

WOMEN'S

HISTORY

AT

WIZZOU!

Breaking Gender Barriers at Mizzou

The University of Missouri (founded in 1839) admitted its first women students in 1868, all of whom were white as the University was not yet desegregated. Initially, the university only permitted women to enroll in the Normal School to qualify as teachers. **Mary Louise Gillett** was the first woman to graduate from the education program in 1870. Soon after, in 1871, the university changed its policies and opened other departments to women. Wasting no time, **Sarah Anna Ware** graduated with a B.S. degree in 1872, becoming the first woman to graduate from MU with a “non-Normal” (non-education) degree.

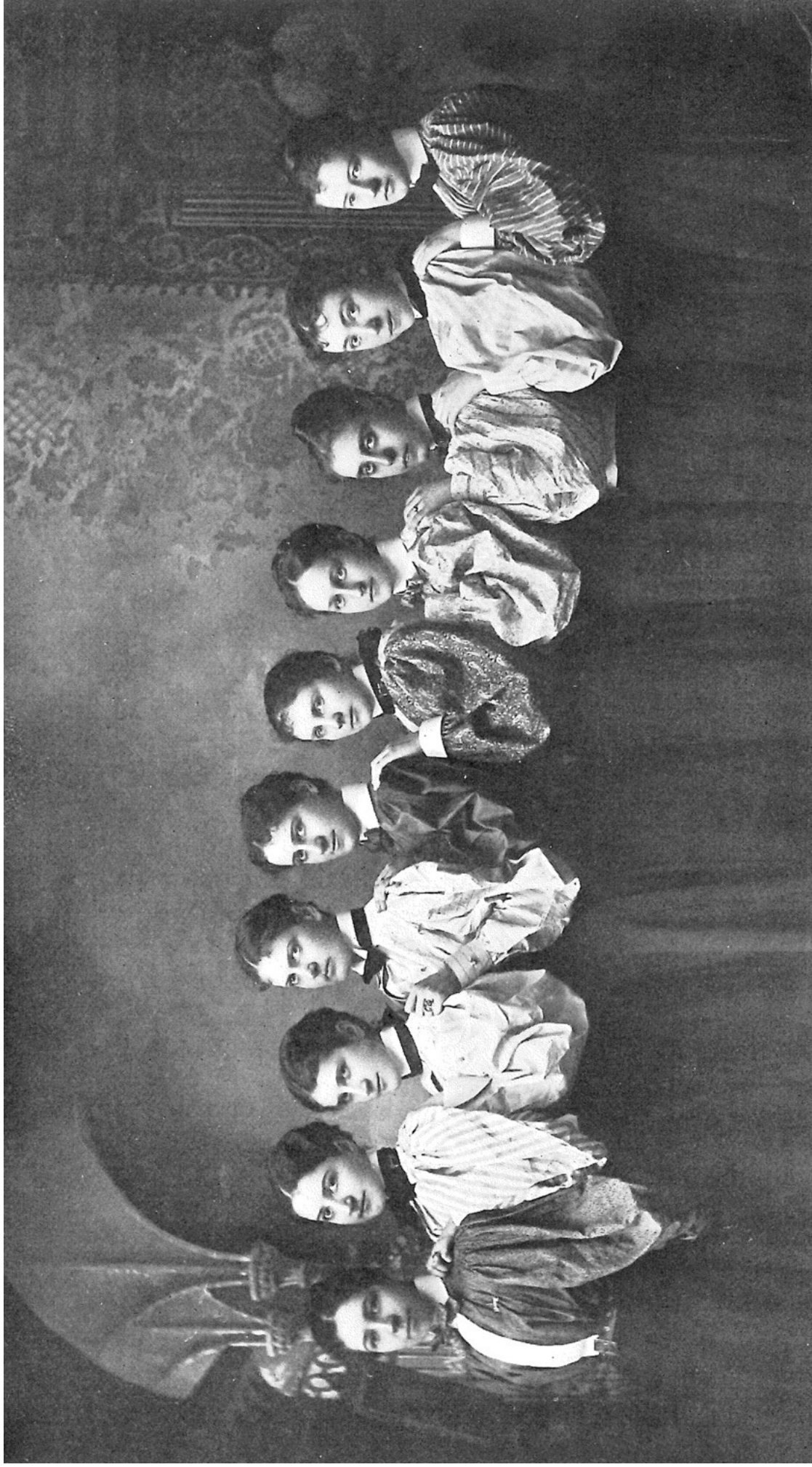
After a few years, the hard-won presence of women scholars on campus impelled the university to also hire women faculty and staff members, albeit slowly and not without controversy. Some Mizou faculty members who broke gender barriers are below:

