

# Our Perspective



Jon Laski, an Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis senior from Torrance, Calif., won the 51st annual Purdue Grand Prix, held on April 19. This year's race was the last to be run on the track north of Ross-Ade Stadium. Built in 1968, the track is being eliminated to make way for the renovation and expansion of Mackey Arena. A new track is to be built at the corner of McCormick Road and Cherry Lane near the new athletic fields. More details will be available on the Grand Prix Web site at [www.purduegrandprix.org](http://www.purduegrandprix.org).

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**It's hard for me to imagine** what it must have been like for Eulora Miller to attend Purdue University.

Miller holds the distinction of being the first woman to graduate from the University. That was in 1878.

She was among relatively few women in the late 19th century who had the opportunity — and the support — to attain higher education. Miller became Purdue's first professional librarian after her graduation and went on to be librarian at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn before gaining notoriety as a dramatist.

Other notable women in Purdue's history include Eliza Fowler, Purdue's first major female benefactor. She gave \$70,000 in 1901 to help construct the first assembly hall at the University — Fowler Hall, where convocations, lectures and commencement exercises were held. Hers was the largest gift to Purdue since John Purdue's contribution.

Then there are Sarah Oren Haynes, the first female faculty member, who came to Purdue in 1875 as "female teacher of the university" and later assistant professor of mathematics and professor of botany; Virginia Meredith, the first woman to serve on Purdue's Board of Trustees (1921-1936); and Janice Voss, who graduated in 1975 from Purdue and went on to become the University's first female astronaut.

There are many more women who helped shape Purdue and Indiana history.

Thanks to a \$1 million gift from alumna and Purdue trustee Susan Bulkeley Butler, the stories of those women are being

gathered and told.

The Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives was established in 2006 with a special focus on the papers of women who have succeeded in largely male-dominated professions such as engineering, technology, science, and management. The Women's Archives, part of Purdue Archives and Special Collections, now enables researchers and the Purdue community to rediscover the contributions of women by highlighting their achievements throughout history.

This past spring, a special gift was made to the women's archives — the artifacts and papers from three key figures in Purdue's history: former deans of women Dorothy Stratton, Helen Schleman and Beverley Stone. The donation came from Sally Watlington, the first female executive officer of an NROTC unit at Purdue.

The treasure trove of photos, correspondence, speeches and memorabilia document the lives of three women who helped clear the path for women's opportunities at the University, says Sammie Morris, head of Archives and Special Collections and assistant professor of library science.

Purdue's Archives and Special Collections serves as the institutional memory of the University and holds the proud history of many in Purdue's past.

To read about some of those individuals, you can go to the library's Web site at [www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol/](http://www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol/). Many items in the collections have been digitized for online research. In addition, you can read about key women in Purdue's past,

follow a timeline of Purdue history, and browse through hundreds of photographs featuring the University's people and places.

Soon, Archives and Special Collections will move from its longtime home on the second floor of Stewart Center to the new Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections on the fourth floor. A gift of \$1 million from Karnes helped to launch the construction of the 15,000-square-foot environmentally secure library.

As we look through the papers and artifacts of Purdue women and men of the past, we can imagine what drive and desire they had as they pursued their dreams — and we can imagine what future Purdue men and women might do in achieving their dreams in higher education and beyond.

As always, Hail Purdue!

*Julie Rosa*

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Editor

*Sally Watlington (below), an alumna and the first female executive officer of an NROTC unit at Purdue, speaks at a reception March 20 during which she donated items and papers from three former Purdue deans of women — Dorothy Stratton, Helen Schleman and Beverley Stone. The items are in Purdue Libraries' Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives. The archives home on the Web (right) is at [www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol/womenarc/](http://www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol/womenarc/).*



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