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Women vital to growth and success of UNI, Northern Iowan, December 9, 2003

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student VOICES

Q. What is your favorite or least favorite Christmas carol?



A. "White Christmas" is my favorite. It reminds me of Christmas, very nostalgic."

-Sarah Gravert, freshman social science education major

A. "I hate 'Feliz Navidad.' I used to work at Taco Johns and that song would come on five to 20 times a day."

-Bob Hughes, sophomore general music major



A. "Silent Night" is my favorite. It's the best carol to listen to at church."

-Tyler Hackman, freshman undecided

A. "Jingle Bells" is awful. It's cheesy and every little kid knows it and sings it constantly, there is not one word for how bad it is."

-Amy Thompson, senior family services major



Holiday season has traditions at UNI

By JACKI ELLENWOOD
NI FEATURES WRITER

Over the years, UNI students and faculty have united together to celebrate the holiday season. Celebrations have ranged from concerts to campus sing-alongs, Christmas dinners in the dining centers to horse-drawn trolley rides and formal dances to tree lighting ceremonies. No matter the avenue, though, the UNI community has had a long history of togetherness at Christmas.

According to the University Archives' Web site, one of the oldest and longest-lived UNI Christmas traditions was the performance of Handel's *Messiah*. The program featured soloists as well as performances by musical student organizations, including glee clubs and orchestras.

The earliest known *Messiah* performance was in 1896, and the program continued, largely uninterrupted, until sometime in the 1980s. The performance was widely attended by students, faculty and members of the Cedar Falls community, and performances had to be moved to buildings with larger seating capacities in order to accommodate all those who wished to attend.

UNI has also celebrated the holidays with Tree Lighting ceremonies. According to University Archives, former UNI President Malcolm Price began the tradition in 1943 as a way to bring military personnel (then training on campus) together with the UNI community.

"In those difficult days of World War II, the ceremony helped to unite the two disparate campus elements—students and military personnel—in a statement of national purpose," said Gail Briddle, University Archives library assistant, in an online summary of Christmas



University Archives

The Christmas formal in 1956, one of many holiday traditions on campus.

traditions.

While the location of the ceremony has changed throughout UNI's history, the concept has remained the same.

The Tree Lighting Ceremony consisted of Christmas carol sing-alongs, horse drawn trolley rides, tree decorating in campus buildings, and the consumption of hot cocoa and snacks.

The ceremony, which continued until 2000, also adapted to suit the needs of the times. In 1974, in recognition of the "energy crisis," UNI's campus Christmas tree proudly displayed only one light, and continued to do so until sometime in the 1980s.

According to Briddle's compilation, "When additional tree lighting and Christmas decorations appeared around

campus in the 1980s, letters to the editor in the student newspaper criticized the university for devoting energy and money to this kind of effort."

Winter formals have also been held during the holiday season, the first of which occurred in 1934. However, formal dances were relaxed to "recreational dancing," in order to keep student costs down.

While some traditions have stuck around longer than others, UNI has maintained its tradition of gathering together to "ring in" the Christmas season.

"Whatever the reason," Briddle said, "It will be interesting to see how, or indeed, if Christmas will be celebrated at UNI in the future."

Women vital to growth and success of UNI

By JACKI ELLENWOOD
NI FEATURES WRITER

UNI's success has been the result of the efforts of many individuals, both students and alumni. There have been many prominent women in the university's past, both alumni and faculty.

Marion McFarland

Walker, a Cedar Falls native, taught in the English department from 1890 to 1897. After a few years' absence, Walker returned to the university in 1907, to serve as a substitute teacher. In 1908, President Homer H. Seerley appointed Walker to the position of Dean of Women.

According to the University Archives' Web site, Walker was a highly influential and motivating

force in the growth of the Young Women's Christian Association on campus, and was integral to the transition in student housing, from private rooming houses to dormitory living.

Being the first person to hold the new position of Dean of Women, Walker found herself in a situation where she could truly make

a difference, and she did.

According to minutes of the July 1, 1957 Faculty Senate meeting, "Mrs. Walker played a major and indispensable part in the educational and cultural development of Iowa State Teachers College [now UNI]."

Walker is remembered by her colleagues and students as having, "devoted her efforts and energies to maintaining the highest standards of social and ethical conduct, and to

broadening and enriching the cultural and social program in the students' college experience. In the wise and kindly guidance which she gave, her chief and sincere concern was always for the welfare of each individual student," read the Faculty Senate minutes.

Professor of geography, Alison E. Aitchison is also a prominent woman in UNI's history. After graduating as a member of the Iowa State Normal School's [now UNI] Class of 1903, she went on to further her education at the University of Iowa and later, the University of Chicago. She returned to UNI in 1930 to join first the teaching, and later, the geography faculty.

Aitchison was not only known throughout the university community, but also in the Cedar Valley, the state of Iowa and across the nation for her service in several organizations.

Her accomplishments within this community, and the national setting are many and varied. She was integral to the founding of the College Hill Interdenominational Church, and was the local and state president of the

American Association of University Women.

In addition, she authored and co-authored six geography textbooks and was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award of the National Council of Geography Teachers in 1945. Aitchison was also one of only three faculty members honored with the award for effective and inspiring instructional service at the 1939 spring commencement.

In a memo sent by former university president, J. W. Maucker, to faculty, upon Aitchison's death, he stated, "This college and this community appreciate the services rendered by Miss Aitchison whose time, money and talents were all extended most generously to her colleagues and fellow citizens."

According to this same memo, the campus flag was lowered to half-mast during her funeral services, and the campanile was played to display the campus' mourning after the loss of such an influential woman.

Another important UNI woman was 1942 alumna, Mona Van Duyn, who received

the Pulitzer Prize in poetry in 1991 and became the first woman to be named as Poet Laureate Consultant to the Library of Congress. She was also given an Honorary Doctor of Literature degree from former UNI President Constantine Curris in 1991.

The first female UNI instructor, Frances Webster, came to UNI in its first year, 1876, and was an integral part of the university's early success in academics. According to University Archives, "She brought new teaching methods that were very different from the read, memorize and recite method practiced at the time. She was also the founding force in the first women's literary society on campus, the Alpha Society.

While this brief exploration into the accomplishments of influential UNI women is nowhere near exhaustive, these few women are examples of the exemplary service women have given to the University of Northern Iowa. Each woman mentioned, along with many others, have been an essential part of the university's success.



University Archives

Alison E. Aitchison