Grace C. Bibb (first woman Dean) was appointed to the Dean of the Normal School in 1878.

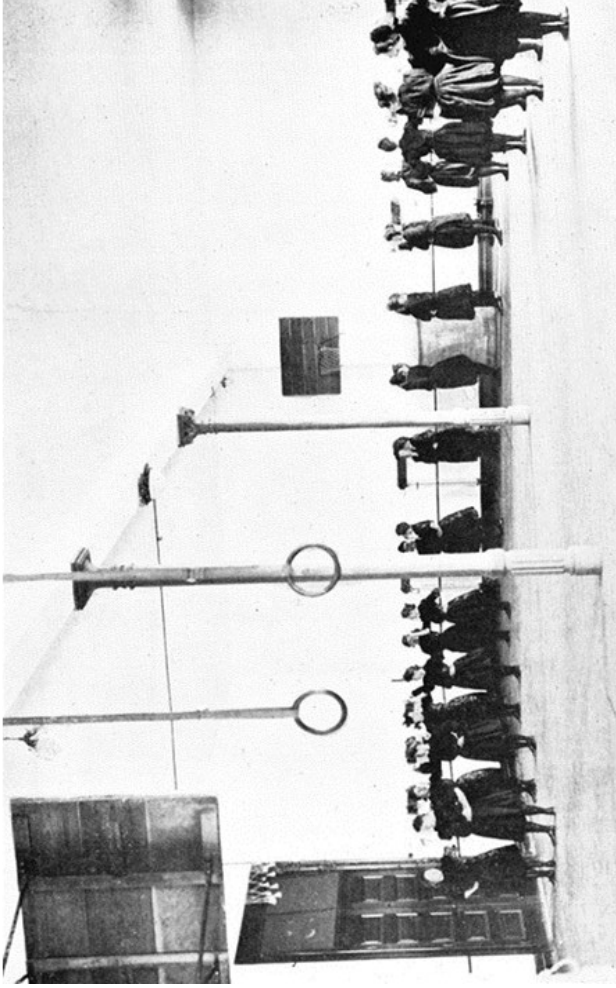
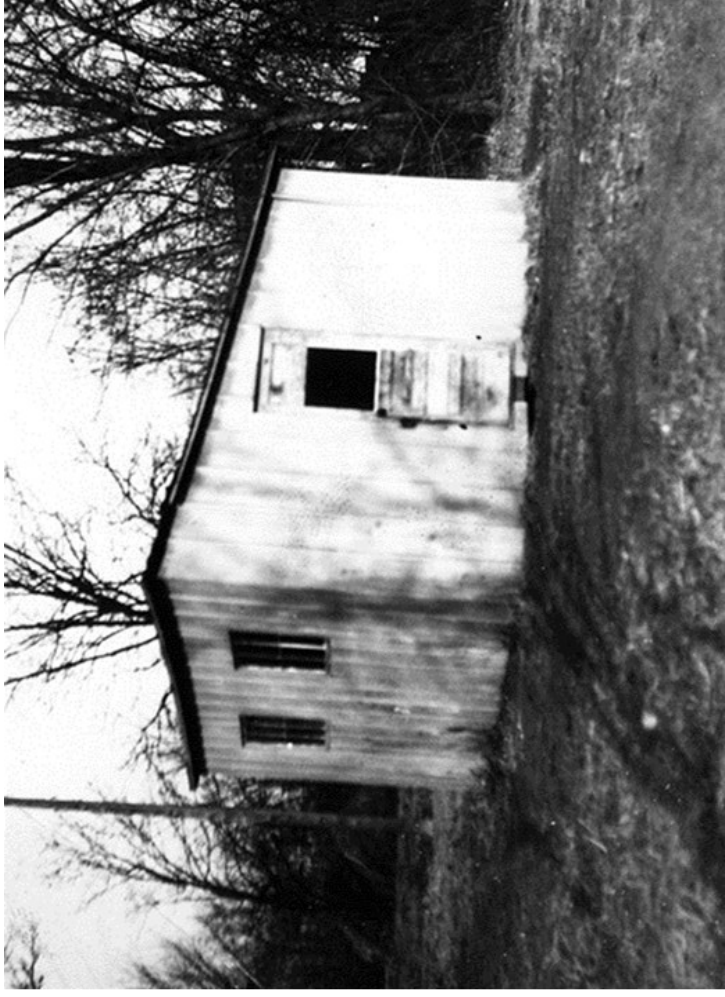
Edna D. Day (first woman Chair) was hired as the Department Chair in the School of Home Economics in 1906.

