

THE PORTRAYAL GAP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN IN THE 60S

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The University of Southern Mississippi was first opened in 1910 as a teacher-training school, but it did not take long before it grew and became much more. The Southern Miss campus was revamped in the fifties and the school was renamed in the sixties, making the decade of the sixties a particularly exciting one for the new adults heading to college. This is reflected in the student writings of the time and the rules that were routinely updated in order to keep pace with the quickly changing times. These writings and rules portrayed men and women very differently from one another, in appearance, temperament, expectations, and personality.

Women

Women who were enrolled at the University of Southern Mississippi during the sixties lived an entirely different life than the women who are enrolled there today, but there is a surprising number of similarities with the social orders in place. Bonnie Rae Daughterty's thesis, *A study of selective factors in dating as related by sorority and non-sorority sophomore women on the University of Southern Mississippi campus*, demonstrates this by allowing women from different social orders of the same age to rank qualities in men considered important when romantically invested. Even though this study was conducted in 1970, it was close enough to the sixties that I considered it valid evidence for this article. The results from the study were different in social areas whereas they aligned more in moral categories. Daughterty found that women in sororities tended to appreciate factors such as, "...masculinity, sex appeal, has money, good dancer, popular with opposite sex, prominent in athletics, belongs to a fraternity, has access to a car, good sport, and is not sloppy in appearance (22)." In the same test, Daughterty found that women not in sororities placed more value in the factors of, "...is affectionate, does not drink alcoholic beverages, and does not smoke (31)." This is a fascinating study, and shows what outward and inward qualities women would have been comfortable expressing wanting a man to have.

MAJOR RULES AND REGULATIONS



The following actions are violations of University Regulations and may result in suspension from the University.

1. Possession, consumption, or evidence of consumption of alcoholic beverages on campus, or at any social event sponsored by an organization of the University. Evidence of intoxication is a violation of law and University regulations.

2. Presence of women guests in the residence of male students on or off campus, except for a scheduled and properly chaperoned social event. Such scheduling should be done in the office of the Director of Student Activities.

Visiting hours for women students in fraternity houses shall be determined by the Dean of Women's Office at the beginning of the school year based on the presence or absence of the fraternity housemother. Visiting hours for women at Elam Arms are 11:00 a.m. until fifteen minutes before dormitory closing hours on the campus.

3. At No time is any person other than the hostess or staff resident on duty for the hostess privileged to open an outside door once the dormitory has been closed. No student, regardless of age, classification, position, or work in the dormitory, is privileged to break this regulation.

4. Cheating, stealing, and gambling.

5. Negligent or malicious destruction of college property.

6. Repeated traffic violations.

“[FOLLOWING ACTIONS ARE VIOLATIONS OF UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS] PRESENCE OF WOMEN GUESTS IN THE RESIDENCE OF MALE STUDENTS ON OR OFF CAMPUS, EXCEPT FOR A SCHEDULED AND PROPERLY CHAPERONED SOCIAL EVENT.” -MISS SOUTHERN 1967-1968

In Miss Southern 1964-1965, the women's rulebook for that school year, it refers to male students as "men" or "males", and never boys. Yet, when referring to the very women it was written for, it uses the words, "girls" more often than it does the words "women/woman" or "female". Were this infantilizing of adults done to both genders, it could be easier dismissed, but in only demeaning grown women to "girls", a blatant difference in portrayal was created, subconsciously allotting men to be more mature than a woman within the same age group.

Photo Credits belong to Miss Southern; 1967-1968

16. TELEPHONES

A girl uses the telephone on her own floor. There is a five minute limit on all calls. The only exception to this rule applies to long distance calls, for which there is no set limit. A girl should respect the rights of her fellow students.

Photo Credits belong to Miss Southern; 1964-1965

Men

Life for males at Southern Miss in the sixties was socially much like the life males enrolled at Southern Miss live now. It was, however, a stark difference from the lives the women were living on the same campus. Men were more loosely monitored in regard to acting “properly”, and had different values impressed upon them as important to have. The Intramural Athletic Handbook for Men, published for use in the academic year 1965-1966, says that sports, “Fosters the rugged virtues of courage, determination, cooperation, and self-composure (1)” and encourages all males to participate in them. What is interesting about this is that cheerleading is never mentioned in the book, not even in the list of possible sports in the index, and yet, in the Southerner; 1961, the cheerleading team was made up of four women and two men. While it cannot be said with certainty how male cheerleading was perceived on campus in 1961 and 1965, the lack of acknowledgment is an example of the absence of recognition and acceptance of men who deviated from a lifestyle that was considered not only “normal”, but vital to a man’s livelihood.

The very absence of a Men’s guidebook is evidence in itself of the differences in how men and women were both portrayed and treated in the sixties- were men so well-behaved they didn’t require a published rule book as the women did? Likely not, but that is the overall idea this decision displays. While there were no doubt rules in the men’s dormitories, those rules presumably did not police the men’s appearance and behavior in ways specific to their sex.

Clothing...proportioned naturally

DEANSGATE
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... the blazer
Essential to every complete university man's wardrobe is the classic blazer. The proprietor's collection of Deansgate blazers includes basic navy plus camel, burgundy, and bottle green. 37.50

The Old Masters understood the fundamentals of proportion and, in applying them, gave the world art destined to live forever! These same fundamentals of proportion distinguish our Deansgate natural shoulder clothing: clean lines, elegance without distortion, taste without exaggeration. Come in and let the proprietor or one of his associates show you our collection of Deansgate suits and sport jackets in your size. You'll find

... the herringbone
Fashion picture for fall says that herringbone is right. The proprietor contends that it is always correct and should be included in your wardrobe picture. A trip onto the red carpet in our clothing room will convince you that we back up our contention with many bones among our collection of traditional jackets. 37.50

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Photo Credits belong to Student Printz 1963-1964

The “popular” stereotype was present in 1963 as heavily as it is today, and the student newspaper ads reflected it. The Student Printz 1963-1964 had clothing ads in it for both men and women, and they reflected what was important and popular at the time, which reveals several things. Interestingly, in ads that are targeted at the same age group, the women all appropriately look to be in their college years, whereas the men look as if they're in their early 30s. Although these were not unique illustrations in their time, they still barter the question of why men supposedly in their early twenties would already have age lines in the face and receding hairlines.

The time spent at the University of Southern Mississippi in the sixties looked different for men and women. This was reflected in the way they were portrayed differently: from being addressed in official rule books to illustrations depicted in clothing ads. Neither side was without its trials, and each side had its perks. Both student and faculty writing from the sixties demonstrate the different standards and expectations put upon either sex, and although inverse interpretations can always be made, there are base facts that are undeniable.

Sources

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