



## 90 and still going strong!

Kitchen 8 invites Watkins and Miller alumnae, residents and friends to join us for the 2016 Gala Celebration Weekend on April 22-24 in Lawrence. The Gala Weekend is one of Kitchen 8's most ambitious undertakings ever with events planned to celebrate three historic events in the life and legacy of Watkins and Miller Halls and our benefactress Elizabeth Miller Watkins:

- The 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Watkins Hall,
- The 19th annual presentation of the Elizabeth Miller Watkins Memorial Scholarship (EMWMS), and
- The grand unveiling of *Watkins and Miller Hall – The Book* at a Cham-

pagne and Sweets Reception.

The theme of the Gala Weekend, “Building on Our History,” is the perfect theme for the weekend that celebrates building – Mrs. Watkins laying the cornerstone that brought to fruition her vision to help “the girls who must travel up-hill,” Watkins Hall standing the test of time for 90 years, and the EMWM Scholarships that pay forward Mrs. Watkins’ vision by helping new generations of exceptional women with financial need obtain a college education.

Before the partying begins, the Kitchen 8 Board will hold their annual meeting from 3 – 5 p.m., at the Watkins Mu-

seum of History, 1047 Massachusetts Street. The board will work on planning the Miller Hall 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Celebration Weekend, scheduled for April 21-23, 2017. Also, the Board will discuss scholarship fundraising and establishing a liaison with scholarship recipients. All Watkins and Miller alumnae and residents are welcome to participate in the meeting.

### Strut your stuff

After the Kitchen 8 Board meeting, the Gala Celebration Weekend will kick off with “The Way We Were” Welcome Party and Taco Buffet at 6:30 p.m., Fri-

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## Celebrating Watkins and Miller - It takes a weekend

By Roselyn (Skonberg) George  
Watkins 1945-48

### Welcome to the 2016 Kitchen 8 Newsletter!

I am so honored to extend a BIG welcome to all Kitchen 8 members and friends and to invite you to the 2016 K-8 Annual Meeting, our yearly celebra-

tion of Elizabeth Miller Watkins and all things Watkins/Miller on a Saturday in April.

However, this year’s event is so HUGE and historic that it can’t be contained in a single Saturday. It’s going to take an entire weekend because this celebration has been almost a century in the mak-

ing. This weekend we will celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Watkins Hall, unveil *Watkins and Miller Hall – The Book*, present the 2016-17 Elizabeth Miller Watkins Memorial Scholarships, and toast Elizabeth Miller Watkins and the legacy she built that has made it possible for thousands of young women to

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presents  
**“BUILDING ON OUR HISTORY”**  
**A Gala Celebration Weekend**  
**April 22 – 24, 2016**  
**Lawrence, Kansas**

**March 2015**

**Friday, April 22**

<b>3 - 5 p.m.</b>	<b>Kitchen 8 Board Meeting:</b> Open to Watkins/Miller alumnae and residents. Help us plan future Watkins/Miller events and celebrations!	<b>Watkins Museum</b> 1047 Massachusetts Street
<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>“The Way We Were” Welcome Party and Taco Buffet</b> Wear your favorite Watkins/Miller outfit and bring your scrapbooks and memorabilia.  RSVP for buffet by <b>April 7</b> -- <a href="mailto:normahoagland@kitchen8.org">normahoagland@kitchen8.org</a> or 913-775-3685 or at <a href="http://www.kitchen8.org">www.kitchen8.org</a>  <b>Buffet</b> -- \$12, payable at <a href="https://www.paypal.com">PayPal</a> on <a href="http://www.kitchen8.org">www.kitchen8.org</a> or at the door	<b>TownePlace Suites Hotel</b> <b>Rooftop Party Room</b> 900 New Hampshire Street

**Saturday, April 23**

<b>9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.</b>	<b>2016 Kitchen 8 Annual Meeting, Brunch, and Elizabeth Miller Watkins Memorial Scholarship (EMWMS) Presentation</b>  <b>Program:</b> “Building on Our History” - Watkins Nifty Fifties Reunion, 1966 Miller Hall 50 <sup>th</sup> Reunion, Watkins/Miller renovations starting this summer, “Blast from the Past” -- Watkins/Miller Trivial Pursuit  Celebratory brunch with EMWMS recipients and Watkins/Miller residents Presentation of the 2016-17 EMW Memorial Scholarships Submit trivia questions/answers by <b>April 12</b> -- <a href="mailto:Pajputnam@hotmail.com">Pajputnam@hotmail.com</a>  Register for meeting and brunch by <b>April 7</b> -- <a href="mailto:Normahoagland@kitchen8.org">Normahoagland@kitchen8.org</a> , 913-775-3685 or <a href="http://www.kitchen8.org">www.kitchen8.org</a>  <b>Brunch</b> -- \$20, payable at <a href="https://www.paypal.com">PayPal</a> on <a href="http://www.kitchen8.org">www.kitchen8.org</a> or at the door (Please consider a donation to cover brunch costs for a Watkins/Miller resident and/or EMW Scholarship recipient, who are guests of Kitchen 8)	<b>Maceli’s Banquet Hall</b> 1031 New Hampshire Street
<b>1:30 p.m.</b>	<b>A Tour with a Special Outlook</b> <b>Tour of The Outlook -- Elizabeth Watkins’ home on Lilac Lane</b> Shade Keys Little, husband of KU Chancellor Gray-Little, will be our personal tour guide	<b>The Outlook</b> 1532 Lilac Lane <i>Meet at Miller Scholarship Hall and walk over to 1518 Lilac Lane</i>
<b>5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Champagne and Sweets Reception</b> <b>Grand Unveiling of Watkins and Miller Halls – The Book</b> Free book launch party sponsored by Kitchen 8. We will have copies of <i>Watkins and Miller Halls</i> to purchase. RSVP requested by <b>April 7</b> -- <a href="mailto:normahoagland@kitchen8.org">normahoagland@kitchen8.org</a> , 913-775-3685 or <a href="http://www.kitchen8.org">www.kitchen8.org</a>	<b>Historic Union Pacific Depot</b> 402 North 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street <i>(near downtown Lawrence)</i>

**Sunday, April 24**

<b>2 - 4 p.m.</b>	<b>Watkins Alumnae Tea</b> Special celebration of 90 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Watkins Hall!	<b>Watkins Scholarship Hall</b> 1506 Lilac Lane
<b>2 - 4 p.m.</b>	<b>Miller Alumnae Tea</b> Help us gear up for 80 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Miller Hall in 2017!	<b>Miller Scholarship Hall</b> 1518 Lilac Lane
<b>4 p.m.</b>	<b>Honoring “Lady Bountiful”:</b> Traditional visit to lay flowers on the grave of Elizabeth Miller Watkins	<b>Oak Hill Cemetery</b> 1605 Oak Hill Avenue

**Accommodations for Kitchen 8 Gala Celebration Weekend**

Kitchen 8 has arranged a special group rate for April 22 and 23 for rooms and 1- and 2-bedroom suites. Share a suite with your RFFs (Roommates – Friends Forever)! To get the special Kitchen 8 rate -- Call 785-842-8800 and ask for “Kitchen 8 Rate” or make reservations through this link: <a href="#">Book your group rate for Kitchen 8</a> . <b>March 7 -- Deadline to reserve special Kitchen 8 Rate accommodations.</b>	<b>TownePlace Suites Hotel</b> 900 New Hampshire Street
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**‘MEETING’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

day, April 22, in the Rooftop Party Room high atop TownePlace Suites Hotel (the official Kitchen 8 Gala Weekend hotel), 900 New Hampshire Street. From the glass-enclosed Rooftop Party Room and Terrace, guests will have a panorama view of downtown Lawrence, including the Watkins Museum of History, the building where Elizabeth Watkins worked for more than 30 years and eventually donated to the city.

As part of the welcome party, Watkins and Miller alumnae are invited to relive their glory days by donning the iconic fashions of their time at Watkins and Miller. We expect our own Project Runway to include those 50s rock-n-roll pool skirts and saddle shoes, daring 1960s mini-skirts, the 1970s blues (blue jeans and work shirts, that is), mirror ball 80s disco outfits, 1990s grunge-wear and much more. Alumnae also are encouraged to bring that old scrapbooks or memorabilia to share and provide a good laugh. And don’t forget to bring a recipe that you cooked in one of those 7 kitchens. Did we really eat that stuff?

**Building blocks**

The 2016 Kitchen 8 Annual Meeting also will be a “building” experience starting at 9:30 a.m., Saturday, April 23, at Maceli’s Banquet Hall, 1031 New Hampshire Street. This year, Kitchen 8 is holding the Annual Meeting in a new location. After 10 years, the Kitchen 8 Annual Meeting has outgrown Lawrence Country Club.

Following the business portion of the meeting, the Watkins Hall Nifty Fifties and the 1966 Miller women, who are celebrating their 60-plus and 50<sup>th</sup> reunions that weekend, will regale us with “When I Live on Lilac Lane” memories to start off the program. Next, Norma (Decker) Hoagland



(Watkins 1969-71) and Renovation Committee Members Kaitlin Neill (Watkins Vice President) and Cecelia (Steffie) Villanueva (Miller Alumnae Chair) will present the plans for the largescale renovation of Watkins and Miller, which start this summer.

This year Kitchen 8 is adding a new course to the celebratory brunch -- "Blast from the Past" a Watkins/Miller Trivial Pursuit game. Send your questions that will stump even the most seasoned Watkinsademias and Millerophiles to Pat Putnam ([pajputnam@hotmail.com](mailto:pajputnam@hotmail.com)) by April 12.

Watkins and Miller residents and EMWMS recipients and their families will be Kitchen 8's guests for the brunch, which costs \$20. Kitchen 8 hopes you will consider a donation to cover the costs for one or more of our brunch guests. Please register/RSVP for the Annual Meeting and brunch by April 7. You can register and pay at [www.kitchen8.org](http://www.kitchen8.org) or with Norma Hoagland at 913-775-3685 or [normahoagland@kitchen8.org](mailto:normahoagland@kitchen8.org).

The Annual Meeting will conclude with the presentation of the 2016-17 EMWMS awards. In 2015, Kitchen 8 presented a record \$63,000 in scholarships to a record 22 accomplished and deserving women, selected in the spirit of Elizabeth Watkins who wanted to help the "girls who must travel up-hill." Since Kitchen 8 set up the EMWMS Fund in 1998, it has grown to more than \$1.2 million and now makes a four-year \$10,000 investment in each EMWMS recipient.

### A tour with a special Outlook

Following the Annual Meeting, Kitchen 8 invites Watkins/Miller alumnae and friends to enjoy a private guided tour of The Outlook, Mrs. Watkins home on Lilac Lane that she bequeathed to be the KU Chancellor's home. Shade Keys Little, the husband of Chancellor

Bernadette Gray-Little will be our personal tour guide.

### Floating away on the bubbles

To cap off the day's celebrations, Kitchen 8 will host a free Champagne and Sweets Reception and Grand Unveiling of *Watkins and Miller Halls – The Book* at the Historic Union Pacific Depot, 402 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

Kitchen 8 encourages everyone to bring pens to participate in a book signing. The University Press of Kansas, publisher of *Watkins and Miller Halls*, will have copies of the book available for purchase at the reception (see "Hot off the presses – a new bestseller" in this issue for more info).

### The party's not over yet

The celebrating continues at the Watkins and Miller Alumnae Teas at 2 p.m., Sunday, April 24. Watkins alumnae will be treated to a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday cake and the entire collection of hall scrapbooks. The University Press of Kansas will have copies of *Watkins and Miller Halls* available for purchase at the Watkins and Miller Alumnae Teas.

After the teas, Watkins and Miller residents and alumnae will quietly and with gratitude conclude the Gala Weekend by heading to Oak Hill Cemetery to lay flowers on the grave of Elizabeth Miller Watkins, our Lady Bountiful. The cemetery is located at 1605 Oak Hill Avenue, east of Massachusetts Street between 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets.

Special accommodations for the Kitchen 8 Gala Celebration Weekend (April 22 and 23) are available at TownPlace Suites Hotel. To reserve the special Kitchen 8 rate, call 785-842-8800 or book your group rate at this link [Book your group rate for Kitchen 8](#) by March 7.

## Hot off the presses and soon to be a new bestseller

By Norma (Decker) Hoagland

Kitchen 8 President

Watkins 1969-71

The wait is almost over. In just one short month Kitchen 8 will unveil *Watkins and Miller Halls – The Book* at a Champagne and Sweets Reception book launch at 5 p.m., Saturday, April 23, in the Historic Union Pacific Depot, 402 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Lawrence.

