

Graduate School, Age 21-23 – (1947-1949)

Having graduated from college with no marketable skills, I did as many have, and continued to go to school. First, however, in June 1947 I went on a trip east with my mother and father and brother, Jamie. We had never done anything like this before and it was a new experience for all of us. We traveled in a big, blue, second-hand LaSalle that we called the “Blue Goose” and usually stayed overnight in inexpensive tourist rooms. We visited Niagara Falls, did sightseeing in New York State, New York City and Boston. For much of the trip we were hosted and royally entertained by the soldiers who had played golf with my folks and came for Sunday dinner when they were stationed in Flint during the war. Many were of Italian descent and we feasted on each family’s special spaghetti for several days in a row. On the way home we stopped in Philadelphia for more sightseeing and had car trouble there, making it more memorable than some of the other places. On the last day, heading toward home, my Dad realized that he had just one \$100 dollar bill left and decided to try to not spend it. There were no charge cards in those days and we traveled on cash only. So that day, for lunch, we bought bread and lunchmeat at a grocery store with the funds on hand, arriving home, to my Dad’s great pleasure, without breaking that last large bill.

For the rest of the summer I lived in Ann Arbor with Professor and Mrs. A. Franklin Shull who had the temporary care of two young grandchildren, ages two and nine months, and needed help. I knew the Shulls because my mother had worked for them when she lived in Ann Arbor, cleaning house and caring for their then young children. Dr Shull taught genetics at the University and they lived in a large, elegant home in a prestigious neighborhood. I had the maid’s room on the third floor. During the late afternoon and evening and other times as needed, I helped with the care of the children and with our dinner preparation and cleaning up. This was a pleasant arrangement and an easy way to earn my board and room. I enjoyed the children, felt like one of the family, and learned a lot about gracious living from Mrs. Shull.

During the day I was on campus, learning my new job at The Institute of Public Administration, a part of the Graduate School at the University of Michigan that was reactivated after the war. One of my favorite political science professors, John W. Lederle, was the new Director, and he invited me to come to work for him. Although he could have had a secretary, one skilled with shorthand and typing, he said he would rather have me work with him as a clerk-typist. He purchased a Dictaphone with the difference in pay between a secretary and a clerk-typist, but for the most part, we didn’t use it. Instead, he would tell me how he wanted a letter answered and I would write the letter. Great experience! I helped plan events, work with the graduate students enrolled in the IPA, and generally do whatever needed to be done there. Dr Lederle was full of plans and ideas and wrote me a note once to say that he had “two administrative opportunities to end all opportunities.” This was the beginning of a huge project that in April 1948 brought dozens of very important people to campus for a conference on “Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government”. We spent many hours over a period of weeks making the arrangements and carrying out the conference and were pleased by the accolades we received after its completion.

Our offices were in Haven Hall, a very old university building that had once been the Law School. The rooms were voluminous with high ceilings and huge windows; the floors were dark, oiled wood. Adjacent to our offices was the Bureau of Government Library, another ancient and appealing cavern of a room and a good place to study. Our office space included a social room where the IPA students gathered to chat and generally hang out. This was the center of activity and a great place to be! I was also a student in the program, working $\frac{3}{4}$ time and going to school full time -- making for a rather heavy schedule. I practically lived in Haven Hall --or so it seemed. I had a key to the building and often went there evenings and on weekends when the place was largely deserted to work and study.

The couple of dozen students in the PA program were a varied group. Some were veterans, there to prepare for a career in government, and many were married. Along with the faculty and research assistants, we enjoyed a lively social life together. We organized a Michigan Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration with regular meetings, excellent speakers and great refreshments. We held parties regularly on Friday afternoons --any excuse for a party! --and in the spring held big picnics at a local park, including spouses, children and faculty members. One year some of us traveled to Washington, D.C. by train to attend the annual national conference of the ASPA. -- an adventure by itself.

The PA program consisted of graduate level classes offered by several different departments. I took courses in political science, sociology, economics, psychology, city planning, argumentation (at the Law School) and governmental accounting -- a course that nearly did me in. A calculator would have helped! Like most graduate students I did well academically and participated in the University's annual Honors Convocation each year. While nearly everyone in the program was planning to be a bureaucrat of some sort, my special interest was in state and local government, not national government or international relations. I always thought I would like to be a city manager, but never came near to doing so, of course.

During my two graduate years in Ann Arbor I lived at Jordan Hall, a dormitory for freshmen women where I was a staff assistant. Jordan was a large, fairly new dorm then without the homey atmosphere of Betsy Barbour where I lived as an undergraduate -- and a whole lot farther from campus. I was required to be on hand in the evenings by bedtime and responsible for making bed check to be sure each coed on my floor was in her room. This was easy work except when someone came home intoxicated or tried to leave after hours through a window to meet the boyfriend she had just had a falling out with. I had a nice single room and ate meals and socialized with the other staff assistants. They even taught me to play bridge because they were always in need a fourth and weren't allowed to fraternize with the residents. They were all graduate students in different fields and I learned about the intricacies of English grammar, theater arts, and library science from these associates. One of them, Janet Hoenshel, became a special friend and was maid of honor at my wedding.

My scrapbook for these years shows that I continued to attend campus dances, plays and other events, much as I had as an undergraduate. My parents moved to Bay City in May 1948; it was weird to go home for the first time and find all of our familiar furniture in a strange house. The church hunting I had begun in earlier years culminated in my becoming active in St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Ann Arbor and I was baptized there in February 1949 and confirmed in March.

Those last two years in Ann Arbor were busy and constructive, but I looked forward to ending my education. I was getting tired of studying all the time. I had completed all of the course work for the degree of Masters in Public Administration and needed only a thesis, based on actual work experience in the field, to receive a degree – as I finally did in 1950. What to do next? John Lederle learned that the League of Women Voters of Ohio was seeking an executive secretary and thinking very highly of the organization, felt that I would be a good fit in such a job. So I applied and in May 1949 flew to Dayton where the League office was to be located. I wore a new summer suit, hat and gloves – a rarity in my poor wardrobe – for the trip. The interview went well and I got the job, scheduled to begin late in the summer. Although I looked forward to this new opportunity, I felt nostalgic about leaving Ann Arbor. And I felt really terrible when I read in the newspaper in June 1950 that my old haunt, Haven Hall had burned to the ground at the hands of an arsonist. But life after Ann Arbor is another story.

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