

With permission from the author, transcribed from a handwritten letter home from Marilyn Jean Stuart (Sullins), class of 1955.

Room 28-A
Chaudoin Hall
October 6, 1951

Dear Mother,

Well, "Rat Week" is over and we are alive and kicking. It was really lots of fun. I'll tell you what we had day by day so you can get a big laugh.

Monday

1. We had to wear rat caps at all times.
2. We could wear no makeup at anytime. (Boy, did we all look great!)
3. We could not speak to any boys under any circumstances.
4. We had to collect the autographs of 15 football players.
5. Had to obey all upper classmen upon request.
6. We had to "button" to upperclassmen upon request. How to button: say --- "I place my index finger upon my button (on rat cap) with my little finger pointed upward. I turn around three times to the right and curtsey to my most Benevolent Upperclassmen." (Spell Benevolent Upperclassmen.) Execute actions while reciting.

Tuesday

1. We had to collect autographs of 10 senior boys & 10 senior girls.
2. We had to carry matches around with us in order to light our most kind upperclassmen's cigarettes.
3. We had to wear our raincoats and wear bathing caps to classes and carry a glass of water with us. Every time an upperclassmen said, "Let's see it rain," we had to pour the water over our heads.

Wednesday

1. We had to collect autographs of 10 junior girls and 10 junior boys.
2. Had to collect a bouquet of 50 sandspurs and put our name on them.
3. Had to carry chewing gum for all the football players.
4. If an upperclassman saw us doing anything wrong, they had permission to put an X on our foreheads. (I was good!)
5. We had to wear our skirts inside out & upside down and our blouses inside out and backward. We had to wear high heels and socks. (We sure looked funny.)

Thursday

1. Collect autographs of 20 sophomore girls and 20 sophomore boys.
2. Had to wear our rat caps backwards and 1 inch above eyebrow.
3. We couldn't wear any makeup of any kind.
4. We had to wear sheets to class (with dresses underneath) and carry our books in a pillowcase. We had to hang a sign around our necks saying, "I am a lowly rat."

Friday

Friday morning at 6 A.M. we had "Rat Court." We got up at 5:30 and put our dungarees on. Then we lined up in back of the dormitory. About 10 upperclassmen were waiting for us in black dresses and black masks. Since everyone looked sleepy they made us take some exercises. We couldn't laugh or smile, but had to look real solemn. Then we had to march slowly over to where we were going to have "Rat Court" and as we marched we had to keep repeating, "I am a lowly rat. I'm a lowly rat." When we got to the outside of the building we had to get down on our hands & knees and crawl in still saying "I am a lowly rat." When we were in we had to keep our heads bowed the whole time and be solemn faced.

Rat Court wasn't so bad. We didn't have to do too much. Since everybody was such good sports about "Rat Week" we didn't have to do anything on Friday except obey upperclassmen. Well, I was happy it was over, but when I went to lunch at the Commons I found out it wasn't. Barbara Harris (another freshman) and I walked into the big lounge in front of the Commons (where we eat) and there were three football players sitting there. As we walked by them they said, "Hey rats, come here." Since we had to obey all upperclassmen we did. They said, "O.K., you two rats, stand up on this table (which was in front of them) and sing the school song 'Here Comes Our Team in Green and White'." We got halfway through the song and we started laughing and couldn't sing so they made us sing it all over again.

After we finished singing we got off the table and started for the dining room. But one of them said, "Rat Stuart, come back here and stand on that table again and recite any poem you want to." So I stood on the table and recited "Mary Had a Little Lamb." (That was the first thing that popped into my head.) I felt so silly standing on the table. Then I ate.

Well, that's the end of rat week, except that we have to wear our rat caps. If Stetson wins the Tampa game Oct. 20, we can take our rat hats off for good. If they don't we have to wear them until Thanksgiving. I don't know if I told you or not but we can't come home Thanksgiving. We just get Thursday off and we have to go to school Friday and Saturday.

Ok, I found out that the game Oct. 20 here is in the evening at 8 pm. The game at Tallahassee is in the afternoon at 2 pm.

The garage looks so nice. Thanks for the pictures.

We are doing a lot of marching and it's pretty hot, but it doesn't bother me.

Peggy has taken some flash bulb pictures and when we get them developed I will send you some.

I got a letter from Gail the other day and she told me about the cake she tried to bake. It didn't rise and it was as hard as a rock.

I hope Millie can come here next year. It's so nice here. The other night while Peggy was asleep, Nancy and I took all of Peggy's shoes out of her closet and hid them in Ginger's suitcase. The next morning she hunted all over for them and finally found them. That afternoon while Nancy and I weren't there, Peggy changed my clothes to

Nancy's closet and Nancy's clothes to my closet. What a shock when I walked into my closet and didn't see any clothes of mine. We changed them back two days later.

Just so you can picture our rooms, I'll draw you a diagram. [Diagram] How do you like our rooms? The other day I got a nice lamp for my desk. Now I can see when I'm studying.

Tell Sam and the other guys "Hi" for me. Send some more pictures of baby Sherry.

Love, Marilyn