*Watkins and Miller Halls* tells the story of Elizabeth Josephine Miller Watkins and her unique vision to help exceptional young women get an educational "hand up." It explores all aspects of the construction of Watkins and Miller Halls from the selection of the architect, the hall design and the decoration of the halls by Elizabeth herself. For the first time, you can read about the housemothers, who Mrs. Watkins personally interviewed, hired and paid.

The book also contains many never-before seen photos of Mrs. Watkins and the halls undergoing construction. There also are stories and photos from every decade since the halls opened. "Many Watkins and Miller alumnae will see their photos, quotations and stories in this book," said Kitchen 8 President Norma (Decker) Hoagland (Watkins 1969-71), the brainchild of this project.

### Another legacy for women for equality

And in a coup that is bound to make *Watkins and Miller Halls* a best seller, award-winning and internationally best-selling author Sara Paret-sky, who lived in Sellards Scholarship Hall while she attended KU, has written the forward to the book. After herself becoming a recipient of Mrs. Watkins legacy of generosity, Ms. Paret-sky has spent her life "paying it forward" by working for women's equality, including on the KU campus and for women writers, and establishing an annual scholarship for women living at Sellards.

*Watkins and Miller Halls* is the fourth in Historic Mount Oread Friends' (HMOF) Biog-



## The President's Pantry: 'If it's Tuesday it must be Belgium'

Dear Kitchen 8 Sisters and Friends,

The headline above is the title of a 1969 screwball comedy about a group of American tourists making a 9-country whirlwind tour of Europe in something like 3 days. Many of you know that my husband Joe and I go to Brussels, Belgium, twice a year where we work, relax and explore, staying for several weeks in our apartment that is a retirement remnant from Joe's company. Last fall our trip to Belgium was anything but a screwball comedy, yet we came back from our trip filled with profound gratitude.

Joe and I love our time in Belgium. We also enjoy the lovely people of Belgium, who still remember with gratitude the United States saving them in two world wars. To the people of Belgium "occupation" means more than what they do for a living. This has never been truer for them or Joe and me than what we all experienced in November and December.

About a week after we arrived in Brussels, Paris was attacked. The terrorists' rental car trail quickly led back to Brussels. One terrorist, who decided not to blow himself up, ditched his cell phone and suicide vest in a Paris dumpster and drove back to Molenbeek, a section of Brussels. This prompted police to conduct a house-to-house search that uncovered multiple stashes of weapons, suicide vests, terrorist cells and additional attack plans.

As a result, the prime minister put the country on the highest level of alert



Kitchen 8 President Norma Decker and husband Joe step out of their apartment in Brussels, Belgium, for a little fresh during the country's security "lock-down" after suspects in the Paris attack were traced back to Brussels (Molenbeek) last November.

and ordered a total lockdown of Brussels. Total lockdown – what's that? No trains, buses, taxis, subways, trams. Work, school, offices – shut down. All, and I mean all, activities cancelled – museums, theatre, opera, symphony, sports events, lectures, seasonal markets, lectures, holiday parties. Tourist sites – empty. Thousands of armed guards in the streets, checking bags at every café, shop and market. Blockades and water cannons at key points in the city. Police asking citizens to stay off social media, fearing any tips being leaked about police movements as they combed through Molenbeek neighborhoods.

The atmosphere reminded me a little of September 11 here in America. Everyone in Brussels felt shell-shocked and knew someone who had been affected by the Paris attacks. Like Americans after 9/11, the Belgian citizens rose to the occasion and reacted magnificently to the lockdown.

Our apartment and neighborhood is on the opposite side of Brussels from Molenbeek, so we felt pretty safe, especially with strong presence of police

and military in the area. That said, the university was just a block away from our apartment and, we were told, a special target of attack. It was interesting, although we didn't want to feel the terrorists had any right to make us afraid, we did not attend the big American Thanksgiving party downtown Brussels. I guess the impact of the Paris attack and the Brussels lockdown made us cautious, if not somewhat afraid.

Fortunately, Joe and I always bring lots of work,

so we had plenty to keep us occupied while we were "occupied." For the past few years I have used my time in Brussels to work on *Watkins and Miller Halls*, the book which you will get a to see for the first time at the Champagne and Sweets Reception book launch party on Saturday, April 23, as part of the Kitchen 8 Gala Celebration Weekend.

Honestly, immersing myself in the book during the lockdown helped me deal with the tension that was felt everywhere. I was grateful I could focus my attention on Elizabeth Watkins and her vision to make the world a better place by giving a "hand up" to make it possible for exceptional women to succeed on that "travel uphill." It was a saving grace to share the lockdown with Elizabeth, my RFF (Roommate – Friend Forever).

We did notice our wireless internet ran very slowly during the lockdown, which made it a challenge to keep up with the changes that our excellent editors Carol Shankel and Barbara Watkins and the book designer, Shala Stevenson, were making. Joe and I both wondered



whether the slowness of the internet was due to any intelligence surveillance that various government agencies might have been doing to catch the terrorists.

During the lockdown we still managed to stay in touch with our family, who really wanted us to come home right away. We also were grateful for the many messages of concern that friends such as our Kitchen 8 sisters sent us. Truth be told, we felt safer staying put in our apartment and neighborhood because there was so much police and army presence. There is a calming presence about Belgian Army guards! So we stayed in Brussels with the remarkable Belgian people until December 14.

After our experience in Brussels, I came back with a renewed sense of gratitude – for the freedom and safety we have here at home, for the special time I spent with Elizabeth and our book while locked down in Brussels.

In book, *The Road to Character*, David Brooks writes:

*Life is not like navigating through an open field. It is committing oneself to a few of the institutions that were embedded on the ground before you were born and will be here after you die. It is accepting the gifts of the dead, taking on the responsibility of preserving and improving an institution and then transmitting that institution better, on to the next generation.*

As Kitchen 8 members, we have been blessed with gratitude for an education that Mrs. Watkins help to make possible. True to Mrs. Watkins' vision and character, Kitchen 8 members are doing what David Brooks implores -- taking up the mantle to preserve, improve and transmit to future generations of women the legacy Elizabeth Miller Watkins so generously endowed on us. I am profoundly grateful for her gift of education to all of us and for your character and commitment to ensure her vision and dream moves onward and up-hill.

**Norma (Decker) Hoagland**  
Kitchen 8 President  
Watkins 1969-71

#### 'BOOK' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

raphy of a Building series and a joint-venture between Kitchen 8 and HMOF, the publisher of this book. HMOF pledged \$4,000 to "green light" the book and Kitchen 8 members donated the remainder of the estimated \$12,000 publication costs.

#### Labors of love

The book has been several years in the making. Norma, along with Lawrence historian Mary Burchill, spent more than two years working on the book. "It took a year of planning and proposing to get HMOF's approval for the book," Norma explained. "Researching, preserving, compiling, sorting, writing material for the book and responding to the editors' comments took another year." HMOF 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Carol Shankel and former Treasurer Barbara Watkins edited the book.

"But it has been a labor of love for me and I am very pleased with the result." Norma said. "I can't wait for all my Watkins and Miller sisters to hold this book, with its lovely photographs and read their stories." Kitchen 8 members, Watkins and Miller alumnae and residents, and special guests will be the first to see *Watkins and Miller Halls* at a Champagne and Sweets reception.

The University Press of Kansas will sell the book at the reception as well as at the Watkins and Miller Alumnae Teas on April 24. After the Kitchen 8 Gala Celebration Weekend, the book will be available at the KU Bookstore or through University Press of Kansas at the following:

**Online:** <https://kuecprd.ku.edu/~upress/cgi-bin/978-0-7006-2275-7.html>

**Telephone:** 785-864-4154

**Mail:** University Press of Kansas  
2502 Westbrooke Circle  
Lawrence, KS 66045-4444

Kitchen 8 plans to give a copy of

the book to each graduating senior who has lived in Watkins or Miller all four years. Donations to help Kitchen 8 present these gifts are appreciated.

#### Dedications and acknowledgements

Kitchen 8 would like to thank Elena Wahbeh (Watkins 1970-72) and Sarah (Watkins 1972-76) and John Shortall for sponsoring the Champagne and Sweets Reception. In addition, Kitchen 8 extends loving thanks to the following donors. Without their help, publishing *Watkins and Miller Halls* would not have been possible:

Eileen (Griffiths) Bennett (Watkins 1940-44)  
Tobey Billinger (Watkins 2005-09)  
Elizabeth (Ervin) Boman (Watkins 71-75)  
Dory Cochran (Watkins 2005-10)  
Norma (Decker) Hoagland (Watkins 1969-71) in memory of Jennie Decker Roselyn (Skonberg) George (Watkins 1945-48)  
Mary (Emerson) Gomez (Watkins 2004-09)  
Martha Householder (Miller 1964-68)  
Cara (Sheets) Kean (Watkins 1948-52)  
Susan (Harshaw) Kissinger (Watkins 1970-74)  
Michelle Loewenstein (Watkins 2005-09)  
Gayle (Barry) Matchett (Watkins 1955-57)  
Pat (Powers) McClure (Watkins 1952-55)  
Cathie (Fuller) Miller (Watkins 1970-73)  
Judy (Johnson) Niebaum (Miller 1958-61)  
Jeanice (Allen) Pokorny (Watkins 1943-47)  
Pat (Jolly) Putnam (Watkins 1971-74)  
Margaret Seba (Watkins 196-48)  
Sarah (Wohlrahe) Shortall (Watkins 1972-76)  
Laura (Draxler) Sixta (Watkins 2005-09)  
Marilyn (Whiting) Thomas (Watkins 1943-47)  
Ruth (Warren) Wilkin (Watkins 1938-40)





# Get out the hammers - it's our turn

By Norma (Decker) Hoagland  
Kitchen 8 President  
Watkins 1969-71

The day after graduation ceremonies this spring, Watkins and Miller Halls finally will undergo long-awaited extensive renovations that promise to be completed one week before classes start next fall.

Rumors of renovating Watkins and Miller have circulated for several years. Each year we have watched and waited while other KU updated other scholarship halls, none as old or as in need of an overhaul. When would it finally be our turn?

## Steamy question – why out - in, not in - out

The answer turns out to be connected to those legendary steam lines running beneath KU. KU's approach to renovating the scholarship halls was to close off steam line starting from the furthest outside end and moving in. Why did KU decide to go out – in and not in – out? Just one of life's little mysteries, I guess.

Last August, the Department of Student Housing (DHS) scheduled the first meeting in the process to select an architect and engineer firms to do the renovation. I represented Kitchen 8 at the meetings and Watkins and Miller Halls were represented by Watkins Vice President Kaitlin Neill and Miller Alumnae Chair Cecilia (Steffie) Villanueva.

Summing up all of our thoughts about the process, Steffie said, "This opportunity has been so educational, exciting, and eye-opening. I have been able to see what exactly goes on behind the scenes. I have been able to witness the process of starting with just a basic idea of how one wants something to function to seeing the final very detailed drawings of exactly how a specific room is going to look." the code just tells us the details of what we have to do not actually what to do."

Although none of us was a voting mem-

ber of the committee, they always welcomed our opinions and suggestions. In the end, the committee selected Clark/Huesemann Architects and Henderson Engineers. We felt a big sigh of relief because a principal in each company was a scholarship hall woman! Henderson's Julie Pierce is a Watkins woman and Jane Huesemann lived in Douthart Scholarship Hall.

## Attention to the details

The architect's narrative best described the scope and breadth of the renovation project:

- *The Miller and Watkins Scholarship Hall Renovations projects consist of a complete mechanical system replacement, fire egress upgrades, ADA-accessibility upgrades, and associated architectural upgrades for both halls. The existing steam heating systems will be replaced with modern, high efficiency heating, cooling and ventilation systems.*
- *Select areas will receive new lighting and power distribution.*
- *Restrooms on each level will be completely renovated to include new sinks, showers, and toilet fixtures, add storage cubbies, and replace interior finishes, ceilings and lighting. An ADA-accessible bathroom will be added on the main level, and the building entrance will be made accessible with modifications to the threshold and interior vestibule.*
- *A new fire-rated wall and exit doors will be added to improve fire safety at each level of the existing 4-story stair, and will provide for direct exit to the exterior through the common room on the lower level.*
- *Hallways and stairs will receive new carpet with the exception of areas with wood flooring, which will remain as-is.*
- *Ceilings in hallways will be replaced on the upper levels with suspended drywall for a more historic character than the current acoustic tile.*
- *The current root cellars will be renovated to increase storage efficiency and provide for custodial [and mechanical] storage space.*
- *Laundry rooms will be modified to separate new mechanical equipment from the laundry space. [Laundry room will receive improved*

*lighting and large countertop for folding laundry, along with new paint and finish.]*

- *The existing Kitchen 2 entrance will be relocated off the general kitchen (GK), allowing for reorganization of equipment and built-in storage in the general kitchens.*

We all agreed that the bathroom improvements will please everyone. However, while we all rejoiced in the idea of central heating and air conditioning, I wondered whether we will miss the radiators. Perhaps not so much!

