

MAROON AND GOLD

Dedicated to the best interests of Elon College and its students and faculty, the Maroon and Gold is published weekly during the college year with the exception of holiday and examination periods at Elon College, N.C. (Zip Code 27244), publication being in cooperation with the journalism department.

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PLAYER GROUP WILL MAKE TOUR

(Continued from page 1)

This Theatre Arts Seminar, which began on January 14th, has featured special study of Moliere himself, of "Tartuffe" and of the theatre today, along with the casting of the play, building of the stage sets, making of costumes and gathering props.

These technical aspects of the "Tartuffe" production will be presented to the high school students in each school, for the Elon Player group will arrive at each school by mid-morning and will conduct a seminar from 10 until 11:30 o'clock each morning, with each seminar featuring acting, direction and stage technical work. This will be followed by lunch period from 11:30 until 12:30, followed in turn by the

performance of the play from 12:30 until 2:30 o'clock.

The entire "Mini-Term" seminar project taken for one course credit, attracted a group of fifteen students. The class roll listed Glenda Condon, McLean, Va.; Jack Cotton, Fuquay-Varina; Tom Edwards, Washington, D.C.; Jim Gillespie, Taftville, Conn.; Dale Kaufman, Charlotte; Sam Roberson, Burlington;

Larry Sage, Lisbon, Conn.; Paula Schmidt, North Caldwell, N.J.; David Scudder, Eclipse, Va.; Bill Shaver, Charlotte; John Swain, Fairfax, Va.; Janet Sylvester, Virginia Beach, Va.; Donna Thomas, Mebane; Jay Wilkinson, Massapequa, N. Y.; and Dyce Wylie, Mount Holly, N.J.

Wilkinson Student Leader For Two Drama Groups

Jay Wilkinson, Elon senior from Massapequa, N.Y., holds the double presidency of both the Elon Players and the Alpha Psi Omega, which is the honorary dramatic fraternity on the Elon campus, so he is truly the student leader of the Elon dramatic activities.

The Alpha Psi Omega chapter on the Elon campus, which is part of a national honorary dramatics organization, offers membership as a special honor for those who play outstanding roles in the Elon College stage plays, whether those outstanding roles be on the stage or behind the scenes. The Elon

chapter was founded more than twenty-five years ago.

In addition to Jay Wilkinson as president, other officers of Alpha Psi Omega are Jeff Taylor, of Bloomingdale, N. J., as vice-president; and Kathy Copeland, of Norfolk, Va., secretary - treasurer.

Other active members this year are Sam Roberson, of Burlington; Denny Kopik, of Edison, N.J.; and Nancy Boone, of Orefield, Pa.

The Elon Player group is somewhat larger than is the Alpha Psi Omega, and other officers of the Player group this year in addition to President Wilkinson are Sam Roberson, of Burlington, vice-president; Sherri Wylie, of Mount Holly, N.J., secretary; and Larry Sage, of Lisbon, Conn., historian.

CHAPTER ONE

This is the first chapter of a history of the Elon dramatic activities and the Elon Players, dating back for more than fifty years and prepared on the basis of research by a former Maroon and Gold editor. This chapter is part of this special "Elon Player Edition" and will be followed by later chapters to bring the story to the present time.



JAY WILKINSON
Double President

Story Of Dramatics At Elon Began Over Fifty Years Ago

Love of make-believe and of plays and acting has been a human characteristic since ancient times, and that love of plays and things dramatic made its appearance very early on the Elon College campus, although dramatics at Elon in early days was sometimes carried out under the archaic name of "Expression" and not "Dramatics."

As early as 1913 the Elon faculty listed Miss Ethel Clements "Director of Physical Culture and Expression," and she had ten students in her expression class. Two years later Miss Bessie Urquhart held the same position, and she formed a Dramatic Club that had thirty-three members. One of those members was Mrs. Oma Johnson, long-time Elon College librarian, who is now retired.

There is no record of that club presenting plays, but there were three literary societies on the Elon campus in those early years, and those societies gave the first plays on the campus. The Philologian Society presented "She Stoops To Conquer," the Psiphelian presented "The Princess," and the Clio Society gave "Nathan Hale" in 1920.

The next recorded plays were given in 1922-23, again by the literary societies, including performances entitled "Betty's Last Bet," given by Psiphelian; "Over Here," a drama of American patriotism, by Clio; and "Driftwood," given by Philologian.

A new literary group, called Psykalean, was formed in 1924 and presented "Am I Intruding" that year. During the same year the Psiphelians gave "The Lady of the Library," the Clios presented "The Hut," and the Philologians presented a variety show, which was probably Elon's first attempt at musical plays.

In 1925 the plays offerings included "The Charm School," by the Psykaleans; "Come Out of the Kitchen," by Psiphelian; "A Regular Scream," by Clio; and "Dulcy," by the Philologians. It is interesting that William B. Terrell, recently retired as Elon's alumni secretary, was in the cast of the "Dulcy" performance.

The season of 1925-26 brought four new plays, all by the literary groups. The Philologians gave "A Marriage of Convenience," the Psykaleans presented "The Whole Town Talking," the Clios gave "The Dust of the Earth," and the Psiphelians gave "The New Poor" to close the stage season in April that year.

During the 1926-27 term the four literary societies gave programs, but they were apparently no plays, and the Maroon

WHEN PLAYERS OFFERED 'MEDEA'



Pictures are lacking for the earliest productions of the Elon Players and other campus dramatic groups, but the above picture recalls one of the greatest and finest of all the Elon Players shows, the production of the great Greek tragedy of "Medea," presented in the early 1950's under the direction of Mrs. Elizabeth R. Smith, who was faculty director of campus dramatic activities for ten years in the 1940's and 1950's. The picture shows Mrs. Smith herself, who had the title role of Medea in addition to directing the show. Several of the finest student actors in Elon stage annals had roles in the presentation of "Medea."

and Gold that year reveals that Miss Emily Johnston was head of the Department of Dramatic Expression at that time, with the only plays given during a two year period being "The Patsy" and "Second Childhood," with large crowds witnessing both performances. These plays were apparently given in Whitley Auditorium.

Records are scarce for the years of 1929, 1930, 1931 and 1932, only record of any play being of the presentation of "The Boomerang" by the Expression Department on March 1, 1929. It would seem that the Thespian spirit was at a low ebb during those years.

A newly organized dramatic club, called the Playmakers of Elon College appeared in 1932 and presented "You And I" in December under direction of Miss Virginia Fitzhugh. Other shows that year included three one-act plays, "The Delicate Child," "Lima Beans" and "The Return of Buck Gavin." Also given was a longer play entitled "Polly With A Past."

The Playmakers did not remain active, and in the fall of 1934 the Maroon

and Gold told of the reorganization of the dramatic club, with the name being changed to the Elon Players. That was the beginning in September of 1934 of the student group that is still active in dramatics on the Elon campus today.

The first officers of the Elon Players back in 1934 were headed by Rebecca Smith, daughter of Dr. L. E. Smith, at that time president of the college. She was president of the Players, with Dick Kimball, of Manson, vice-president; and Marcell Ackenhausen, of Cincinnati, Ohio, secretary. Miss Floyd Childs was faculty director.

The first play ever given by the Elon Players was "Her Husband's Wife," given in Whitley on November 22, 1934, and the next program featured three one-act plays on March 31, 1935. They were "Susan," Christopher Morley's "Thursday Evening" and "The Valiant," the great one-act tragedy by Hall and Middlemass. The Players also gave a commencement play in 1934, presenting Sidney Howard's "The Late Christopher Bean." (Continued on page 3)