



# 150 Stories for 150 Years

## Alumna's WC Experience Included Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia, Mexico and American Samoa

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I was attracted to the diversity and (F)riendliness of Wilmington College in 1967. I found it striking that we saw the College president walking across campus and my tour guide said, "Hello, James Reed." Ah, Quaker forms of address! I was offered a scholarship when I went alone to visit. When my family moved me into Friends Hall dorm, I remember my mother said something about how yes, this will be okay, when she saw that not everyone looked like me. Agnes Gory and husband ran the International House across the street from Kelly Center. I found my home among the international students. Wilmington had a place for me, a "square," Spanish major from Missouri, who was very little concerned with appearances. We had interesting conversations in the dining hall. Once there was a discussion with students from New York City about how celery grows—certainly not on trees! I imagine there were loftier talks, but that's one I remember. The freedom to organize my own schedule, even stay up all night talking, was certainly different from high school. However, the College was in its last year of "in loco parentis," in which we had to sign in and out of our dorm after suppertime, and we had a curfew. By senior year, I lived in a coed dorm, Marble Hall.

Opportunities for off-campus study were of great value to me. I gained appreciation for other cultures and people. Sophomore year, I went to study in Nicaragua with Dr. Neil Snarr's group. Carol Mendenhall and I were the two who had



the most Spanish experience. We were able to converse easily with our homestay families. There followed a semester teaching at Monteverde Friends School, Costa Rica, a stint winter quarter in Bogota, Colombia, teaching English to adults, and during my senior year 10 weeks at University of the Americas in Cholula, Mexico. I met the love of my life, Va'atuia Malepeai, "Junior," my senior year (1970–71) when he came from American Samoa. He was talking to Leonard Brown outside of Kelly Center, needing a ride to bowling class. Va'a introduced himself as Junior, and that's how he was known at WC, but I got him to write down his full name that first day. Little did I know I would share his name! He explained to everybody that he was not a foreign student, as American Samoa is a US territory. Va'a came to WC through knowing Anne and Woody Gross, friends from their time in Peace Corps in Western Samoa. Thank you, Wilmington College, for shaping my life!

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