

STRATFORD CONNECTION

Stratford College, 1930-1974

Fall Edition

September, 2006

Dr. Alvin L. Hall Returns to Danville

accepting in behalf of Stratford College Alumnae Association.



On Thursday, June 15, Dr. Alvin L. Hall, former professor of history at Stratford College, and his wife, Mary, returned to Danville for the first time since 1976.

Upon acceptance of an invitation from the Stratford College Alumnae Association, Dr. Hall was the keynote speaker at a gathering of local Stratford alumnae.

The event was hosted by Stratford House, now a full-service retirement community developed by the Danville Regional Health System on the beautiful campus of the former Stratford College.

Following a delicious box luncheon served to alumnae in the dining room, residents of Stratford House joined Stratford alumnae in the Evergreen Room to hear Dr. Hall share facts from his book, The History of Stratford College. Enhanced by Dr. Hall's charming personality, humorous style of storytelling, and keen recollection of his own life experiences from 1964 to 1974 at the College, Dr. Hall captivated his audience and brought to life memorable experiences of college life, social activities, and interaction among staff, faculty, and students.

Concluding his talk, Dr. Hall presented a preserved Stratford College banner to Carol Ann Kernodle,

We received many notes and comments regarding your interest and pleasure in reading the focus on faculty and staff contributions in the March, 2006 issue of the Stratford Connection. We are including several contributions in this issue as well. Please know that faculty and staff enjoy so very much reading the contributions of alumnae who write to bring everyone up to date on their lives and activities. So, please keep writing and submitting your contributions and let's stay connected! Mail to: Nancy C. Nelson, 123 Grove Park Circle, Danville, VA 24541 or e-mail ebonelso@gamewood.net

Dr. Nathaniel F. Magruder, 155 South Fairview Avenue, Spartanburg, SC 29302 864-583-1339

I taught history and political science at Stratford for two years, 1956-1958. John Simpson was president of the college and Ida Fitzgerald was the dean. Among my closest friends on the faculty were John Carter,

Margaret Russell, Mary Evelyn Jefferson, Peggy Gardiner, and Lydia Harvey.

I left Stratford in 1958 and moved to Chapel Hill, NC., where I completed work on a PH. D. degree while teaching as an instructor in the Department of History. In 1962 I joined the faculty of Converse College in Spartanburg, S.C., where I served for six years as chairman of the Department of History and Politics. In 1972 I married Gayle Gravies of Birmingham, Alabama, a member of the Department of Physical Education at Converse. We have no children.

Since retiring from Converse in 1994, I have kept busy visiting friends, gardening, swimming regularly at the YMCA, reading, volunteering at the local soup kitchen, and working for Meals-On-Wheels. After my wife retired, we were able finally to take those overseas trips we had been talking about for so long. Our most recent—and best—trip was to Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji.

I first joined the Stratford faculty a half-century ago, but I still have fond memories of both the faculty and students.



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I was an administrator/faculty member (counselor & supervisor of student teachers) at Stratford College from 1969-1974. Upon the closing of Stratford, I was employed by Longwood University in various capacities as an administrator until retirement in 2002. I returned home in Danville to care for my disabled mother, who passed away in May 2006 at the age of 98.

Although it has been over thirty years since the closing of Stratford, I still remember and miss the camaraderie of the students, faculty, staff and the warm and caring environment, and I still remember my sadness at the announcement of Stratford's closing.

Occasionally I drive through the grounds to reminisce. I love to see Stratford alumnae throughout my travels, especially in the south. I still keep up with the Moomaws, Cathy Welton Raney and my great friends Marion Johnson Church and Sarah Huntley Kemm. I am looking forward to spending the Labor Day holiday with Sarah and Marion at Marion's beach house.

Visiting New Orleans was extra special because I was wined and dined by Elizabeth McIlhenny Rodriguez...as only Elizabeth can do...Elizabeth even took me to Avery Island to see how Tabasco Sauce is made. It was a little difficult for Niki and Lydia and John Peale (former Stratford faculty) to entertain Elizabeth when she visited in "little" Farmville, VA. Seeing so many members of the Stratford family at the Stratford reunion 2004 in Danville was so much fun.