## Measuring up to Elizabeth's standards

The three of us were pleased there was no question about retaining the historic front door with its leaded glass panels. However, what they originally planned for the front reception area caused all of us to exclaim immediately, "Mrs. Watkins would NEVER approve of this!" The original blueprint had placed the new water fountain and ADA-accessible bathroom door so it opened directly onto the front reception area. That would be what you saw the minute you walked in the door. It didn't take too much convincing to get those first floor hallway plans revised because, luckily, there was adequate space.

The engineer mentioned an interesting historical point that he discovered when he opened a section of wall to determine how to improve wiring to the study rooms. He told the committee that he'd never seen "fabric-wrapped wiring this old," but he added that the pipe conduit the wiring was in was in perfect shape so it would save thousands of dollars because he could simply pull new wires through the existing conduit. Another victory for Elizabeth: she built it right from the start and 90 years later it still saves money!

## If these walls could talk

There are some issues that are still a bit up in the air – what to do about those study room walls. "The change that has



generated the most varied response is whether we want new wallpaper, either modern or historic, or we just want paint,” Kaitlin said.

Watkins residents have voiced many different opinions on this issue, while Miller said “let’s just paint the walls.” Maybe Steffie’s high-tech market research to gather everyone’s opinion paid off. “I sent out online surveys that allow me to obtain data,” she said. “By reading the results I have been able to witness just how passionate Miller women are over ensuring that Miller remains our home, and it does not transform into something impersonal, like a dorm. They want to ensure that the history along with the traditions of this hall are respected and remain intact throughout these renovations.” She added that determining the opinion of the Miller women was the most interesting part of this experience.

Originally, the study room walls had been painted plaster with a stenciled border along the ceiling. In the 1970s, DSH allowed residents to paint their study rooms and we should take bets on just how many coats of paint those study rooms have! Hopefully, we will be able to announce the final answer on study room wall finishes during the hall renovation presentation at the Kitchen 8 Annual Meeting.

From a Kitchen 8 perspective, there will be difficulty in holding our New Woman Dinner in the TV (Council, Common) Room again, as a part of the floor space had to be taken for the fire exit. The room was scarcely large enough before! Trust me, we tried everything conceivable to avoid this – but fire safety had to come first. So, we will have to look at how we do this event and where we can get all the new women together next fall.

The renovation will claim a few victims -- the “stock-up” kitchens, or what some of us refer to as the “scary kitchens” -- have got to go. These are the pantries at the far end of the kitchen level where early residents kept bulk grocery items and home-

canned goods sent by loving mothers.

### There are no monsters in the closet

Kaitlin said she was surprised that removing the storage closets in the scary kitchen generated “the most passionate responses” from residents. “Some people were very adamant that we keep them for historical reasons, while others did not even know that they were there,” Kaitlin said. Watkins residents supported keeping the scary kitchens by a slight majority while Miller residents wanted them out of there. “In the end, DSH decided that we would get more storage by removing them and putting in wire shelving,” Kaitlin reported. Residents finally agreed to remove the scary kitchens after DHS pointed out that additional storage space was needed because the ADA bathroom on first floor and the changes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor mechanical room would reduce storage space.

So, you may want to go say your good-byes to the “scary” kitchens at the

Alumnae Teas a 2 p.m., Sunday, April 24. Just don’t go down there ALONE!

### What’s new is still old again

It has been a tremendous opportunity for the three of us to be involved in the renovation planning and decision process. At the Kitchen 8 Annual Meeting, we will share floor plans, pictures, specifications and more stories about this renovation process. As the Kitchen 8 representative, I was very pleased that DSH included alumnae on this committee. I am also extremely proud of Kaitlin’s and Steffie’s diligence, hard work and the many hours they put in to ensure the voices of the Watkins and Miller women were heard.

“Although physical aspects of Miller (and Watkins) will change,” Steffie acknowledged, “I believe it is safe to say that thanks to the voices of all the marvelous Millerites (and Watkins Women), the essence of our halls will remain the same.”

## How to get away with Murder House



Here’s a taste of what was waiting for frightened scholarship hall residents when they dared to enter the Miller Murder House on Halloween Eve last fall. Miller transformed its normally cheery halls into a casting call for “The Walking Dead” in order to revive a once forgotten hall tradition. Miller held their event in conjunction with Watkins’ Heaven and Hell Party the next evening. Despite standing outside in the cold rain for hours to usher in hapless victims, Miller President Laurel Kolacny (back row, two to the left of the headless Millerite) said the event was a hit and they plan to put a contract out again next year.





# Kitchen 8 - busy building bridges

By Camille (Icenogle) Olcese  
Kitchen 8 Watkins Campus Coordinator  
Watkins 1971-74

**K**itchen 8 Campus Coordinators Judy (Johnson) Niebaum (Miller 1958-61), Stevi Ballard (Watkins 2006-10), Camille (Icenogle) Olcese (Watkins 1971-74) and a host of local Kitchen 8 members kept very busy this year trying new and doing tried-and-true things to help build strong relations with the residents of Watkins and Miller Halls.

## Give me s'more time with Miller

Judy Niebaum used killer s'mores to entice almost two-thirds of Miller Hall to gather at her home for their annual retreat on Sept. 27. According to Judy, the Sunday Soup and S'mores supper accomplished the many goals she set. Encouraging the Miller residents to help make the chili, vegetable soup and s'mores provided time for the Miller women to get to know each other better and a fun opportunity to learn how to work together, and gorging on killer s'mores was the perfect end to another perfect annual retreat.

**BELOW:** Kitchen 8 Watkins Campus Coordinator Camille Olcese helps to set up the Tie-Dye T-Shirt Party in the Miller Hall backyard during Hawk Week last fall. Kitchen 8 donated 120 t-shirts to Watkins/Miller residents for the event.



## The tie-dyes that bind

Kitchen 8 started off its new year of activities to build the bonds of friendship with Watkins and Miller residents by sponsoring a Tie Dye T-Shirt Party. With donations from Kitchen 8 members and the Kitchen 8 Sugar Bowl Fund, Miller Orientation Week Chair Katie Hrenchir purchased the essential party supplies – 120 white t-shirts and a big, multi-color supply of dye.

“Those s'mores were incredible,” Katie Hrenchir said, adding that the group made five batches that evening. “A couple of them were even made without chocolate for vegan Millerites!”

A tour of Judy’s lovely wooded property also put everyone’s psyches in a fresh, healthy and cooperative frame of mind.

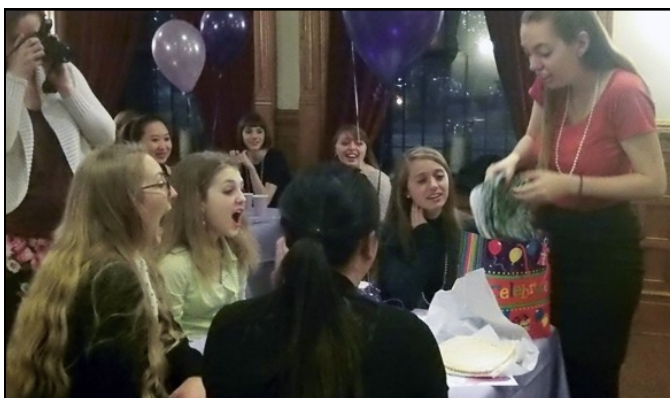
At the Kitchen 8 Gala Celebration Week-end and Annual Meeting, Judy will mark 10 years of service and leadership as Kitchen 8 Miller Campus Coordinator.

## Building bridges with watermelon salad and traditions

Kitchen 8 officially welcomed new Watkins and Miller residents with the annual New Women Dinner and Traditions Night on Sept. 30. Kitchen 8 members treated the new Watkins and Miller women to a delicious home-made supper at Miller Hall. In a show of unity, the old women got together for dinner at Watkins.

“This dinner is a long-held Kitchen 8 tradition that gives a chance for the new women of both halls to get to know each other and connect with us,” said Kitchen 8 President Norma (Decker) Hoagland (Watkins 1969-71). “The dinner conversation between the new Watkins and Miller residents and

**AT LEFT:** Miller residents Phoebe O'Brien, Judy, Gabby Buckner, Katie Hrenchir and Emily Colebank help Judy Niebaum make the first of many batches of killer s'mores at the Miller Hall annual retreat last fall.



**ABOVE:** Surrounded by surprised Lilac Lane sisters, Watkins President Hannah Swaggerty counts the abundance of potholders, hand-knitted by Kitchen 8 member Bev Benso, that they received as a gift at Kitchen 8's 155<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party for Elizabeth Watkins at the Watkins Museum of History on Jan. 29.





Kitchen 8 members, who represented several generations, was lively and spirited. I'm certain more than a few famous hall stories and secrets were shared."

Following dinner, Norma gave a presentation about life in Watkins and Miller Halls and how much the hall scholarships and Elizabeth Miller Watkins' generous legacy have meant to thousands of young women. Kitchen 8 presented each new resident with books about the history and traditions of Watkins and Miller Halls, as well as the life of Mrs. Watkins.

The evening ended at Watkins Hall, with the Watkins and Miller Annual Traditions Night. Elizabeth Watkins (Watkins President Hannah Swagerty) and Jabez Watkins (Watkins woman Shavonne Abella) shared their history and love story, and the visions behind the founding of Watkins and Miller Halls. At the end of their great performance, the new Watkins and Miller women joined the old women and Kitchen 8 members to sing "My Sweetheart of Lilac Lane."

**Happy Birthday Lizzie, you don't look a day over 150**

Kitchen 8 celebrated Elizabeth Watkins's 155<sup>th</sup> birthday (that's sesquicentennial plus 5 for anyone who's counting) at the Watkins Museum of History on Jan. 29. More than one-half of the residents of Watkins and Miller came to celebrate our Lady Bountiful who was born January 21, 1861.

Local Kitchen 8 members, who organize Lizzie's birthday party every year, adorned guests with strands of pearls in the spirit of Mrs. Watkins' signature accessory, served cake and punch, and led the revelers in a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday" to Mrs. Watkins, our benefactress.

**Kansas may be a state, but Lizzie's still top doyenne**

Since the party also coincided with Kansas Day, the 154<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kansas becoming a state, the group also sang "Home on the Range." However, it was pointed out that Kansas is, and always will be, Mrs. Watkins's junior!

At that point, Lizzie's birthday party departed from usual custom. Instead of the guests bringing presents, Kitchen 8, in the spirit of Mrs. Watkins, gave presents to Watkins and Miller. Watkins women delighted at the gifts, including board games, an electric griddle, an exercise DVD, and 14 pot holders that Bev (Runkle) Benso (Watkins 1954-58), former longtime Watkins Campus Coordinator, hand-knitted with love. Miller women opened presents of kitchen thermometers and a generous supply of plastic refrigerator containers.

The last and most special gift to Miller Hall was a Christmas tree that belonged to Judy and Jerry Niebaum. The Miller women christened it "Jerry's Tree," in honor of Jerry Niebaum, Judy's beloved husband and wonderful Kitchen 8 member, who had passed away just a few weeks earlier.

Thanks go to the K-8 members who made the EMW birthday celebration possible: Susan Anderson, Stevi Ballard, Valentine Baumann (Watkins 2003-05), Bev (Runkle) Benso (Watkins 1954-58), Simone Briand (Watkins 1982-86), Laura (Draxler) Sixta (Watkins 2006-09), Norma Hoagland, Judy Niebaum, Abby Olcese (Watkins 2008-11), Camille Olcese, Alica Thomas (Miller 1990-94) and Elena Wahbeh (Watkins 1970-72). Extra special thanks also goes to Elena for purchasing lilac colored tablecloths and donating them for future celebrations.

