in a volunteer committee meeting, an enjoyment of a certain opera/symphony from Music Appreciation, leading a Brownie and G.S. troop from Recreational Leadership, to the study of Democracy, Communism, and Socialism in my senior year, to rural/urban churches, Biblical basis in my faith, or in learning how to really listen to people from psychology classes, to wherever any interest leads me. I am eternally grateful to my parents for allowing and encouraging me to get a college degree and to IWU professors for enriching my life. Not everyone has such a gifted opportunity.

In addition: My late husband, Robert W. Heath '49 and I are in the IWU booklet on couples who met at IWU and were married. Please feel free to use, edit, ignore do whatever you want with my epistle. Copied and signed Oral History Agreement to arrive under separate cover. Alice Heath