

Collection Guide: Women at IIT

Overview

Throughout the history of IIT and its predecessor schools, Lewis Institute and Armour Institute of Technology, women have played a substantial role in shaping the schools identity. Technical training classes were initially offered at Armour Mission at the urging of librarian Julia Beveridge, who continued manage the Mission's technical training classes through the 1880s. When the Armour Institute of Technology was founded in 1893 by Philip Danforth Armour, Sr., his wife Malvina Belle Ogden Armour took an active role in socially and financially supporting the school and eventually her husband's place on the Board of Trustees upon his death.

Most of Armour Institute's female students attended the library school under faculty including Katherine Sharp, protégé of Melvil Dewey, and later founder of the library school at U of Illinois. When Armour Institute ended its library and home economic programs in the 1910s, it lost its female students until the merger with Lewis in 1940 to form IIT.

Lewis Institute had a substantially larger number of women students and faculty across several departments. Some faculty members and alumni of note included French Instructor and recipient of the prestigious *Palmes Academiques* Lea DeLagneau, noted painter and art teacher Maria Elsa Blanke, and alumna Ethel Percy Andrus, who went on to found the AARP. Lewis Institute's Home Economics program produced some of its most successful female alumna, who went on to professional careers in restaurants, advertising, and social work.

After the merger of Lewis Institute and Armour Institute of Technology in 1940, IIT's new faculty of 182 instructors included 21 women. In addition to faculty positions, women also were administrators. However, with the exception of one female department chair, all of IIT's deans, department chairs, directors, and Trustees were male. Listed below are women instructors and administers, with their title and date of initial appointment at Lewis or Armour. The list has been taken from the 1941 academic catalog.

Art

Maria Elsa Blanke, Asst. Prof. of Applied Art, 1896

Home Economics

Ruth Cowan Clouse, Prof. of Nutrition and Chairman of the
Department of Home Economics, 1941

Elsamarie Fritz Hartman, Instructor in Home Economics, 1929

Hazel Schultz, Instructor in Home Economics, 1940

Laura Mae Winkelman, Asst. Prof. of Home Economics, 1909

English

Mollie Cohen, Instructor in English, 1920

Irene Baker Gustafson, Asst. Prof of English, 1928

Margaret Florence Williams, Instructor in English, 1915

Helen Larson Stevens, Instructor in English, 1931

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History

Marie Wilkinson Spencer, Instructor in History, 1925
Agnes R. Mathews, Instructor in History, 1925

Chemistry

Helen Skinner Mackenzie, Asst. Prof. of Chemistry, 1930

German

Edith Amelia Schulz, Instructor in German, 1930

Other Staff

Olive Pierce Hazel, Instructor in Physical Education, 1920
Kathryn Judkins, Business Coordinator, 1940
Anna C. Orcutt, Psychologist, 1937

Library

Esther Eloise Cheshire, Asst. Librarian, 1936
Mabel White Craig, Asst. Librarian, 1940
Margaret Mary Murphy, Asst. Librarian, 1940
Alice Virginia Neil, Asst. Librarian, 1935
Nell Steele, Librarian, 1921

Administration

Agness Josyln Kaufman, Registrar;
Nell Steele, Librarian;
Frances Todd Wylie, Assistant Business Manager.

Materials in UASC

Processed Collections

- 032.03.06 *Deceased Donor Part-1*
Josephine L. Dawson, Counselor of Women, Lewis Institute, and others
- 1993.04 *ARF glass lantern slides*
- 1998.17 *Patriotic League of Lewis Institute*
- 1998.24 *Gunsaulus Papers*
- 1998.46 *Ralph Owens Papers*
Box 53, Society of Women Engineers, 1952 – 1967 (one folder); includes a list of women who had received engineering degrees from Armour Institute of Technology, Lewis Institute, and IIT as of 1952
- 1998.48 *Film: Women at IIT*

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- 1998.49 *Henry T. Heald Papers*
Box 78, Faculty Women's Club, 1936-1937 (one folder); includes list of club members
- 1998.62 *Hotchkiss Papers,*
Box F, [Armour] Faculty Women's Club, 1933 – 1936 (one folder); includes newsletter items and program schedules
- 1998.053 *Camras correspondence*
Correspondence concerning four talks to women's groups.
- 1999.04 *Registrar's statistics*
- 1999.21 *P. R. brochure – Women at IIT*
- 1999.33 *Alfred Jacques*
- 2000.49 *Women's Association/Anita Anderson*

Unprocessed Collections

- 1990.01 *IIT Women's Club, 1939 – 1977*

Technology News

Oct. 17, 1933; founding of Armour Institute of Technology Faculty Women's Club
(check Special Collections index for other articles)

For more information, contact archives@itt.edu or visit UASC, Galvin Library, 35 W 33rd St, Chicago, IL, Monday- Friday, 1pm-5pm.

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