**2015 Elizabeth Miller Watkins Memorial Scholarship Fund and Kitchen 8 Sugar Bowl Donors**

**From the 1940's**

Carolyn Crocker (Watkins 1944-46) and Doris Brown Donna (Holm) Fisher (Watkins 1946-49)\*

**From the 1950's**

Bev (Runkle) and Eldon Benso (Watkins 1954-58)\*  
Ann (Fahrback) Branden (Watkins 1956-59)\*  
Gayle (Barry) Matchett (Watkins 1955-57)\*, *Memorial to Georgia (Dillon) Miller*  
Pat (Powers) McClure (Watkins 1952-55)\*  
Judy (Johnson) Niebaum (Miller 1958-61)\*  
Mary (Harder) Schroff (Watkins 1951-1953)  
Pat (Gardner) Stein (Miller 1953-57)\*

**From the 1960's**

Norma (Decker) and Joe Hoagland (1969-71)\*, *Memorials to Harriet Stephens Wilson and Ruth Warren Wilkin (Watkins 1938-40)*  
Jacqueline Bogner (Watkins 1968-71)

**From the 1970's**

Elizabeth (Ervin) Boman (Watkins 1971-75)\*  
Susan (Harshaw) Kissinger (Watkins 1970-74)\*  
Cathie (Fuller) and Ron Miller (Watkins 1970-73)\*  
Nancy (Archer) Rehkamp (Watkins 1970-74)  
Sarah (Wohlrabe) and John Shortall (Watkins 1972-76)\*  
Elena Wahbeh (Watkins 1970-72)\*

**From the 2000's**

Sarah Greenup (Watkins 2008-2012)  
Stephanie (Wilkinson) Hargett (Watkins 2000-04)  
Angela Oguna (Watkins 2007-2011)  
Ali (Bannwarth) Zayas (Watkins 2002-06)

**Friends of Kitchen 8**

Ineta Bebb  
Susan Karpen  
McClure Family Trust, *Memorial to Jim McClure*  
Nancy Morrow  
John Roper  
Janette Rudkin  
Patricia Spreer

**Memorials to Georgia (Dillon) Miller (Watkins 1955-59) from:**

Joe and Renda Beery  
Jake and Sally Bogner  
David and Betty Hewes  
Bradley and Vicki Irsik  
Tom and Margaret Miller  
Marie Millershaski  
Brian and Gwendolyn Oyler  
Janice Renich  
Bruce Renick  
Chuck and Mary Ann Robinson  
Vincent and Marilyn Sauer  
Joanne Stewart and Hugh Jenkins and Family  
Sandra Tarter  
Ed and Debbi Wehkamp  
Glenn Wendel  
Mary Wendel  
Ronald and Paula Wilson

**'WELCOME' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

“travel uphill.” Now you can see why Kitchen 8 is presenting A Gala Celebration *Weekend* April 22-24. If you have never attended a Kitchen 8 event, this is the year (and weekend) to do it.

My favorite part of the Annual Meeting will be when Kitchen 8 awards the EMW Memorial Scholarships to all those accomplished young women. I served on the EMW Memorial Scholarship Selection Committee for a number of years. I can attest to the outstanding qualifications of the many recipients, as well as applicants, and how hard it was to decide who would receive the awards. It made me realize what profound difficulties some women face in trying to get an education. I know Elizabeth is very proud that we, her daughters, are paying forward her gift to us by helping the next generations of “girls who must travel uphill.” Seeing the recipients’ beaming faces and hearing their voices crack with gratitude as they express their appreciation for their scholarships inspires me to come to Kitchen 8 annual meetings year after year. Once you see the young faces of the EMWMS recipients on April 23, you too will put the Kitchen 8 Annual Meeting on your calendar every year.

**Saturday night’s specials**

Saturday’s events are not ending with the EMWMS presentation. What may be the most exciting event of the gala weekend – the grand unveiling of *Watkins and Miller Halls –The Book*. – is set for Saturday. The book is the culmination of years of hard work by many people, starting with the research and work Kitchen 8 members, such as Gayle (Barry) Matchett (Watkins 1955-57), did to get Watkins and Miller Halls placed on the National Register. And read the story in this issue about how President Norma (Decker) Hoagland (Watkins 1969-71), along with Lawrence historian Mary Burchill, spent more than two years researching, compiling and preserving the history and stories about Watkins and Miller Halls and Mrs.

Watkins for the book.

**Double your pleasure**

After the bubbly I’ll go to bed exhausted, but happy, dreaming of having everyone sign my copy of *Watkins and Miller Halls* at the Alumnae Tea the next day. The Alumnae Tea is one of my favorite events. It’s a time to visit with old friends, tour the hall again and meet residents and young alumnae. I consider all of them to be my “younger sisters,” or “much younger sister” as some have pointed out. I am so proud of them, and now that we are in the Facebook age, it’s easy to keep up with the happy events in their lives, like the new additions you can read about in this issue’s Alumnae News section. Thanks to Kitchen 8, my Facebook “Friends” list is big and getting bigger.

Although I lived in Watkins, I treat myself to both the Watkins and Miller Alumnae Teas. During my time at Watkins (1945-48), I met many Miller sisters, and through Kitchen 8, I have met many more since. It’s great fun to stop by both Teas to see old acquaintances. The Teas are sweet events with tasty food and entertainment the Watkins and Miller women prepare and present. And they are guaranteed to end the same way -- singing our “Sweetheart of Lilac Lane.”

**Mother’s always right**

More than anything else, singing our special song at the Alumnae Tea, always brings back a flood of memories and reflections about what living at Watkins Hall meant to me and how it shaped me and my life. Living at Watkins was good preparation for “real life” later on. Our Housemother, Julia Willard, was the perfect example of courtesy, grace and good taste. Standing when she came into the room taught me courtesy and respect for people.

I never wanted to embarrass Mother Willard by coming in late (Do you do know we actually had closing hours in those days!). It happened to me just

once. I had to ring the doorbell, and Mother Willard had to unlock the door to let me in. Seeing her face when she opened the door was much worse than the demerit I got, which also happened to be the worst I ever received.

**The world is too much with us**

I have visited with Watkins and Miller alumnae who attended KU during many different periods – the Depression years, the WWII rationing, the turbulent 60s, the dawn on a new millennium — and each was a little different. Even on peaceful Lilac Lane, we are inevitably affected by what is going on in the wider world.

I moved into Watkins in 1945 as WWII was ending. Germany had surrendered and we celebrated V-E (Victory in Europe) on May 8, 1945. The United States had dropped atomic bombs on Japan on August 6 and 9, 1945. I was attending Orientation Week on August 15, 1945, when Japan’s Emperor announced his country’s unconditional surrender. My first thought was— “What will the newspapers have to write about without the war?”

**When Johnny comes marching home**

The end of WWII brought many changes and challenges to all college with the “return of the boys” who had been all too absent from campus. The returning soldiers, who took advantage of the GI Bill, were no longer boys but men of 22 or 23. Many of whom had grown up quickly as they experienced battle. They were more serious than the “boys” who had gone to fight the good fight. Now they were in a hurry to get their degrees and start a new life. They were fierce competitors as they filled the all the classes and classrooms.

I remember walking into Algebra II and the room was all veterans. Even the teacher was a veteran who assumed that we had all received lots of math classes and training in the service. Everyone had except for me! It was then I knew I would not be a math major!





In the scramble to find more class space for the quickly growing student body, we sometimes met in strange places. I remember taking an English class where I had to climb up many stairs to the top of old Fraser Hall, just below the two flag poles on top. I am not sure how we would have safely escaped if a fire broke out. Oh, now I remember -- I guess we were supposed to slide down at least three stories in that canvas tube on the west side of the building. It never happened, thankfully!

### Slow as molasses (rationed)

Other things were slower to change after the war. Rationing was one. Many things still continued to be rationed for some time, so I took my ration book to school in order to buy meat and sugar, mostly. The big thing that couldn't change fast enough for young women after the war was the rationing of shoes. Leather had gone toward making shoes for soldiers, and as part of the victory effort we were allowed to buy only two pairs per year. My big-hearted mother, who had four daughters, let us use some of her allowance to keep us in saddle shoes. The big day the *University Daily Kansan* announced the end of shoe rationing was the day I finally knew the war was really over.

Fortunately other fashions changed almost immediately after the war. Wool fabric was available once again for civvies. The availability of wool fabric brought down the hem of skirts to almost ankle length after the war, which certainly helped on the cold walks to class.

### Knit 1, pearl 2

The war inspired fashion innovation -- many of us learned to knit. The standard uniform of the day was sweaters, skirts, saddle shoes and anklets. I must say they were comfortable uniforms. During the war, however, wool sweaters were difficult, if not impossible, to buy and very expensive. In fact, some brides were using parachute silk their soldiers brought home to make wedding gowns.

So, to keep up our wardrobes we knit. Many of us knit at mandatory house meetings, which was -about the only activity allowed during meetings. Some of us actually finished sweaters. I remember giving a party for my roomie, Carole, so she could show off the sweater she had made and put it on for the first time. The neck opening, however, was too small and she couldn't get it over her head no matter how hard she and we tried! Tears and laughter followed.

Some of us also tried our hand at knitting exotic multi-colored Argyle wool socks during house meetings -- but only a few women were able to declare victory. As for me, I started a pair when I was a sophomore and only finished them years later for my husband Doug!

### A new wind blowing

After the veterans returned to school, there were some rumblings on campus about the treatment of black people, and black students in particular. Sadly, even after WWII there still were laws in Lawrence prohibiting blacks from being on the street after dark and restricting where they could live. Two white students, having just returned from fighting for freedom, thought this was unfair. So they sponsored sit-ins about where blacks could sit on the buses.

Blacks, including veterans, could not live on the KU campus either. There was only one black girl, Esther, in any of my classes. She had to attend a night class and we all worried about her long walk way down the hill to her home at 10 p.m. on cold, dark nights. When I found Esther's name on the 50th KU reunion list, I wrote to tell her how proud I was of her for sticking it out and graduating under the difficulties she experienced. Esther responded, thanking me and saying her grandson thought it was nice I had written to her. I had to write back to tell her grandson that he should be proud of HER. I didn't face such difficulties at KU. I am glad the discriminatory laws she faced are gone.

### Home cooking

Eating meals together in small family style in our little Watkins kitchens was a nice way to end the school day. Even with rationing, we usually ate well-balanced meals. Of course, some of us went through a learning curve to achieve it!

The kitchens were a mix of freshmen and upperclass women. Kitchen assignments changed every year so you quickly got to know 5 or 6 other women in the house very well. I learned a lot listening to the advice the upperclass women shared about various professors and classes. And of course, I always tried to make sure I never missed any hot news or gossip that floated around the dinner table!



Watkins alumna Roselyn George and her husband Doug will celebrate their 66<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this June. At age 89, Roselyn is one year younger than Watkins Hall.

### Sleeping porches, fresh air and Western Civ

I loved that Watkins Hall had sleeping porches. Today you get a choice -- warm or cold porch. In my day there were only cold porches. My upper bunk mate liked the window to be open so there would be lots of fresh air. And, wouldn't you know, it was the bottom window right next to my bed that was open to get LOTS of fresh air. On more than one occasion I remember waking with snow on top of my blanket.

I liked that the sleeping porch was a 24 hour quiet zone, which meant that when you went to bed it was always quiet --

Please see 'WELCOME', page 13



## Alumnae News: Which came first – 2 babies or 2 reunions?

### Nifty Fifties reunion to storm the fort

The “Nifty Fifties,” the sisterhood of intrepid women who lived in Watkins during the 1950s, are busy planning their 60-plus reunion to be held April 19-22 in Leavenworth, KS. The reunion will mark the 7<sup>th</sup> one the Nifty Fifties have held since 1990. The gatherings of the Nifty Fifties have taken them all over the country – from Florida to the Appalachian Mountains and South Carolina to Colorado

Already planned for this reunion are tours of the history of the Leavenworth area, including the Carroll Mansion (home of the Leavenworth County Historical Society), the Lincoln and Scripture exhibits at the University of Saint Mary, the C.W. Parker Carousel Museum, and a walking tour of downtown Leavenworth.

On April 21, the Nifty Fifties will tour Fort Leavenworth, the oldest continuously active military reservation west of the Mississippi River. Although Fort Leavenworth’s public website says “this historic post is noted for its campus-like setting, open green spaces, and hometown character,” they require a security clearance for all visitors. Fortunately, like the FBI’s code name for President Obama (POTUS), these Watkins alumnae also come with their own code word: NIFTY FIFTIES.

For more information about the reunion and hotel accommodations in Leavenworth, please contact Joyce (Klemp) Browder (Watkins 1954-58) at [joyce@markiiieb.com](mailto:joyce@markiiieb.com) or Bev (Runkle) Benso (Watkins 1954-58) at [bevbenso@sunflower.com](mailto:bevbenso@sunflower.com).

### The 1960s are back

The Miller Hall Class of 1966 also will

be celebrating a reunion, their 50<sup>th</sup>, during the 2016 Kitchen 8 Gala Celebration Weekend. The 1966 Miller Women will gather for dinner after the Champagne and Sweets Reception on Saturday, April 23 to remember old times.

