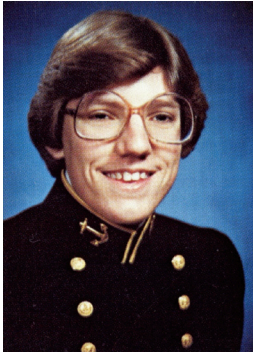


*The Class of 1980 was comprised of resourceful and determined women seeking to serve their nation. Here are some of their stories about getting to Annapolis.*

**CAPTAIN BARB GERAGHTY '80, USN (RET.)**



I'd been thinking about the military for its structure and discipline and my father was urging me to go to college. After a visit to the Air Force Academy on a family vacation, I ordered the Naval Academy catalog and applied for admission through Minnesota Senator Humbert H. Humphrey.

Senator Humphrey sent me a letter on 10 March 1975, thanking me for wanting to serve my country, but included a note from the Academy

that read as follows:

*At the present time women cannot legally be admitted to the Naval Academy. The curriculum at Annapolis includes considerable training for combat service at sea and ashore and rigorous physical requirements which are, at this time, unnecessary or inappropriate for women officers. Therefore, participation by ladies in the curriculum would be wasteful to them and to the government, particularly in view of Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 6015, which states: 'Women may not be assigned to duty in aircraft that are engaged in combat missions, nor may they be assigned to duty on vessels of the Navy other than hospital ships or transports.' This constraint has been in effect since the earliest provisions pertaining to women in the naval service.*



Andre Deladrier, associate professor, worked with Midn. Geraghty and another female midshipman during fencing class.

CAPT Barb Geraghty '80, USN (Ret.), was told her gender was the only thing preventing her from a congressional nomination prior to the October 1975 law change allowing women at service academies. She was prepared to go to college through the ROTC program if the law had remained unchanged.

I had no idea at the time my gender would hold me back from something I aspired to do—my parents raised their three daughters and two sons as equals. I shrugged it off and applied for ROTC instead.

My dad followed the progress of efforts to amend the Defense Appropriations Bill to allow women to attend the service academies. In May 1975, my congressman, Representative Thomas Hagedorn, voted against such an amendment, but in favor of a separate amendment to “study the feasibility of establishing a separate academy to train women for careers in the armed forces.”

I was still interested, so I resubmitted my application to Senators Humphrey and Walter Mondale, and to Congressman Hagedorn. I was accepted under the congressman's nomination. He came to my high school shortly thereafter and I introduced myself to him and thanked him for nominating me. He responded that he did not believe women should be at the service academies, but he nominated me because I was one of his most qualified candidates. It was my first significant leadership lesson—leaders follow the law and orders even if they do not personally agree.

**KATHY (SLEVIN) CLORE '80**



I applied to the Naval Academy at the end of my junior year in high school in the summer of 1975. I had a friend that was recently accepted to the Naval Academy with the Class of 1979, and looking through the catalog he shared with me, I thought I'd like to be part of the Academy.

My motivation for applying was to go to an elite school in the East on a scholarship so my parents would not have to pay for my education.

USNA fit the bill. Plus, this was at the time of the U.S./U.S.S.R. Apollo-Soyuz space program, and I had interest in studying Russian and possibly entering the space program (I did neither).

So, I applied. Never did I ever think I wouldn't be able to serve my country or attend a military academy because I was a woman. I was not brought up and never encountered anything in my 17 years that I could not do because of my gender. The day I got my rejection letter was a shock because the only reason was because of a law that discriminated based on gender.

The letter did say they anticipated that the law allowing women into the academies would soon change, so they would keep my application on file. By this time, I had made up my mind that I wanted to go to the Academy, so when the law changed and I got notification that it did, I finished my application.

I tell people that I was a reluctant (maybe ignorant is a better word) pioneer. If I had known fully what I was going to face I probably would not have applied. I guess sometimes ignorance is a good thing. I ended up serving in the Navy for 20 years. ⚓

PHOTO COURTESY OF CAPT BARB GERAGHTY '80, USN (RET.)