

Berkeley Has Made Its Mark in Bergen County...

Civil rights, feminism, the Space Race, the Beatles – the 1960s ushered in sweeping changes in American culture. And, as the decade came to a close, stories making headlines in 1969 showed the shift toward a more youth-oriented, technology-based society:

*Neil Armstrong First Man to Walk on the Moon
Nearly 500,000 Attend Woodstock Music Festival
Sesame Street Airs*

Berkeley Acquires Claremont Secretarial Schools

Berkeley College, too, was poised for change, and made its own headlines in 1969 when it acquired the Claremont Secretarial Schools with locations in Ridgewood, New Jersey; Hicksville, New York; and New York City. But it would take more than physical expansion to grow.

Since 1931, Berkeley had built its reputation as the New York metropolitan area's largest resource for producing top-notch executive secretaries.

But, with women entering former male-only professions – and technology beginning to impact work – in 1970, Berkeley established a Fashion Program, offering classes in fashion merchandising. The decision to offer a new program independent of secretarial training changed Berkeley forever.



Bergen Campus Adds New Personality

Although Berkeley had a singular focus – to prepare students for success in their chosen careers – each campus had a distinct personality. The new location on Maple Avenue in Ridgewood, with upscale shops and restaurants, drew female students not only from Bergen County, but from Rockland and Orange Counties in New York as well.

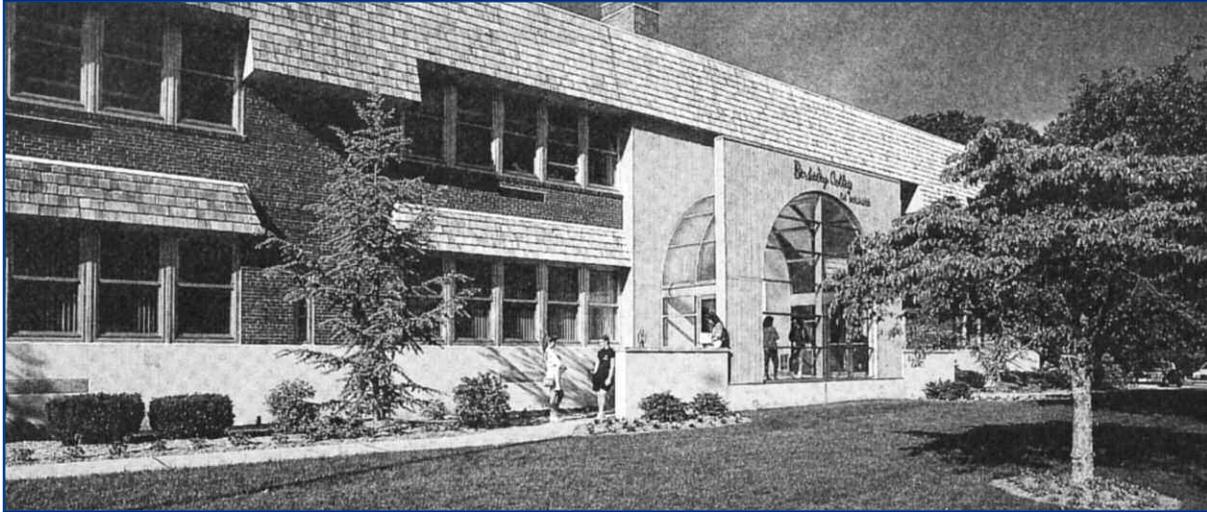
Lori Merante, who served as Director of Admissions at the Ridgewood Campus from 1981-1985, remembers the Ridgewood Campus offering 9-, 12-, and 18-month secretarial programs. In addition, the Campus offered the "Gateway 12," a 12-week program for college graduates eager to gain business and office skills – skills that made them more attractive to employers. Students could also enroll in the 12-month Fashion Merchandising program.