Now much of my energy is channeled in varied enjoyable activities. I spend time traveling, reconnecting with "old" friends, making new friends, entertaining, and volunteering my time in and around Danville. I serve on the Boards of the Danville Science Center, the Womack Foundation, the YWCA, and the Wednesday Club. I also serve as a docent at the Danville Museum of Fine Arts and History, where I point out to visitors the silver pieces that came from Stratford. Serving as advisor of the Junior Wednesday Club perhaps helps me forget that I am now a "senior citizen." I always look forward to seeing Stratford alums "all around the town."

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I was employed at Stratford College from 1965-1973. I worked in the Admissions Office for several months before being asked to serve as Secretary to the President, Dr. W. Hugh Moomaw. I handled all of the secretarial duties for the President and also served as Secretary for the Board of Trustees and all meetings involved with the full Board and Committees..

It is impossible to recall all of the many wonderful things I enjoyed while being a part of the Stratford staff. It was like living in a little community separate from Danville itself. All of the students, faculty, and staff were special, each in their own way. Getting to know them, as well as the parents of the students was such a meaningful part of my position there.

The opportunity to be exposed to the high caliber of intellect of the faculty, to be able to enjoy the unbelievable art collection at Stratford, to become acquainted with warm, friendly, and helpful people

associated with the College, to witness the growth and maturity of the students as they progressed through their years at Stratford, to be included in all of the events which took place on campus, and to witness the growth of the college during the years I was there – all of these meant so much to me.

One special event was the year that my daughter served as a Flower Girl for the May Day Queen, along with Jamie Bond (daughter of Paul and Jane), and Jimmy Ingram, son of Ina Russell Ingram and the late Jim Ingram.

The opportunity to serve as Secretary for Dr. Moomaw was a “golden” one for me. Getting to know him and his family was certainly a pleasure, and I still keep in touch with Dr. and Mrs. Moomaw. Dr. Moomaw and I had one particular thing in common—we both love peppermint patties. Just about every afternoon I would make a trip to the Snack Bar to get these for our daily treat.

When I left Stratford in 1973, I served as Secretary to the Director of the Health District whose office was located at the Danville Health Department. I also served as Supervisor of the District Office Services Staff and in latter years as Human Resources Coordinator. I retired from State service July 1, 1996.

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What long, long memories I have of Stratford: They begin with recollections from my childhood of lazy summer days spent playing on “the hill” on the back campus—ages before that area was landscaped and terraced and named “Elizabeth’s Hill.” They accrue through the years, taking many forms, to the very present—when the latest issue of The Stratford Connection brings a recent picture of Grace Neely with her radiant smile, and when Al Hall returns to campus on a lovely June day to be the speaker at a little mini-reunion of regional Stratford alumnae, faculty, and staff.

Al’s warm, witty, and moving reminiscences of what Stratford meant to so many of us brought back an overwhelming tide of memories for me. As a native of Danville and a life-long resident, and as both a graduate of the college and then a member of the faculty for seventeen years until it closed in 1974, I think there are few facets of my life that have been untouched by my “Stratford experience.”

Of course, it is my memories of Stratford people that I cherish most. I am blessed that there are so many with whom I still have contact—classmates, students, colleagues. And, living in Danville, I have the joy now and then of an unexpected encounter with someone whose “Stratford connection” may have been different from mine or unknown to me—but we share an instant bonding.

When I was a student at Stratford at the beginning of World War II, President John C. Simpson, Dean Mabel H. Kennedy, and Miss Ida Fitzgerald (the great triumvirate!) were already in the floodtide of their leadership, influence, inspiration. Classes were small; everybody knew everybody; learning mattered. We realized that we were living in a serious time, and editorials in The Traveller, our student newspaper, often reflected our concern for the anxious world outside the walls that sheltered us.

But there was fun in our lives, too. After lunch we jitterbugged with one another in the wide hall space in front of the mailboxes; and we really dressed up (in crinoline petticoats and tulle) for formal dances like the Poinsettia Ball and the Valentine Dance—when boys were invited! Under the direction of Edna Fisher Parker, who taught speech and drama, we acted in plays (“Lilies of the Field,” “The Imaginary Invalid”) with girls playing the male roles, too, because Mrs. Parker insisted that the dramatic experience of students was more important than “reality” for the audience.

