

The History of Human Ecology at Kansas State University 1873 to 2009



INTRODUCTION

In the 1860s, Manhattan was on the edge of the American frontier known as the Bluestem Prairie. Both the Santa Fe Trail and the Oregon Trail were within 40 miles of the growing community, but a few miles to the west there was wilderness. Manhattan was established in 1855 and originally called New Boston. The settlers organized Blue Mont Central College in 1858, and completed construction of the original building (pictured above) in 1860. After Kansas became a state in 1861 and the Morrill Act Land Grant was passed by Congress in 1862, the state legislature accepted the Morrill Act and created the first officially designated land grant college in the nation. Renamed Kansas State Agricultural College, the college earned distinction for its practical education based on a foundation of classical studies. President John Anderson provided leadership to emphasize the practical value of education. The early curriculum included a six-year farmer's course, a six-year "woman's course," and a four-year mechanic's course. Kansas was the first state to open an agricultural college to women and to appoint a woman professor, Nellie Kedzie.

Kansas State University exemplifies a legacy of leadership during the early years of the human ecology discipline. Food preparation and millinery were the first college credit offerings in the nation. The curriculum had an unexpected national impact and provided a model for many other colleges to prepare women for both self-supporting careers and traditional homemaking roles. Although the curriculum was criticized, it was effective in expanding educational opportunities for women. Moreover, the curriculum, research, and extension programs in human ecology continue to thrive and earn recognition more than 135 years later. From domestic science and domestic arts to household economy to home economics, the names of courses, programs, and academic units changed to reflect the context of society.

From the time of the early leaders to the present, great social, scientific, economic, and political changes have shaped the nature of the College of Human Ecology without changing its basic mission. The programs and leaders at Bluemont College and Kansas State Agricultural College provided an example

for other colleges and universities as they dedicated study to improving the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities. The early endeavors in education for women meant exploring new territory and resolving controversies about both education and the role of women in the context of frontier life. This curriculum became known as “The Kansas Plan.” Beginning with study in dressmaking and millinery, courses in hygiene, household chemistry, household economy, and scientific cooking were added to provide knowledge and skills for employment. This curriculum included liberal education with study in the sciences, arts, and humanities. Kansas State Agricultural College developed the largest and strongest program of domestic economy in the nation.

Throughout more than 135 years, Human Ecology at Kansas State University evolved to its current status with the leadership of nationally recognized administrators and faculty. More buildings at Kansas State University are named for Human Ecology leaders than at any other land grant university in the United States. The success of alumni is a tribute to the rigor and relevance of academic programs, research, cooperative extension programs, and community outreach. Today, faculty and students in Human Ecology address issues that challenge our global society, nation, communities, families, and individuals throughout their lifespan. Kansas State University and Human Ecology can be proud of a *legacy of excellence*.

The History of Human Ecology at Kansas State University describes the contributions of courageous and visionary leaders who developed and advanced programs within the college. Section One of the book describes the unique and successful approaches to leadership provided by Hattie Cheseldine, Mary E. Cripps, Nellie Sawyer Kedzie, Henrietta Willard Calvin, Mary Pierce Van Zile and Helen Bishop Thompson from 1873 to 1923. The book also focuses on Margaret Justin, who served as dean of Home Economics from 1923 to 1954. The innovations and initiatives of Doretta Schlaphoff Hoffman and Ruth Hoeflin advanced the college and the human ecology discipline and increased national and international recognition. Barbara Stowe led the college to enhanced research, student leadership and facilities despite challenges to the university and college structure described in *Ballad of the Big Red Hat*. The legacy of Carol Kellett was the construction of additions to two major facilities, the Stone House and Campus Creek Complex – the first two buildings on campus funded entirely through philanthropic gifts. At the present time, Virginia Moxley is serving as Dean of the College of Human Ecology. To date, a significant legacy of Dean Moxley is leadership for development of the Great Plains Interactive Distanced Education Alliance and the Institute for Academic Alliances.

