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Nelly Don: An Educational Leader

by

Lisa S. Thompson

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Nelly Don: An Educational Leader

by

Lisa S. Thompson

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Education
at Lindenwood University by the School of Education



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4/27/18

Date



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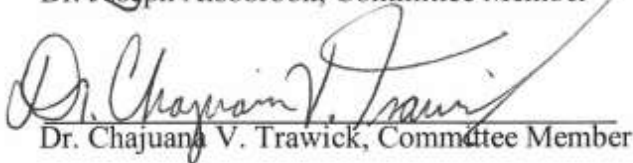
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4/27/18

Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Lisa Sonya Thompson

Signature:  _____ Date: 4/27/18

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Abstract

In 1916, Ellen Quinlan Donnelly aka Nelly Don started a fashion empire from her humble Kansas City home. She became one of the wealthiest and most celebrated American women in business with a career that spanned well into the 1960s. The Nelly Don Empire reportedly sold more dresses in the 20th century than any other single person in the United States, and she started as a Lindenwood College student.

This study investigated Nell Quinlan Donnelly the “Grand Lady” of the garment industry beyond her millionaire status and revolutionary business leadership at Donnelly Garment Company. The reexamination of Nell Quinlan Donnelly’s 60 year relationship with Lindenwood College began in 1907 as the first married student to attend. Donnelly graduated in 1909 with a Seminary Diploma and later became a phenomenal business, civic, and educational leader.

The significance of Nell Quinlan Donnelly’s relationship with Lindenwood College has been identified by her recognition of the changing role of young women post World War II. Donnelly, a visionary leader, and a member of the Lindenwood Board of Directors and several other administrative boards, encouraged developing programs that focused on mathematics and computer science. Donnelly challenged Lindenwood education leaders with the idea of “reaching beyond traditional confines of Liberal Arts programs and to expand student experiences that would offer ‘unlimited opportunities’ for young women” (Lindenwood Board of Director notes 1944 & 1962; Ebling & Kavanaugh, 1980). The foresight of “unlimited opportunities” afforded to young women as envisioned by Nell Quinlan Donnelly would prove her to be a woman ahead of her time and one of Lindenwood’s most loyal and dedicated educational leaders.

Dedication



Figure 1. Mrs. Nell Quinlan (Donnelly) Reed, c. 1949. Lindenwood College Bulletin, Mrs. James A. Reed, 1949.

To all past, present and future women who encourage “unlimited opportunities” for the advancement of women in society, I dedicate this study. Mrs. Nell Quinlan (Donnelly) Reed is just one of many early 20th century women who tirelessly and unselfishly spent their lives making a difference in the lives of women. Mrs. Nell Quinlan (Donnelly) Reed’s vision of “unlimited opportunities” can continue to serve educational leadership at Lindenwood and beyond.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The year was 1907, and the location a small women's college just west of the Mississippi River in St. Charles, Missouri. A 19-year-old woman by the name of Ellen, better known as Nell by her family, began studying at Lindenwood College for Women. Nell had an interest in fashion design and business. She graduated in 1909 with a Seminary diploma, the only educational option awarded at that time.

This qualitative study searched for historical evidence to further explicate the story of Ellen Quinlan Donnelly, aka Nelly Don, as a pioneer in the fashion industry and a visionary in educational leadership through her 60 year relationship with Lindenwood College for Women. In addition to contextualizing her life and accomplishments through a review of published literature, new evidence collected by the Principle Investigator is presented including oral histories, and the results of a search of primary and secondary sources. Multi-faceted chapters drawing from a variety of sources are focused chronologically with regard to historical highlights from 1907-1980s.

During the years between 1916 and 1919, Ellen Quinlan Donnelly, under the fashion name Nelly Don, started a fashion empire from her humble Kansas City home. She became one of the wealthiest and most celebrated American women in business with a career that spanned well into the 1960s. The Nelly Don fashion label reportedly sold more dresses in the 20th century than any other single person in the United States, and she started as a Lindenwood College student.

Progressive Era 1890s-1920s

American women at the turn of the 20th century began to experience noticeable societal changes associated with social, cultural, political, and technological advancements that influenced their lives (Solomon, 1985). This included American women's lifestyles, gender related roles, education, and their sense of fashion (Leach, 1984; Whang, 2011). Prior to the 19th century, middle-class Americans depicted women as emotionally inferior, dependent, docile, and expected to bear and raise children (Leach, 1984; Solomon, 1985). Societal norms for men during the same time period were quite different. Men were acknowledged and perceived as having been rational and finding personal fulfillment in life (Leach, 1984). These societal norms continued for men into the early 20th century, but by 1915 expectations began to change and a less docile American woman evolved (Solomon, 1985). It was during this time that a 27-year-old Ellen Quinlan Donnelly, aka Nelly Don, emerged, an unforeseen fashion industry pioneer, millionaire entrepreneur, and educational philanthropist from the Midwest. It was now that American women were able to coexist with men in a manner not recognized before. Technological advancements prompted transformations of households and workplaces along with changed cultural and social norms, resulting in a progressive movement that industrialized, urbanized, and modernized early 20th century society (Whang, 2011). Leach (1984) confirmed that men continued to monopolize salaried factory and corporate positions, but single and working class women had begun to enter the service oriented workforce in greater numbers.

By the early 1900s, the "Gibson Girl" a prototype of the "New Woman" was created by Charles Dana Gibson (1867-1944) (Library of Congress Exhibitions, 2013).

The Gibson Girl look was vibrant, a new feminine inspiration that set the standard for beauty, fashion, and manners (Library of Congress Exhibitions, 2013). Early 20th century writers described this “New Woman” as an independent and often well-educated young woman advocating for more pronounced roles in society than women in preceding generations. The Gibson Girl displayed the ideal of this new phenomenon. This new population of employable women was hired for “pink collar” jobs which brought to life the “Gibson Girl” look and persona (Leach, 1984). Pink collar jobs such as typist, secretaries, telephone operators, and sales clerks were typical and the Gibson Girl look complimented the role and responsibilities of the new pink collar employee. A part of the Progressive movement, Ellen Quinlan at age 16, moved to Kansas City, Missouri, and took on a job as a stenographer. Soon after, she met Paul Donnelly, a credit manager for a local shoe company, who became her first husband. Ellen Quinlan portrayed the image and lived the life of a Gibson Girl; she was stylish and fashionable but wore clothing that was functional and utilitarian as opposed to an earlier restricted and uncomfortable Edwardian style of dress.



Figure 2. The Gibson Girl’s America: Drawings by Charles Dana Gibson (c. 1895). Library of Congress Exhibition, 2013.

The number of women employed as pink collar workers rose to 7.5 million by 1915, but the majority of Americans still put more value in domesticity and emphasized women's role in the household (Leach, 1984). But, at the same time, even married women who saw their role and responsibility as being in the home as wife and mother ventured out and participated in activities outside the home. More than a million women joined clubs and engaged in social reforms (Whang, 2011). Furthermore, women drove cars, sought employment outside the home, engaged in social clubs, volunteer services, social and political reforms, and became active in organized athletics (Tortora & Eubank, 1998). Schneider and Schneider (1993) concurred that American women's lifestyles depended more on consumption than production of goods and services, specifically fashion and clothing. A more "modern fashion" (Whang, 2011) catered to an active lifestyle that American women embraced. It was during this time as a young woman that Ellen Quinlan Donnelly initiated great opportunities and success for herself that garnered her financial independence. She was an integral part of changing fashion trends for women which was reflective of the social change movement started by new technological advances in the home and workplace (Ewing, 2001). Subsequently, social and economic reforms made advancements in women's lives that resulted in more liberated freedoms. The education of women had become an even bigger part of society and became more evident in the lives of women as the number of Domestic Science and later Home Economic programs were established at higher education institutions.

Due to societal stereotypes and restraints, progressive women, namely, Mary Sibley (1800-1878) educational leader and founder of Lindenwood University in 1827, St. Charles, MO, the oldest woman's college west of the Mississippi River, Catherine

Beecher (1800-1878) prominent educational leader, advocate for women's rights and instrumental in the establishment of several women's colleges, Nannie Helen Burrough (1879-1961) African –American educator leader, civil rights activist and business woman who founded the National Training School for Women and Girls, Washington, DC 1909, and Ellen Swallow Richards (1842-1911) first female student to attend Massachusetts Institute of Technology and graduate with a BS in Science in 1873 and a founding member of Home Economics academia, Lake Placid New York, 1909. (Solomon, 1985; Stewart, 2011). All women had individual visions of establishing higher learning institutions for women with one common goal: to improve not only their quality of life but society as a whole. The early visions of these progressive women have been recognized and identified from several historical viewpoints, contexts and/or philosophical frameworks of reference, which included academia, gender/roles, political, social, racial, economic and religious grounds of defense. Solomon (1985), women's historian, noted that "women, pioneering in new roles, founded schools where the female student became the focus of academic purpose" (p.17).

The academic evolution in higher education from Domestic Science to Home Economics was an educational life changing advancement for women in the United States, which began in the 1920's and spanned into the 1960's. Although domestic science was an area of academia that was encouraged and openly offered to women, there was a divide in philosophies about the delivery of teaching and learning methods and academic content. The divide amongst higher education institutions in the U.S. involved a contrast between schools in the East and schools in the West. In addition, institutions of higher learning singled out degrees in domestic science, home economics, and other

educational areas for women (Solomon, 1985). Other academic areas of higher learning were not thought to be suitable for women (Solomon, 1985).

Mrs. Ellen Quinlan Donnelly

During this transformative era, housewife Ellen Quinlan Donnelly (1889-1991), born in Parsons, Kansas, a lifelong Midwesterner, became an American contemporary in the fashion and garment industry. Ellen Quinlan Donnelly had also built a fashion empire, re-envisioned the eye of fashion for women, and set standards in the ready to wear garment industry. Donnelly's enterprising and entrepreneurial mindset began in her home after husband Paul Donnelly went to serve in World War 1. She had begun to design and produce stylish housedresses for herself, family, and friends because she disliked the look of the "Old Mother Hubbard" housedress (McMillen & Robertson, 2002). Her friends became her first customers and urged her to take samples to *Peck's Dry Goods Company* in Kansas City in 1916 (T. M. O'Malley, personal communication, June 13, 2015). After taking one sample of a "pink gingham check apron frock", she received an immediate order for 18 dozen dresses and all 216 pink gingham dresses sold the first day (McMillen & Robertson, 2002; O'Malley, 2006a; Wilding, 1987) at a \$1 a dress equivalent to \$22.04 in 2016 (The Inflation Calculator, n.d.). The initial sales transactions with *Pecks Dry Goods Company* along with the popularity of the pink gingham house dress, later led to the establishment of *Donnelly Garment Company* (DGC) in 1919 by Ellen and Paul Donnelly, her first husband. Thereafter, the name Nelly Don was branded as the company clothing label. The success of DGC was acknowledged in 1931 by the employment of over 1,000 employees, the production of 5,000 dresses a day by the 1940s, and the fact that Nelly Don had become the largest

women's ready to wear manufacturing company in the world by 1947 (O'Malley, 2006a; White, 1984; Wilding, 1986). It was at this time that Ellen Donnelly identified herself as Nelly Don, a brand that was both her clothing label and her persona. Therefore, for the purpose of this research study, Nelly Don will be considered synonymous with Ellen Quinlan Donnelly, and Nell Quinlan Reed. Furthermore for brevity, the researcher will reference her affectionately as "Nell", the name sake her family gave her.

Previous Nelly Don researchers revealed her prolific life as a business women but less is known about how she used her business success in education as a leader, advocate and philanthropist. Nell Quinlan Donnelly's life story is one of historical significance, but worthy of further recognition because of her visionary educational insight that supported many Lindenwood College women. Nell, a young woman in the early 20th century with entrepreneurial credentials as a self-made millionaire in the American fashion industry, who designed and sold more dresses in the 20th century than any other person and/or company in the United States, had the grit to challenge the notion that women were best suited for domesticity. Many shops opened throughout the country as outlets to satisfy the demand for the fashionable popular women's wear brand. One of the taglines for a Nelly Don advertisement read, "Try one on and own a Nelly Don." She was among the first to design for women liberated from domesticity (O'Malley, 2006a) and that may have been the secret of her success. These were far from nominal achievements (O'Malley, 2006a). Nell Quinlan Donnelly's legacy does not end with her business success and million dollar status. That success paved the way for her ongoing 60 year relationship with Lindenwood College, her alma mater.

The Research Question

One overarching research question guided this investigative study: How did Ellen (Nell) Quinlan Donnelly influence and support Educational Leadership for women at Lindenwood? It was presented and supported in the research context with primary and secondary literature resources and oral histories.

Within the framework of the research question, this historical study reviewed chronological events of Nell Quinlan Donnelly's life drawing from multiple sources. This included biographical information, educational experience as a Lindenwood College student, life after college as a housewife, and later millionaire fashion industry entrepreneur, who served as an educational advocate and loyal philanthropist to Lindenwood College.

