Penn Women Who Influenced Our Lives
A of A members answer the question: “What Penn woman stands out in your memory for the positive influence she had on you?”

Dr. Jean S. Straub, GrEd’57
By Deborah H. Wolff, CW'62, GED'66

Jean Straub was an Assistant Professor and Personnel Officer in the School of Education and I was chairman of the Student Advisory Board in my freshman year and worked very closely with her. She was so enthusiastic and supportive and helpful and made Eisenlohr Hall seem like a warm, welcoming place. Another person who positively impacted my years at Penn was Edwina (alas, cannot recall her last name.) I don’t know what her title was, but she was always helping us with student government projects, newspaper projects and she was responsible for setting up receptions and parties during my four years wheeling and dealing on the fourth floor of Bennett Hall. She even helped me cater parties at my house after she retired from Penn.

Dr. Emma Dillon
By Stephanie S. Yee, C’08
Emma Dillon, Professor of Music, stands out in my mind as one of the most influential Penn women in my life, and she is also my favorite professor at Penn. I took Professor Dillon's Music 030 (now Music 033) “History of Opera” course during the spring semester of my junior year at Penn. This course was my favorite course during my undergraduate years. Professor Dillon made opera history applicable to our lives in the 21st century by using modern technology examples (online blogs, quality audio, and video recordings) and by taking us to see a live performance of "Porgy and Bess" at the Philadelphia Opera Company. Professor Dillon encouraged us to understand opera in both the past and the present, and she was enthusiastic about every topic and the culture of opera. I knew very little about opera before taking the course, and now I love it!

During my senior year, I learned that Professor Dillon was teaching Music 021 “Introduction to Music History.” I immediately enrolled in the course, and I was excited to complete my Music minor with a course taught by my favorite professor.

I became great friends with one of my classmates in the opera course. She and I have stayed close after graduation, and we rarely miss an opera at the Philadelphia Opera Company. We often reminisce about how much we loved Professor Dillon’s course. Years later, we continue to use the many skills Professor Dillon taught us – most importantly, how to “swoop in” to better seats during Intermission.

Suzanne Lyons, SPP’05
By Patrice R. Green, C’05, G’08
Suzanne Lyons was a Graduate Assistant in Du Bois College House from 2003-2005. She did everything from helping review my Spanish essays to providing life advice. To this day she is one of my closest friends and more like a big sister who has been instrumental in getting me over some hills both at Penn and beyond. Thanks Suz!!!!!!!

**Peg Wettlin, Ed’28**  
By Didi Owens, CW’63

Her name was Peg Wettlin. I met her at a Tri Delta meeting probably more than 20 years ago. She was close to 90 then and very lively for her age. She had just written a book called *Fifty Russian Winters: An American Woman’s Life in the Soviet Union* and was so thrilled about it. I asked her to tell me about her story, and she responded with the cutest twinkle in her eyes, "You'll just have to read my book!" Needless to say, I rushed right out to buy it and read it. What an incredible story and an amazing life she led when she went to Russia in 1932 to "find out what all the fuss was about" in Russia at that time. Times in Russia were tumultuous in those days. The experiences she had during the nearly 50 years living there were sometimes enlightening, sometimes frightening, but always an adventure. I would recommend that anyone read her book for a great story.

At any rate, we became good friends after that, and Peg came to our A of A meetings. One of the best lessons I learned from her was from a story she told me about having gone to a gathering. She said she was there for awhile, then left. I asked her why she left the party. She answered, "Because nobody TALKED to me!" All I could think was... WOW! There's a lesson to not be forgotten. Everyone has a story to tell if we only ask. The world is so small and there are so many opportunities to connect with others. Let's let each other tell our stories!

**Betty Costanza**  
By Nicole C. Maloy, W’95
Betty not only served as Head Coach of Penn Varsity Women’s Track & Field, but also established the program. She was a living connection to those who had cleared the path in women’s athletics, both as an athlete herself (she competed in the Olympic Trials in the Pentathlon), and as a coach. Our sports often do not get the respect they deserve, but Betty had a presence that could not be ignored. She fought hard so that I could float in during the early ‘90s and enjoy the benefits that she and others over the years had made possible for me as a female athlete. This woman is legendary in Ivy sports, and to train under her leadership was an honor. She quite literally led me to greater heights. Don’t get me wrong. I can still hear her yelling at me – LOUDLY, with her very distinctive, yes-I'm-from-New-York accent – during practice to correct any and all kinds of issues with my form. But, just as clearly, I can still see her leaping with the purest joy to celebrate the moment when she saw me break both my personal record, and the school record, in the high jump. One day that record will fall, but I will always carry with me the lesson that we are often capable of more than we think we are, and that sometimes others can see in us more than we can see in ourselves. Thanks, Betty.

Rosemary D. Mazzatenta, ED'53, GED'56
By Mae Pasquariello, CW'53, GRD'85

There is only one person and one person only that is completely responsible for where I am. Rosemary D. Mazzatenta called me when our 25th reunion was taking place and insisted that I become a vital and genuine participant in everything that had to do with my class and my Alma Mater. I was the Newsletter Editor for the next 35 years and Class Co-President for the last 10 years. I am also a lifetime member of the Association of Alumnae. Receiving that phone call from Rosemary changed my life.