



COTTEY
Shaping your own destiny



Student Traditions

STUDENT TRADITIONS AT COTTEY

Cottey life is enriched and made more special by many traditions. They provide a bond between past and present students. Traditions at Cottey are a reflection of tradition in society—the means of passing on customs and practices from one generation to another. Cottey is unique because the “generation” of each class is only two years. Some traditions have been part of Cottey life since the early days of the College (Signing of the Cottey Book, Hanging of the Greens, Founder’s Day). Others have been in existence many years but have been modified through time (spuhs, societies, Senior/Freshman Chapel). The College organizes some traditional events every year, but most are planned and coordinated by various student organizations.

Traditions at Cottey can create wonderful memories that bind the students to the College. Traditions can give students a sense of belonging, importance, and identity. As Cottey’s seniors pass down the traditions to freshmen, special relationships form between individuals and between classes. The shared experiences contribute to developing lasting friendships.

However, it is important for each member of each class to determine the extent she wishes to participate in student traditions. Participation in student traditions is entirely voluntary.

Students should be aware that hazing and harassment are not to be a part of student traditions, on or off campus. Traditions should not include any activity or situation producing mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, intimidation, harassment, or ridicule. Students should not be coerced into participating in traditions. All students have the right to a college environment free from harassment and intimidation. Please refer to the Student Handbook for complete definitions of hazing and harassment. All traditions are under the purview of the Student Life Committee and are subject to the approval of the Student Government Association.

Baby Blue

Baby blue is the color of the sweatshirt worn by members of the Freshman Class.

Campus Work Day

A day set aside in the spring to revitalize the campus.

Capping

The seniors are “capped” on the evening before Commencement. This tradition dates to the early days of the College when each graduate selected one younger student to place the traditional mortarboard upon her head. Today, each senior selects two or three freshmen or other women who are special to her. Only women participate in Capping; faculty and administrative staff of the College do not cap students. This ceremony is held on the front steps of Main Hall, weather permitting, and all participants are dressed in traditional white.

Centennial Room

Each of the suites on campus has the opportunity to dine in the Centennial Room. A special menu is planned and student dress is semiformal. Centennial Room is the name given to the room in 1984 when it was redecorated in honor of Cottey’s centennial. Prior to 1984, the room had red carpet and dishes and was called “Red Room.”

College Colors—Yellow and White

Yellow and white were the colors chosen by the first Cottey students to represent their school. Coincidentally, the same colors were chosen by the founders of the P.E.O. Sisterhood to represent their organization.

Commencement

On Sunday morning following spring final exams, Cottey College enjoys Commencement. Graduating students in white caps and gowns and carrying daisies proceed through a chain formed by white-clad first-year students. The Commencement ceremony includes the Cottey choir, an address, granting of degrees and the Alma Mater. First-year students then pick up the daisies the second-year students carried into the building and form the traditional chain for the new graduates as they recess.

CSC

This is the logo used for the Senior Class at Cottey College. It is imprinted on sweatshirts and other passdown items. At Cottey, the second-year students are called seniors because in the early years, the College had grade school and high school programs. The students in the junior college were called juniors and seniors. In 1967, many years after the grade school and high school were closed, the juniors became freshmen.

Daisy

This flower was selected by the first Cottey students to represent their school. Coincidentally, the marguerite, which is similar to a daisy, is the flower chosen by the founders of the P.E.O. Sisterhood.

Daisy Chain

As a part of Commencement, the freshmen who are all dressed in white, form two lines that begin at the front doors of Hinkhouse Center and extends onto the sidewalks. The graduates (who are carrying daisies), faculty, and administrative staff march from the “senior sidewalks” in front of the Chapel, along Austin Street toward the Library, and then process between the “Daisy Chain” in front of Hinkhouse Center, where the ceremony is held inside. Following the ceremony, the freshmen pick up a daisy and form the “Daisy Chain,” through which senior students pass.

Dottey Cottey

Dottey Cottey originated in 1940 when Doris Kingsbury Gayzagian, Class of 1942, created the character to illustrate a typical Cottey student in the student newspaper, then called the *CoCo Comment*. Dottey grew to be a popular figure on campus and illustrated several publications. Doris and her mother designed custom-made Dottey Cottey dolls and sold them to students for several years. They also

designed felt lapel pins for students to wear while they were traveling to Cottey to make it easy to recognize each other. In the 1980s, Doris used drawings from a Dottey Cottey calendar she made in the 1950s to design note cards. The profit from the sale of the note cards was given to Cottey. Dottey was designed to represent the Cottey spirit, and students today try to recapture the character when the seniors dress up in their version of the old-fashioned Cottey ideal.