Purpose of Study

The researcher's purpose for this historical study is guided by one point; to reexamine and further articulate Nell Quinlan Donnelly's relationship with Lindenwood College extending from 1907 until the late 1980s as related to educational leadership for women. The significance of Nell Quinlan Donnelly's 60 year relationship with Lindenwood college, began with her enrollment as a student from 1907-1909 and continued as a philanthropic friend of Lindenwood College. In an attempt to further contribute to existing history, the researcher undertook to identify and acknowledge the historic importance of Nell Quinlan Donnelly's relationship with Lindenwood and concluded with a cohesive understanding of the past and present relevance of that relationship. In addition, this research study reexamined the pioneering work of Nell Quinlan Donnelly, an American fashion designer and entrepreneur business owner of

Donnelly Garment Company. Thus, this research provided a reconstruction of what has evolved and, as far as is possible with available evidence, an explanation of why.

Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012) described this method of research as a “systematic collection and evaluation of data to describe, explain and thereby understand actions or events that occurred sometime in the past” (p. 535).

Nell Quinlan Donnelly’s personal commitment to improving women’s education at Lindenwood College was often solely funded by her. Documented archival examples during Donnelly’s 60 year reign at Lindenwood College included fashion designers from Donnelly Garment Company, who taught at Lindenwood and sponsored a yearly spring fashion show where students designed their own garments and modeled Nelly Don signature clothing. By the 1950s, Nell Donnelly recognized the changing role of young women and encouraged the Board of Directors to consider developing programs and courses that focused on mathematics and computer science. Donnelly challenged education leaders with the idea of “reaching beyond traditional confines of Liberal Arts programs and courses to expand student experiences that would offer ‘unlimited opportunities for young women’” (Ebling & Kavanaugh, 1980; Lindenwood College Board of Director notes, 1944, 1962). In 1967, with both Donnelly’s entrepreneurial business and educational leadership background, Lindenwood College partnered with McDonnell Aircraft Company allowing many young women to flourish in an integrated work and learning environment. Her mindset involved entrepreneurial integration and was used to exemplify an innovative means that highlighted student characteristics and experiences while positioning students and academic programs competitively. Donnelly’s efforts were to better ensure preparedness for women in a diverse and global

fashion industry. This is equally relevant in today's entrepreneurial business sphere as it was then.

Findings from this study will contribute to the scant existing details documented about Nell Quinlan Donnelly's professional and educational endeavors with Lindenwood College after she graduated in 1909. This study will have highlighted her involvement as an alumnus in the fashion/costume design department and her generous philanthropic gifting in support of educating women pursuing careers in the fashion industry and beyond.

The researcher will also have the opportunity to present historic literature found in the archives that may have not been read or seen by the fashion community and encourage better future documentation and archiving of historical information regarding fashion programs at Lindenwood in a timeline as pioneered by Cornell University 1900-1969. *The Lindenwood College Bulletin* (Mrs. James A. Reed, 1949a) stated, "Through the years Mrs. Reed [Nell Quinlan Donnelly] has always maintained a loyal interest in Lindenwood and its welfare" (p. 3). This statement memorialized the devotion of Nell Quinlan Donnelly and speaks to the spirit of a great American woman fashion designer and educational leader well deserving of a permanent and public display in the current fashion department and/or elsewhere at Lindenwood. An acknowledgment of this type revealed the necessity to re-tell Nell Quinlan Donnelly's legacy in the most accurate manner.



Figure 3. Nell Quinlan Donnelly (c. late 1920s) from the cover of *Independent Woman* magazine (Albert, 1927).

Whang (2011) completed a systematic research study titled *Nelly Don's 1916 Pink Gingham Apron Frock: An illustration of the Middle-Class American Housewife's Shifting Role from Producer to Consumer*. Since its publication no other research studies pertaining to Nell Quinlan Donnelly have been completed and nothing focused specifically on her relationship with Lindenwood College has ever been done. It is also the researcher's personal hope to help establish a relationship between the Donnelly family and the Lindenwood fashion program as we continue to research, document, and contribute to the legacy of Nell Quinlan Donnelly through various academic and social events.

Rationale for the Study

After Mary and George C. Sibley founded Lindenwood College for Females in 1832, a printed statement of record in the section "Suggestion to Parents" depicted a sentiment of pride for not being known as a "fashionable" school for girls from 1873-1897 (*Lindenwood College for Young Ladies, Females & Women Annual Register 1873-1875, 1876-1880 & 1881-1889*). For a short period of time from 1876-1880, Lindenwood College, not known as a "fashionable" school was later renamed as a "simple" school. The interpretation of "fashionable" and "simple" was equated to religious beliefs and virtues that Lindenwood College founders George and Mary Sibley upheld and the ideal of equality among all girls; a family's monetary wealth was not viewed as a privilege. By the late 1940s -1950s, Lindenwood College leadership had a new mental model of what female college life should be: protective and privileged (K. Smith, personal communication, March 22, 2015). But, according to Lindenwood's History, 10 years after 1897 the publication of the *Lindenwood College & Annual*

Register, 1873-1897, priding itself as a utilitarian institution for females was questioned. Lindenwood College enrolled a married student and educated one of the most successful 20th century American fashion designers. This research study found no evidence to substantiate why Donnelly was admitted as a married student since it was not common practice in the early 1900's. The 1909 Lindenwood College graduate, Ellen Quinlan Donnelly, made a fashionable statement at Lindenwood while in attendance and later became a millionaire alum by age 27. Nell Quinlan Donnelly's story is important for many reasons and contributes to several areas of history. Unfortunately, American historians have only within the last half of a century attempted to develop women's history as a separate field of study (Dingwall, 1956). This is possibly why Nell Quinlan Donnelly was not studied and written about in an historic manner during the early 20th century; it was not customary to do so.

Not much has been publically written, documented, or gathered orally about Nell Quinlan Donnelly's interest in women's education. The lack of documented scholarship offers a unique opportunity for the researcher to further articulate who Nell Quinlan Donnelly was and more specifically to explore the 60 year history she shared with Lindenwood College.

What has been collected and produced includes *Nelly Don: A Stich in Time* (2006a) a documentary film with an accompanying book produced by O'Malley (Nell Quinlan Donnelly's great, great nephew) and a 2007 exhibit featuring *The Extraordinary Life of Nelly Don* at the *Irish Museum & Cultural Center* in Kansas City. In addition, several selected pieces from the Kansas City exhibit along with other Nelly Don dresses were showcased at the *Historic Costume and Textile Museum* (HCTM) in cooperation

with O'Malley to preserve records, designs, dresses, and oral stories about Nelly Don. Later in 2007, another exhibition was featured at the Historic Costume and Textile Museum at Kansas State University titled *Nelly Don: Dresses that Worked for Woman*. A short biographical essay titled "Nelly Don: A gentle lady tycoon" written by Wilson in 1993 for the Women's Division, was displayed at *The Kansas City Museum* previewing her life's story. The Kansas City Museum at the Historic Garment District has also acquired a Nelly Don archive in collaboration with other Mid-Missouri institutions. A most recent event, *Nelly Don the Musical*, was held in Kansas City, 2017. But overall, little has been revealed about Nell's 60 year love relationship with Lindenwood, her alma mater, and what significance it had for young women.

Most historical information pertaining to Nell Quinlan Donnelly's 60 year relationship with Lindenwood had been found in the Mary E. Amblers archives, Lindenwood University. These primary sources from Lindenwood, although expansive in years are scattered and were not archived in the home economics/fashion/clothing and textile department, as well as the math and computer science department. An inconclusive determination of what documents were archival worthy was not representative of a unified comprehensive collection. The suspected lack of collaborative effort among the home economics department and others over the years has been a hindrance to preservation of the intellectual welfare of Lindenwood, which was evident in past histories. Lindenwood did not have a comprehensive chronological archive (timeline) and/or relevant artifacts (tangible /intangible) that have been saved over the years regarding the home economics and/or math and computer science programs, or anything that can be cross referenced with Nell Quinlan Donnelly, specifically the

fashion programs. No true exhibit or such that memorialized or visually recognized Nell Donnelly has been publicly produced at Lindenwood except for brief notes in Lindenwood College bulletins, newspaper, yearbooks, and/or other Lindenwood College reproduced photographs and general publications.

It was also believed that oral histories can be communicated and recorded from alumni who graduated in the late 1940s to late 1950s, past members of Lindenwood administrative boards, family members and employees of Donnelly Garment Company and /or Nelly Don Company and other past and present fashion industry stakeholders. Remarkably, three Lindenwood alums who graduated in the years 1945-1951 are still living. One alumnus is a member of The Alliance of American Quilts and Daughters of the American Revolution. All such opportunities to conduct oral histories with Lindenwood as the designated archival depository will help to close gaps in written history, at Lindenwood and beyond. Furthermore, this historic research will have informed the present and guided the future. As stated by Ritchie (2003) “simply put, oral history collects memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews” (p. 47). The missing piece is to close the gap between the written past and the verbalized present.

Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative historical research method to gather and interpret data using primary and secondary sources and oral stories. Christy (1975) stated that the historical researcher must have innate abilities to develop the “curiosity, perseverance, tenacity and skepticism of the detective” (p. 192). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004) referenced that interpretation made during a historical study are identified as tentative and

fluid, while the researcher was simultaneously involved with data collection and analysis of research findings.

Historic research makes inquiries about past events that require a systematic method of data collection and evaluation with regards to answering research questions. These inquiries are related to trends reflective of, and associated with, occurrences that may help explain or inform the present while providing an opportunity to guide the future (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Leininger, 1985; McDowell, 2002; Touliato & Compton, 1988). Touliato and Compton (1988) argued that historical research most often depends on a systematic collection of data, and the logical interpretation of gathered evidence. Therefore, historical researchers have the responsibility of deciphering and integrating factual information into meaningful generalizations as opposed to merely reciting common facts when the purpose of the study is to expand and clarify existing knowledge, as well as discover new knowledge. As related to the purpose and outcome of this study, McDowell (2002) explained that historical research encouraged both researcher and reader to incur a deeper awareness and interest in the past, develop a sense of gratitude, and create a framework that researchers can use to make sense of the past for a better understanding of how to guide future actions.

Oral history is both a method and process. First, the recording of an individual(s) personal experience and/or story followed by the preserving of the oral testimony, the product. The method begins with audio recording of a first person account made to the interviewer from the interviewees, both of whom have a conscious intent of creating a permanent record for depository to contribute to informing the present and guiding the future. The methodology used in this qualitative historical study required both primary

and secondary sources, and oral stories. This study initially relied heavily on primary sources of evidence from the Mary E. Ambler Archives at Lindenwood, followed by oral stories from individuals who knew Nell Quinlan Donnelly including Lindenwood College alums (1940s -1960s), family members, former Lindenwood board members, former employees of the Donnelly Garment Company and/or Nelly Don Company and others who had some other kind of educational or professional relationship and/or interest in her or her company(s) past or present. Past literature included scholarly journals, dissertations, biographical literature referencing Nelly Don, women's history and fashion history, as well as creditable websites. These were referenced and cited when providing supporting details to answer research questions. Therefore, this study required an extensive manual search of primary archived materials.

Oral histories, when used in the realm of social science, were distinguished from other forms of interviews by content and extent. The interviewer sought to capture an in-depth account of personal experience and reflections allowing ample time for interviewee to relate oral histories in its entirety. The success of oral history interviews is grounded in content that is reflective of the past as opposed to commentary relative to contemporary events only. Oral history is a systematic collection of living people's stories and /or testimonies about their own personal experiences. Oral history is not folklore, gossip, rumors, or hearsay. The oral historian [interviewer] attempts to verify findings, analyze them and reference them in an accurate historical context. Furthermore, oral historians [interviewer] are responsible for storage of findings for future scholarly use.

This study is an open-ended investigation of Nell Quinlan Donnelly based on artifacts and oral histories about her personal and business life as well as 60 year relationship with Lindenwood College. Accordingly, this study began with the following known sources and proceeded as information, that is, leads, became apparent. (See Appendix A for specific information). An initial search for participants included an archival retrieval of relevant background information regarding Nelly Don's early associations with Lindenwood as a student, later business enterprise and success, her past philanthropic relationship with Lindenwood and its fashion programs, and lastly, her extended membership on various Lindenwood administrative boards. Eventually, the noted sources led to identifying persons familiar with Nelly Don's business enterprise and persons familiar with her affiliations with Lindenwood. See Appendix A for matrix of participant search process and selection, and Appendix C for selected participants and questions. Since this history is now 45-100 years old, there are few people left with firsthand knowledge. Participants and interviewees were contacted via telephone, email, or US Postal Mail service.

The criteria for inclusion in this study involved proximity to Nell Quinlan Donnelly; having known or worked for Nelly Don and/or her French designer Madame Helene Lyonene from 1940s-1960s. This could include former students and faculty from Lindenwood University, Lindenwood Board members, employees of the Donnelly Garment Company / Nelly Don Inc. and/or any other individual stakeholder that was relevant to this study. The researcher estimated that five to six participants would be located and available for recorded oral stories based on Lindenwood Alum data base, Lindenwood library Mary E. Ambler archive and personal communication with Nell

Donnelly's great, great nephew Terence O'Malley. Currently, three Lindenwood College alums have been located and their oral history's recorded. The small number of participants reflects the dwindling number of people who were witness to this part of history. However, the interviews only constitute one source of information in this study. Other sources of information for this study include contents from the university archive: Lindenwood Board minutes, public announcements, course catalogues, newsletters, etc.