Each year we celebrated “Good Manners Week (there’s still probably no Stratford girl anywhere who chews gum) and “Good English Week” (it’s hard to believe any Stratford girl would confuse the verbs “to take” and “to bring” the way so many speakers and writers tend to do today.)

October Day was a relatively new tradition: in those early days we went to Fairystone Park, near Martinsville, to enjoy our surprise picnic, to make wreaths of autumn leaves for our “Big Sisters,” to crown our October Day Queen, dressed in her regal robes of gold damask with ruffed neckline.

May Day was a long-honored tradition even then. Weeks of preparation led up to the elaborate outdoor pageantry presented before a beautiful May Queen and her court—especially the intricate weaving of the May Pole, the performance of clever skits, and the display of skill in all kinds of interpretive dancing. Elizabeth Grant was May Queen the year I graduated.

When she died just a few years later, “Elizabeth’s Hill” was named in her memory.

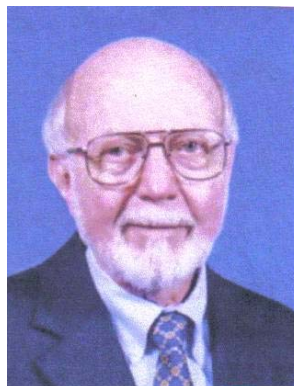
When I returned to Stratford to teach English in 1957, it did not seem that much had changed—on the surface. Dr. Simpson was still president; Dean Kennedy was semi-retired; Ida Fitzgerald was dean. Bernice Waddell would soon be named assistant dean, and gracious Grace Neely, with her efficiency and charm, seemed to be in charge of everything but academics. Among the faculty, Mary Richardson and Hazel Richardson (no kin) were strong and beloved women of character to be reckoned with. Jane and Paul Bond would soon arrive to expand our understanding of the dimensions of art and life.

But the school was growing, and, until Simpson Hall was built in the 1960s, there was little office space for faculty and classroom space required some juggling. I seem to remember spending lots of time in basement rooms in various buildings. It was to that basement classroom on a Friday afternoon in November 1963 that Gilbert Guinn came from his classroom nearby to tell us that President John F. Kennedy had just been shot in Dallas.

A much happier memory is of the time Norman Cousins came to speak to our student body. After his speech, I remember sitting in an informal session in the Student Center with a large group of students gathered around our famous guest. I was so proud of our students—bright, warm, gracious young women, asking such intelligent questions!

By the time Stratford closed in 1974, I had completed my library science degree during summer terms at Chapel Hill, and I was working with Catherine Rickman in the beautiful new library on the main floor of Simpson Hall. So I came to have a slightly different perspective on the Stratford experience. I missed the special relationship that exists between student and teacher in the classroom setting. But I was still involved with Stratford in other meaningful ways, and the poignant spring days of 1974 echo in my memory like an elegy. Stratford was unique; the air we breathed there was different. It was a vibrant place, where truth and freedom were celebrated, where individual dignity and purpose were honored; where grace and mercy prevailed. It was a place of searchings and options and possibilities.

Al Hall concluded his published history of Stratford and ended his talk in June by speaking of love. It is my last word, too.



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Has it really been 42 years since I left Virginia and my work at Stratford? It was in the summer of 1964 that I loaded up my family, moved to Gainesville, and entered a graduate program in counselor education at the University of Florida. I had every intention of returning to Stratford, but unexpected opportunities opened here.

After finishing a master’s degree program that first year, I completed a doctoral program in 1969. This was made possible for a middle-aged married man with a family, variously by assistantships, part-time pastoral appointments, community college teaching, and my wife Pat’s employment. During my third year as a member of the UF faculty, I designed a grant proposal that would dominate my professional career for the next twenty-five years.

There was general agreement in those days that hard-nosed management by the government and courts did little to change the attitudes of offending adolescents. Nor did mental health counseling by itself do much to change delinquent behavior. With limited federal funding, I proposed combining the two approaches, adding on-going developmental counseling by an independent private agency to the State’s existing program of probation (called “Community Control”), implementing a dual-treatment approach.