Duck

The duck is the mascot of the Senior Class.

The Duck Game

The Duck Game is an informal tradition carried out by students that is based on a rivalry between the two classes. Participation in this activity is optional, and the rules and details are clearly presented. The rivalry has its origins in the early years of the College when some seniors rescued a duck from an icy pond. The Duck Game, as with most Cottey traditions, has evolved through the years.

Duck Jackets (D.J.s)

These denim jackets, with a duck painted on the back, are worn by members of the Senior Class during certain traditions.

Emanon

Emanon is the name of the senior nightclub. At this fund-raising event, the seniors present a series of skits and songs in a nightclub style. Some acts spoof events that took place on campus during the current year, and others are acts that are passed down from one group of students to another from year to year. All are intended to be entertaining and fun.

Family Weekend

In early October, family members are invited to campus for a weekend of special activities. The first Family Weekend was held in 1984.

fcc

This is the logo for the Freshman Class at Cottey College, and it is imprinted on sweatshirts and other items.

fcc Days

This tradition honors the members of the Freshman Class with a serenade and other activities.

Formal Drawing

Held at the beginning of the fall semester, each freshman is chosen at random or by legacy to become a member of the Alphan, Delphian, Emerson, or Magnoperian Societies. See **Societies** for more information.

Founder's Day

Founder's Day is celebrated each year in late March or early April. The observance began while the College's founder, Virginia Alice Cottey, was alive. It was originally a celebration of her birthday which is March 27, 1848. Today, alumnae return to visit their alma mater, attend special events, and renew friendships.

Funeral Dinner

This event marks the official end of the Duck Game for the academic year.

Halloween

Halloween is celebrated in each of the three residence halls. Each hall has its own tradition such as a scavenger hunt or haunted house and is organized by the hall officers.

Hanging of the Greens

Inter-Society Council coordinates this weekend of activities in early December. The various student organizations decorate evergreen wreaths to adorn the campus buildings. The weekend begins with a chapel service and wreath hanging on Friday evening. The participants proceed to each building to carol and hang the greens, ending with snacks and warm drinks at the President's House. A lush buffet dinner complete with hors d'oeuvres is served Saturday evening, followed by a formal dance. The greens hang through finals.

Hawaiian Leis

Two Hawaiian leis are provided each year by P.E.O. Chapter C, Honolulu, Hawaii. They are presented at Honors and Awards Convocation on Commencement Weekend and are worn at Capping and Commencement. The First Lei Award is presented to the graduate with the highest scholastic average. The Second Lei Award is presented to the graduate considered by vote of the faculty to be outstanding in the areas of leadership, student government, and academic, social, and community affairs and who best exemplifies the spirit and ideals of Cottey College.

Meet the Suites

The residence hall officers organize "Meet the Suites" in their respective residence halls for the freshmen to meet the seniors in the various suites.

Passdowns

A passdown is any object that is passed down from year to year to be worn, displayed, or used in any fashion. Passdowns are not only pieces of living history but serve to give encouragement and faith in living the Cottey experience.

Presidents' Dinner

Late in the spring, the current class and organization presidents are recognized as the new presidents assume their leadership positions. There is a symbolic passing of a flower or other memento from the outgoing president to the incoming president.

Quad-C Week

Quad-C is an acronym for "Cottey College Community Chest." During Quad-C Week, entertaining activities are organized and sponsored by Rotaract (a campus organization affiliated with Rotary International) to raise money for selected charities. This week began at Cottey in the 1940s as W.S.S.F. Week (World Student Service Fund). From 1954 until the 1970s, it was known as W.U.S. Week (World University Service). W.S.S.F. and W.U.S. were the precursors of the United Way.

Rec Rats

The "Rec Rats" originated in the late 1960s. At that time, the only television in the residence hall was in the basement recreation room. The rec room was also the only place where students could smoke. Key cards did not exist and students had to be in the residence hall by 10 p.m. Some students spent a lot of time in the rec room and they became known as "Rec Rats." Times changed—students were allowed to come and go as they pleased, smoking was allowed in various places on campus, and the televisions were moved to the parlor. In the mid-1970s, the "Rec Rats" adopted the function of preserving some traditions. This role was maintained until 1993-94 when, because their activities involved hazing and harassment, the "Rec Rats" ceased to be recognized as a campus organization. **Organizations such as the "Rec Rats," also referred to in the 1990s as "The Family," are prohibited by Cottey policy.**

Saturday Night Suppers

Students sit with their classmates in the dining room where they sing class songs back and forth. In the 1970s and early 1980s, a Saturday Night Supper was scheduled approximately once a month. As a result of students' changing priorities, the number of Saturday Night Suppers was reduced in the mid-1980s. Saturday Night Suppers are now held only by special arrangement, usually during Founder's Weekend.