In oral history projects such as this research study, the interviewee will recall events for the interviewer [researcher] who will record the recollections and create a historical record.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was intentionally limited to one historic higher learning institution and one particular woman of interest. There are many other notable institutions and women the researcher could have chosen; locally, regionally, nationally or internationally representing any demographic dimension. This research sought to gather the evidence regarding Nell Quinlan Donnelly's relationship with her alma mater, Lindenwood College, with regard to educational leadership. The examination of a 60 year relationship between this once all-women's historic institution and one notable woman, can potentially add to the present historical branding of the university, further adding to the 190 year history.

Nell Quinlan Donnelly was a 1909 Lindenwood College graduate, a successful woman entrepreneur in the garment industry during the early twentieth century and had an ongoing relationship with the College. Nell Quinlan Donnelly's relationship with Lindenwood College was chosen as a means of delimitation because it exhibited her

philanthropic, humanitarian acts of kindness and educational interest in young women's academia and their unlimited opportunities. Even more impressive is the fact that Nell Quinlan Donnelly's initial relationship with Lindenwood College began when she was admitted as the first married student during a period in time when women became advocates for new societal roles regarding women; redefining domesticity and modernity (Albert R. Mann Library, 2005; Solomon, 1985).

Definition of Terms

Clothing and Textiles_- “an academic discipline in higher education and represents all types of academic programs/units related to clothing, apparel, fashion, and textiles found in today's higher education” (Ha-Brookshire & Hawley, 2012, p. 18).

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS)_- was originally known as Domestic Science, then renamed Home Economics in the early 20th century; and was referred to as Family & Consumer Sciences circa 1994, but known as Home Economics internationally as noted by Werhan (2013). This term was noted by Fogg (2012) as “a major covering several specializations, including consumer economics, child development, consumer marketing, and apparel and textile studies; most popular specialization includes dietetics, food and nutrition” (p. 75).

Fashion Industry_- a diverse occupational field with many career opportunities (design director, fashion school administrator, trade organization coordinator, freelance fashion show producers, brand manager, etc.). The fashion industry “is not stagnant; it is a competitive business that is constantly changing” (Dias, 2008, para. 2).

Housedress - defined for the purpose of this study as an inexpensive, washable work dress worn by middle-class women with limited or no domestic help in the home; circa early 20th century (O'Malley, 2006a).

Home Economics - An explanatory statement for the purpose of this study is: college instruction offered at the undergraduate and graduate levels to prepare students for homemaking and for a variety of professional fields such as teaching, business careers, home economics extension and research (McKee, 1966).

Summary

The following chapters will commence with a paragraph introducing content that will be explored and examined as related to the research and legacy of Nell Quinlan Donnelly, an educational leader at Lindenwood University.

Chapter Two: “Nelly Don” a Fashionable Midwesterner

Chapter Two presents a historical overview of the Nell Quinlan Donnelly’s life; 1916-1980s to better understand her accomplishments and significance of her role as student, wife, fashion industry entrepreneur, and educational leader at Lindenwood College.

Formative Years

In the small Midwest town of Parsons Kansas, Ellen Quinlan was born March 6, 1889 on a farm. She was the 12th child of 13 to an Irish immigrant family. Friends and family affectionately called her “Nell” (O’Malley, 2006a).

John Quinlan (Nell’s father), a literate teenager emigrated from County Cork, Ireland to America before the Civil War and was able to serve his future family well in America (O’Malley, 2006a). Nell recalled her father believing America was the “beacon of light of the world” and opposed the division between the North and the South (O’Malley, 2006a). Quinlan later sided with the Union politically regarding the Civil War and decided to move to Chicago, Illinois because of the approbation of his employer in New Orleans (O’Malley, 2006a). During the transition Quinlan enlisted in the United States Army in 1862, which only lasted a short while before he was discharged for an unknown disability. After settling down in Chicago, he met his wife Catherine Fitzgibbons, daughter of Irish immigrants and soon after marrying the Quinlan family moved to Parsons. Quinlan was a farmer and later a railroad worker for the Katy Railroad (O’Malley, 2006a).

Nell, the youngest of five daughters, learned to sew without any patterns from her mother and oldest sister Mary. She not only mastered repairing and re-purposing dresses

handed down from her older sisters but also designed and sewed dresses for her dolls.

Nell's innate fashion creativity and experimentation with clothing design may have been the catalyst that gave her confidence to design women's dresses later on (O'Malley, 2006a).

The Quinlan family was not destitute but by no means wealthy, and as soon as each child became self-sufficient, they were expected to make their way in the world. After Nell graduated from Parsons High School, she enrolled at Parsons Business College to learn stenography, a "pink collar" job for young progressive women in America during the early 1900s (Leach, 1984). By age 16, Nell moved into a boarding house in Kansas City, Missouri where she met Paul Donnelly. Paul Donnelly was 23-years-old from St. Louis, Missouri and a stenographer studying to be an accountant. Nell and Paul were later married in 1906, Nell was 17-years-old. As a newlywed, Nell confessed that she wanted to attend college even though she was married. Paul Donnelly was supportive and funded the \$900.00 needed to enroll Nell at Lindenwood College for Women, in St. Charles, near St. Louis Missouri, in 1907 (Bird, 1976). The Donnelly's saved enough money in one year out of their joint savings for Nell to attend college. Historically, early 20th century newlywed couples would have saved for a down payment on a farm or house and the idea of new bride going off to college and not fulfilling her matriarchal role was unheard of according to Bird (1976), as stated in her book *Enterprising Women*.

Nell Donnelly was the first married student accepted to Lindenwood College for Females in 1907. Nell's two years as a student were enjoyable and prosperous (Mrs. James A. Reed, Lindenwood College Bulletin, 1949a; O'Malley, 2006a). Nell eagerly participated in several collegiate organizations affirming her strong academic leadership,

interest, and participation in her education. Donnelly's ongoing efforts and contributions to support Lindenwood College began in the 1920s. She would later be recognized in 1949 by the awarding of an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by the Rev. Dr. James W. Clark, president of the Board of Directors. He proclaimed that Nell was "endowed with a sense of duty and skillful fingers and during her undergraduate years at Lindenwood she was one of the best students in her class" (Mrs. James A. Reed, Lindenwood College Bulletin, 1949a, p. 3). Nell was bright, and both the Quinlan's and the Donnelly's knew it, and with the support of both families Nell received a Seminary diploma in 1909.

While at Lindenwood College, Nell was business manager of the *Linden Leaves*, the Lindenwood College yearbook, president of the Lindenwood Senior Tennis Club, secretary of Phi Delta Sigma sorority, and a member of the "Boys Chorus" (O'Malley, 2006a). She enrolled in a fine art class where she came under the influence of Dr. Alice Linnemann, the first person to formally introduce her to costume design. She became Nell's teacher and also served as Dean of Art from 1901-1941. This first initial impact sparked Nell to become one of the most innovative and successful American designers in the early 20th century. During an interview, Nell recalled 50 years later that after leaving Lindenwood College in 1909, Dr. Lineman was the first person who significantly supported her interest in costume and fashion design. In *The St. Louis Star* Donnelly stated that "my first lessons in costume design were taken 20 years ago from Miss Alice Linnemann, head of the art department of Lindenwood College at St. Charles" (Wise, 1931).

After graduating with a Seminary Certificate in 1909, Nell and her husband moved back to Kansas City where she resumed the role of a housewife. She was

dissatisfied with the drudgery of domestic labor and also with the traditional, utilitarian serviceable clothing available to the domesticated woman. American women who were part of the Progressive Era, 1890s-1920s had begun to expand and challenge their role in society. Nell Quinlan Donnelly was one of those women. She identified with the “Gibson Girl” in her earlier years for both style and manner-(O’Malley, 2006a).

Donnelly later made history when she became one of the first women to operate and own a garment manufacturing company, a women way ahead of her time.

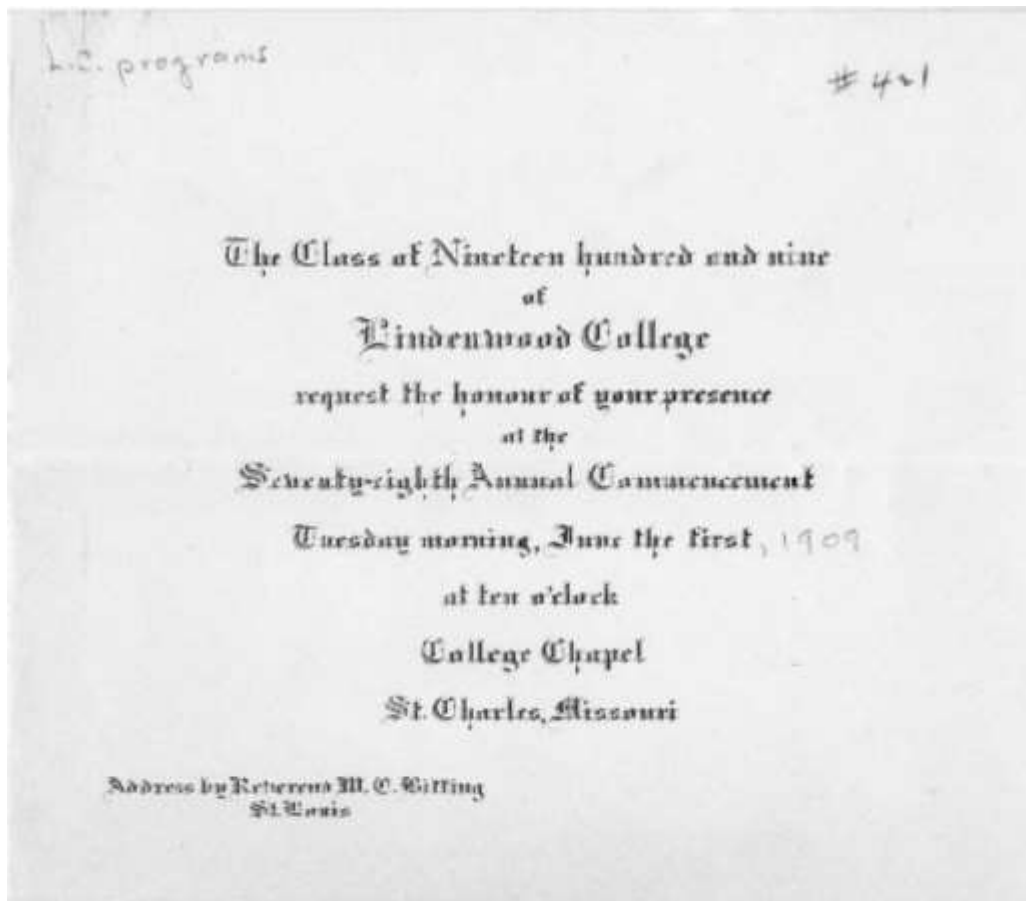


Figure 4. Nell Quinlan Donnelly Commencement Announcement (c. 1909)
(Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).

Seniors

Ethel Maurine Allen, Seminary
 Helen Vaughan Babcock, Seminary
 Virginia Louise Belts, Seminary
 Mary Adelaide Clog, Vocation
 Caroline Elizabeth Collins, Seminary and Piano
 Lois Dale, Seminary
 Clara Louise Davis, Seminary
 ✓ Nell Quinlan Donnelly, Seminary
 Nell Ruth Fleming, Seminary
 Elizabeth Louise Keene, Seminary
 Marie Wanda Krebs, Seminary
 Keala Hatheryn Millerbach, B. A.
 Oepha Ellen Moore, Piano,
 Winniford Marcella Olmstead, Seminary
 Mary Redfield Rice, B. A.
 Alice Sarah Riple, Seminary
 Margueret Anna Schiltz, Seminary
 Winifred Warren, Seminary

Figure 5. Nell Quinlan Donnelly senior class announcement (c. 1909)
 (Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).



Figure 6. Nell Quinlan Donnelly receives LLD degree from Dr. Franc McCluer (c. 1949).
 (Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives, Connections, 2008).

Housewife to Fashion Industry Millionaire: Nelly Don 1909-1919

After graduating from Lindenwood in 1909, Nell Donnelly was still a youthful bride, “vivacious – fond of pretty clothes and keeping house was a new and exciting adventure” (Donnelly, 1926 as cited in O’Malley, 2006b, p. 23). Nell was described by her great-great nephew, Terence O’Malley in *Nelly Don: A Stich in Time*, as having a “dramatic, artistic instinct that impelled her to dress the part as a housewife” (O’Malley, 2006a, p. 23). Nell was described as a hopeless romantic, and thoughts of having a beautiful kitchen, the desire of a new bride, and to be the prettiest housewife were her ambition (Flynn, 1992; O’Malley, 2006a). Nell kept the dream alive and for the next seven years she kept house, but with no children to raise, she began to design and sewed her own clothes that were admired by all that saw her. Nell was her own fashion model as she wore her own designs, daily gaining women’s attention who wanted comfortable everyday dresses that did not look like bungalow aprons (a garment similar to a nightgown and/or house dress for indoor wear), Mother Hubbard house dresses or other garments offered in stores for wear at home (Bird, 1976; Jones, 1989; Wilding, 1987). Historical evidence collected from Donnelly researchers concluded that her desire to be pretty in the kitchen became a reality; it all started with her own wardrobe (McMillen & Roberson, 2002; O’Malley, 2006a; Snider, 1991; Wilding, 1987). She then began designing and sewing her own dresses, and later started selling them to family and friends.