We created the outside private agency and named it CREST (Counseling, Research, and Education Specialist Teams). It would be a private not-for-profit corporation and would serve a multi-county area. Our counselors were graduate students earning practicum or internship credit. A few of them received stipends as team leaders, while the majority were not paid, and all of them were clinically supervised by UF faculty at no extra cost. University and community college

undergraduates were recruited to serve as tutors. Our clients were habitual delinquents who were not responding to probation, but getting into deeper trouble, and some were facing institutional commitment. Fanning out each week in all manner of vehicles, including hippy vans, we provided some 200 adjudicated delinquent children a year with weekly individual, group, and/or family counseling services. In the process, our student counselors advanced their skills working with troubled adolescents. I directed the program and held adjunct faculty appointments at the University.

Concurrent with directing CREST, I developed an enjoyable private practice as a licensed psychologist. Among other things, this included evaluation and counseling services for children in public schools and for Methodist ministerial candidates in the area. I retired from this and CREST in 1996.

In September of 2001, Pat died very unexpectedly, and following a bout with my heart I moved into the North Florida Retirement Village in Gainesville. Here I have been involved in many activities: chairperson of a communications committee, editor of a newsletter, moderator of a weekly civic and world affairs discussion group, and more recently the organizer of a ballroom dance club.

My life has been varied and fulfilling, but I must say that nothing has been more meaningful than my days at Stratford. I started there in a pivotal period for the college and for me. Stratford was facing immediate changes with the loss of its president, and I was struggling with a compelling urge to leave the pastorate in favor of becoming a teacher and psychological counselor. I don't know how much good I did Stratford, but I do know that Stratford was a godsend for me, genuine therapy. I loved everything about it: the responsiveness of its likeable students, the support of Dr. Simpson, Dean Fitzgerald, Dr. Moomaw and fellow faculty, and the encouragement and freedom to develop new courses and innovate as chaplain. All my memories are too valuable ever to be forgotten. I am grateful, and I extend my very best wishes to all of Stratford's alumnae and former faculty.

In Memorium

On a sadder note, we cherish with love and high respect the memory of several faculty members who recently passed away.

JANE APPLETON BOND died Monday, June 26, 2006 at Danville Regional Medical Center. She was predeceased by her husband, James Paul Bond and is survived by two sons, Ken and Phillip Bond and a daughter, Jamie Bond-Shipman. Jane studied at the Parsons School of Design in New York City and in Florence, Italy. Her work has been exhibited in New York, Connecticut, Virginia, Alabama, and North Carolina. Both Jane and Paul were members of the Abington Square Painters Guild in New York. Jane was a friend of the Museum of Fine Arts and History in Danville, and the museum plans a display of her work in January, 2007. Jane was loved by both students and faculty at Stratford College and will always be remembered as a true friend.

MARGARET JOHNSTON GARDINER died Saturday, March 25, 2006. She was predeceased by her husband, Robert M. Gardiner and is survived by her son, Anthony Morriss Gardiner of Chatham. Margaret served on the Stratford College faculty for many years and later started and managed the College bookstore. She was loved by her students and became a dear friend to many of the faculty. Before her death, she was a resident at Stratford House and all who knew her will cherish many fond memories.

MARVA TUTTLE BARNETT, age 93, died on May 2, 2006 in Salt Lake City, Utah. A friend to all who knew her, she taught Latin, English, and Shakespeare in public and private schools in Danville. She taught English and technical writing at the University of Utah. Later, a technical communications consultant, she authored three technical communications textbooks, one of which remained in print nearly 30 years. She was preceded in death by her husband, John R. Barnett, and a daughter, Karen B. Barnett. She is survived by a daughter, Marva A. Barnett, Professor and Director of the Teaching Resource Center, Department of French at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA

The Stratford listing of alumnae on the web page has been updated to include corrections, deletions, and additions. Please check the site www.stratford-house.com and check the information., especially for correct e-mail addresses and zip codes as well as your name and address. Also be sure your correct class date is shown. Send changes to Nancy Nelson ebonelson@gamewood.net or to mail address: 123 Grove Park Circle, Danville, VA24541 or contact Kathy Gray at Stratford House grayk@drhsi.org or to her at Stratford House, 1111 Main Street, Danville, VA 24541. Thanks for helping us to keep an accurate listing.

