



THE
GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

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Office of the Chairman
Department of Surgery
(202) [REDACTED]

November 22, 1983

Dr. John D. Wilson
President,
Washington & Lee University
Lexington, VA 24450

Dear Dr. Wilson:

I'm sorry I missed your recent talk in Washington, DC but my brother, Robert, gave me a synopsis of the discussion regarding admitting women to Washington and Lee University. He indicated that your view was as yet somewhat undecided and that you were soliciting views from the alumni.

My personal view was that an all male environment was beneficial for me and that I profited by restricting my womanizing to the weekends. I think, however, that I was in the minority and that given today's environment I might seek my college education at a co-educational institution.

It seems to me that one of the primary goals of Washington and Lee University should be excellence in education. Given the increased competitiveness for the superior student, I believe that the decision regarding whether to become a co-educational institution should be primarily one predicated on the analysis of whether becoming co-educational will allow you to recruit an overall superior student body to the one you are now able to recruit. If so, I would strongly support a move to a co-educational institution. The selling of this concept will undoubtedly be slow and frustrating. One piece of datum you may find helpful is to know how many students, who applied to Washington and Lee and had good to excellent admission test scores, turned Washington and Lee down because of its failure to have a large number of full-time female students. It would seem that this information could be reasonably readily attained by writing the high school seniors who you felt were acceptable candidates and asking them for their reasons why they chose another institution. This kind of data collection may be tedious, but shouldn't be too expensive and might be persuasive to a number of alumni.

I am an academician and consequently am not wealthy. I certainly would be willing, however, to substantially increase my contributions for several years if you feel the shortfall of becoming co-educational might be catastrophic in your annual giving campaign. I have heard many nice things about you and wish you all the best in your continuing efforts to improve what I regard with fond memories as a fine university. With all best wishes, 111

Sincerely yours,

Hugh H. Trout, III, M.D.

December 15, 1983

Dr. Hugh H. Trout, III
Office of the Chairman
Department of Surgery
The George Washington University Medical Center
[REDACTED]
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Dr. Trout:

Your thoughtful letter reached me at Thanksgiving time and I meant to answer at once. It turned out to be a very intense week or so, with trips to several cities to visit still further with the members of the University's alumni association. I very much enjoy these visits and profit from them, but travel takes time and tends to throw everything behind. Forgive me, at any rate, if you can.

Your view on where the consideration of the coeducation question should begin is perceptive. We must take thought first about what kind of institution Washington and Lee is and wants to be. It seems clear to me that our reputation is disproportionately earned for us by alumni who have gone through professional schools (medicine, law, business, engineering etc., etc.) to take up key roles in the learned professions and in business and industry. Our first sanction, then, is provided by the leading graduate schools who have come to respect our standards and honor the transcripts of our graduates. We must do everything we reasonably can to protect the integrity of those transcripts, that is, to protect the overall academic quality of the work offered here.

I truly believe you have that part clearly focused. Some alumni see it differently and suggest we could afford to drop our standards some to maintain our single-sex character. What I'm trying to calculate is where the cost in reputation and national standing would become too high to bear. That is a very complicated equation indeed. The faculty assume we dare not drift lower than we currently are.

I didn't mean to get quite that far into "our" subject, not at Christmas time. I meant mainly to thank you for your letter and wish you the happiest of holiday seasons. Give my fondest regards to your brother as well. I didn't think the Washington meeting went very well (it featured a ragged dialogue at the end of the meeting which went on too long) but I'm glad Robert could attend.

All the best.

Sincerely,

John D. Wilson
President

JDW/bcb