The typical Midwest housewife spent their days cooking and cleaning, wearing a utilitarian garment identified as the Old Mother Hubbard dress. These dowdy, shapeless dresses offered no sense of fashion, style or feministic pride that Nell felt housewives

deserved. Nell's clothing was not only designed and suitable for housework but also fashionable and desirable for entertaining guests, socializing and going out on errands (O'Malley, 2006a). Nell gained attention from the women in her neighborhood with her own self-made form fitting dresses (Flynn, 1992). Historian Jane Flynn in the *Kansas City Women of Independent Minds*, conveyed the word "sexy" was never used in describing or selling Nell's newly designed housedress, but *A Modern Business Romance* pamphlet published by Donnelly implied otherwise (Flynn, 1992). Nell Quinlan Donnelly, aka Nelly Don, personified her housewife experiences by announcing, "How a young housewife found a million dollar business at the end of her apron string" (Donnelly, 1926, n.p.) in a self-published pamphlet named *A Modern Business Romance*; reprinted by O'Malley in 2006b. The informational advertising pamphlet gave a more fantasized version of the creation and success of *Nelly Don* (the design brand) and how her husband Paul Donnelly was responsible for Donnelly Garment Company (DNC) success. Nell was a living example of an early 1920s housewife who disregarded restricted clothing options and designed her own stylish dresses that were good quality, affordable, and appealed to women like her (O'Malley, 2006a; Whang, 2011). This type of early marketing of the Nelly Don brand identified with women like Donnelly, an untapped profitable niche of women who wanted to look pretty (O'Malley, 2006a).

Nelly Don researchers (O'Malley, 2006a; McMillen & Roberson, 2002; Snider, 1991; Wilding, 1987) concluded that the Old Mother Hubbard dress, sold at dry goods stores for 69 cents was the only housedress available when Nell created her newly designed housedress. It should also be noted that sewing patterns and a variety of ready-made housedresses were featured in advertisements, fashion columns, mail-order catalogs

circa 1916, indicating that housewives such as Nell had options. Women were becoming consumers and less so producers, a noticeable trend as women started doing more outside the home. But many of Nell's family and friends could not find housedresses as pretty and charming as hers. Nell knew this because she had tried to find housedresses herself. Donnelly wrote "many mothers didn't have time to make their own dresses, some couldn't sew and thousands of housewives like herself couldn't afford to buy frocks" (Donnelly, 1926 as cited in O'Malley, 2006b, p. 24) "even though they may have been better quality, [they] were no more pleasing than the cheap utilitarian garment of servitude" (Donnelly, 1926 as cited in O'Malley, 2006b, p. 24).

In the beginning, Nell the housewife pondered "Could she - why she shouldn't make frocks that stores would buy to sell to their customer who wanted just the kind of frocks she and her friends and relatives wanted" (Donnelly, 1926 as cited in O'Malley, 2006b, p. 24). Nell, now housewife turned entrepreneur, was making dresses for purchase and encouraged by friends to sell her dresses to local retailers (McMillen & Roberson, 2002; O'Malley, 2006a; Wilding, 1987). In 1916, Nell convinced by her intuition that women like her were a part of a seemingly unknown but large untapped niche market, started prospecting. Nell shopped the retail Kansas City women's clothing market looking for a "smart little dress" like the ones she had designed and could wear while doing housework. Everywhere Nell called on, she was given the same response from the sales clerk; highly paid designers were not encouraged to spend time designing cheap dresses that would not yield a high profit (Bird, 1976; O'Malley, 2006a; Whang, 2011). Nell rejected trying to persuade the store clerks; she had a dream, or rather a plan with a goal.

Nell now had an opportunity of a lifetime knowing that the garment industry was not interested in designing and selling clothes for the everyday housewife. She was convinced women would pay up to \$1.00 for a smart and pretty everyday dress that allowed freedom of physical movement without making a woman look frumpy. So, Nell designed and sewed a few dress aprons to be solicited to local retailers. With a few crisp and colorful dress aprons under her arm, Nell (as her own her first saleswoman) took a leap of faith without knowing the rules and regulations of salesmanship, or the habits of shrewd buyers (Donnelly, 1926 as cited in O'Malley, 2006b, p. 24) . Unfortunately, most department store buyers doubted if women would purchase Nell's version of the housedress. Her luck prevailed when she offered to put her dress aprons on sale as a test at *George. B. Pecks Dry Goods Company* in Kansas City and the store buyer agreed. The store ordered 18 dozen dress aprons, which were taken in on consignment and any risk or liability was Nell's responsibility.

What followed was a revolution of the women's garment industry. Her husband was not so eager about setting up a garment factory in the house, but invested \$1,270.00 in purchasing two sewing machines and materials. Nell recruited two friends as seamstress in an effort to meet the two month deadline to have all 216 dress aprons completed for delivery at *Pecks*. Nell designed and produced a dozen dress aprons a day in the living room or attic of the Donnelly home and met the deadline within one month. Once the order was delivered, all 216 pink gingham apron style dresses sold out the first morning at a \$1.00 a piece (Bird, 1976; McMillen & Roberson, 2002; O'Malley, 2006a; Wilding, 1987).



Figure 7. Full scale reproduction of Nell Quinlan Donnelly's famous 1916 pink gingham apron frock (c. 1940) (Jackson County Historical Society of Independence, MO).

In 1917, Paul Donnelly was called to duty to serve in World War I, leaving Nell to run their new start-up business. Nell took reign of Donnelly Garment Company (DGC) during an era when women's suffrage was still being fought for and against. Nell's leadership traits, values, and progressive mind set were an anomaly early in her

life but were profoundly instrumental as she led the dress business throughout her life. When Donnelly returned from service, Nell's dress apron business had grown to 18 employees and \$250,000 in sales (Bird, 1976; O'Malley, 2006a). The business had outgrown the Donnelly's house and was moved to a downtown Kansas City location near the department stores (Bird, 1976). Paul quit his job as credit manager at Barton Shoe Company, and became president of the new Donnelly Garment Company, while Nell became secretary-treasurer (Bird, 1976; O'Malley, 2006a). Nell took a back seat to president of DGC; it was a male dominated industry and women were only best classified as pink collar worker at the time. Nell took on other company positions as head designer, production supervisor, sales marketer and was responsible for hiring employees for DGC (O'Malley, 2006a).

The Donnelly's Business and Personal Life 1920s-1940s

By 1919 Nell, ingeniously inverted her last name Donnelly and came up with the brand name of Nelly Don (O'Malley, 2006a). The innovativeness of Nell as an American designer, who put her signature name in her dresses like Parisian designers, quickly became a vested trademark. Nelly Don dresses were now known throughout the industry and to the women's consumer market as sensible, wearable and attractive dresses priced affordably. The DGC prospered during the roaring 1920s, with sales sometimes totaling \$3.5 million a year. They were flourishing alone in Kansas City without the trends of the growing dress industry on Seventh Avenue, New York (Bird, 1976; O'Malley, 2006a). In 1923, seven years after the initial big order Nell negotiated with *Peck's*, DGC had 250 employees and Nelly Don dresses were sold in most major department stores nationally and even abroad (O'Malley, 2006a). She continued to build

the Nelly Don brand on two key factors, affordability and quality (Bird, 1976; O'Malley, 2006a; Whang, 2011). Nell's attention to detail became company standard; she paid personal attention to the quality of the clothes that bore her name.

Nell's fashion line of dresses had become so vast that she started ordering patterns and color schemes directly from fabric mills, dismissing brokers, and maintaining low production costs. She routinely scheduled travel abroad to Paris and Vienna to view new styles and discover new fashion trends. She would often study textile designs and fabrics that she would incorporate into her own designs using color-fast fabrics that were more durable and washable. By 1931 the Donnelly Garment Company had 1,000 employees, manufactured 1.5 million dresses, boasted a second office in the Empire State Building and had record breaking sales of \$3.5 million (O'Malley, 2006a). The average cost of a Nelly Don dress was now \$2.33, more than doubled since the first order from *Pecks Dry Goods* in 1916.

Even during the Great Depression, the Donnelly's were millionaires and Nell would become known as one of America's first female multi-millionaires (Jones, 1989; O'Malley, 2006a). Paul Donnelly was an integral part of DGC and had a keen instinct for business but his passion for dressmaking could not compare to Nell's. She had now taken on the moniker of Nelly Don herself, and became an internationally known figure in the fashion industry (T. M. O'Malley, personal communication, June 13, 2015) and Paul was taking a back seat in the limelight. This brought about some angst because most of Paul's success was a result of Nell's ambitions during an era when women were housewives and mothers while husbands took the role as breadwinners.

Nell's prosperity during the Depression was interrupted and all good fortune for the Donnelly household almost came to an end. Nell and George Blair, her Negro chauffeur, made national headlines when they were kidnapped from the Donnelly estate after returning on the evening of December 16, 1931. Paul Donnelly was the intended kidnapping victim, but had been suffering from a mysterious illness and had not left the Donnelly estate for weeks. The kidnapers then decided to abduct Nell (Bird, 1976; Jones, 1989; O'Malley, 2006a; Wilding, 1987). This incident would change the course of the business and her life (Bird, 1976).

Ill and distraught, Paul Donnelly started calling friends and family to help find Nell. The kidnapers threatened to gouge out Nell's eyes to blind her and kill George Blair if Paul Donnelly contacted the police or refused to pay a ransom. The abductors forced Nell to write ransom letters to her husband and James A. Reed, her lawyer, neighbor, and former Missouri senator, demanding a \$75,000 ransom payout. He was contacted about the kidnapping in Jefferson City, Missouri working on a trial. He rushed from the courtroom causing commotion that exposed the Nell Quinlan Donnelly kidnapping (O'Malley, 2006a; Wilding, 1987). When Reed returned to Kansas City, he released a statement from the Donnelly home taking blame for publicizing the kidnaping. He publicly threatened abductors that if they harmed one hair on Nell's head, he would personally hunt them down if it took the rest of his life and ensure they receive the death penalty (O'Malley, 2006a).

Reed was well-known and his political connections with Kansas City boss Tom Pendergast resulted in his election as Jackson County attorney, then Kansas City mayor and three term U.S. senator. He immediately contacted John Lazia when he heard of the

kidnapping (Coleman, 2007; Ford, 1999; Hulston, 1999). Lazia, a local mobster connected with Pendergast, was convinced by Reed to organize a special search for Nell and her abductors. It was said that Lazia sent 25 cars of thugs looking for Nell. Lazia's underground operation found and freed Nell and her chauffeur after 34 hours in captivity. Detectives soon located the ring leader of Nell's kidnapping, who was later extradited from South Africa to Kansas City (O'Malley, 2006a; Magerl, 1999). No ransom money was ever paid; the gangsters found Nell before any money transfer took place. The kidnapping ordeal was over, Nell was home safe, and her gratitude for her chauffeur who protected and risked his own life for her safety would last for a lifetime. Nell kept a promise she made to herself during the time of the kidnapping: she vowed to keep George Blair employed with the Donnelly Garment Company for the rest of his life (O'Malley, 2006a).

After the kidnapping, Nell's personal life continued to be as intriguing and adventurous as her business life. Although Nell and Paul were able to maintain the façade of a "modern business romance" until 1932, they both had been losing interest in their marriage for years (O'Malley, 2006a). Paul Donnelly had started pursuing other women while Nell grew fond of her neighbor, James A. Reed. In September 1931, while still married to Paul Donnelly and supposedly pregnant with James A. Reed's child, Nell executed a fictitious trip to Europe on the premise of adopting a child but in fact traveled to Chicago to deliver her baby (Bird, 1976; O'Malley, 2006a). Soon after, Nell returned back to Kansas City with a healthy baby boy named David. Paul Donnelly never wanted biological children of his own and threatened Nell if she ever got pregnant, he would kill himself. Other family members believed that Paul Donnelly was unable to have children

and knew if Nell had gotten pregnant, she must have cheated with another man and the baby would not have been Paul's.

Less than a year after Nell was kidnapped baby David arrived, and on November, 15, 1932, she divorced Paul Donnelly, her husband of 26 years; their personal assets totaling 1.27 million dollars (Donnelly Divorce, 1932; O'Malley, 2006a). The divorce was a surprise to all except for a few close friends. The court proceedings took about 15 minutes and Mrs. Donnelly appeared care-worn but sharply dressed. A life altering outcome of the divorce was the fact the Paul Donnelly was not the biological father of David Donnelly but James A. Reed. Reed's aggressive actions to help secure Nell's release from the kidnappers in 1931 were not the act of a benevolent client –attorney relationship but of love for Nell. Nell later bought out Paul's interest in the Donnelly Garment Company for \$1 million dollars and took complete control of the business. A year later, Paul Donnelly hanged himself and Nell Quinlan Donnelly married James A. Reed on December 13, 1933 (O'Malley, 2006a).

The newly wed Nell retained control of DGC and became president in 1932. While under Nell's operational leadership, DGC survived the Great Depression due to her innovative fashion forward thinking and by offering high style women's clothing at low prices, thus becoming a multi-million dollar clothing manufacturer (Bird, 1976; Jones, 1989; O'Malley, 2006a; Wilding, 1987). The DGC dressed every seventh women in the United States with a Nelly Don Dress made in Kansas City.

