

Entrance exams might have eliminated me

When I entered Knox College in (gulp) 1954, the tests required by many colleges and universities were called "college boards." Fortunately, Knox did not require them at the time, or I probably never would have been accepted. I was an above average student at Kewanee High School, but never studied much that I can remember. There were always many more interests for me, like boys — athletic events where we watched the boys, slumber parties where we talked about boys, shopping trips when we wondered what the boys would like. Well, you know the teen-age routine, and when I think back on it, I ask myself, "How stupid is that?"

Girls today are much smarter. THEY play the sports and have other interests and goals in their lives besides whom they are going to impress, attract or marry.

But I digress. What we did have at Knox was "placement tests," which we took immediately after we got to school in the fall so it could be determined what courses we needed, or did not need, to catch up with the rest of the world.

I had spent my entire summer after graduating from high school working as a waitress at a hotel in Saugatuck, Mich. Since my brother had worked there the summer before as a dishwasher and was going to again, my parents decided it was safe for me to work there with him. Well, he had more than he could handle keeping track of me. There were five waitresses and a cleaning gal and we all lived in a dormitory in bunk beds. I was the youngest, the rest were already in college. My pay was \$12.00 a week, room and board, plus tips. I sent most of it home in bank envelopes, which infuriated my brother because I never had to pay for much. In those days, the boys paid the bills.

We had to serve breakfast in our hotel, but not lunch, so there was time to hit the beach before dinner hour duties began. We got

done about 10 p.m. and then the fun started. A group of young people from all over that resort community; waitresses, dishwashers, lifeguards and cleaning people, gathered for beach parties, square dances and regular dances.

Michigan laws were very strict; people under 21 could not be served liquor, so if we all went into a restaurant, we had to separate according to age. Of course those of us under 21 were not allowed in a bar at all. About halfway through the summer I fell in love with one of our dishwashers, a student at Michigan State University and we spent many hours together.

With all this activity, I didn't sleep much that summer. So by the time I got home to Kewanee, I had about three days to get my clothes ready, pack and get to Knox College. The placement tests started immediately. I was exhausted, not very smart and didn't pass a single one. I remember starting the "Speed of reading and comprehension" test and waking up with the professor saying, "you have five more minutes."

Well, the test scores indicated that I needed everything. My highest scores were in the areas of math and fine arts, so I was put into a trigonometry class. I learned the symbols and the formulas very well but didn't have a clue how to use them. In other words; I never understood the whole point of trigonometry. I had never gotten a 'D' before, but that one was a joy to behold. That was the end of my math career.

The first quarter of my freshman year I had English, trigonometry, geology and German. Not an easy schedule. In those days a full load for a quarter was four courses, not three, as it is today. We eventually went into the semester system my senior year and we took five courses at one time.

I graduated from Knox and my education and college experience have meant a great deal to me. I took more courses in 1973 to



get a major in Political Science so I could go to graduate school, and 32 years later that's exactly what I'm doing.

The learning process never stops. And thanks to Knox College letting me join the 90 valedictorians who were in my freshman class, I am continuing my education at this late date, working for my Masters Degree in Political Science at Western Illinois University.

I've done a lot of studying, writing and political activity in the intervening years, and my college background prepared me well for jobs, dealing with people and nourished the talents needed to get along in this world.

Bless Knox for eliminating the entrance exams, recognizing the potential of the whole person, and that at age 18 we aren't exactly all we can be.

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