



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA





Restoration Celebration
for
Kathryn Chicone Ustler Hall

March 1, 2004

1:00 p.m.



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Ustler Hall

The Women's Gym was the first permanent structure at the University of Florida intended for campus-wide use. Originally conceived to serve as both an indoor basketball arena and an assembly hall, the gymnasium was built to reflect the needs of an expanding student body in the aftermath of World War I.

"The New Gym," as it was called, opened in 1919 after Gainesville citizens donated funds to overcome a budgetary shortfall. The excitement generated by the community effort led then UF President A.A. Murphree and the mayor of Gainesville to invite the New York Giants baseball team to use the new gym for spring training, and the team accepted. The auditorium and gym became a focal point of campus activity.

The building was designated the Women's Gym in 1948 when UF officially became coeducational. It was used for general athletic purposes until 1979 when the Women's Athletic Department moved into the Florida Gymnasium. The university received state funds to demolish the Women's Gym, but an interest in preserving original campus structures prevailed. In 1988, the Women's Gymnasium was granted protection under the National Register of Historic Places.

A generous donation from alumna Kathryn Chicone Ustler in May 2000 allowed for today's restoration celebration. The restored gym will be renamed Kathryn Chicone Ustler Hall, making it the first University of Florida academic building named solely after a woman. The 14,700 square-foot, three-level Ustler Hall will house classrooms, seminar rooms, and faculty and administrative offices for the Women's Studies program.

Once the restoration is complete, a garden will be constructed adjacent to the facility. The Catherine A. and Mary E. Yardley Garden will serve as a greenway to connect this area to the heart of the historic campus and will include a commemorative wall honoring many women associated with the university and the state.

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Program

Opening remarksJ. Bernard Machen
President

In appreciationNeil S. Sullivan
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

ResponseKathryn Chicone Ustler
1961 Alumna

Concluding remarks.....J. Bernard Machen

Kathryn Chicone Ustler

Kathryn Chicone Ustler was born in Orlando, Florida. Kay's childhood was spent in the nearby town of Winter Garden. In the 1920's, her father had settled in Winter Garden and founded the citrus and real estate business that the family still runs.

Kay graduated from Edgewater High School in Orlando and attended Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri for one year. She then transferred to the University of Florida where she was active in the Delta Gamma Sorority and earned a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1961.

Kay's father, Jerry J. Chicone, Sr., was one of 30 organizers of the Gator Boosters program in the 1950's and a trustee emeritus of the organization. The north endzone Gator Booster offices are named after him. Her brother, Jerry Chicone, Jr., graduated from UF in 1956 and is a former president of Gator Boosters.

Kay has one son, Craig, who graduated from UF in 1991 and is active in commercial real estate development, particularly in downtown Orlando. Both are involved in helping to make the Orlando community a better place to live.