Nell Donnelly's modern day business romanced continued. On the evening of December 13, 1933 Nell invited 30 guests to her home for a special holiday social, a venison and duck dinner. James A. Reed was one of the guests. At the right time in the

evening, a federal judge in attendance asked everyone to stand and bear witness to the nuptials of Nell Donnelly and James A. Reed. The guests were surprised and it took a moment for them to realize what they were witnessing. Nell was 44 years old and James A. Reed was 72 years old. The marriage lasted nearly 11 years, until Reed died of pneumonia in 1944. Nell often said those were the best years of her life and she never married again (O'Malley, 2006a; Wilding, 1987).

Life After Donnelly Garment Co. & Nelly Don Co. 1950s-1990s

While achieving phenomenal success as business owner, Donnelly never forgot about Lindenwood College and her first costume design teacher, Dr. Alice Linnemann. After establishing the DGC, Nell created Nelly Don scholarships and Prizes at Lindenwood College beginning in 1920s. Students in the Home Economics and Fine Art departments enrolled in costume design and clothing /textiles were awarded prizes every year for their dress designs and construction during the annual spring fashion show in Roemer Hall auditorium. This tradition lasted for over 40 years: 1920s-1950s. Nell also contributed the services of her French designer Mme. Helene Lyolene for 10 years, 1940s-1950s. Lindenwood Board of Director indicated that Lindenwood originally split the Mme. Helene Lyolene salary with DGC but eventually Nell paid all of her salary when the college faced financial difficulties during the late 1940s. Donnelly later partnered with McDonnell Aircraft Company and endowed a specialized computer/math program and Math Chair professorship. Donnelly frequently visited Lindenwood as a loyal philanthropist serving as a member on four Lindenwood College administrative boards from 1953 to the late 1970s (Board of Director Notes, 1950s-1970s).



Figure 8. Lindenwood College costume design students modeling their own fashions at spring style show (c. 1937). “These Lindenwood College girls have been “snapped” as they came of the stage” (Lindenwood Mary E. Amblers Archives).

In 1956, Nell recognized changes in the fashion industry and decided it was time for a change for her as well. Nell retired and sold the Donnelly Garment Company. It had been 40 years since she reinvented the dress apron, housedress, and frock that set the world on fire for American housewives. Retirement brought about a new life for Nell, she now was able to spend more time with family and advocate for social, humanitarian, and political issues she believed in. Most causes involved the advancement of women through higher education and career opportunities (Magerl, 2003; O’Malley, 2006a;

Wilding, 1987). Other civic involvement included the Kansas City Art Institute, Starlight Theater, the Kansas City School Board and as the first women on the board of the Midwest Research Institute (Magerl, 2003; O'Malley, 2006a; Wilding, 1987).

Without Donnelly's day to day guidance, the DGC renamed as the Nelly Don Company, declined in popularity over the next 20 years and filed for bankruptcy in 1978. Ellen Quinlan Donnelly Reed died on September 8, 1991 at the age of 102. Today, 26 years after Nell's death, when asked about the history of women's fashion, Coco Chanel, Paris, and New York come to mind. But, as history revealed from the mid-1900s to late 1950s, the Kansas City garment district was a major fashion market and Nelly Don was the anomaly that started it all with her romanticized notion of a pretty housewife in the kitchen looking lovely for her husband wearing a colorful and stylish housedress. Donnelly's production of her housedress revolutionized the design, manufacturing and marketing of women's clothing thus changing women's roles at home and beyond from domesticity to modernity while looking pretty and smart.

Chapter Three: Women's Entrepreneurship 1880s-1960s

Chapter Three further articulates the innovative mindset of Nell Quinlan Donnelly, which led to her millionaire status, one of two early 20th century women entrepreneurs, Madame C. J. Walker having been documented as the first. Nell transposed herself from housewife to CEO of Donnelly Garment Company and was known worldwide as Nelly Don. Chapter Three also examines the history and role of American women entrepreneurs as well as the garment and fashion industry, specifically the Midwest during pre and post-World Wars. The chapter concludes with historical details about Donnelly Garment Company (DGC) and the Nelly Don clothing brand. Nell Quinlan Donnelly took a position against labor unions, but developed an effective and ethical business model that included a human resource department that provided generous benefits to all employees which was unusual during the early 20th century.

Kansas City Garment District

Kansas City, a growing Midwest City in the 1920s was fashionable, known for jazz musicians, speakeasies, flappers, and local mobsters. Kansas City was a place where many entrepreneurs took their first chance at becoming successful at something that inspired them. Dressmaker Nell Quinlan Donnelly was beginning to make her mark in history as a business owner and entrepreneur in 1919. As owner of Donnelly Garment Company (DGC), she employed 250 people, replicated Henry Ford's assembly line production, and came up with memorable taglines for ads including "Nelly Don, Just Try One On" and "Tis inward satisfaction to don a Nelly Don" (O'Malley, 2006a, pp. 3, 30).

Nell's success and achievements were evidence that women of her era could be producers and consumers outside the home by means of entrepreneurship. She never lost

her initial inspiration to dress middle class housewives in fashionable and stylish quality-made clothing in all sizes at an affordable price. By the end of the 1930s, DGC employed over a 1,000 and production levied sales up to \$3.5 million. New York's Seventh Avenue evolution into the fashion capital of America concentrated on production and sales of new styles while Nell Donnelly found her niche in loyal customers who lived in and with the clothes they bought (Bird, 1976). As a woman entrepreneur, Nell personally understood the needs and wants of other women that escaped the attention of her fellow men business owners. These men were not dressmakers who worried about women's dresses that were stylish and fit, nor did they understand the embarrassment of answering the door in a shapeless "housedress" (Bird, 1976). Nell Donnelly, known as Nelly Don, found a way to use her intuition and insight to build an economic empire.

American clothing manufacturers' major hubs were located in New York, Philadelphia, and New Jersey, but Kansas City had also found a niche market, American housewives. Wilson (2013), professor emerita of Textile and Apparel Management, University of Missouri, Columbia stated that Kansas City had "appeal, as it offered lower business cost, lower cost of living and plenty of laborers" (Mizzou Weekly, 2013). The success of Nelly Don as an entrepreneur and woman business owner caused a migration of designers to the Midwest City.

The Fashion of Domesticity

Women have always been entrepreneurs and business owners, but gaps in history due to insufficient documenting and recording over the past century have since become more relevant through historical research, including this study (Dingwall, 1956; Kwolek-Folland, 1998). The emergence of increased acceptance, prominence and progression of

female entrepreneurship along with more business opportunities are credited to the women who led this feminist movement (Albert R. Mann Library, 2005; Kwolek-Folland, 1998; O'Malley, 2006a). Some women pursued opportunities in entrepreneurship by establishing their own companies in spite of the purview of the women's sphere. Women's initial roles in private business and the public workforce were identified by cultural beliefs and the societal value of women and their role in society (Blaszcyk, 2002). Idealistic perceptions related to the fashion of domesticity shaped early 19th century American women and dictated their role in the home. Publicly, the perception of domesticity aligned directly with the type of occupations thought suitable for women. These perceptions led to themes associated with domesticity, including mothering and nurturing which ranked high in women dominated industries. By the late 19th century American women began to dominate businesses and professions involving food preparation and serving, production, retail and care of clothing and care giving jobs such as librarians, midwifery, nursing, education, and social work (Bird, 1976; Blaszcyk, 2002; Solomon, 1985). While these pioneering 19th century women found employment in the small and divisive workforce throughout America, their business ventures were circumscribed by a set of social expectations regarding what was thought befitting of women in American society.

The decades framing American history from the 1880s–1920s witnessed a surge in women's participation in business as both entrepreneurs and pink collar workers beyond the home (Blaszcyk, 2002). Significant economic changes in American history were brought about by the rise of corporate business, industrialization and urbanization, which slowly and eventually contributed to redefining women's role in American

business. Women began working outside the home, and were able to find jobs as “helpmates” of various types, “pink collar” jobs (Blaszczyk, 2002; Leach, 1984). Many of these women inspired startup businesses that targeted niche markets that were comprised of women like themselves who were in need of a product, service and/or clothing that was unavailable to them. One of these women entrepreneurs, a pioneer in the American fashion industry who revolutionized the production of women’s ready to wear clothing (1919-1960s) in Kansas City, Missouri was Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed, aka “Nelly Don”, one of America’s first woman entrepreneurs and millionaire of the early 20th century.

This historical research study defines the term “entrepreneur” to refer to a woman who encapsulated an idea for a service or product through an innovative mindset and started a business of her own. American history prior to the late 1970s documented that women did not use the term “entrepreneur” to acknowledge their businesses but instead named themselves “sidelines” or part-time projects, similar terminology associated with “helpmates” during the early 20th century (Bird, 1976). Entrepreneurship was understood by early 20th century women as what men did even though American women have owned businesses since colonial settlement in America. Bird (1976) revealed in *Enterprising Women* that before the 20th century most business ventures women commanded dealt with warding off poverty after the loss and/or abandonment of a spouse or a way for an unmarried woman to generate income. While this research study did not specifically explore women entrepreneurship in early 20th century America, it did acknowledge and recognize that women’s business ownership reserved a place in the expansive history of entrepreneurship in America.

The New Women Entrepreneurs: 1900-1930s

Progressivism, feminism, consumerism, and immigration during the first half of the 20th century were all social ideologies that gave rise to a new climate of modernity for women. This evolutionary era of modernity was not only relevant to women's entrepreneurship, but influenced society as a whole (Bird, 1976; Blaszczyk, 2002; Solomon, 1985). The changing climate from domesticity to modernity impressionably shaped how women perceived themselves within the realm of business. Like many women of this era, Nell Quinlan Donnelly acknowledged a simple but universal problem that was identifiable among many other American housewives. This business venture precluded the transformation of clothing for American housewives. The lack of stylish, affordable, and quality made clothing allowed Nell to build an allegiance among many American housewives. Nell sought a primary niche market and took a simple and practical women's clothing issue and innovatively turned it into a million dollar business within a decade (O'Malley, 2006a). Both fashion and business historians have concluded that the New Women Entrepreneurs tinged their businesses with an urgency that illuminated frustration, desire and risk for the advancement of women (Bird, 1976; Blaszczyk, 2002; Solomon, 1985). These women who utilized innate domestic skills and made them profitable to sustain their existence in problematic times were the first known women entrepreneurs. This tinging of New Women Entrepreneurs have been remembered throughout Nell Quinlan Donnelly's life as she and her company persevered and served American women for decades. Examples of her life's work can be seen in her educational leadership, business leadership and ultimately her philanthropic humanitarian acts of giving, which will be detailed in later chapters. Nell Quinlan Donnelly was a

signature model for the New Woman Entrepreneur who incorporated her business with a sense of purpose beyond simple economics of a “helpmate” or a “sideliner” to her spouse.

Nell Quinlan Donnelly, co-founder and owner of Donnelly Garment Company (DGC) was one of these women who took over their small clothing business while her husband was off to war, and she turned it into a million dollar business by the time he returned home. The dawn of the 20th century labeled the acts of enterprising women as ventures, later to be named businesses and eventually women’s entrepreneurship. The changes brought forth from the acknowledgement of women in business were due to aspects of lives of ordinary women in America and from the domesticity to modernity in the public sphere. Women’s movements of this era emphasized and advocated for equal rights, recognized newly formed women’s organizations and the rise of a new generation of educated and professionally employed women who began to transform the traditional patriarchal social structure (Solomon, 1985). By the middle of the 20th century, women like Nell were being recognized as pioneering figures in the ever changing cultural landscape, marking revolutionary changes in social and domestic roles of American women.

Future (1935), a newsweekly publication, reported in an article “Snapshots of the Week” that Nell Donnelly Reed of Kansas City was rated the fourth most prominent business woman in the country. A closing remark, “A nice hand for Nelly Don” aka “The Grand Lady” of the garment industry was concluded in the “Snapshot of the Week” article (Future, 1935, n.p.). In another fashion industry publication *Panorama*, Wainwright (1937) wrote an article titled *Fashion’s Famous* that captured the

unprecedented disbelief of Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed's rise to success as a New Woman Entrepreneur.

Like most good and honest people the world over, Middle Westerners are the last to see the phenomenon which has sprung up in their own midst, and it remains for strangers from far parts to gasp at a Fashion Center in Kansas City. (Wainwright, 1937, para. 1)

The Nelly Don brand began to receive notoriety from the fame of the house dress. By the late 1930s, the company's sudden spike in profits became constant, and Nell Quinlan Donnelly's chief commitment was maintaining the demand for her newly designed women's wear. Her idea of a one-dollar house dress evolved into a multi-million dollar industry as mentioned in previous chapters and gave Nell her original nickname, "Peck's Bad Girl" (Browning, 1949, para. 2). *The Chicago Tribune* archives noted at the same time in New York, 20 percent of dress manufacturers were closing each year, while the other 80 percent had yearly profits of 6 million, and considered their companies successful (Browning, 1949). Middle Class American women wanted fashionable clothes and were the new consumers in a bustling garment industry. *The Chicago Tribune* also reported with such a diverse and segregated clothing industry mimicking Parisian clothiers, the U.S. garnered approximately 9,000 manufacturers who tried to capture the market (Browning, 1949). The supply and demand of big business mass production of ready-to-wear clothing for fickle American women became less stable, more concentrated and more mechanized like the manufacturing of automobiles, all factors Nell Quinlan Donnelly understood and used to her advantage.

