

# CELEBRATING OUR 75<sup>th</sup> WITH CONTINUED SUCCESS

*As Berkeley College celebrates its 75th year, its five campuses each look to a record of achievement that can best be summed up as a living history that balances the parallel interests of students with the demands of the marketplace. Predictably, each has, with individual flair and the familial strength that is Berkeley, reached its own pinnacle of success. With the country focused once more on good news as World War II ended, the exodus from metropolitan areas to the suburbs was reflected in business as well as by families seeking the American dream. To Berkeley, it was a time that signaled expansion — and the birth of the Westchester campus.*



Westchester Campus

THE SUCCESS OF ITS FIRST TWO CAMPUSES IN EAST ORANGE AND MANHATTAN BECAME THE IMPETUS FOR FURTHER GROWTH AND A RENEWED PLEDGE BY BERKELEY TO REMAIN AT THE FOREFRONT OF BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR WOMEN. BY 1945, WHEN BERKELEY OPENED ITS THIRD CAMPUS IN WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK, IT HAD ESTABLISHED NOT ONLY A STRONG COMMITMENT TO ITS GROWING STUDENT BODY, BUT A VISION DETERMINED TO KEEP PACE WITH A CHANGING BUSINESS CLIMATE.

In later years, the opening of a Berkeley School in White Plains, in Westchester County, New York, would be called “inspired,” as indeed it was. IBM and General Foods would move their corporate offices to Westchester, and Alyea Brick saw an emerging trend, one that could benefit the ambitions of young women embracing business careers. In fact, Berkeley graduates were prominently scattered among the relocated secretarial staffs of both IBM and General Foods, as well as other Fortune 500 companies with world headquarters in Westchester County.

The first administrators of the new school were Ethel Townsend and Frances Mitchell, who transferred from

New York City to White Plains, where classes took place in four rented rooms in the Reporter Dispatch Building. From the start, the expansion to Westchester proved a brilliantly calculated plan. It wasn't long before the number of enrollments demanded additional space, resulting in two moves and the eventual purchase of a former church in White Plains to accommodate the growth of the campus.

One early accomplishment that became a school-wide Berkeley Advantage™ was the comprehensive reference guide created by Ethel Townsend. *The Berkeley Manual of Style*, containing regularly updated rules of grammar and punctuation, has served three generations of graduates, as well as their employers.

A year after it opened, the Berkeley School of Westchester benefited from a voluntary accreditation initiated by the Board of Regents of the State of New York. It was among the first schools in the area to obtain the new credential. That was the start of spiraling upward mobility for the still fledgling campus, leading to its accreditation as a two-year business school by the Accrediting Commission for Business Schools in 1966.

After initiating a four-quarter program in 1972, the Westchester campus was the first to introduce an expanded short program of a two-year, six quarter program in 1974.

By this time, the White Plains campus site had been replaced by a new home in Harrison, one with room for the inevitable growth and success for which Westchester appeared predestined. Students were housed in apartments at Heritage Hill and at The Summit in Rye Township, while an on-campus residence, Red Oak Hall, was under construction.

With the expansion of the three existing campuses, the Berkeley “family” grew in strength. History reflects that its familial bonds may well have been the source of its strength, as enrollments increased, the success of

graduates in the business world grew, and campuses maintained their assertive positions among business schools. The unspoken but well understood mantra for Berkeley was “never stand still.” The school was constantly on the move, introducing new courses to accommodate business trends, and meeting increasingly higher, more rigid accreditation standards. Nowhere is this more evident than at the Westchester campus, which opened to a welcoming community of students and has held a solid authoritative presence on the academic scene since then.

In 1972, Westchester was one of the first schools in the area to receive authorization to award the new vocational degree — Associate in Occupational Studies — to graduates of the professional secretarial, and fashion marketing and management programs.

By 1980, faculty members were attempting to increase the transfer of student credits to four-year colleges. They undertook an intense reevaluation of general education courses and ultimately petitioned the Board of Regents for authorization to award an Associate degree in Applied Science. It was granted a year later, making the Westchester campus the first proprietary school in New York to have such authorization.

In 1982, Westchester received candidacy status from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Then, following a four-year application to the Accrediting Commission of the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools, the Westchester campus was upgraded from a two-year business school to a junior college of business. In 1988 the College at last received its long-sought-after accreditation from the Middle States Commission.

It was in 1995 that Westchester’s paralegal studies program was approved by the American Bar Association. The upward mobility in stature and accreditation at Westchester and other campuses inevitably led to pressure to achieve baccalaureate status. A Master Plan Amendment to the New York State Education Department to award a Bachelor of Business Administration degree was submitted in 1996, and granted two years later.

Berkeley’s considerable outreach to the business and educational communities consistently has paid dividends in the high esteem with which it is regarded throughout New York and New Jersey. In Westchester, the Westchester Country Club became the venue for programs featuring celebrated speakers, among them prominent authors and researchers who addressed as many as 700 teachers and guidance counselors on



*Sussex House student residence at the Westchester Campus.*

important educational issues. In 1981, the Westchester campus had the honor of hosting Berkeley’s 50th Anniversary with a gala president’s reception for faculty and staff of the five schools. It was a joyous occasion for the Berkeley family and one deservedly hosted with pride in achievement.

The Berkeley College of Westchester, as it became officially known in 1990, was recognized as a separate institution under the leadership of a common Berkeley Board of Trustees. Again, program content became structured to complement business trends and consequent student interest. In 1998, Berkeley College received approval to award the Bachelor of Business Administration degree.

In 2001, Westchester acquired a 100,000 square-foot, four-story building in the revitalized downtown White Plains. A year later, Cottage Place, a new six-story student residence opened adjacent to the academic building. An additional residential floor was added for the 2005 class, one section of which houses international students. The expansion of student housing facilities complements Berkeley’s broad diversity within the student population. No one ethnic group comprises a majority; rather, diversity parallels a microcosm of the community served by the school. That community is far different from what it was in 1945 when the first students enrolled for training in secretarial skills. Today, a wide range of programs is offered to a co-educational student body with expanding career interests. As with all Berkeley campuses, the history of the Berkeley College of Westchester is a moving drama. It’s a story of action, peopled by faculty members who have contributed to student success, and by alumni whose own rich histories in the business world leave a proud imprint on the school.