



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHY (SLEVIN) CLORE '80

Kathy (Slevin) Clore '80 (fifth from the right) with fellow plebes on I-Day 1976. In high school, she aspired to earn a scholarship to attend an elite East Coast college. When the 1975 law to allow women at service academies was signed, she set her sights on the Naval Academy.

BETH LEADBETTER GORDON '80



I was a senior at John Marshall High School on 7 October 1975. My guidance counselor told me service academies were now open to women. She was quite fond of the Naval Academy, and said, 'I think you should apply. If anyone can make it through, it's you.'

I was all set to attend West Virginia University the following year and room with a friend from my hometown, until this new and exciting

opportunity became available to me. After seeing my parents excitement at the possibility of me attending the Academy, I decided to apply and make a decision later, if I was accepted.

The application process was lengthy, requiring page after page of detailed information. Sensing my frustration, my dad sat with me at the kitchen table while I completed the application. After mailing it back to the Academy, we waited for several weeks for news.

In the spring of 1976, I was practicing tennis with the varsity tennis team. I saw my mom driving toward the courts waving an envelope outside of the window. It was a letter addressed to me. It was a letter of acceptance to the Naval Academy!

CAPTAIN BARBETTE HENRY LOWNDES '80, USN (RET.)



I applied to the Coast Guard Academy because: (1) I received their catalog first, and (2) I saw they were going to allow women on ships, but didn't see that women would be able to go on ships in the Navy. My father encouraged me to apply to the Naval Academy even though women would not be able to go on ships.

My school counselor was not familiar with applications for the service academies, but helped me

collect the basic information to apply. My mom's boss in the office management of a local retail chain was a Naval Academy graduate. When he heard I was applying to Navy, he brought our family in, showed us pictures, gave us brochures, etc.

He always watched over me while at school and after graduation. He even attended my retirement ceremony. I never knew, until I attended his funeral, that he was a Blue and Gold Officer.

I was able to apply for a presidential nomination since my father was active-duty Navy at the time. In May, I received a telegram from my congressman telling me I had been accepted and offering me an appointment. ⚓