

WOMEN SCIENTISTS



Carolyn Black was appointed in 1910 as an instructor of botany. She received an M.A. from Indiana University in 1909, which was followed by a teaching fellowship at the same institution.

There were few women scientists in the 19th century, but one woman stands out, astronomer Maria Mitchell, a Nantucket Quaker. At the age of 28 she discovered a comet that bears her name, an achievement that brought her international friendships and fame. She was elected to the newly formed Association for the Advancement of Science and went on to found the Association for the Advancement of Women in 1873. She was Vassar College's most illustrious faculty member. As a scientist and an unremitting advocate of women's suffrage she wrote, "I wish we could give to every woman who has a novel theory dear to her soul for the improvement of the world, a chance to work out her theory in real life."



Helen Ann Murphy of the class of 1920 was the first woman in engineering. In the year book is a notation that "...she decided to be a chemist and nothing that "Arnie" or "The King" said could dissuade her, so she registered as a "chemical engineer".

At New Hampshire College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, women faculty began joining the science departments in the early part of the 20th century, particularly in zoology and botany. Over the years, women faculty have been hired in civil and mechanical engineering, physics, molecular biology, natural resources, earth science, mathematics and physical chemistry. More recently, the numbers of women faculty have increased in such departments as biochemistry, animal sciences, biology, environmental conservation, and zoology.



College of Arts faculty gather for a photograph in 1932. They include the following women:

Dorothy T. Smith, M.S., became Dorothy Barton, an instructor in zoology from 1931-1939. Helen McLaughlin, A.M. was chair and professor of home economics from 1930-1939.

Irma G. Bowen, B.S., was assistant professor of home economics from 1920-1947, teaching textiles and clothing. She created a large collection of women's and children's garments from the late 1700's to the 1930's, known as the Irma G. Bowen Collection.

Edythe M. Tingley (UNH B. Sc., 1922) became a graduate assistant in zoology. She became an instructor in 1926 and by 1931 was Edythe T. Richardson, M.S., assistant professor of zoology. In the 1940s she became an associate professor and professor by 1956. She continued to teach through the 1960s.

Naomi Ekdahl, Ph.D. was assistant professor of psychology from 1930-1940.

Women in the sciences serve essential roles as mentors to women students pursuing science degrees, a group whose numbers have grown in the last 30 years. The University has seen marked increases in its enrollments of women in the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences and the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture.

In many fields women on campus have created their own academic support organizations. One such group is the local chapter of the Association for Women in Science. Women faculty hold informal meetings every other week to exchange ideas and provide support to each other. Since 1990 the chapter has also sponsored the annual Women in Science poster exhibition, an opportunity for both faculty and students to display their research on campus.



Margery Milne, Ph.D., shown with her husband, Lorus Milne, taught as an assistant professor of zoology in 1950. She became an enthusiastic teacher in the Division of Continuing Education and the College of LifeLong Learning until 1994. She authored many books with her husband, and is the official keeper of the swans in Durham.



Charlotte Nast, Ph.D., was a professor of botany who taught from 1948-1970. She was a plant anatomist who did basic studies of important economic plants and especially the morphology, anatomy and the evolution of primitive flowering plants.

Joan Ferrini-Mundi, shown here with her children, received her bachelors and doctorate from UNH in mathematics education, teaching here after several years at Mt. Holyoke. In 1995 she went on leave to the National Research Council as associate director for the Center for Science, Mathematics, Engineering Education and Executive Director of Mathematical Science and Education Board. She formally left the department in 1999.



Gloria Lyle, Ph.D. joined the Chemistry Department as an instructor in 1955, later became an associate professor, and left the University in 1970. She was the first woman in a previously all-male department, where since, no women have been present over a period of time.



Carmela Amato-Wierda, a physical chemist and assistant professor of materials science, received a National Science Foundation award to create a national model for chemistry laboratory instruction. Students conduct research within multidisciplinary teams, developing solutions to current problems in the field and learning to communicate their results. Shown with Amato-Wierda are students constructing a piece of equipment.



Alanna Connors was a research scientist from 1988-1998 at the Space Science Center. Creator of a History of Women in Science poster in 1990-91, she was a valuable resource for this panel.



Dawn C. Meredith came to this institution in 1987 and is now associate professor of physics, one of several women in the department. She initiated an innovative course offered at only a few colleges in the country that combines calculus and physics.



Anita S. Klein is associate professor of biochemistry and molecular biology and former chair of the Genetics Program. As one of the few women in science when she arrived in 1985, she helped found the Association for Women Scientists (AWIS) at UNH. The group meets every other week for breakfast to talk about issues and concerns. Klein has been a constant source of support and a mentor to both women faculty and students in the sciences.