In the Kansas City garment industry, in spite of the uncertainty in the women's fashion market, Nelly Don apparel sales topped 14 million dollars annually (Bird, 1976; Browning, 1949; O'Malley, 2006a; Whang, 2011). Past historians questioned how one individual, Nell Donnelly, successfully took dominance of the women's ready to wear clothing market. DGC's high standard of regulated quality, stylish fashions, and affordability were the guiding principles of design. Nell Quinlan Donnelly's shrewd business sense and uncanny eye for forecasting new style trends defined her as a new woman entrepreneur. She had courage and the skill set to defy tradition and move from constraints of domesticity to modernity in both manufacturing and style designing during the mid-20th century. While other garment manufacturers thought it was impossible to expand their businesses because of the volatile fashion and clothing market, Donnelly was ingeniously adapting her sewing machinery. A reporter from *The St. Louis Star*, 1931 asked while discussing manufacturing as a field for women:

What has been the keynote of your success? Nell Donnelly replied "I suppose my love for individuality always had something to do with it; I wanted distinctive dresses for women in their homes. I was rather unusual again; I entered a field hitherto dominated only by men, refused to follow many of the methods they used in turning out hundreds of dresses of the same style and pattern.

(Individuality, 1931, para. 6-7)

Donnelly Garment Company's business operations under the leadership of Nell Quinlan Donnelly allowed her to be one of the first to adopt the innovative auto industry "sectional system" method (O'Malley, 2006a). DGC employees were masterfully skilled in only one area of dress production, such as button holes, hemming, belts, under arm

seams, collars, sleeves, etc. Employees were sub-divided into 20-40 small dress making stations. *The St. Louis Star* (1931) reported Nell insisted that each dress be completed within individual stations, so seamstresses always saw the finished garment, encouraging personal interest and pride in workmanship (Individuality, 1931, para.10). Most manufacturers were still employing one person to construct one dress at a time, a less profitable method of garment construction. The sectional system that DGC incorporated, modeled after Henry Ford's automobile assembly line, produced and manufactured dresses in record time as a result of sewing expertise of each skilled seamstress (Snider, 1991; White, 1984).

Business associates and friends thought Donnelly's success warranted expanding DGC manufacturing to New York if she wanted to stay profitable in the fashion business (Browning, 1949; O'Malley, 2006a; Wainwright, 1937). But "if we can make nice dresses at the right prices in Kansas City" she retorted, "why move to New York?" (Browning, 1949, para. 15). Instead Donnelly decided to personally market her line of clothing in New York, coming back with "dozens of fat orders from eastern buyers" in the mid 1920s (Browning, 1949, para. 6). Interstate commerce was now part of the DGC marketing and production, immediately expanding business to stores in St. Louis, Des Moines, Cleveland, and Detroit. Success from the Midwest markets ultimately led to cross country sales from Maine to California; housewives across the U.S. were dressed in Nelly Don fashions. The DGC eventually acquired a New York office in the Empire State Building. Nelly Don dresses were selling out in the high-end department store Bloomingdale's and *Fortune Magazine* named her as one of the most successful business women in the United States (O'Malley, 2006a).

A manifesto that simply stated “women want to look pretty even while washing dishes” was Nell Quinlan Donnelly’s secret to popularity (T. M. O’Malley, personal communication, June 13, 2015). Dresses made by DGC were not just sold as fashionable with good designs but of high quality and fit; this was an imperative standard upheld by Donnelly. The idea that Donnelly had for the house dress to fit properly on a woman’s body was revolutionary in 1916. The design principle incorporated into her styles and manufacturing practices, required dresses be fitted on live models for shape and size (O’Malley, 2006a; Whang, 2011). Donnelly and her first two seamstresses were used as initial models, sizing for small, medium and large. As the DGC business grew, more specific sizes were added. Nell believed that all dress sizes should flatter a woman’s size and shape (O’Malley, 2006a); this was another profitable and innovative clothing production feature that would later become an industry standard. In addition to a flattering fit, fashion forward thinking and designs were essential to her success as a clothing manufacturer. *The St. Louis Star* (1931) quoted Nell Donnelly as saying “My designers cannot just draw a pretty picture and let it go at that; they have to see model with dress on and determine will the design be as becoming in size 42 as in size 16, thus making adjustments” (Individuality, 1931, para. 9). Annual trips to Europe afforded Nell to shop for luxurious printed silks and negotiate licenses to reprint designs on her cotton and rayon fabrics, another marvel that brilliantly dressed mid-class American women in high fashion ready to wear prints. *The St. Louis Star*, 1931 quoted Donnelly, “My fabrics are individualized, I buy the designs in Paris and Vienna, and have them up according to my ideas in American factories, giving a wide latitude of choice” (Individuality, 1931, para. 9). Donnelly’s innovativeness and knowledge in textile science moved her forward

in the fashion and manufacturing industry. She also pledged to never sell her reprinted fabrics by the yard, it would degrade the value of the finished garment. Nell continued to position DGC as leader in the expanding American ready-to-wear woman's clothing market and into international business.

By the late 1920s, DGC dress production reached record breaking numbers in the women's garment industry. Nell Quinlan Donnelly had no tolerance for sub-standard workmanship; she only accepted the best. Donnelly's own answer to the fashion industry was "high fashion, high quality and low cost" a mission that prevailed throughout her tenure at DGC (Browning, 1949, para. 5). Her business ethic and leadership skills were known throughout the clothing industry along with the educational leadership she shared personally with DGC employees. Nell's spatial and kinetic way of processing and problem-solving was evident in the everyday operations of DGC. All of her employees were taught to sew her way, and clothing patterns were always simple and classic in style. The DGC quality measure of excellence included details such as generous hems, side seam allowances, and high grade notions, buttons and tape, along with personally selected fine fabrics. These elements of design not only enhanced quality but the longevity of the garment. Each garment was designed and produced with individual alteration as an option. Nell Quinlan Donnelly was the last of three quality control inspectors to view garments before finishing and shipping out. At the end of production, Nelly Don dresses were tissue wrapped with an inserted signature tag arriving fresh and clean to stores (O'Malley, 2006a). It was these type of details along with strict quality control protocols that made the Nelly Don line of a clothing a phenomena till the 1960s.



Figure 9. Donnelly Garment Company "Dresses by the Thousands" using Nell Donnelly's unique "ski run" method to move dresses (c. 1949) (The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City, c. 1949. *Nelly Don at Home Catalogs*, folder 35).

Nell Quinlan Donnelly once again proved her entrepreneurial insight during the Great Depression. She kept her garment factory in production year-round and kept workers employed despite the adverse conditions. It was her innovation of the Handy Dandy Apron designed to protect women's clothing in the kitchen and featured pockets that held utensils, oven mitts, and other small household items.



*Figure 10. The “moving finger”; a new conveyer system that carries dresses from the ultra-modern pressing room to shipping area where they hang color by color in double – deck cabanas ready for delivery to 2,500 stores worldwide (c. 1940s) (The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City, *Nelly Don at Home Catalogs*, folder 35).*

Nell patented the low cost Handy Dandy apron to deter knock off versions of her specialty apron and to replace dress sales while keeping her workers employed during World War II. The garment was designed and manufactured without having to remove the garment from the sewing machine during stitching, thus reducing production time and allowing for production of an affordable product. The aprons came in floral prints, gingham checks, and stripes and sold for \$6.50 a dozen, a profit for the DGC (O’Malley, 2006a). The patent approved Handy Dandy Apron encouraged fashion conscious women, who wore luxury brand clothing before the Great Depression, to shop the Nelly Don brand for the haute couture look at affordable prices.

World Wars and Women Businesses: 1930s-1960s

At the close of World War II, many American women were no longer needed in or accepted in the workforce because of returning soldiers. This exodus of skilled women from the workforce encouraged some women to start their own businesses, especially those whose husbands returned home injured or were killed at war. This was another time when women sought the opportunity of entrepreneurship as an added incentive and means to provide for themselves and their families. The Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs and state officials, all initially established in New York City, provided workshops for aspiring entrepreneurs while *Reader's Digest* included women among the winners of the 1946 competition for best business ideas. The American press hailed post-war women entrepreneurs for their contribution to the nation's economy by the creation of new businesses as the number of women owned businesses jumped from 600,000 in 1945 to approximately one million by 1950 (Hartman, 1983; Johnson, 1950; Miller, 1948). By the mid-1940s DGC had been in business for over 30 years and was an industry leader in ready-to-wear women's clothing. In 1947, Nell Quinlan Donnelly's response to a newspaper reporter regarding a woman's ability to be successful as an entrepreneur and own a clothing company, was, "It takes no more energy than bridge. And I don't like bridge" (Wilding, 1987, pp. 8-11).

Nell Quinlan Donnelly and the DGC survived the American fashion market in spite of influential Parisian dominance during pre and post war times. Nell took on several roles while leading and operating DGC: secretary/treasurer, head designer, production supervisor, marketer, and later president. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Nell had a flair for marketing and used her life story of an American housewife to establish the

Nelly Don brand, the “Modern Business Romance” that she and Paul Donnelly created. The “Modern Business Romance” pamphlet designed and published by Nell told the story about the early days of DGC and expanded marketing and sales of her housedresses helping to better promote the Nelly Don brand. Nell also captured the persona of Nelly Don by using a type of brand imaging known as “life-style marketing,” making her a celebrity (O’Malley, 2006a). The DGC had a specialized public relations and marketing department. Beulah Spilsbury, director of public relations and fashion promotions, worked closely with retailers on fashion shows and television appearances and seasonal advertising circulars that had catchy taglines like “Tis Inward Satisfaction to don a Nelly Don” (O’Malley, 2006a). She was known as “Nelly Don” to her customers and the fashion industry, creating a connection between herself and her clothing line. The Nelly Don name had become somewhat of a legend and evoked the attention of NBC (radio). On January 17, 1950 the producer of the Cavalcade of America radio program broadcasted to a national radio audience of 8 million listeners “The Golden Needle: The Story of Nelly Don,” a publicized portrayal of Nelly Don that added to her notoriety and growing fame as an international dressmaker. DGC depleted marketing opportunities in the quest to sell Nelly Don as a household name. Outside retailers who carried the Nelly Don brand in their stores were under contract to exclusively sell her line of dresses. In return, DGC provided retailers with extensive and ongoing marketing support, a profitable relationship for both.

Although American designers responded to the clothing needs and wants of American women, the Parisians still eclipsed and dominated the fashion sector. The French fashion industry targeted the American clothing industry, customers, and their

money. Historically, Americans were not given credit for their designs early in the 20th century due to lack of attention from the press. Parisian designers were recognized for exquisite designs and known worldwide as superior creators of haute couture. American designers, to the contrary, were commended on their technical abilities for copying Parisian designers. Advertising and editorial literature boosted French designers, whereas American designer names were rarely mentioned in fashion advertising periodicals. During the buying season, Parisians led decisions, trends, and innovative fashion styles that were published in American department and specialty store advertisements. Retailers rarely commented or supported American designers or their merchandise. Instead, most clothing was labeled under the manufacturer's name, a department store, or even a fake Parisian name rather than the creative mind of the designer, thus causing American designer's failure in attracting loyal following of costumers.

Nell Quinlan Donnelly saw beyond American advertising barriers, and for years designed, marketed, and sold the Nelly Don label exclusively without other manufacturers removing and disqualifying her name. As an entrepreneur first, she understood the power and necessity of marketing and having diversified media plan circulars, radio, newspapers, pamphlets, miniature books, fashion dolls, magazine articles, and 16mm film of action for advertising Nelly Don dresses (O'Malley, 2006a). Ultimately, Nell marketing herself as Nelly Don was the greatest advertising innovation that built the Nelly Don Empire. The marketing and advertising techniques used by Donnelly later enabled American designers to solicit and build consumer appreciation for

good designs, even in inexpensive merchandise, therefore urging American retailers to sincerely and intelligently support American talent (Marcketti & Parsons, 2007).

Nell Quinlan Donnelly, initially known as a designer, was a progressive and compassionate business woman. As DGC became more successful, Donnelly understood the welfare of her employees contributed to her success. She was among one of the first in any industry to advocate and provide better working conditions and higher wages (Wilding, 1987). DGC was the first in Kansas City to offer employees group hospitalization plans, onsite medical services, social and morale building programs such as free coffee and doughnuts each morning, and lemonade and snacks in the afternoon. A five-acre estate owned by the Donnelly's was converted to a country club for DGC employees for company parties, hiking, fishing, and personal use as well as a recreation center in town for dances, sports, and theater productions. Nell also provided an onsite grocery store and a cafeteria serving inexpensive nutritious meals and a Nelly Don fabric and dress store (O'Malley, 2006a; Wilding, 1987). Lastly, DGC employees benefited from an unlimited number of tuition paid courses and scholarships for themselves and their children at local colleges (Snider, 1991). "She believed in education for women and their families and gave generously to her employees and Lindenwood College students where she was an alum" (T. M. O'Malley, personal communication, June 13, 2015).