Sara Lockwood Williams, a Mizou alumna and professor, was the first woman Journalism professor at MU or any other institution in the United States in 1921.

Dr. Edith Hedges Matzke, hired in 1921, was the first woman medical doctor at Mizou. Before working at MU, Dr. Matzke was a medical lecturer for the War Department.



Kappa Kappa Gamma Fraternity (est. 1875) is the first women's, Greek letter fraternity on campus. The Kappas have had a house on Hitt Street since 1900, but their current house was built in 1929 and is shaped like a key, one of KKG's symbols. (*Savitar*, 1898).



Women's Athletics began in 1889 and met in the top floor of Jesse Hall (pictured above, left). The building pictured above, right was their exterior changing room for athletics and physical education. Men had a separate , state-of-the-art, gymnasium.



Mortar Board, a secret society unveiled on Tap Day, was at one time, an all-women's honorary society. Founded in 1915, Mortar Board was called The Friars, until 1919, and selected the "most outstanding junior women on campus."



Every year Mizzou celebrated May Day on campus. This festival was virtually the only holiday that specifically celebrated women. Each year one woman from the senior class was chosen as May Queen.



In 1910, Mary Gentry Paxton was the first woman to graduate of the Journalism School. She became the first woman reporter in Kansas City and eventually returned to teach Journalism at Christian College (now Columbia College).



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. was the first National Pan-hellenic Council, Incorporated, sorority at Mizzou, founded in 1964.

Women's & Gender Studies

The Association for Women Students (a student government for women similar to MSA) contacted faculty members from a variety of disciplines to encourage them to offer an interdisciplinary course on women.

In 1971, the first Women's Studies course was offered and was simply titled "Women's Studies."

In 1980, Women Studies achieved formal program status and in 2007 Women's & Gender Studies became a department. Students can now choose from a myriad of classes and receive a Bachelor's major or minor in WGST or a Graduate level minor.



Dr. Dorothy Haecker was hired by Mizzou in 1981 as the new director of Women Studies. While here, Dr. Haecker advocated for the rights of women students and successfully launched a new Women's Studies degree program. In 2011, Women's and Gender Studies created a postdoctoral teaching fellowship named in her honor (*Savitar*, 1984).