According to Polly (Ruhter) Epting (1962-66), who is organizing the reunion, the women will have a lot to reminisce about. They were living at Miller when President John Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. They also lived right next door to the Chancellor’s home when students picketed it. “We set up hot chocolate booths for the picketers since it was during the winter,” Polly recalled. “Don’t remember why they were picketing. Anyway, I’m sure the first thing everyone will talk about is their grandchildren.”

For more information and to RSVP for the reunion dinner, please contact Polly at [jaguar101@kans.com](mailto:jaguar101@kans.com) or 620-364-2424.

### Santa delivers early present

Santa came early to the Bunnyfield family this year, bringing **Sam (Birchfield) Bunnyfield (Watkins 2003-07)** and husband Nate their bestest holiday present ever -- Owen Elliot Bunnyfield. Owen arrived on Dec. 13, 2015, weighing in at 8 pounds, 3 ounces and measuring 21 inches long.

With “adorable dimples and reddish hair,” as Sam describes Owen, the family instantly fell in love with their bundle of joy. Owen is the first person in Sam’s family not born in Kansas, but that hasn’t stopped her family from lavishing the baby with love and affection. “Owen is the first grandchild on both of our sides,” Sam explained, “and is getting super spoiled!”

Sam was lucky to share Owen’s birth with her Watkins roommate and doula,



Watkins alumna Sam Bunnyfield and her son Owen enjoy a quiet nap time together.

Anne Iverson (2003-06). With Anne by her side, Sam endured 13 hours of labor without an epidural. After going through IVF and a medically-induced labor, Sam said she and Nate are grateful to have Owen in their lives and enjoy all the “good, bad, and ugly parts” of being parents.

“I was totally not expecting to be so obsessed with how much another person pees and poops, but it is certainly something I think about all of the time!” Sam joked. The Bunnyfields feel truly blessed that Owen is a happy and healthy baby. The couple looks forward to seeing their son grow and Sam said she hopes Owen’s hair will get redder as he gets older.

Sam and Nate moved to Chicago in June 2013, after she graduated from KU with a Master of Social Work (MSW). Before Owen was born, she worked as a child and family therapist at a foster care agency in Chicago. After her maternity leave, Sam says she will return to part-time work as an independent family therapist practicing a play and attachment based therapy known as Theraplay. Nate is a software engineer for a start-up in downtown Chicago.

### Where did you get those eyes?

**Paula (Hopkins) Wrigley (Miller 2003-08)** and husband Phillip (Battenfeld 2004-08) welcomed daughter Cara Sue Marie on June 3, 2015.





Cara weighed in at 6 pounds, 10 ounces and 20.25 inches long.

But it wasn't Cara's healthy measurements that filled Paula and Phillip with joy when they first saw their daughter – it was “them there eyes!” “Her beautiful blue eyes shone out from the beginning as well as her welcoming disposition,” Paula recounted.

Cara's timely arrival couldn't have been more perfect. Since Phillip is a teacher, the family was blessed to be able to spend all summer together with their new daughter. Paula said they are constantly in awe of how Cara is growing and changing and working hard “trying to keep up with her.” Cara already is accomplished at sitting up, babbling, and traveling. According to Paula, Cara already has flown on an airplane and even visited Miller Hall several times! In fact, at just 2 ½ months Cara greeted Watkins and Miller residents at the Tie-Dye T-Shirt Party and a month later she helped mom host the 2015 Watkins/Miller New Women Dinner and Traditions Night.

In addition to serving as Kitchen 8 Secretary, Paula works in the Clinical Flow Cytometry Lab at The University of Kansas Hospital. Phillip works as an Avid, Social Studies, and ELL educator at Topeka High School. The family is happy to call Lawrence their home.



Cara Sue Marie Wrigley, daughter of Miller alumna Paul Wrigley, helps her mother greet Watkins and Miller residents to the Tie-Dye T-Shirt Party during Hawk Week.

#### ‘WELCOME’ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

albeit cold! If your roommate had to study all night for a test, she could stay up without disturbing your sleep. It also was a convenient place to escape from everyone or take a needed nap. And that's where Western Civilization comes in.

Sometime just before WWII ended, “the powers that be” decided that American young people didn't know enough about western civilization, so KU required incoming freshmen (except pre-med, engineering and fine arts students) to take a new (in)famous course with that name. I have tried to find the original reading list on Google, but failed. I seem to remember Beowulf, Plato's *Republic*, and Machiavelli's *The Prince* were on the list along with many, many others. I think the books were listed in chronological order. It was a very respectable list and I wish I had it now. It would be a good “Bucket List” of books to read over a lifetime. But freshmen, mostly 18 year olds who had not taken difficult high school literature classes, were required to read the entire list in one school year, plus take another 12 credit hours each semester. I did my best to do as much reading as I could, but I also struggled to get through some of it.

We earned 3 hours of credit per semester for Western Civ, yet there were no classes, no teacher, no papers, no mid-terms – just a long list of books to read and a “monitor” (usually a veteran working on a graduate degree) we could visit if we felt the need. It all came down to one exam at the end of spring semester.

The Western Civ exam was akin to waterboarding, a nearly day long test in a large auditorium. It was 3 hours of essay questions in the morning followed by another 3 hours of mostly True-False questions in the afternoon. Even before the morning session ended, I noticed students leaving. And they didn't return after lunch.

At the end of the afternoon test, I

walked home sadly, went directly to the sleeping porch where I could be alone and cried myself to sleep. I knew I had done well in all my other classes, but I was sure I hadn't done better than a C on that horrible exam, which would ruin my chances of getting the grade point I needed to return to Watkins, the place I had come to love as my “home away from home.”

The next day I left to go home, not knowing my grade. Back in those pre-computer days students gave their teacher a stamped, self-addressed post card so the teacher could send your final grade. Several days later I did receive my grade: B+. I thought, “They must have graded on a curve.” I rejoiced all the way from the mailbox to our farmhouse!

As soon as the school started that fall, KU civilized Western Civ. Rumor has it that there were threats of student suicides and complaints from parents.

So, the sleeping porch was my comfort when I really needed it. Or maybe it was all that fresh air!

#### The power of positive thinking

Going to college was a dream my parents had for all four of us sisters, but they were recovering from the Depression and unsure how they could afford it. Mother had attended two years of college and taught in a small school before she married my father. Someone told me about the Scholarship Halls at KU, so I filled out the application and waited hopefully for an answer. I was so disappointed when KU informed me I was an alternate and would receive a scholarship only if another student did not accept it.

Even though it already was the middle of the summer, I was undeterred -- I was going to KU even though I had no place to live. I knew I would find a place. The Depression had made it too difficult for many young people to go to

**'WELCOME' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13**

college so they took high-paying jobs right in defense plants and other war-related projects. Most young men had gone into military. So my odds of finding an available room were good, even at that late date.

Not many days before we left for Lawrence, I received the letter I had been hoping for -- I got a Watkins Scholarship. We made a quick shopping trip to find bed linens and blankets for the sleeping porch. Wool blankets were impossible to find, so Mother bought a rayon one, hoping it would last 4 years. It has kept 3 daughters and 11 grandchildren warm.

**Home sweet home**

Off we went never having been to Lawrence nor seen Watkins Hall. Mother never said it aloud, but I think she may have wondered what kind of place Watkins was, considering how cheap it cost to live there. As we drove up in front of Watkins I remember her saying "This is really nice." The best thing about Watkins was that it looked like a "home," with pillars in the front, a beautiful entry hall, a lovely living room inviting you to come in and sit a spell and a graceful stairway leading to the second floor (which only the president and house manager could use, I assume to save wear and tear on the carpet).

I remember feeling at home almost immediately and it still feels the same today. I loved being in my new home surrounded by 49 other women, sisters really. I grew up in a busy farmhouse in a family of four sisters, plus girl cousins down the road. So, there was always someone around. To me, Watkins Hall is small enough to feel comfortable, but large enough to always find someone to talk to or a quiet porch with plenty of fresh air when you need to be by yourself.

**What goes around comes around**

We made deep and lifelong friends during our years at Watkins. We have nourished for nearly 70 years in Round Robin letters and reunions and they have sustained us. And all this was before Facebook! So, I welcome all of you -- my Lilac Lane sisters!

## In Memorium: Remembering our sisters and our friends

### Harriet (Stephens) Wilson (Watkins 1936-38)

Harriet (Stephens) Wilson, a passionate book lover, passed away

March 31, 2015 at Brandon Woods in Lawrence. She was 97.

Harriet was born on May 6, 1917, in Topeka. She was the eldest daughter of Harry and Senah Stephens, a businessman and school teacher, respectively. She attended school in her Topeka neighborhood and graduated from Topeka High School.

Although Harriet only lived in Watkins her first two years at KU, her daughter, Betsy (Wilson) Marvin, said her mother always considered herself to be a "Watkins woman." Harriet was among the first Watkins alumnae who raised concern about the deterioration of Watkins in the 1980s and 1990s and transfer of income from Mrs. Watkins' trust to KU for projects other than maintained Watkins and Miller.

To help her family, who now had three children attending KU, Harriet shared an apartment with her sister and brother her junior and senior years. According to Betsy, Harriet worked very hard and got the best grades of anyone in her family. She earned a bachelor's degree in English and membership in Phi Beta Kappa.



Harriet (Stephens) Wilson

**In love with love and Lawrence**

Harriet loved living in Lawrence and she met her future husband, Paul E. Wilson, while she was attending the Methodist Church. In June 1941, the couple married in her parents' backyard in Topeka and moved to Ashland, KS. However, her time there was cut short when Paul enlisted in the army in 1942.

After the war they lived in Lyndon, KS, and Topeka, before moving back to Lawrence in 1957, when Paul became a professor in the KU Law School. Harriet's return to the city she loved enabled her to take seminars and graduate courses at KU. She also taught English courses at KU while raising four children.

After the children were grown, Harriet and Paul lived for a year in New York City while he taught at NYU Law School. "My mother loved living in New York," Betsy said. "She loved the energy of the book and arts scene, you know, Greenwich Village, black stockings and turtlenecks."

**It speaks volumes**

After Paul retired, the couple moved to Taos, NM, renown an arts colony where Georgia O'Keefe and D.H. Lawrence had once lived. Harriet and Paul surrounded themselves with books, a dream life for them. Paul and Harriet purchased the Taos Bookshop, which specialized in used and out-of-print books. Betsy said it was the perfect place for her mother, who used to "drag all of use to book stores whenever we went anywhere." During the time the couple owned the bookshop Harriet also developed a side business helping customers locate rare and out-of-print books from all over the country. In 1982 the Wilsons returned to Lawrence, where Harriet





continued her rare books search service for over a decade.

Harriet's passion for books defined many aspects of her life. For a number of years Harriet volunteered for, and chaired, the Lawrence Library Sale. According to Betsy, her mother spent all year sorting through the used books donated to the Library, setting aside rare copies for special sale by the Library.

"My mother used to rope in all of us, even people visiting for out of town, to help sort books," Betsy recalled. "And my parents were voracious readers, so they took many trunk loads of books to the Library for the book sale."

The sins of the parents have visited on the children, Betsy lamented. "Books are a terrible problem," she admitted "I collect them and can't get rid of them. I have piles and piles of books all over the house."

Harriet was preceded in death by her parents and her siblings, Paul, who died in the service of his country in 1945, Bonnie Jean Mix and Lois Sayler. Her husband Paul died in April 2001. Surviving are Harriet's four children, Betsy (Charles) of Atlanta, GA; Polly (Ron) Orbin) of Prescott Valley, AZ, Eileen (Steve) Unruh of Lawrence, and David (Carol Ward) of Springville, MA; eight grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren.

## Ruth (Warren) Wilkin (Watkins 1930-40)

Ruth (Warren) Wilkin, the first woman and Democrat to represent

her district in the Kansas House of Representatives and first to chair a major legislative committee, died



Ruth (Warren) Wilkin

July 5, 2015, at Presbyterian Manor, in Topeka. She was 96.

Ruth was born Sept 9, 1918, in Muscotah, KS. Ruth's parents, Will and Ella (Calvert) Warren, adopted her when she was five months old after her birth mother, Ruby Carter Stamper, died and her father, John Stamper, was unable to care for his four children.

