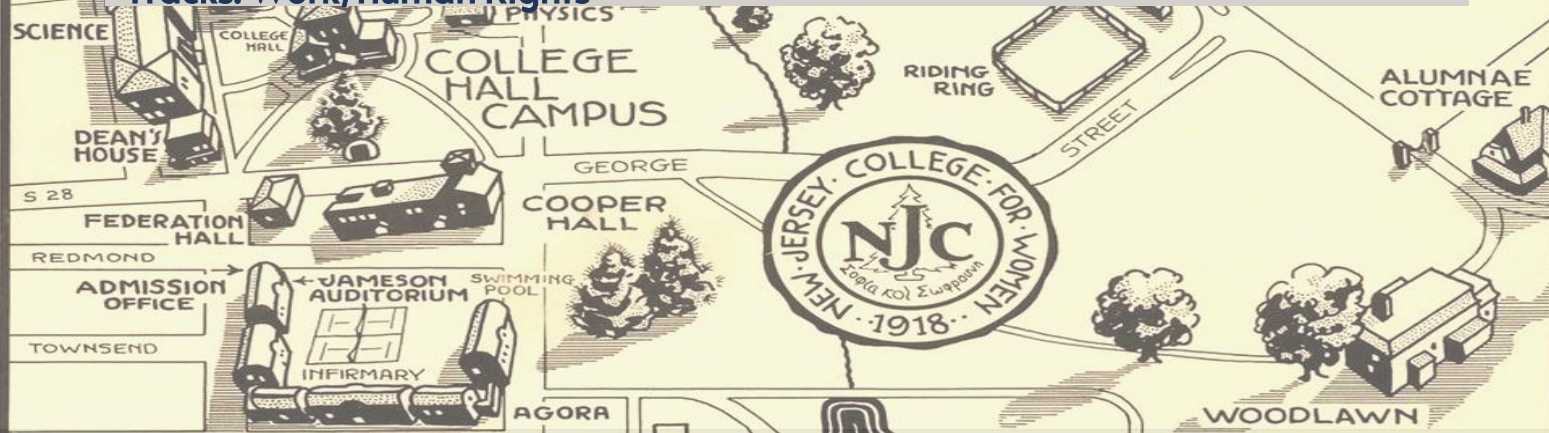


Walking Through Herstory: A Douglass Signage Project

Meredith Simms

Tracks: Work/Human Rights

Policy



Mission Statement



The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to practice leadership through action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women's Leadership's website at <http://iwl.rutgers.edu>.



Goal Statement

My signage project aims to inform Rutgers students, Douglass students, and visitors about the founding history of Douglass College (New Jersey College for Women). Even after 100 years, many people are unaware that Douglass was New Jersey's first women's college or that it still exists today. This project aims to create an informative -interactive historical sign- in front of College Hall for individuals to learn about this important history.



My Personal Interest

- ❖ I grew up learning about women's history, specifically the first wave of feminism
- ❖ Joining Douglass gave me a new women's history to learn about
- ❖ Since learning the history, my connection to the community has grown

Me at the
Equal Rights
Amendment
Convention in
Seneca Falls.
July 2023.



Me at
GirlBlazers
summer
program.
2014.



Intellectual Foundations

Place attachment is the emotional bond between person and place, and one way of describing the relationship between people and spatial setting

- ❖ Studies show that learning local history increases civic participation and strengthens place attachment

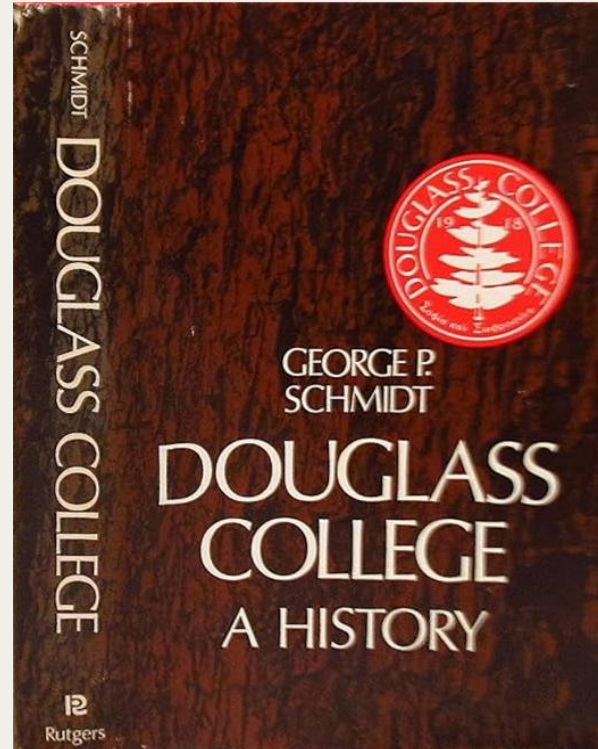
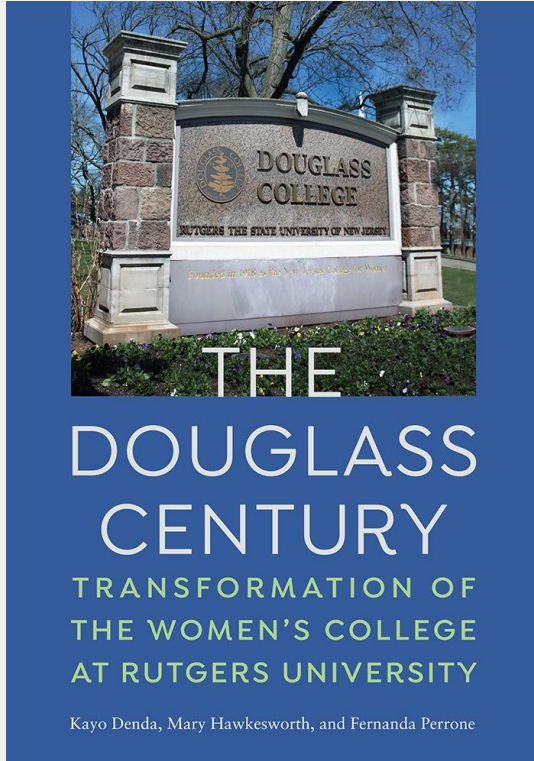
Manzo and Perkins (2006)

