

College Heritage | CSAHS | Text Transcript

This is a text transcript for the video “College Heritage | CSAHS | Alumni & Reunion Week 2021” by the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences at the University of Guelph.

Transcript:

Narrator:

The Macdonald Institute is the current home of the of the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences at the University of Guelph.

Behind this modern multi-disciplinary school of community engaged scholarship and research excellence lies a rich and fascinating history.

The Macdonald Institute was the brainchild of Adelaide Hoodless, founder of the Women’s Institute movement in Canada and a champion of women’s education.

With the financial support of Montreal tobacco magnate and educational philanthropist Sir William Macdonald, this new women’s domestic sciences college was constructed and opened its doors as the Macdonald Institute in 1903.

The adjacent Macdonald Hall was built as a residence for the students.

Dressed in their stylish blue MAC uniforms, the young women of Macdonald Institute quickly formed close bonds.

They attended classes in food science, physiology and hygiene, bacteriology, psychology, economics and more.

The food lab in the Macdonald Institute was a practical kitchen where students could put their education in food preparation and meal planning to the test.

The food lab played a special part during the second world war when nutrition became a matter of national interest.

Macdonald Institute was temporarily closed and the Royal Canadian Air Force took over the building to house their School of Cookery.

The food lab – which is still in use today for a number of experiential learning courses – is a perfect example of the blend of applied and scholarly learning that was at the heart of Macdonald Institute and that is still embodied in the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences today.

Mac girls, as they were affectionately known, were a close-knit group who developed a thriving social community on campus.

They held musical and theatrical performances in the gymnasium of Macdonald Hall. They created sports teams, clubs and societies.

They developed traditions such as the braiding of the daisy chain, and the painting of the cannon.

They looked forward to dances with the men of the Agricultural college, winter sleigh rides, late night slumber parties and yearly College Royal.

In 1964, Macdonald Institute became one of the founding colleges of the University of Guelph.

Since then, the College has gone through organizational and name changes, the student population, which now includes both sexes, has grown and transformed and the scholarly focus has shifted.

But the ideals on which this school was constructed – to provide a place where ideas can grow, knowledge can be turned into action, friendships can be built, and students can be furnished with a solid educational foundation – are still evident today.

[End of transcript]