Ruth graduated from Lawrence High School in 1936 and lived at Watkins Hall while attending KU. Ruth remained a loyal Watkins woman throughout her life, carrying forward the legacy of Elizabeth Watkins in many aspects of her life. Ruth regularly contributed to the Elizabeth Miller Watkins Memorial Scholarship Fund. Most recently, Ruth donated seed money to enable Kitchen 8 to publish Watkins and Miller Halls – The Book. Kitchen 8 President Norma (Decker) Hoagland (Watkins 1969-71) said Ruth is featured in the book and had hoped to present her with a copy at the book launch reception on Saturday, April 23 in Lawrence.

Ruth was a determined student, becoming a Phi Beta Kappa member her junior year. The times (Great Depression) and her teachers shaped Ruth's view of the importance of government and public service in people's lives. As a result, she majored in political science and got involved in campus politics.

In 1940, Ruth married childhood sweetheart, Donald Keith Wilkin, in Lawrence. They lived in Corpus Christi, TX, during WWII where Don taught radar and radio while serving in the Navy. After the war, the couple returned to Kansas and raised their three daughters in Topeka, where Don was Plant Extension Engineer for Southwestern Bell Telephone and Ruth engaged in politics and community service.

## Making a difference – women's lives matter

Like Elizabeth Watkins, Ruth also be-

lieved one person could make a difference. To that end she was a Girl Scout leader for many years and President of the League of Women Voters. Ruth was the only woman on the Kansas City's Tax Review Commission, a member of the Environmental Health Committee, and a member of the steering committee for the Public Assistance Coalition for Kansas.

She was a regular contributor to the "Topeka Scene" column in the Topeka State Journal and a member of numerous civic organizations. Ruth strongly supported many feminist causes and worked tirelessly for equal pay for women. "Ruth was a wonderful role model for many Kansas feminists like myself," recalled Jolene Grabill, a friend from Topeka. "Her example of courage and conviction was a source of strength for me."

Ruth's voice also reached out to younger generations of women. "As a child I always loved listening in on my Great Aunt Ruth as she engaged in 'lively discussions' with other grown-ups," niece Kim Pickens remembers. "I could recognize other voices, some who were much more conservative, others who were more in the middle. Their voices were often somewhat muffled and indistinct, except when they in chorus protested a certain point. But Great Aunt Ruth's high-pitched voice rang through loud and clear every time, and was always peppered with facts no one else seemed able to counter directly. I was always fascinated with her debating skills and her understanding of so many different complex issues. She was a wonderful role model for me."

## Leader of the house

In 1972, Ruth put those debating skills to good use and was elected to the Kansas House of Representatives. Ruth was the first woman to chair a major committee in either the House or Senate when Speaker of the House John Carlin appointed her to chair the Assessment



and Taxation Committee. After retiring from the Kansas House, Ruth served as legislative liaison for the American Association of University Professors and the Girl Scouts.

An active member of Potwin Presbyterian Church, Ruth led a church initiative in 1977 to sponsor a large refugee family from Vietnam. She was a supportive figure for the family through the years and pleased to see the children and grandchildren succeed in college and their careers.

Ruth and Don found great pleasure in travel and camping. Each summer the family drove through a different region of the country in their goal to visit every state (which they did). In later years, Don and Ruth traveled throughout the world.

Ruth was preceded in death by Don in 1993 and daughter Susan in (1992). She is survived by daughters, Jan Chase (Jim Jensen), of Pomona, CA, and Donna Wilkin (John Epp), of West Des Moines, IA; two grandchildren, Ben Chase (Melissa Saldana), of Minneapolis, MN, and Amelia Chase (Baard Hermansen), of Oslo, Norway; and sons-in-law, Robert Beer, of Telluride, CO, and Lyle Chase, of Union, NE.

## Georgia (Dillon) Miller

### Watkins 1955-59

Georgia Ruth (Dillon) Miller (Watkins 1955-59), a Kitchen 8 and contributor to the Elizabeth Miller Watkins Memorial

Scholarship Fund, died March 22, 2015, at St. Catherine Hospital in Garden City, KS. She was 77.



Georgia (Dillon) Miller

Georgia was born on the Fourth of July in 1937 to Gerald and Alice (Bechelmayer) Dillon of Finney County, KS. After Georgia graduated from Garden City High School in 1955, she attended KU, living in Watkins Hall the entire time. She graduated with bachelor's of science in Accounting in May 1959 and married Loren Miller in Garden City just two months later on July 19.

The couple lived on Loren's family farm in Northwest Gray County for more than 30 years where they raised two children. Georgia also worked for many years at H&R Block Tax Services in Garden City. In 1991, after Loren retired from farming, the couple moved into Garden City.

Georgia was an active volunteer who loved to take care of others. For many years she volunteered and was on the board of RSVP. For several months each year Georgia used her accounting skills to provide volunteer tax preparation assistance for senior, low-income and non-English speaking citizens. She also served as vice-chair of Eldercare Friendship Meals for the Finney County Senior Center.

When Georgia wasn't helping others she loved to garden, cooking and travel. Loren passed away in 2009. Georgia is survived by son Tom (Margaret) of Ingalls, KS and daughter Pam Miller-Jenkins (David Jenkins) of Omaha, NE; sister Mary Lou Thompson of Nederland, TX; and 5 grandchildren Ryan Miller, Emily Miller, Kyle Miller, Dillon Jenkins, and Sean Jenkins. She also was preceded in death by her parents, brothers Kenneth and John, and sister Virginia.

## Jerome (Jerry) Niebaum

Kitchen 8 member Eldon Jerome (Jerry) Niebaum passed away from cancer at his Lawrence home on Jan. 5, surrounded by his high-school sweetheart and wife of 54 years, Judy (Johnson) Niebaum (Miller 1958-61),

and his daughter Jerri Clark. He was 76.

### Fly now, Daddy

In announcing Jerry's passing, daughter Jerri tenderly assured friends and family her father's final day was peaceful: *My dad passed away peacefully at home this afternoon just before 1 p.m. Mom and I were with him, and we had a very special experience.*

*My brother, Rich, and Dad had devised a plan that after he died Dad would visit as a red Cardinal at the feeder outside my parents' bedroom window. As he labored to breathe this afternoon, I spotted a cardinal at the feeder that was spending quite a long time at its meal. I said, "Daddy, it's ok to go. Fly now."*

*He took one more sweet, peaceful breath. Mom leaned her heart next to his, and felt his final heart beats before they stopped. After a long quiet pause, I hugged my mom and said, "He did it. He did it perfectly."*

*His last days were sweet. Yesterday, he and mom napped together in a nearly silent house. At bedtime, Judiet leaned in to kiss her Jerome good-night, and said what she always says, "Good night, my darling."*

Although speaking had become difficult and he had said very little on that day, he whispered his answer, which is the answer he has always given . . . "Good night, my love."

### "Small town kid"

Jerry was born in Caldwell, KS, on Sept. 11, 1939, to Herman and Grace (Smith) Niebaum. Neither of his parents was fortunate enough to get much education, but both encouraged Jerry to focus on getting a good education. His father, a mechanic, threatened in jest, "If you ever pick up a wrench, I'll hit you with it." Jerry listened to his father's advice -- earning a bachelors in math education from KU, a masters in mathematics from Northwestern University, and a P.D in computer science from Iowa State University.

Eventually Jerry did pick up a wrench. After his father's funeral, Jerry's sister





**TOP:** Kitchen 8 member Jerry Niebaum, husband of Miller alumna Judy Niebaum, leads Watkins and Miller alumnae and residents on a walking tour of the KU East Historic District after the 2015 K-8 Annual Meeting and April.

**ABOVE:** Jerry and Judy Niebaum share happy memories of their 54 years of life together shortly before he passed away in January.

gave him a fishing tackle box that she said their father wanted him to have. Since Jerry didn't fish, he stuck the box in his garage. Much later, when Jerry finally looked inside, he discovered, "They were Dad's small tools, the special kind that require some extra care and keeping. I was so overwhelmed that I cried great sobbing tears right there in the garage. As a final gift, he had passed me his tools."

Jerry's family moved to Corbin, KS, when he was a child. Their home did not have electricity until he started

graded school or indoor plumbing until Jerry was in high school. Although Jerry's elementary education was spent in a two-room schoolhouse (1-4 and 5-8), he thought "I really got a good education." The school's very small library was located in only one room "I didn't get exposure to encyclopedias until I moved I moved into fifth grade," Jerry said.

### Math genius

It was Jerry's 7th grade teacher Oraleen (Merritt) Urban who first fostered Jerry's interest in math. In high school ran through every course Caldwell High School offered and did independent math study his senior year when he was not singing in the choir, running track, and playing football on team that was undefeated his entire high school career.

When Jerry graduated from high school in 1957 he had a Future Teachers of America scholarship to the college of his choice, which wasn't KU because "we were small town kids." Judy's brother, who lived at Joliffe Scholarship Hall and became Jerry's roommate, introduced Jerry to the "schol hall" option. "That's the main reason I came to [KU], the availability of a scholarship hall," Jerry said.

### Campus sweethearts

Jerry's high-school, and soon-to-be lifetime, sweetheart, Judy joined Jerry at KU the following year moving into Miller Hall. Joliffe was just down the hill from Miller and it was rumored that from roof of Joliffe the residents could use binoculars to catch a forbidden glimpse of Miller's sleeping dorm and the Pi Phi sorority. Love continued to bloom on Lilac Lane for Jerry and Judy.

In 1960, Jerry also fell in love when he took the first computer class KU taught. It was love at first sight the moment he saw KU's "big, old, very noisy" IBM 650 in Summerfeld. "It . . . changed my life," Jerry said, "I was just absolutely enthralled with computing" from that point on.

In May 1961 Jerry graduated with an education degree, got a teaching job at Leavenworth Junior High School and married Judy one month later, on June 11. As newlyweds, the couple lived in Lawrence while Judy completed her education degree. In 1962, they moved to Leavenworth when Judy got a teaching position at Fort Leavenworth.

### Bit by the computer bug

Big changes were in store for Jerry and Judy in 1963. First, their son Richard was born. Then, then the couple moved to Evanston, IL, for the summer when Jerry received a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to start his masters in mathematics at Northwestern University. They repeated the sojourn the following two summers so Jerry could complete his master's degree and take his second computer course. The computer bug had struck.

Jerry was looking to teach at a school that had a computer emphasis so the couple moved to Wichita and Jerry taught at near Campus High School in Haysville, a small bedroom community just south of Wichita. The school had both a data processing curriculum and an IBM 1620 computer that was better than the computer at Wichita State University. Jerry was ecstatic that he could "use that computer as much as I wanted." In between in his computer time, Jerry and Judy had daughter Jerri.

### On the road again

The following year, Jerry was lured to the University of Omaha to teach mathematics. On a visit to Iowa State University (ISU) a professor there suggested Jerry get a Ph.D at ISU in Computer Science. So it was off to Ames, where the couple put down roots for the next 13 years. During that time Jerry completed his Ph.D. in computer science and he became the tenured assistant director of the ISU computation center. Judy loved living in Ames. The couple bought a home, made good friends, sent their kids to the local



schools where Judy also taught.

What goes around comes around  
In 1981, Jerry said “an opportunity of a decade” knocked on his door when a position for director of academic computing services at the new Computer Center opened up at KU. “The only reason Judy let me apply for the position was that she was so certain I wouldn’t get it,” Jerry recalled. As we know, there could be but one outcome - Jerry was selected for the position from the 60 individuals the search committee considered.

Six months after Jerry and Judy moved back to Lawrence, they bought a home on a 3-acre wooded lot southeast of Lawrence where Jerry lived until his death.

### King of the geeks

Jerry immediately hit his mark when he was able wipe out the Computer Center’s \$76,000 deficit in just a year. Next Jerry brought the center into the age of microcomputers, saying the “revolution was about to . . . catch fire.” When Jerry came to the center, he said, “[W]e had more vending machines than microcomputers.” According to colleague Dave Barnhill, KU manager of enterprise applications and databases, “Jerry was a genuine visionary” who brought KU into the Internet age.

Jerry’s 23-year tenure at KU spanned an era of enormous technological changes. Barnhill recalled that changes were happening so fast it was hard to keep up. “I used to joke we were doing stuff that didn’t have a name yet, and Jerry knew what he was doing” Barnhill said.

The University officials recognized Jerry’s many talents navigating that new frontier and he moved up to Director of Computing Services, then Executive Director of Computing and finally Assistant Vice Provost for Information Services, a position Jerry held until his retirement in 2004.

### Leading indicator

Jerry also worked enthusiastically to help Kansas and the entire Midwest enter the internet age. In 2002, the Kansas Department of Education awarded Jerry its Kansas Leadership in Technology Award to recognize his work bringing the state online through KAN-ED, a statewide networking project. He also directed several NSF-funded projects to connect schools and libraries throughout Kansas and the Midwest with electronic information resources. Jerry led the effort to secure NSF funding to create the Great Plains Network Consortium to support collaborative research and high-speed data sharing among members universities and serviced as the Network executive director for one year.