A sense of community = an emotional connection grounded in shared history, interests, and concerns

Stefaniak et al. (2017)

Taught youth about the local history of their towns and after gaining this knowledge, the youth expressed stronger emotional connections to their communities

Intellectual Foundations



Timeline

**Spring
2025**



Plan SAP;
Meet with AADC;
Attend March
Conference

**Summer
2025**



Read books
on Douglass
and outline
plaque

**September
& October**



Organize
Douglass history
into easy-to-read
notes for tours

**November &
December**



Create plaque;
search for
funding;
network with
Alumnae

Preliminary Future Timeline

December



Submit plaque to the University Plaques, Monuments, Major Markers and Artwork Committee

Jan/Feb



Continue funding initiatives;
Work with committee to edit plaque and find org to make it

**March
or end of year**



Add plaque to Douglass campus

Finding Historical Information

I took multiple trips to the Rutgers archives in Alexander Library to find historical images and gain context to the history I was reading



Rutgers Archives. Sacred Path Ceremony. n.d.



Rutgers Archives. Yule Log Ceremony. n.d.



Rutgers
Archives.
Aerial View
of NJC. 1923.

New Jersey College For Women
New Brunswick, N. J.



Rutgers Archives.
Students in
Snowfight. n.d.

Sharing Historical Knowledge

I worked to create a historical information guide for the Red Pine Ambassadors and interested parties in doing a historical tour - including Eagleton Institute



Shared a presentation with the Red Pine Ambassadors and the Douglass Student Recruitment Network on the history of Douglass

Creating the Sign

What I Want to Share

The Campaign
People who helped
The first four years
Class of 1922
Present Day

Took trips to the
archive to find
images

Finding Images



3-30-3 Rule

3 seconds
30 seconds
3 minutes

Taking the books &
pages of information I
had and minimizing it
to a few sentences

Simplifying Information

Important Content in My Signage



Before NJC - women had no access to secondary education in NJ


The campaign - Started by New Jersey Federation of Women's Clubs and completed by Mabel Smith Douglass

Key figures - James Neilson, John Carpenter, Leonor Loree, Mabel Smith Douglass

The first four years - the curriculum

The first class of 1922 - their creation of clubs, motto, emblem, and school color

Present Day - explain how Douglass now functions as a residential college



Fundraising

GOAL

\$3,500



NETWORKING

Attending alumnae events
Emailing alumnae
Working with AADC



PERSISTENCE

When grants weren't available and individuals never responded I had to keep pushing forward

Feminist Leadership

- ❖ Douglass history is inherently feminist
- ❖ The school allowed women gain an education to be leaders
- ❖ Douglass is part of the reason IWL exists today



Rutgers Archives. Passion Puddle. n.d.

Intended Impact

- ❖ Inform students and visitors about Douglass's history and current presence
- ❖ Encourage Douglass students to connect more with the community
- ❖ Assert the importance of Douglass in the past, current, and future

Rutgers
Archives.
Jameson
Complex.
n.d.



Rutgers
Archives.
Student
Welcome
Day. n.d.



Acknowledgements

Thank you to all who have supported me so far and in the future with this project!

- IWL - Sasha Taner, Karla Brewer-Jackson, and my lovely cohort
- Dean Meghan Rehbein
- Kayo Denda
- Mary Hawkesworth, Fernanda Perrone, George P. Schmidt
- Associate Alumnae of Douglass College
- The memorability committee of AADC
- The Rutgers Archives



Rutgers Archives. College Hall Postcard. n.d.



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Thank you!!