And, although mini skirts, tank tops, tight-fitting pants, and torn jeans were the typical attire of college students of the day – Berkeley students still adhered to a dress code. "Students had to wear suits, dresses, pantyhose, and heels," says Ms. Merante, who is now Associate Vice President of High School/Community Outreach. "But gloves and hats were long gone by then."

Berkeley Has Made Its Mark in Bergen County (cont.)

Bergen Campus Moves to Waldwick



Literally bursting at the seams, after 16 years in Ridgewood, the Bergen Campus moved to Waldwick in the summer of 1985. One of the first things Ms. Merante recalls about the new location was the additional space. “The building was so large compared to the one in Ridgewood,” she says. The new location (a few blocks from the Waldwick train station) and a new Interior Design program continued to attract students from Bergen County and Orange County, New York, and it brought in a new population from Hudson County, New Jersey.

From 1991-2002, Annette Long, Vice President, Central Admissions Office (BES), called the Waldwick Campus home, as did the entire Central Admissions Office staff. But one person’s mansion is another person’s cottage. Ms. Long, who had worked at the Garret Mountain Campus since 1977, had this to say about her new home: “The Campus was a small one with an ambiance and life of its own.”

Besides offering more breathing room than Ridgewood, the Waldwick Campus introduced a number of Berkeley “firsts.” The Telemarketing Center, today’s Enrollment Services, started at the Waldwick Campus as a one-woman operation. Today it is located at the Garret Mountain Campus, and houses Berkeley’s inbound and outbound call centers. Its seven full-time and 45 part-time associates

play a vital role in Berkeley’s day-to-day interaction with prospective students.

Teri Duda, Vice President of External Affairs, began her Berkeley career as the Administrative Director of the Bergen Campus in Waldwick in 1991. She recalls the closeness and camaraderie among the students, staff, and faculty. “We worked well together and had tremendous pride in our work,” she says.

The friendliness and family atmosphere was evident, according to Ms. Duda. “We implemented a staff talent show, which was terrific. It rejuvenated us and raised the already high level of communication. We also had a lot of fun at the College’s 60th Anniversary Family Picnic, which was our first big event. There was a lot of enthusiasm and involvement,” she recalls. Guests enjoyed a pie-eating contest and three-legged race among the many activities at the celebration.

Since the Waldwick Campus had an auditorium with a 300-seat capacity, the All Associate Days were held there. The Campus was also home to Berkeley’s first International Office. In 15 years, the one-person department with two students from Japan has grown to an International Department that is responsible for nearly 500 students from 85 countries. And the Interior Design program, which made its debut at the Waldwick Campus, added a new mix to the Campus’ personality. Ms. Long recalls the students’ work on display,

Berkeley Has Made Its Mark in Bergen County (cont.)

showcasing their varied talents. It was an opportunity to get up close and personal with the students and instructors in the program, she says.

Always looking to improve access for students, and to be more visible in the community, the Bergen Campus moved to its current location at 64 East Midland Avenue in Paramus in 2003. Bergen COO Arlene Cohen, who has been with the College since 1974, says the Bergen Campus has experienced steady growth over the last three years, especially in the evening population, which numbers about 230 students.

Overall, nearly 60% of the students are enrolled in business programs, with fashion leading the way. The remaining students, many of who hold Bachelor's degrees, are enrolled in the Interior Design Program and are looking to change their careers.

One of two educational institutions in New Jersey to offer a degree (A.A.S.) in Interior Design, Berkeley's program has reached elite status. "The curriculum prepares students to become professional interior designers who, after graduation from Berkeley and working in the field for a number of years, can sit for the national interior design examination," says Department Chair Kevin Byrne. The only other degree-granting program in New Jersey this field is a Bachelor's program at one of the public universities. The moves and changes in the Bergen Campus since 1969 reflect Berkeley's commitment to taking a leading role in educating students and preparing them for careers. And, although change is a necessary ingredient for growth, Ms. Merante points out two characteristics in Bergen Campus students that have not changed: their focus and commitment.