### From vocation to avocation

In retirement Jerry pursued an “avocation” in computing. Not only did he maintain three websites but also, as president of the Endacott Society for KU retirees, he led a weekly computer study group to help other retirees stay abreast of current technologies. Jerry took great pleasure in showing elderly friends and family how to use Facebook, Go-Pro cameras and . . . drones.

Daughter Jerri noted that drones figured prominently in her father’s last Christmas. “A highlight was gathering on the front lawn to fly drones,” she recalled. “Dad gazed up in obvious delight, guiding his Christmas toy to hover, swoop and glide above the treetops. He laughed out loud with the rest of us when the drone snagged on tall branches 30-foot up.”

### Give me a tenor

In addition to computers, Jerry’s passions extended to other areas. Jerry and Judy shared a love of music and singing. At KU they were both sang in University Chorus and continued in church choirs throughout their lives. After moving back to Lawrence they sang in the First United Methodist Church choir for more than 20 years

and performed together in the “Ballad of Black Jack” at the Lawrence Arts Center. Jerry and Judy also sang in choral ensembles that performed at Kansas City Music Hall and got a standing ovation at Carnegie Hall for their performance, in Latin, of “Durufle Requiem.”

Music held a special place for Jerry and Judy right up to the very end. On Christmas Day, Jerri said her mother wheeled Jerry to the living room to play and sing “I’ll be Home for Christmas” (a few loving tears shed) and other carols on her piano that she had been practicing since Jerry come home for Hospice care. “She looked so beautiful and strong sitting there and playing her heart out for him,” Jerri said, “and he was receiving every note with much love and glistening eyes.”

The couple enjoyed theatre and Jerry served on the Lawrence Community Theatre and KU Friends of Theatre boards. An avid historical buff, Jerry also served on the boards of the Lawrence Sesquicentennial Commission and Douglas County Historical Society (DCHS), serving as chair for one year. DCHS operates the Watkins Museum of History.

Jerry also was a dedicated and invaluable Kitchen 8 member. K-8 President Norma (Decker) Hoagland (Watkins 1969-71) said Jerry helped to convince Historic Mount Oread Friends to publish Watkins and Miller Halls – The Book and provided photos for it, helped set up K-8’s PowerPoint presentation on Elizabeth Miller Watkins and last April led a walking tour of the East Campus Historic District as part of the 2015 K-8 Annual Meeting.

In addition to Judy, Jerry is survived by his sister Joann Nulik of Caldwell; son Richard (Laurie Weber) of Chicago, IL; daughter Jerri (Matthew) Clark of Vancouver, WA; and grandchildren Michella Kuykendall, Calvin Clark, Avi Zephyra and Astrid Ariana.





# A toast to the lady with the pearls and the vision

By Sarah (Wohlrahe) Shortall  
Kitchen 8 Newsletter Co-editor  
Watkins 1972-76

When Watkins and Miller alumnae and residents gather together next month and celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Watkins Hall, the first toast surely will be to the extraordinary woman with the pearls whose vision and generosity nearly a century ago made all of this and all of us possible. Let's raise our glasses to **Elizabeth Josephine Miller Watkins -- "Lady Bountiful."**

It was Lady Bountiful who left her heart and garden gate open to help, as Chancellor Ernst Lindley said, "those young women and men she saw struggling so bravely at the threshold of life for an education that could make their lives nobler and more useful."

From the sunporch of The Outlook, her home next door to Watkins and Miller Halls on Lilac Lane, Elizabeth Josephine Miller Watkins spent many days watching KU students trudge up the hill to their classes. If they could cut through her yard, she thought, their journey would be easier. So Elizabeth always left her gates open so they could do so, and her waves and smiles as they passed by were her loving gesture to the students who probably never knew it was she who left the gate ajar to help them to travel uphill and onward in their lives any way she could.

## A visionary in pearls

When Watkins and Miller alumnae and residents hear the name Elizabeth Watkins, the image that most often pops up is the portrait of the nice, dignified, older woman with a long strand of pearls that hangs in the living room at Watkins and Miller Halls. In reality, she was a trailblazer and visionary. In the late 1800s, she was among the first women of her generation to work outside the home in a white-collar job. She



broke "the glass ceiling" before the term was even coined and managed assets worth millions of dollars. Yahoo!

And though she never earned a high school diploma, let alone a college degree, she believed deeply in education for women and made that happen for thousands of young women.

She may have earned only \$50 a month as a secretary, but in her lifetime she gave away a fortune, earning her the well-deserved title Lady Bountiful. And although her name graces several buildings at KU and in Lawrence, it is Watkins and Miller Halls where her vision shines brightest.

## Go west young woman

"Lizzie Jo" Miller, as her family called her, was born on January 21, 1861, in New Paris, OH, to Dr. Valentine and Ella Gardner Miller. In 1872, when Lizzie was 11, her father, a Union Army surgeon in the Civil War, moved his family to Lawrence to set up a medical practice. "They came to Kansas at a time when money was a luxury," *Lawrence Journal World* Editor W.C. Simons wrote. "The farmers struggled against poor crops, grasshoppers and what not.

The doctor was almost the last man to be paid. But regardless of pay, Dr. Miller answered every call."

As a young girl, Lizzie looked up to University Hall—later known as Old Fraser—and dreamed of the day when she would attend classes there. At age 14 Lizzie enrolled in KU Preparatory School, however, hard times for her father's medical practice forced her to drop out of school to help support the family. Lizzie never finished high school or attended college and the family's hard times also slammed shut the gate on her dreams to pursue an art career in New York City. A family friend helped Lizzie secure an office clerk job with her first and only employer: J. B. Watkins Land and Mortgage Company.

## J.B. – the Bill Gates of the 1880s

Jabez Bunting (J.B.) Watkins, the namesake of Watkins Land and Mortgage Company, worked his way through the University of Michigan to get his law degree. After graduation, J.B. set up a real estate and loan business starting with just a few hundred dollars. Within 10 years he incorporated the company in Lawrence and secured enough money from eastern and foreign investors to establish branches in Dallas, New York, London and Lake Charles, LA. The company solicited funds from the East to lend to farmers in the Midwest.

From 1873-93, J.B. obtained about 2,500 Kansas farms through foreclosure, which represented 10-20% of all the loans made to farmers during those years. In the 1880s, J.B. purchased nearly 1.5 million acres of land in Louisiana and built railroads throughout the state. He also founded a number of banks, including the Watkins National Bank.

In 1888, J.B. moved his empire into a new building at the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and Massachusetts Streets in Lawrence. The new building, which took several years to construct, was considered one of the



most magnificent buildings west of the Mississippi River. Elizabeth worked on the third floor where the Land and Mortgage Company was located and, conveniently, where J.B. had a small apartment tucked away in the sub-attic. The bank occupied the second floor while the first floor was used as an office for lawyers and civic groups.

As J.B.'s company grew, so did Elizabeth's responsibilities and stature in the company. She eventually became J.B.'s private secretary as well as assistant secretary of the company, assuming many of its administrative responsibilities. Her natural abilities and instincts for finance made Elizabeth an invaluable employee and she played no small part in the growth of the Watkins business.

**Going to the chapel and we're going to get married**

In 1909, after Elizabeth and J.B. had worked together for more than 30 years, the couple married in Brooklyn, New York. The bride was 47 years old; the groom was 63 years and considered one of the richest men in the West.

The *Lawrence Journal World's* announcement about the couple's "destination" wedding raised more than one eyebrow, "Word has reached Lawrence today from New York of the marriage there last week of Miss Lizzie Miller and Mr. J. B. Watkins, both of this city. This announcement is the most startling that has been made in Lawrence in several years, for no one in Lawrence had any idea that the wedding was to take place."

However, according to Steve Jensen, former director of the Watkins Museum, no one should have been surprised that Elizabeth and J.B. tied the knot. "We believe they were romantically involved for a lot of the time she was his secretary," Jensen said. "She accompanied him on long business trips, which would not have been looked upon favorably in that day. He even took out life insurance policies on her and provided for her in his will before their marriage."

**Great mystery of love**

The mystery for Jensen was not that Elizabeth and J.B. married, but rather that it took them so long. Originally, Jensen thought J.B. may have kept Elizabeth waiting. "Now we think that it may have been [Elizabeth] who put it off," he theorized. "Her parents were strict prohibitionists, and J.B. drank heavily. . . [C]oincidentally, her mother died in 1909, and they were married not long afterward."

However, others tell a different story. Charles Stough, a friend of one of Mrs. Watkins' student chauffeurs, and Sean Williams, the grandson of Mrs. Watkins' business manager, both contend that Elizabeth pursued J.B. "I've heard and have every reason to believe that she tried to marry him several times without success," Stough said. "She would have dates set, and he either wouldn't show up or wouldn't stay long enough for the service to be performed." And one story has it that J.B. may have been drunk when he married Elizabeth.

**It's lonely on top of the hill**

Whatever theory is correct, their marriage was a source of scandal and Elizabeth "was never really accepted despite her wealth," Stough said. "Socially, she was not invited to things and was shut-out of social circles." Even though Elizabeth left over 100 bequests in her will, Stough said, "She was a rather lonely person." He added that no one ever saw a single person riding with Elizabeth in her limousine, although folklore has it that she often told her driver to stop so she could give a ride to a weary pedestrian.

What Jensen found remarkable was that Elizabeth was able to "rise above her experiences of being snubbed." He also suggested that J.B. may have been snubbed too because he was a Democrat and "in this town you were a Republican." Elizabeth also was a staunch Democrat. Stough surmises that being scorned may have pushed Elizabeth to make her extensive donations to KU and the community. "I expect she went





out of her way to show those people,” Sough said, “And she sure did – she was able to immortalize her family.”

### A fresh Outlook

Three years after Elizabeth and J.B. married, the couple built a mansion at the end of Lilac Lane on land they purchased from former Governor Charles Robinson, the state’s first governor who was instrumental in bringing Kansas into the Union as a free state. They called their new home The Outlook because of its breathtaking view of Wakarusa Valley.

The three-story Neo-Classical Revival mansion boasted 26 rooms, 7 fireplaces, 17 closets, porches and verandas on every side of the home, and more than 6,000 square feet of living space. With its distinctive green clay-tile roof, white stucco walls, Ionic portico and wrap-around porches, architects called the mansion’s style “Prairie Newport.” The Watkins furnished their new home with beautiful pieces, which made the mansion “one of Kansas’ most luxurious and best equipped mansions,” according to the *University Daily Kansan* (7/28/1939).

### The Widow Watkins

Although Elizabeth and J.B. often talked about how they would spend their “twilight years,” the couple had lived together at The Outlook for only nine years when J.B. died in 1921 at age 76. Mrs. Watkins, who had just turned 60, told the *Kansas City Star*, “We planned many things, but my husband died before our plans were all made.” Mrs. Watkins lived at The Outlook another 18 years, twice the length of her marriage, until her death in 1939.

During those years, Mrs. Watkins regularly invited faculty women to tea and entertained many notable guests at The Outlook, none more famous than First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. In 1938, the year before Mrs. Watkins died, the First Lady came for tea and toured Watkins Hall.

### Lady Bountiful

As Elizabeth and J.B. intended, after

Mrs. Watkins’ death, The Outlook became the new permanent home of the Chancellor. Her will even included a \$5,000 grant to furnish the Chancellor’s new home. Following rushed renovations, Chancellor Deane W. Malott move into the mansion at the start of classes that fall, whereupon the gates that “Lady Bountiful” left open to make students’ educational journey a little easier, were promptly locked.

The widow Watkins inherited an estate valued at \$2.4 million when J.B. died. The estate included seven national corporations, 200 Kansas corporations, more than 200 Kansas farms that the Watkins Land and Mortgage Company had acquired through foreclosures, and about 100,000 acres of land in Texas and Louisiana. Clearly, she was a wealthy widow.

For years, J.B. and Elizabeth had privately provided hundreds of students with financial assistance to attend KU. In addition, Mrs. Watkins hired KU students to chauffeur her long 16-cylinder Cadillac sedan. However, the Watkins did not believe in giving “handouts,” but in offering a “hand up.” Their approach to giving mirrored that of Andrew Carnegie: help others not by giving them a handout but by giving them the opportunities to improve themselves.