Famous Alumnae

Lisa Myers 1973:

Chief Congressional Correspondent for NBC News

Linda Bell Blue 1978:

Executive Producer of Entertainment Tonight

Linda Godwin 1980:

Veteran of four space flights and recipient of the NASA
Outstanding Performance Rating



The precursor to The Association of Women Students, the Women's Self-Government Association governed the women student body. According to the *Savitar* of 1940, the W.S.G.A. "regulate[d]...all house rules for women students and determine[d] closing hours for women's houses." Despite their strict standards, the group was not all business—the W.S.G.A. also sponsored "an impressive array" of dances, shows, and other student activities for women (*Savitar*, 1940).



In 1972, the members of Delta Gamma Sorority used their yearbook photo as a feminist forum. The group was likely responding to contemporaneous debates about the Equal Rights Amendment, which would have ensured equal rights for women under the law (Savitar, 1972).

The ERA reads:

Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

It has yet to pass in the United States.



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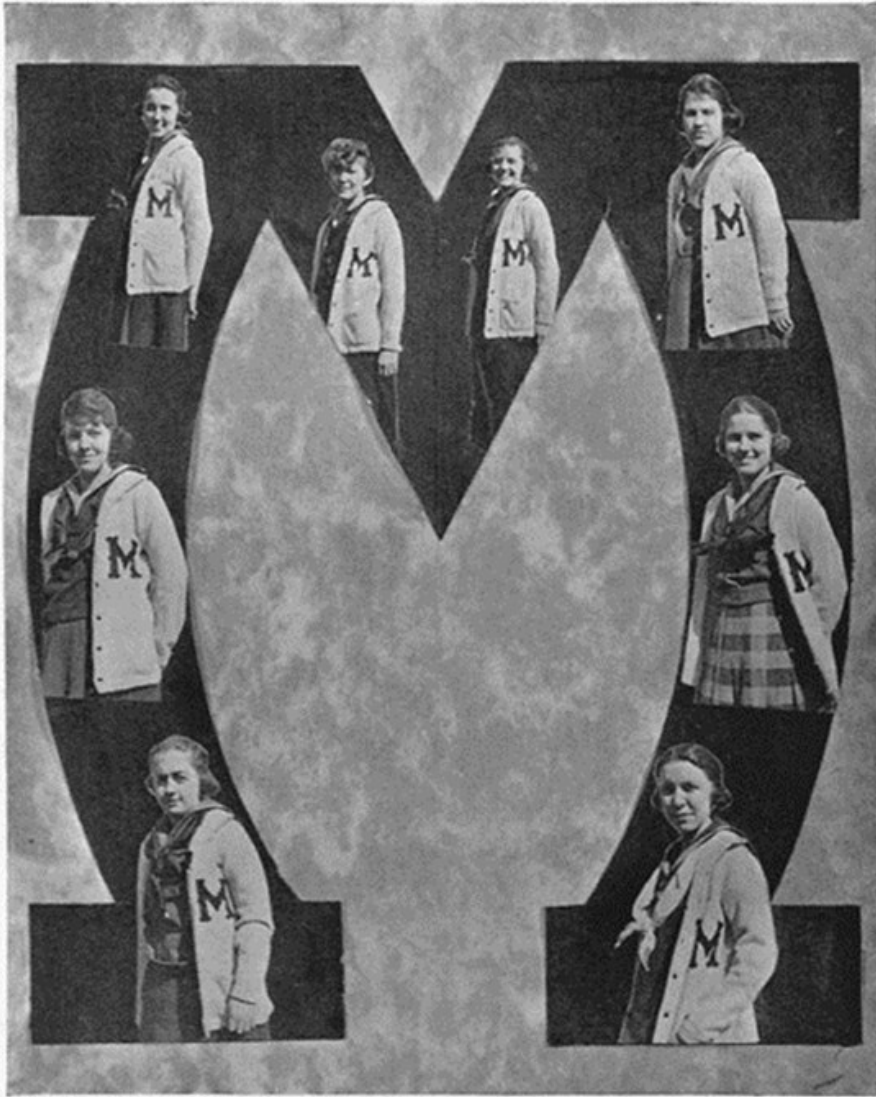
Mizzou's first woman Chancellor, Dr. Barbara Uehling, became a national celebrity as the first woman in the United States to lead a land-grant university.

