

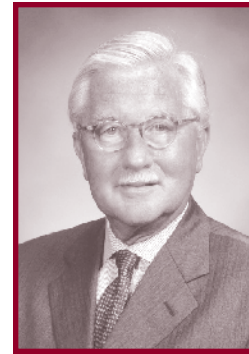


April 2007

A Moment for Grove City College

For this “Moment” piece, I thought I would write about an item that would stir (or sauté) the memories of all alumni – that subject is food! In particular, our campus food service – what it was all about in the past and what we are doing today. Whether you graduated in the 1930s or last year, I am certain you have a recollection and an opinion.

First, a little history: from the time the College was founded in 1876 until Colonial Hall was built in 1904, students lived off campus in homes and took most of their meals there, just like a boarding house. In fact, a lot of our more senior alumni will recall, I am sure, that when they left school and took their first jobs in the '30s and '40s and even early '50s, it was not unusual to live in a boarding house and take meals with the other boarders at a common meal table. Colonial was the first residence hall built and it had a resident dining facility. Memorial followed in 1914, Ketler in 1932 and Mary Anderson Pew in 1937. Students now lived in residence halls, so the need for dining halls began. The ladies first ate at Colonial and the men ate at old Memorial Hall (from 1914 until Ketler Hall was opened); co-ed dining did not occur until 1973.



Dick Jewell '67

My wife, Dayl, and I had lunch in Florida in January with two of our most distinguished grads and great friends, Eleanor (Ketler '37) Larry (our founder's granddaughter and Dr. Weir Ketler's daughter) and her husband R. Heath Larry '34. Mr. Larry has been a College Trustee for more than 60 years. As I told them that my next Moment piece was going to address eating at GCC, both of them helped me recall their student days. For the ladies, meals – especially dinner – were quite formal and regulated by the arrival and seating of the Dean of Women. Mr. Larry recalled the men at Memorial eating in coats and ties in a formal atmosphere as well.

We also visited that same day with Ferne (Cozad '38) Sticht and her husband, long-time Trustee and past Board Chair J. Paul Sticht '39. Unfortunately, this was my last visit with Mr. Sticht, as he passed away on March 27, 2007, at the age of 89. His service to our College was invaluable and he had an indelible impact on the life of Grove City College, our students and our alumni. You will be reading more about Mr. Sticht and his contributions in upcoming publications. On that day in January during my visit, Mr. Sticht had a big smile on his face as he thought back to his time as a waiter in the ladies' dining halls. This was truly a coveted position (and lasted from the 1930s until the late 1960s). Any fellow assigned to those locations where the women ate was deemed to be “out in front” in meeting freshman girls and getting the first chance to see, greet and date the co-eds. Hence this was the only student job for decades that included “fringe benefits” (i.e., getting that first chance to meet the ladies).

From the time the College first opened dining halls until 1995, College employees did all the cooking. My experience and recollection from my student days (1963-67) are probably representative of most of the years until 1995. The dining hall food was pretty good but there were not a lot of choices. In fact, as to choices, it was sort of like growing up – your mom prepared a meal – you ate it. There was (as I recall) no going back for seconds except drinks. Milk, tea and coffee were the drinks that accompanied every meal. On occasion, some students would claim that it was difficult to discern exactly what the entrée was; hence the term “mystery meat” came into being. I worked as a dishwasher in Ketler men's dining hall (at 75 cents per meal) for two years and washed pots and pans for two years

(at \$2.50 per meal). These were not cushy jobs but prepared me well for KP duty early in my U.S. Army training (today we call these “transferable skills”).

While Grove City has been co-ed since its founding, the integration of the sexes came slowly. For years, in fact until the fall of 1956, the ladies sat on one side of the Chapel and the men on the other, and until 1973, the respective genders ate separately, too.

That all changed in 1973-74. From then on, Hicks and a large dining hall in MAP West were open for co-ed dining. (For those nervous about spotting a trend here, let me help you down off the ledge by saying, no, we don't foresee co-ed dorms on our horizon.)

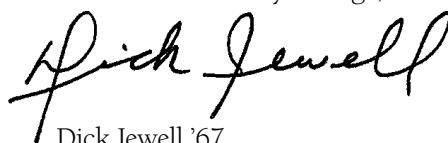
Then in 1995, a revolutionary change in food service came about. President Jerry Combee brought in the Bon Appetit Management Company of San Francisco to be our food service supplier. They remain today. A lot has happened since, and it reflects a nation more interested in healthy choices and nutrition. Today what we serve is labeled if it's in balance, low fat, vegetarian, vegan or organic. Bon Appetit's Farm to Fork program ensures that much of what is bought is from local farms, seasonal and minimally processed. When we serve seafood, we try to be aware of the generally accepted guidelines for sustainable seafood. All baked goods are made fresh on site, turkey and beef are roasted on site for fresh deli meat and only canola oil is used in all fryers. There is much more, but you get the picture. Providing good nutrition is stressed, and that meshes well with the College's required Fitness and Wellness course for all students. That course stresses, among other things, important information about nutrition for life. In addition, we work closely with our students who have food allergies to ensure a careful allergy avoidance diet.

During the past two years, two great physical changes have occurred and are occurring, and one additional eating alternative has been initiated. In the physical area, last summer we invested \$1.3 million in a total makeover of the MAP West dining facility to include a complete facelift, new kitchen and serving equipment, expansion of the dining areas and the addition of air conditioning. This summer we will make a \$2.7 million investment in a major retrofit, facelift and modest enlargement of Hicks that will also include air conditioning. When completed, we will have greatly updated eating facilities. This includes a food court presentation for serving, especially in Hicks. The new meal alternative option permits our students to apply their board (food) plan to lunch and dinner in the Gedunk on weekdays. Students have a choice of five different entrees that are covered by the plan.

I eat frequently in the dining halls and enjoy the selection of food. We have a student food committee that meets monthly to provide feedback to us and to our vendor, and we also work closely with the Student Government Association on food issues. So, the food situation today sounds pretty good. In fact, it really is, but knowing students (as we all should, having once been students ourselves) there are always varied opinions. The greatest challenge is the fact that if you and I had an all-time favorite restaurant and we ate there 16-21 times a week, it would probably be difficult for it to remain a favorite. But all things considered, we work hard with Bon Appetit to make our meal options varied, tasty and nutritional. We intend to keep doing that and **that is a promise.**

As I finish this Moment, given its subject matter, I am getting hungry. It is late in the afternoon and one of this evening's entrees is pork stir fry – my favorite. I am heading to Hicks for dinner – Bon Appetit!

Yours for Grove City College,



Dick Jewell '67
President