



NAME OF BUILDING: Vera Hackman Apartments

DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION: 2000

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: Historicism/Revivalism: Neo-Eclectic/New Classical

ARCHITECT:

CONTRACTOR:

PURPOSE(S)/USE(S): Apartment style residence hall

PERSON(S) FOR WHOM THE BUILDING IS NAMED: Vera R. Hackman (1903 - 2000)

BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE: Vera Hackman was an extraordinary woman who played a significant role in the development of Elizabethtown College. Hackman was born in 1903 and attended the College and graduated in 1925. She then continued onto Columbia for a master's degree in 1936. She began her career as an educator in Pennsylvania public schools. She also spent some time in the Kentucky school system, where she learned pedagogical fundamentals. In 1944, she returned to Elizabethtown College, but this time as a faculty member, no longer a student. Upon returning, she became the first dean of women for the College and was a professor of History. She retired as dean in 1968, but continued teaching until 1973. For these last five years, however, she was a professor of English, no longer History. She taught the first journalism course at the College and served as the English department Chairwoman. Apart from academics, she also strongly influenced the development of the Honors Program on campus. Hackman began the College's honors housing program, which allowed honors students to co-habitat and rely on each other for support in their accelerated academics. This addition to the operations of Elizabethtown have persisted to this day.

In addition to academic improvements she made to the College, Vera Hackman also took it upon herself to significantly improve the social activities on campus. Hackman served as an advisor of Sock and Buskin, a comedic drama team on campus. This group operated for students who wanted to pursue fun, non-academic activities. Furthermore, she served as an adviser to *The Etownian*, the College's newspaper. This club was a great outlet for English majors who wanted to practice and hone their journalism skills before pursuing it as a career. The other advantage to advising the newspaper was that other, non-English majors were allowed to submit to the paper as well; therefore, Hackman got to know many students both in her discipline and outside the English field. Lastly, she advised the Women's Honor Society on campus. Because of her continued focus on encouraging participation from

women, Hackman was deemed, “a woman ‘ahead of her time’ in realizing women’s increasing role in society.” Another social activity that Hackman could take complete credit for introducing was dancing on campus. She was a huge proponent of incorporating school dances at Elizabethtown College, which was slightly controversial because many Brethren Church members disapproved of dancing. Vera Hackman did not allow this conflict in ideology prevent her from making additions she deemed important for the social life on campus.

Hackman’s career came to an end in 1973 when she retired from the College; however, from all her time and service at the College, she accumulated many awards, some occurring while she was still teaching. For example, in 1961, “the Conestogan,” the school yearbook, was dedicated to her in recognition of her influence on the students at Elizabethtown. Then, in 1968, she was named dean of women emerita. Her recognition continued in 1978, when she was awarded an honorary doctor of humane letters degree from Elizabethtown College. The College also honored Hackman with the Educate for Service to Humanity Award in 1983. Furthermore, because of her pursuits to teach immigrants English, she received the Jefferson Award in 1984. On February 2, 2000, Hackman was one of thirteen individuals to be awarded the Centennial Medal from the College. The final honor the College bestowed upon her was in the Fall of 2000, right after her passing. The College decided to dedicate the new apartment buildings to Vera Hackman, as a memento to her service and contributions to the College. Vera Hackman will never be forgotten, “she was, in a sense a Renaissance woman, a great lady, a grand dame.”