The
SAVITAR
"M" Women's Organization

Founded October 11, 1916

OFFICERS

CATHERINE CALLAHAN	<i>President</i>
RUTH DULANEY	<i>Vice-President</i>
AGNES MOORE	<i>Secretary</i>
SARA SEARCY	<i>Treasurer</i>



*Top Row—CALLAHAN, MISS GATH, MOORE, HANNA
Second Row—DULANEY, MUMFORD
Bottom Row—MURTO, SEARCY*

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The *Savitar* from 1920 features Mizzou's "M" Women's Organization. This group consists of women who have earned a letter in a varsity sport.



According to her player bio for The Missouri Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame, Natasha Kaiser “ranks as the most decorated female athlete in University of Missouri history.”

Kaiser holds a silver medal for a 4x400-meter relay at the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain and a gold medal for the same event at the 1993 World Championships in Stuttgart, Germany.

While at Mizzou (1985-1989), Kaiser was twice named most valuable athlete at the Big Eight championships and was (in 1989) named the Big Eight Conference Female Athlete of the Year (photo credit: *Alumnus*, 1989).



Nikki Thole was the first women’s soccer player in the history of MU to be named to an All-American team. Thole played soccer



According to her player bio for the Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame, Lorinda Richardson was a five-time all-American and six-time Big Eight Conference champion in Track & Field who specialized in the long jump. She still holds the MU long jump records (*Savitar*, 1985).



Angela Davis—a radical feminist, black rights activist, and respected scholar—came to campus in 1974 (and again in 2009) to converse with Mizzou students about race and gender.



Since 1871, MU policy has allowed women to enroll in all departments at the university. However, the rigid social norms of the early 20th century functioned to largely confine university women to “feminine” professions. Today, women are increasingly active and successful in man-dominated fields, however, largely underrepresented. Pictured above, two women students work in the University’s Nuclear Research Reactor Facility (Savitar, 1966).



**Missouri State Senator Maida Coleman (D-05)
(later Missouri Senate Minority Leader) talks to
students about her experience as a black woman
working in politics (*Savitar, 2005*).**



Since the 1990s, MU's LGBTQ Center has celebrated National Coming Out Week with supportive activities and programs on campus. One event (pictured left) allows LGBTQ individuals to celebrate their sexuality by 'coming out' through a door in the middle of Speaker's Circle. Programs like this one promote pride among Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer women on campus (*Savitar, 1999*).



In 1994, Michelle Schulz was the first woman to qualify for MU Canon Crew. The Canon Crew is a group of R.O.T.C. cadets who do push-ups after each touchdown at football games (Savitar, 1995).

Learn More

- * Visit WHM.missouri.edu for events & info.
- * Check out books by women and about women from Ellis, Columbia Public Library, MU LGBTQ Resource Center & MU Women's Center.
- * Follow [@WomensHistory](https://twitter.com/WomensHistory) or [#WHM](https://twitter.com/WHM) on Twitter.
- * Watch films & support art made or produced by women.
- * Remember to view history through a lens. Many women have been written out of history due to lack of interest in their work or what was deemed "appropriate" of the time.

MU Organizations

There are many organizations on campus that celebrate women's achievements and contribute to women's development academically, socially & professionally. Here are a few great ORGs!

- * Mizzou Black Women's Initiative
- * Mizzou Women's Club Basketball Team
- * American Association of University Women
- * Girls on the Run
- * Griffiths Leadership Society for Women Mentoring & Networking Program
- * Society of Women's Engineers
- * Mizzou Collegiate Cattlewomen
- * Women's Law Association

For great events & more information:

WHM.missouri.edu

**Celebrate Women's
History all year &**

#WHM

