

September 2009

Dear Friend:

In the fall of 1950, a young Smith student composed a heartfelt letter of thanks to the alumna whose scholarship donation had made her education possible. “At first,” the student wrote, “I didn’t want to let myself hope for Smith, because a disappointment would have been hard.” But, after a few weeks of waiting, the student got word of her financial aid award. “I was being given a scholarship,” she continued, enthusiastically. “So I went around the house for days in a sort of trance and not quite believing myself when I heard my voice saying: Yes, I’m going to Smith.”

When I came across this letter, which was published anonymously in the February 1951 issue of the *Smith Alumnae Quarterly*, I was moved by how meaningful the student’s words remain. Indeed, the letter could have been written today. In it, the student describes in great detail how, in just a few short months, her life had changed in ways she could not have imagined. Her classes, her professors, her fellow students all had influenced the way she looked at the world. “Life has suddenly taken on deeper perspective and meaning,” she says.

All of this thanks to the generosity of one alumna.

Just days ago, we welcomed a new class of 685 women, chosen from the largest applicant pool in Smith’s history. I am sure that in the coming months, many of these young women will experience a similar kind of transformation as that first-year Smith student did nearly sixty years ago. Smith, after all, is a place that encourages women to break out of their comfort zones. Students come here from all over the world because they know they will be challenged and pushed to explore new ideas and consider different ways of looking at life.

As an alumna, you play an important role in ensuring that every young woman who comes to Smith gets to experience her own life-changing moment. Your financial support of The Smith Fund makes so many things possible, from maintaining our beautiful campus to developing the programs students need to succeed. Perhaps most significantly, your gifts ease the financial burden on all our students, allowing them to focus on what they came to Smith to do: study, learn, and grow. That’s why your help is so urgently needed.

The alumna who offered scholarship assistance back in 1950 understood the long-term importance of giving, and the student who benefited from her generosity was undoubtedly forever grateful. At the end of her letter, the student reflected on how that one gift had such a significant impact on her life. She wrote, “There are so many little details that are so wonderful—the lights of the houses against the night sky, the chapel bells on Sunday afternoon, the glimpse of Paradise from my

window. All this and so much more. . . . I just want you to understand that you are responsible, in a sense, for the formation of an individual, and I am fortunate enough to be that person.”

Times may have changed since the letter writer put her words to paper, but the benefits of giving remain the same. Simply, your gift matters—and makes a difference.

Please give as generously as you can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol T. Christ". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Carol T. Christ