By 1947, Nell Donnelly moved DGC into a new million dollar building that consumed two city blocks. She continued to focus on educational opportunities and comfortable working conditions for employees. Electric ceiling fans circulated the air, floor to ceiling heat resistant windows tinted light blue framed the east and west walls, and softened the glare of the sun (O'Malley, 2006a). Favorable working conditions

resulted in the employment of over 1,000 employees. The majority were women and about 400 worked for DGC for 20 years. Wages at DGC allowed for 60% of employees to own their own homes. Many Kansas City residents regarded DGC as an ideal place for women to work. Children of DGC employees were known to taunt other children and brag that their “Mommy” worked for Nelly Don (Chicago Tribune, 1949).



Figure 11. The new Donnelly Garment Company building, Kansas City Missouri (c. 1947) (The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City, *Nelly Don at Home Catalogs*, folder 35).

Further research identified the 1950s as a memorable time in the history of DGC. Donnelly was still actively involved in her company, Lindenwood College, and other civic activities. The history and success of Donnelly Garment Company was important to Nell Quinlan Donnelly and the world. In 1952, a public exhibit dedicated to the 36 year history of Donnelly Garment Company was on display on the Avenue of the Americas in Rockefeller Center, New York. This was the first time Arthur Kleeman, then president of Colonial Trust Company invited a garment company to exclusively use the bank’s show

windows in the center (Clippings, re: Nelly Don, political, 1948-1952). The historical display of 24 inch miniature dolls showcased 36 of the most popular dresses in the company's history. No details were forgone as Nell wanted every doll to look life-like including hair, hats, dress details, accessories, and shoes all replicated to the year of representation. The exhibit also included a complete history in background artifacts built to scale; miniature sewing machines from various time periods, dress advertisements and the first imported voiles and printed fabrics that were designed exclusively for Donnelly Garment Company. A staff of 12 from the advertising and promotion and the art department spent over three months to complete details on the historical project. In addition to the dolls, 36 pictures of the dresses matted in fabric and framed in natural wood by the Kansas City Art Institute were also part of the exhibit.

The Donnelly Garment Company's historical display was believed to be the first of a garment company's history in a miniature exhibit (Clippings, re: Nelly Don, political, 1948-1952). The historic miniature dolls attracted much attention in New York City, while neither time, detail and accuracy or money was spared in the perfection of the project. At the close of the New York exhibit, the miniature doll display was returned to Donnelly Garment Company where it was permanently housed as an historic exhibit. Nell Quinlan Donnelly's place in society as a leader, specifically her realization of the need and ability to showcase the history of Donnelly Garment Company for the public to view is just more evidence that justified her as an educational leader outside of traditional educational norms. The miniature doll exhibit showcased in New York, the fashion epic sphere of America was more than just about the dresses. It was about the history of

Donnelly Garment Company, whose existence laid in Nell Quinlan Donnelly's life story, a women's history that had marked its place in time.



Figure 12. Nelly Don dolls from New York exhibit (c. 1951). Wilding, 1987 (Lindenwood University Mary A. Amblers Archives)

The Reed's Versus the International Ladies Garment Workers Union

DGC's reputation as an outstanding employer in 1937 was challenged by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). In the 1930s, one time president of the ILGWU, David Dubinsky, described the pursuit of unionizing DGC as the bitterest organizational battle in the union's history (Dubinsky & Raskin, 1977). "No company gave us greater trouble or proved a harder nut to crack" (Dubinsky & Raskin, 1977, p. 170). Employees were pressured to unionize and picketers harassed them outside the factory. After marrying Nell Quinlan Donnelly, James A. Reed became a legal advocate for his wife as her company feuded with Dubinsky and the ILGWU.

Forty years later, Dubinsky declared victory after organizing efforts and legislative measures filed in federal courts and the National Labor Relation Board. The company finally signed a contract in 1971, 14 years after Donnelly retired from DGC (Swisher, 2002). The ILGWU formally unionized DGC, later known as the Nelly Don Company, but only for a few years, as the company filed bankruptcy in 1978 and went out of business (Wilson, 1993).

The ILGWU allegedly accused DGC in 1937 of under paying and over working employees, and the speed-up system (sectional piece production) caused exhaustion among the women, a condition worsened by low wages and a work environment that was considered a sweatshop (Wilson, 1993). The evidence was to be disputed as many publications and employee allegiance proved differently. DGC working conditions were described as fair and comfortable, most employees appeared to be happy with many exhibiting devote loyalty (O'Malley, 2006a; Wilson, 1993). Employee wages were not the highest in the industry but far from the lowest. Rhetorical charges made by the ILGWU against DGC were to ignite public opinion (Dubinsky & Raskin, 1977). It was perceived that Nell's entrepreneur mind-set created a business model with a firm, conservative belief in the rights of DGC and restricted provisions allowing employees any decision making opportunities. Nell Quinlan Donnelly felt obliged that she could better serve her employees than outsiders, referring to the ILGWU leadership (O'Malley, 2006a; Wilson, 1993). In May 1937, Nell and her husband, James A. Reed spoke to the press concerning ILGWU's continuance to organize DGC. Swisher (2002) reported on an interview with the *St. Louis Missouri Star-Times 1937*, Nell Donnelly Reed recognized her employees by saying;

More as friends than as hired people, I have never attempted to interfere with my employees and they have always had full action of liberty...my attitude toward Dubinsky is that if my people want to accept his dictatorship they are at liberty to do so...But, my opinion is that they will receive better treatment at home from friends than they will from the Russian Dubinsky, who lives on the tribute levied on the wages of labor. (p. 28)

DGC employees, many who had trusted her for years created a Nelly Don Loyalty League membership headed by factory managers Martha Gray and Florence Henderson to keep outside agitators away and all but about six of the 1,300 employees became members (Swisher, 2002). Nelly Don Loyalty League members soon after established the independent Donnelly Garment Company Worker's Union in 1937 that remained in existence until 1971.

Nelly Don: Latter Years at Donnelly Garment Company

In April 1946, the Office of Price Administration (OPA) was established to control money (price control) and rents after the outbreak of World War II. They ordered Nell to stop dress production. In response, Nell packed up several pieces from her Nelly Don collection and traveled to Washington, DC, and before the senate and house banking committee presented her own fashion show. She asked:

Gentlemen, which is the best buy, this Suzy-Q original for \$69.95 or the Nelly Don for \$10.95? Don't you think dresses in good fabrics at moderate prices should be kept on the market at a time when the government is urging the public to avoid extra spending? (Browning, 1949, para. 37)

The senators and banking committee rescinded their original decisions after viewing the Nelly Don casuals and stood in agreement with Nell Quinlan Donnelly.

After 33 years in business, Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed still had one of her first employees and business account. The DGC had 32 salesmen on the road calling on accounts in 2,700 towns and cities, while 500 sewing machines all operated by women produced over 5,000 dozen dresses a day. DGC employed a few hand-picked models for fittings and photos while others were available for well-known Nelly Don fashion shows (T. M. O'Malley, personal communication, June 13, 2015). The designing room at DGC was Nell's favorite place to spend time as she often gave approval for new designs before going to production. She would minutely inspect dresses on models and never hesitated over altering a finished pattern as little as a 32nd of an inch if it improved the quality of the finished fit and look (Browning, 1949). Except for formal and evening wear events, Nell was usually dressed in one of her own Nelly Don designs, always an advocate and model for her company.

In 1956, with DGC at its peak, Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed sold her interest and retired from daily operations after leading the company for 40 years. The new owners, Nell's family who currently held interest in DGC and with her brother-in-law at the realm, renamed the company, Nelly Don, Inc., but by 1978 the company went bankrupt. The new owner lacked the instinct to understand what American women wanted in clothing and they were not as savvy as Nell was in design.



Figure 13. Lindenwood 4th Annual Fashion Design Alumni Showcase, 2015
Nelly Don dress (c.1950s). Courtesy of Thompson, *The Classic Modern Society* personal historic costume collection.

During the last century, women entrepreneurship was not documented as much as men's history. Much of the history is embedded in the lives of women whose oral histories have not been heard and recorded as archived American women's history. Women's entrepreneurship has become a historiography of risk and triumphs that are a part of an incomplete revolution of women's history. Nell Quinlan Donnelly's innate entrepreneur skill set, astute business sense, and mannerisms along with innovative design instinct set her apart from many other women of her era. Her personal qualities and professional ambitions led DGC to a multi-million dollar women's clothing business until her retirement in 1957. Donnelly's dress designs were not just aesthetically pleasing but functional as she explained in 1916 (O'Malley, 2006a) when she designed the pink gingham check frock as an alternative to the Mother Hubbard dress. She understood in 1916 that there was a difference between fashion and clothing, which afforded her instant success as a fashion designer and entrepreneur. She knew all aspects of the business and

kept pace with the changing fashion market. DGC set the standard for designs that were viewed in vogue, a look for women that spanned sixty years. Nell Quinlan Donnelly designed and constructed clothing that “combined the pleasing aesthetics, practicality, durability, and affordability into one garment” (Reilly & Kaiser, 2015, p. 8).

Nell Quinlan Donnelly had an idea and believed in the possibilities of entrepreneurship, and was able to personally use herself as brand and label. Nelly Don, that pretty housewife and later the smart dress women seen across America and abroad, all started with the romanticized idea of looking pretty for her husband (Chafe, 1977; Evans, 1979; Freeman, 1975; O’Malley, 2006a).

Chapter Four: The Evolution of Home Economics in America 1900s-1960s

Chapter Four exposes the barriers faced by early 20th century women who pursued a higher education degree and career choices in the professional work environment. The chapter begins with a historical perspective on liberal arts higher education institutions for women only, education and training aligned with changing expectations for women, and educational program(s) academia best suited for women. Chapter Four concludes with relevant evidence about Lindenwood College retrieved from archived Director of Board notes and other published literature that highlighted the educational experience for Lindenwood students, including Ellen Quinlan Donnelly.

Clothing and Textiles Programs

Today's higher education fashion and clothing/textile programs commonly have been associated with departments of design, fine arts, business, agriculture, engineering, human services, human ecology, family and consumer sciences, or human environmental sciences (Bye, 2010; Ha-Brookshire & Hawley, 2012). A historical overview of clothing and textiles as an academic discipline is necessary to understand the role and function of fashion when associated with academia. It is also important to have acknowledged that clothing and textile (C & T) and other related fashion design programs were academic content areas taught at the secondary as well as higher education levels. The initials C&T are commonly used to represent an umbrella of academic programs related to "clothing, apparel, fashion, and textiles found in today's higher education" (Ha-Brookshire & Hawley, 2012, p. 18). Clothing and Textile programs today are just as much controversial as their practical yet complex beginnings.

Historically, clothing and textile programs in higher education institutions were often brought under scrutiny by some women educational leaders. The pursuit of careers in the fashion and textile industry were not promising after completing a degree program at liberal arts institutions, whether private or public pre and post war. There were apparent restrictions that hindered American women in the fashion and clothing textile industry; mainly the type of training and/or education received and what career opportunities could be found. Typically, if a student had an interest or an innate skill set in the area of fashion and could afford tuition, they attended specialized schools, for example, Parsons School of Design, Fashion Institute of Technology and Rhode Island School of Design, all located on the Eastern Seaboard. With more advanced training, some women were able to obtain employment as fashion designers and operate their own dressmaking company. Demographically, fashion industry stakeholders were often restricted to large cities where garment facilities were located, where there was an available and skilled work force, and a lucrative consumer market, usually on the east coast (Rury, 1984). For women in rural communities, this did not prove feasible or offer many educationally opportunities that supported careers in the fashion and clothing industry. The cost of an education in clothing and textiles was often not justifiable given the benefits of employment in the industry (Rury, 1984).

Home Economics

“New scholarship in American women's history suggests that home economics was a progressive field that brought science to the farm home and women into higher education and leadership positions in public education, academia, government and industry” (Albert R. Mann Library, 2005, para. 1).

The history of Home Economics can be documented for more than 150 years in America. The economics and sciences of maintaining a home were the intended fundamental concepts when establishing the discipline and profession of Domestic Science in the mid-1800s, later to be renamed Home Economics at the turn of the century. This new area of study was a critical and direct pathway into higher education for American women, largely associated with land grant institutions. Since inception, “collegiate home economics has been multidisciplinary and integrative with an emphasis on science applied to the real world of the home, families and communities” (Albert R. Mann Library, 2005, para. 2). In the early decades of the 20th century, home economists, whether an educator or professional in the field, pursued connections to revitalization of agriculture and rural communities, but also to Progressive Era programs in urban cities.

For most of the 1800s, education in America beyond middle school was rare and not expected for much of society, especially women (Stewart, 2011). By the 1830s, opportunities for an education equivalent to high school for women began as academies, seminaries, and later normal schools offered higher education coursework for teaching and domesticity training. Historically, there were just a few careers accepted by societal norms for women. Bethlehem Female Seminary founded in 1742 by the Moravians in Germantown, Pennsylvania was the first acknowledged school that provided a higher education for women (Solomon, 1985).