Part Two of ***the History of Human Ecology at Kansas State University*** examines the facilities and technology that supported instruction, research, and outreach for more than 100 years. Descriptions of the organization and names of the programs, departments and college provide insights regarding a history of growth and success within K-State and in professional stature. Major initiatives in research and scholarship, extension and outreach, and instruction reflect a continuous commitment to improving lives of individuals, families and communities. Highlights of international programs and partnerships show dedication and commitment to collaboration that addresses human needs on a global basis throughout the history of the college and university. Successful students and alumni are essential to a historical depiction of the College of Human Ecology and to its future growth and success.

For readers who have special interests regarding the history of the College of Human Ecology, there are supplementary materials that include benchmark achievements and events of the college, textbooks authored by faculty, centers and institutes on campus, special features about the founders, the Home Economics Centennial, and the 125th Anniversary Celebration. With this publication, the College of Human Ecology can celebrate a *legacy of excellence as we anticipate a future of prominence*.

Dedication

The opportunity to review and update the Hoeflin book provided a meaningful experience. Doretta Hoffman was dean when I was an undergraduate student (1965 – 1969), and I still have vivid recollections of her dynamic presence. Ruth Hoeflin was Associate Dean when I was a baccalaureate student and in that role, she served as my academic advisor and instructed my Introduction to Home Economics class. She was serving as Dean when I was elected to the Home Economics Alumni Board. It is an honor to follow in her footsteps and document the history of the College.

In 1988, Dean Emeritus Ruth Hoeflin and the College of Home Economics published the first comprehensive history of the College, *History of a College: From Woman's Course to Home Economics to Human Ecology*. The first four chapters of this book are adapted from the Hoeflin history and many excerpts from Hoeflin's book can be seen throughout this publication. I am grateful for Dean Hoeflin's work over many years to preserve the history of the College of Human Ecology for future generations. *The History of Human Ecology at Kansas State University* is dedicated to Ruth Hoeflin – a scholar, leader, and my valued teacher and mentor.

The most rewarding and joyful experiences of my career in higher education have taken place when working with outstanding students. Reflecting on the experience of writing this book, I am very grateful for the significant contributions and dedicated work of four outstanding students. Alexandria Teagarden, a junior majoring in Apparel Marketing, dedicated more than two years to supporting the research and documenting original references. Together we selected photos for the first seven chapters from the archive files. Allie wrote several of the new sections and edited other sections adapted from Hoeflin's history. Jaimee Keister, a recent alumna and current graduate student in Family Studies, supported editing of this history. She also researched and revised references and citations to assure accuracy in the history of Human Ecology at Kansas State University. Caitlin Husman, a student in Architecture, Planning, and Design, edited chapters and supported writing. Caitlin brought her talent with photography to our endeavors, and I hope you enjoy the photographs as much as I have. Lastly, Apparel and Textiles graduate student Sarah Heidebrecht wrote brief biographies of College leaders and supported editing.

The author and student co-authors sincerely appreciate the support of both Anthony Crawford and Pat Patton of the Kansas State University archives, who helped locate and access the historical documents and photographs that so clearly depict the history of K-State and the College of Human Ecology. Without their enthusiastic support, this publication would not have been possible.

Dean Virginia Moxley supported the book with ideas, insights, and enthusiasm. Both Dean Moxley and I take great pride in the history of Human Ecology at K-State and share a sincere interest in our historic leaders, emeriti and current faculty and staff, alumni, students, and benefactors. In designating a part of my faculty assignment to this area of scholarship, she provided me with a cherished opportunity that has led to collaboration with colleagues to share this history on a national level in presentations and publications. We appreciate the many Human Ecology faculty, staff, and alumni who contributed information and participated in interviews.

Throughout our endeavors, the shared pride of alumni and students and the evident respect of Human Ecology colleagues throughout the nation and world have been apparent. They make our history of excellence and a future of prominence possible.

Carol E. Kelllett

Professor and Dean Emeritus
September 2009