### For those who must travel up-hill

Soon after J.B.’s death Mrs. Watkins formalized her philanthropy by offering her first “hand up” to KU. She purchased

land on Lilac Lane and donated \$75,000 to construct a unique project of her own conception -- Elizabeth Miller Watkins Scholarship Hall, the first cooperative arrangement for women students in the nation. Watkins Hall opened its doors for the first time on September 14, 1926. The novel approach she designed for Watkins Hall was to help bright, but financially needy, young women attend college by having the women who lived there do all their own cooking and housework, thereby reducing their living costs to \$27 a year plus food. Then, Mrs. Watkins established a scholarship to cover most of the rest of the costs.

About her special project, Mrs. Watkins said:

*My sympathy has always been with the girls who must travel up-hill. My husband and I had intended to do something that would really be beneficial of them. It has been my dream to aid self-supporting girls to get an education.*

### Move it a little bit to the left

Mrs. Watkins totally immersed herself in every aspect of making Watkins Hall a reality:

*The color scheme of every room, the furniture, draperies and furnishings, are results of many months of planning. I have never done anything into which I have put more of myself. It is my dream come true.* (“For the ‘Girls Who Must Travel Up-hill,’” KU History webpage).

According to the KU History webpage, Mrs. Watkins was “a stickler for details going forward” and her attention to

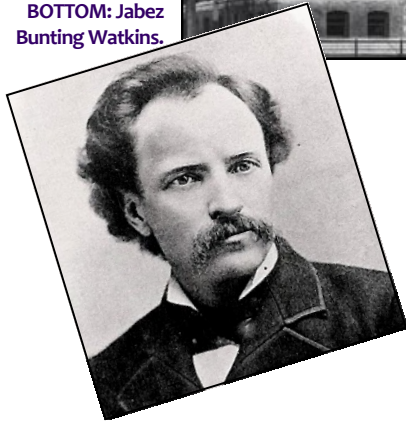
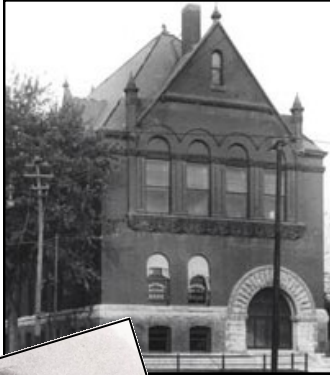


If you look hard enough you may be able to see Mrs. Watkins’ sitting on the sunporch or her Lilac Lane home, The Outlook, and waving to students who pass through the open gate to get to class. In her will Mrs. Watkins bequeathed The Outlook to KU for the Chancellor’s home.



TOP: The façade of the Watkins Museum of History.

MIDDLE: The Watkins Museum of History, formerly the J.B. Watkins Bank Building, where Elizabeth Watkins worked for more than 30 years before marrying Jabez Watkins in 1909



[originally] specified.” The first residents of Watkins also seemed to inherit Mrs. Watkins’ business acumen. The *Kansas City Star* reported that the seven kitchen heads at Watkins would get together and make a list of all the food they would need for the month and then invite local wholesalers to bid against each other to furnish the supplies (2/24/1935).

Once Watkins Hall opened, it quickly became a phenomenon in the collegiate residence world, the KU History webpage reported. In the mid-1930s, delegations from all over the country came to study the hall, saying that there was nothing like it at any other college. During the same time, interest in Watkins Hall at KU also grew.

**Miller time**

The growing interest of women in becoming a “Watkins woman,” in part, prompted Mrs. Watkins to donate another \$75,000 to build an identical twin next door to Watkins. Mrs. Watkins named the second hall to honor her beloved brother Frank C. Miller, a Salina banker, who died in his 40s, two years before J.B.

Like the attention she gave to the construction of Watkins Hall, Mrs. Watkins again involved herself in every detail of building Miller Hall. She was actively involved in everything from the interior layout to personally selecting the china pattern the new residents would use.

**Won’t you be my neighbor**

Not only did Mrs. Watkins take great interest in the walls that formed Watkins and Miller, she also took great pleasure in its residents. Harriett Dyer (Watkins 19935-39), a Lawrence native, described Mrs. Watkins as “dignified,” “kindness clear through” and “interested in education.” “She was like a queen with her kindness and really down-to-earth,” Harriett added. Veda Gibson (Watkins 1930-34) found Mrs. Watkins “austere but friendly.”

Verda Lee (Miller) Shields (Watkins 1938-43) and Philomene (Bourassa) Hood

(Watkins 1935-39) both remember Mrs. Watkins holding tea every year to meet new Watkins women. Another Watkins alumna (1938-42) remembered attending the annual tea the year before Mrs. Watkins died, “Going to tea at the ‘Big White House,’ which we called her home, was a challenge to dress up as best we could – putting on hose, our best Sunday dress, coiffing our hair and practicing our best manners.” In the July 1937 *Graduate Magazine*, Watkins women said they typically set an extra place for Mrs. Watkins when they cooked just in case Mrs. Watkins she dropped in, which she apparently did from time to time.

**Surviving and thriving in the Big Crash**

After the stock market crashed in 1929, Mrs. Watkins showed herself to be an astute business woman. During the Depression she managed both to retain the \$2.4 million value of the estate she inherited and to continue her generous gift-giving. The year of the big crash, Mrs. Watkins donated the Watkins Building to the City of Lawrence. That gift followed the \$200,000 she had given the year before the crash to build a new hospital, which opened one month before Black Monday. Interestingly, five days after the hospital opened, the first baby was born there and named Elizabeth in honor of Mrs. Watkins.

**To your health**

In 1930, Mrs. Watkins gave KU \$175,000 to construct, fully furnish and maintain a 46-bed student health facility equipped with full-time staff, examination rooms, an operating room and pharmacy. Before her gift, on-campus health care had been makeshift at best, changing locations five times over two decades and proving to be inadequate during the influenza epidemics of 1918 and 1928. As with her earlier projects, Mrs. Watkins helped to devise the interior design of the new hospital. Once again, she personally selected the wood furnishings for patients’ rooms and common areas with a design that created an environment that was a far cry from the stark, sterile white of many hospitals.

detail was amazing. She even ensured that the halls provided the new residents everything from the silverware and table linens to the sheets and blankets for the sleeping dorms.

Mrs. Watkins also selected Watkins Hall’s first housemother, Mrs. R.C. Morrow. She paid the salaries of the housemothers until her death. In addition, under formal agreement with KU, when a new housemother was needed Mrs. Watkins reserved the right to provide a list of nominees from which KU would have to select.

**Dollars and sense**

Mrs. Watkins also applied her shrewd business sense to ensure that KU would continue to serve the Watkins women who must travel up-hill. Under an agreement with KU, she maintained the right to take back the property if “at any time [it is] diverted to uses other than those





The hospital began seeing its first patients in January 1932, but was not dedicated until commencement on June 5. Mrs. Watkins told the commencement assembly that the hospital was the embodiment of her “desire to contribute to your welfare. I feel that the future success and happiness of yourselves, as well as the future prosperity of this state, depends to a considerable extent on the proper care of your health.” In 1937, to provide a nice living space for the Watkins Hospital nurses, Mrs. Watkins gave \$41,000 to construct the Watkins Nurses Home.

### Live, love, leave a legacy

On June 1, 1939, after a long illness Mrs. Watkins died of a heart attack at The Outlook. She was 78.

The pallbearers at the funeral were some of Lawrence’s most influential citizens, including Dolph Simon, publisher of the *Lawrence Journal World*, and A.B. Weaver, a department store entrepreneur. In his eulogy, Rev. Theodore Aszman said of Mrs. Watkins:

*Though the term ‘Lady Bountiful’ befitted her, it was a term that she herself would not care for. She expressed the best that was in her in the finest way she knew. She was imbued with a high sense of sacred trust that was hers to be a good steward of the wealth entrusted to her using. This stewardship she carried out thoughtfully and conscientiously without ostentation or the desire for praise.*

When Mrs. Watkins’ will was read, it revealed a windfall for KU. To that point, her gift was the largest ever given to a state university. In addition to The Outlook, she left \$250,000 to support Watkins and Miller Halls, \$175,000 for Watkins Hospital and 26,000 acres of Kansas farmland. The money generated from the land helped to build, among other things, Danforth Chapel, where more 5,000 wedding have been held; the Campanile and its chimes; and other scholarship halls. It also has been used to purchase land that doubled the size of the KU and KU Medical Center campuses.

In her will, Mrs. Watkins made gifts to a diverse range of nonprofits, including Lawrence Memorial Hospital, the First Presbyterian Church of Lawrence, the Presbyterian Tuberculosis Sanitarium in New Mexico, Father Flanagan’s Home for Homeless Boys (Boys Town) in Omaha, NE, and Bethel College in Newton. She also made bequests to more than 80 people – friends, family, employees and those she simply wished to help – to whom she provided between \$500 to \$10,000 each. For some she established trusts so they would have a yearly income. She also set aside valuable personal items – furniture, jewelry, ermine capes, artwork – for special people.

### Our Sweetheart of Lilac Lane

“Mrs. Elizabeth M. Watkins probably [has] done more to make the University of Kansas what it is now than the efforts or benefactions of any other one person,” former KU Endowment Association Director Irving Youngbird once observed. And Chancellor Ernest Lindley called her the town’s “greatest benefactress.”

But Elizabeth Miller Watkins was far more than a great philanthropist. She was and remains a great role model for and an ongoing supporter of young women. One of Elizabeth’s scrapbooks reveals the highest of standards she set for herself. Pasted into the front page is an excerpt from a Methodist hymn “My Creed.” Above that she wrote “My Creed, Also”:

*I will be true for there are those who trust me.  
I will be pure for there are those who care.  
I will be strong for there is much to suffer.  
I will be brave for there is much to dare.  
I will be a friend to all, to foe, to friendless.  
I will be giving and forget the gift.  
I will be humble, for I know*

*my weakness.*

*I will look up and love and laugh and lift.*

Daring, caring, loving, giving – they describe Elizabeth Miller Watkins perfectly. Through her generous gifts, Mrs. Watkins assisted those who were needy, encouraged those who were most promising, and cared for those who were sick all while keeping a close watch over her surrogate children from her front porch. And through her daily waves and smiles and open gates she let them know how closely she held them in her heart.

*Sources: 1989 article by Julie Mettenburg (Watkins 1987-91) on the Watkins Scholarship Hall website; 1998 article by KU graduate Judith Galas on the Lawrence History webpage; KU History Webpage, Watkins Museum of History.*



**AT TOP:** In addition to being a great businesswoman and philanthropist, Elizabeth Watkins was an avid scrapbooker, collecting articles and other inspirational materials, including “My Creed.”  
**ABOVE:** K-8 Treasurer Mary Emerson and Miller alumnae Kristina Nieldler, Keeleigh Smith, Katie Kutsco and Erin Christiansen pay their respects to “Lady Bountiful” during a tour of The Outlook.



## Alumnae Tea and anniversary cake, please 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 24

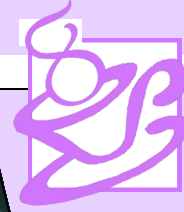
Watkins and Miller Halls will honor, treat and entertain alumnae at their annual Alumnae Teas at 2 p.m., Sunday, April 24. For Watkins Hall, the first scholarship hall in the nation and at KU, the “treat” will be a celebration of its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, complete with a special birthday cake and the entire collection of hall scrapbooks.

Miller Hall will emphasize both the tradition of alumnae and high teas. They will invite Miller alumnae to share memories as the hall ramps up for its 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2017. They also will get out their china teacups and saucers and serve tea-size sweets and savories. In keeping with tra-

dition, the Alumnae Teas and both Watkins and Miller Halls will conclude with alumnae and residents joining together in singing “My Sweetheart of Lilac Lane.”

Parking is available at the Student Union lot if spaces on and surrounding Lilac Lane are full.

After the Teas, alumnae and residents will head to Oak Hill Cemetery to place flowers on Elizabeth Miller Watkins’ grave, an annual tribute to Lady Bountiful. Oak Hill Cemetery is located at 1605 Oak Hill Avenue (East of Massachusetts Street between 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets).



### Save the Date:

*Elizabeth (Miller) and Jabez Watkins*

and

**KITCHEN**

invite you to attend the

**Miller Hall 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Gala Celebration Weekend  
Saturday, April 22, 2017**

Join us to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Miller Scholarship Hall, to present the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Elizabeth Miller Watkins Memorial Scholarships and surprise Special Events.

**Make sure you are on the invite list.  
Join Kitchen 8 at [www.kitchen8.org](http://www.kitchen8.org).**



**KITCHEN**

**The Alumnae Association  
For  
Watkins and Miller  
Scholarship Halls**

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