Senior/Freshman Chapel

This event is a production of skits in which one class performs for the other. Originally, these events were serious and sentimental, but in recent years, humorous skits have been added.

Senior Ring

In celebration of the “circle of friendship,” the College recognizes the seniors with a ring that is presented by Cottey’s President. Employees who are alumnae also attend this ceremony to act as witnesses and to welcome students into the circle of Cottey alumnae.

Senior Skip

Jackets, sweatshirts, ducks, and other memorabilia are passed from one class to the other on this day.

Serenades

Serenades usually occur in the evening when members of one class sings to the other class. Songs are both humorous and serious. Serenades can be a touching and sentimental experience, and strengthen the bonds among students.

Signing of the Cottey Book

During the first days on campus, all new students participate in this ceremony of honor. Signing of the Cottey Book signifies personal and academic honesty, commitment to the values of the College, and dedication to cooperation for the good of all. New students have signed the Cottey Book since 1935.

Sit-Down Dinners

Sit-down dinners are served occasionally. All the students enter the dining room together and are seated before the meal is served family style. In the early years of the College, all meals were served this way.

Societies

The four societies are Alphan, Delphian, Emerson, and Magnoperian. In the early days of the College, the societies were organized as literary groups whose members read and discussed great works of literature. Later, the societies were used as a way to divide teams for intramural sports. Today the Inter-Society Council, made up of representatives of each society, coordinates campus events such as Signing of the Cottey Book, Formal Drawing, and Hanging of the Greens. Each society also participates in a volunteer service project and its own fund-raising and recognition activities.

SPUH (S.P.)

This term is used for secret pal. Within the residence halls, each senior draws a freshman student’s name at random. The senior begins leaving friendly and encouraging notes for the freshman. Each set of secret pals selects names that they will use to identify themselves, i.e. Peanut Butter and Jelly or Gumby and Pokey. The senior decides at which point in the year she will reveal her identity. Some freshmen select a senior as a “reverse spuh,” and the process is reversed. This tradition grew out of the Big Sister/Little Sister tradition of the 1940-50s.

Step Sing

This is the introduction of Senior Class songs and the duck as the senior mascot to the Freshman Class by the Senior Class. Step Sing is the first time freshmen see the seniors in their duck jackets.

Suite Chairs

Suite chairs are students elected to be the leaders and spokespersons of individual suites. They may be either first- or second-year students, but are usually second-year students. They receive formal training for their responsibilities and meet regularly with the director of housing.

Suite Feed

Suite feeds are usually held on Sunday evenings in the suites. The students plan and prepare their own meal, spend time together, and discuss group concerns. Suite feeds are held with varying degrees of regularity, depending on the wishes of the students in each suite.

Susprise

Susprise is a Christmas tradition that is planned by the seniors for the freshmen.

Tearing of the Square

This is a Christmas tradition for which students gather in the parlor of their respective residence halls each evening from early December until finals are over to count down the days until winter break.

Vera

Vera is the “ghost of Rosemary Hall.” Vera Alice Neitzert was a high school senior at Cottey when she died on May 17, 1920. Vera was one of several students participating in a forbidden chafing dish party, making candy in a suite sitting room in Main Hall, and her nightclothes caught fire. The burns she suffered were fatal. In the 1970s, the legend of Vera the ghost took hold when students were in Rosemary Hall late at night studying and practicing the piano. It is interesting to note that Vera did not die on campus, but in the American Sanitarium in Nevada, and the fire was in Main Hall, not Rosemary Hall. Rosemary Hall was razed in 1990 following the opening of the Haidee and Allen Wild Center for the Arts.

Yellow and White Dinner

On the Friday night of Commencement Weekend, seniors are honored by the freshmen during this dinner. Parents of the graduates are invited to attend.

Zeran Award

The Margaret Fritchler Zeran Award is presented annually to the graduate judged by the vote of the faculty to approach most nearly an ideal of intellect and spirituality and to have exerted the most wholesome influence on her peers. The award recipient is presented a medal on a ribbon at Honors and Awards Convocation to wear on her robe at Capping and Commencement.

Published by the Office of Student Life, July 2009