Catherine Beecher, daughter of Lyman Beecher an outspoken Presbyterian leader, and an educator who founded Hartford Female Seminary in 1831, allowed women the opportunity to receive a broader education than what was available at that time (Stewart, 2011). Beecher was one of the first advocates for home economics education. In 1841

Beecher authored the *Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies at Home*, a book that founded the academic field of Domestic Science, and revealed and discussed the subordination of women's roles in society (Albert R. Mann Library, 2005; Stewart, 2011). Her book was one of the first used to educate women about home economics and was the first complete guide to housekeeping in America. Beecher was at the forefront in recognizing the importance of educating young girls and women about homemaking.

The Morrill Act of 1862 exceeded the opportunities in domestic science as land grant colleges recognized benefits in educating farm wives in how to operate productively and safely in their households while their husbands sought education in agricultural methods and processes. The first states to become leaders in offering educational programming of this type were Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, Minnesota and Michigan (Matthews, 1987; *History of Home Economics*, n.d.). The expansion of land grant college programming increased educational alternatives for women and began to break societal norms that held them back, but subsequently only the privileged upper class women were afforded the opportunity to obtain an education beyond a secondary level (Radek, 2006).

The discipline of Home Economics, now known as Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), has historical notations dating back to 1909. Ellen Swallow Richards is regarded as the "single founder from Massachusetts Institute of Technology" who originally named the discipline Domestic Science (Collins, 2002, p. 276). Richards preferred the name domestic science and was highly regarded for the application of science to the improvement of living conditions, specifically the home. In 1904,

Richards, an instructor in Sanitary Chemistry at Massachusetts Institute of technology, stated “home economics stands for the ideal home life for today unhampered by the traditions of the past and the utilization of all the resources of modern science to improve home life” (Albert R. Mann Library, 2005, *Some words on Home Economics*, para. 1).

At the turn of the century, American women continued to be isolated in feminized service professions such as nursing, teaching, social work, librarianship or any other profession that associated women as helpmates (Albert R. Mann Library, 2005, *Some words on Home Economics*, 2005). The same was true for women associated with the discipline and/or profession of Home Economics, as the struggle to be acknowledged as a scientist while being identified as a part of the culture of women inhibited the progression of women. Home economic programs cultivated new experiences for women who once were labeled helpmates in America. This new generation of women later became entrepreneurs, educators and better informed homemakers satisfying an assortment of employable niches in society. Home Economic professionals and educators began a series of annual conferences held between 1899 -1909 beginning and ending in Lake Placid, New York in which they defended the profession regarding the nature of the discipline and purpose, debated what the profession should be named, established the group as a professional association, and published their first research journal (Albert R. Mann Library, 2005, *Some words on Home Economics*).

Ten years after the first meeting at Lake Placid, the group was formally recognized in 1909 as the American Home Economics Association (AHEA) with the purpose and mission of improving human living environments and conditions involving the home, institutions and communities. There were many women graduates from the

named land grant colleges before the Lake Placid Conferences which ultimately gave birth to the home economic movement. Historical research confirmed, until the first Lake Placid Conference in 1889, documentation recording the history of domestic science as a discipline and/or profession was non-existent (Albert R. Mann Library, 2005, *Some words on Home Economics*; History of Home Economics, n.d.).

After the 1909 Lake Placid conference, the next decade of home economists began developing their credentials and initiated the earning of advanced degrees in the field. By the early to mid-1920s, two significant government issued legislative acts were approved that supported home economics education. In 1914, the Smith-Lever Act was enacted, preceding the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917. Of such great importance, the Smith-Lever Act was garnered around the creation of the Agriculture Extension Service, thus allowing women further teaching opportunities in home economics programs and for women in rural communities to benefit from the services offered (Vincenti, 1997). Later, the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 was established by the federal government to support vocational education at higher education institutions. Ironically, members of home economics departments throughout the United States were not involved in the drafting or passing of the act but the change in departments as a result of approved funding, gave way to expansion and further opportunities in home economic vocational education.

East vs. West

Although, domestic science was an area of academia that was encouraged and promoted to women, there was a divide in philosophies about the delivery of teaching and learning methods and academic content, known as home economics. The divide involved separating institutions by their location: schools in the East and schools in the

West. This is best described by associating schools in the East as the cooking schools that acknowledged the scientific approach to solving problems in the home. These beliefs are associated with Ellen Swallow Richards and transcended forward into the 1920s when the first major adaptations began to occur in the academic discipline.

The schools in the West had their interest in agriculture and manufacturing which led to a blend of science and practical hands-on learning. Nellie Kedzie, the founder of the department of Domestic Economy at Bradley Polytechnic Institute in the mid-19th century, based her school on the Industrial Model (Collins, 2002). Kedzie, a 1878 graduate from Kansas State Agricultural College, was educated in the Western Kansas tradition where many families did not have domestic help, and where the Industrial Model was based on a balance of doing and knowing, a hands on practical approach. Her priority was to have established a Domestic Economy program with realistic goals and outcomes that taught students the knowledge and skill sets to have clean, sanitary homes during a time when women lacked formal education (Collins, 2002). This blended approach to learning, often adapted by Midwest land grant institutions, involved scientific methods and practical hands-on learning (Collins, 2002; Stewart, 2011). Nellie Kedzie and Ellen Richards were comrades and advocates but also opponents in the ideology of Home Economics academic pedagogy (Collins, 2002). In spite of their two differing philosophies, historians believe both Nellie Kedzie and Ellen Richards made profound accomplishments in the development of modern day Home Economics and/or Family and Consumer Sciences disciplines as they exist today (Collins, 2002; Vincenti, 1997).

In 1920, the American Association of Land Grant Colleges deemed it worthy to add departments of home economics at higher education institutions. A paradigm shift from college departments just educating women about housework, now included more comprehensive home economic departments benefitting all aspects of the home and family, and parent education courses for both women and men were added (Vicenti, 1997). The revised standard curriculum for home economics, after the enactment of several governmental acts supporting the discipline, four major areas of study became the foci. The first foci was food sanitation /preparation, meal planning and nutrition. Second was the study of fashion and textile design, including dressmaking, textile construction, fashion illustration and millinery. The third foci, household management provided coursework in planning, furnishing and the necessary maintenance of a home. Lastly, the study of general home economics, a comprehensive plan of study comprised of supporting pedagogy for teacher education preparation. All content focus areas had strong connections to domestic science, whether scientific in nature (East) or practical teaching/learning (West).

The specificity of home economic program development was required to further acknowledge the academic importance of the discipline. The purpose of home economic areas of study or specialties was not to enhance the basics of home study but the scientific training that is rooted in the curriculum, as the founding members of the America Home Economics Association regarded in 1909(Collins, 2002; Vicenti, 1997 .



Figure 14. Lindenwood college students in domestic art laboratory, c. 1914 (Lindenwood University *Mary E. Amblers Archives*).



Figure 15. Lindenwood college students in domestic art laboratory (c. 1917) (Lindenwood University *Mary E. Amblers Archives*).



Figure 16. Lindenwood college domestic science laboratory (c. 1917-1920)
(Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).

Lindenwood: A Small Midwest Liberal Arts College for Women

Mary E. Sibley (1800-1878) founder of Linden Wood boarding school for girls, later named Lindenwood Female College in 1832 and currently Lindenwood University was a pre-industrial reactionary leader when compared to her female contemporaries. In the beginning, late 1820s, there was Linden Wood a boarding school for girls, then Lindenwood College for Women, the oldest women's college west of the Mississippi, and currently Lindenwood University. Lindenwood College, "the educational leader of

the great Southwest” (Lindenwood College, 1919, para. 1) was the realization of one woman’s vision.

In the 20th century, Lindenwood College for Females, located in Missouri often considered a southern state, prescribed to the philosophy of the East regarding teaching and learning methods. By the 1910s Lindenwood began modeled itself after Wellesley College for Women (P. Huffman, personal communication, October 17, 2015; K. Smith, personal communication, May 24, 2014). Wellesley College, established in 1870, shared a similar sense of making history for women in higher education. Wellesley’s founder, Henry Fowle Durant, a Harvard graduate, former lawyer and businessman, later a converted lay preacher along with his wife Pauline, provided women “opportunities for education equivalent to those usually provided in colleges for men” (Solomon, 1985, p. 48). Durant had visions of educating young women with strong religious beliefs and preparing them for womanhood whether as homemakers or professionals. Durant was quoted saying that his school would be another for “the glory of God” and “the higher education of Women is one of the great battle cries for freedom (Solomon, 1985, p. 48).

These spoken words inspired and led to a new generation of leadership at Lindenwood College. Lindenwood College for Women, transformed itself to “The Wellesley of the West” to give “Character to the Education of Women in the Middle West” (In memoriam Col. James A. Butler, 1917). Col. James Gay Butler (1860-1916), a lifelong friend, philanthropist and benefactor to Lindenwood College was given credit for the new Lindenwood and hiring Dr. John L. Roemer in 1914 for academic leadership. Col. Butlers’ educational and societal vision for Lindenwood College and its students would be challenged over the next few decades. Lindenwood’s educational mission

became one of curricular contingency between the importance of liberal arts that aligned with elite women's colleges and practical vocational aspects of Midwest colleges, offering student's a different type of experience, one designed to prepare women for the kind of lives that would be productive in 20th century America (Marthers, 2011).

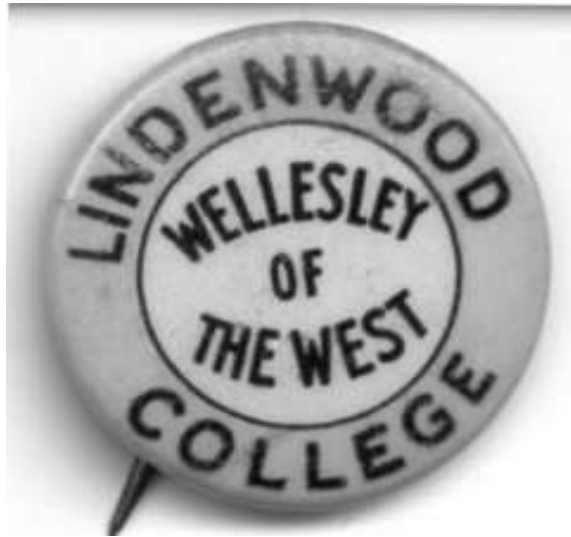


Figure 17. Wellesley of the West pin (c. 1914-1915) (Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).

Home Economics: A Woman's Sphere

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, home economics programs prepared thousands of women for public school teaching, careers in the extension service, state and federal government and other service industries. The evolution of Domestic Science to Home Economics was a life changing event for women in the United States, beginning in the 1920s and spanning into the 1960s. Domestic Economy and Domestic Science were programs established by social reformers, mostly women in the early nineteenth century to help the welfare of people and attack debilitating issues. But by the late 1950s and the early 1960s, broad changes in American women's economics and social roles made

collegiate education in home economics seem "old fashioned," an image that did not do justice to its rich history (Albert R. Mann Library, 2005).

Today, the discipline, as an area of study, has resided under an umbrella consisting of several content areas that have become interdisciplinary in program development and have represented a surge of content knowledge that has allowed women to gain respect in higher education and beyond. Ellen S. Richards and her counterpart Nellie Kedzie both made outstanding contributions for the advancement of women in the practice of education as well as educating women in ways to improve and survive societal ills of industrial capitalism. Those who advocated and defined Home Economics saw it as a relationship between science, society, and application of scientific principles (Richards) to the practical and skill driven domestic tasks (Kedzie), prompted the need and creation for new careers, a trend still applicable today (Stage & Vincenti, 1997). The accomplishments of both women, Richards and Kedzie, are still revered today, and as a result the discipline has broadened in content areas which have allowed for women to further their education and careers. A point to be acknowledged and understood when referencing the discipline was to have appreciated the history of the profession, and with that understanding, the philosophy of the profession becomes clear (Collins, 2002).

Convergence

Nell Quinlan Donnelly attended Lindenwood College from 1907-1909. She was aware and conditioned to societal norms pertaining to homemaking trends but chose to access new information regarding home management and organization via service industries and time saving home devices, thus leading her to explore dress-making options for herself, family, friends, and soon after, middle class American women with

the establishment of Donnelly Garment Company. These cumulating events, a result of her innate ability to self-lead, could have triggered her fashion acuteness, keen managerial and production skills, and her technical way of thinking and problem solving allowed Nell to become a pioneer in the early 20th century fashion industry. It was the right time for Nell's talents and skills first as a married college student, dressmaker entrepreneur, millionaire business owner, philanthropist and educational leader (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1950s-1970s; O'Malley, 2006a).

Chapter Five: Discussion of Mrs. Ellen (Nell) Quinlan Donnelly Reed

Previous chapters presented a historic biographical overview of Mrs. Ellen (Nell) Quinlan Donnelly, establishing and supporting her leadership tenure as an early 20th century visionary business and educational leader. Most widely known as Nelly Don, Donnelly became a prominent business woman who achieved millionaire status by designing and manufacturing dresses for American middle class women, but little publicized accolades for her 60 year philanthropic relationship with Lindenwood College. Research from this study found that Lindenwood College publications covered Donnelly from the 1920s through the 1980s. A historical review of events provided a framework to support her lifelong relationship with Lindenwood College capturing her devoted service, loyalty, and forward thinking academic standards for young women. Her allegiance to Lindenwood College started when she was admitted as the first married student in 1907 and continued throughout her entire life as she advocated for unlimited opportunities for women.

The relationship between Nell Quinlan Donnelly and Lindenwood College from 1920s-1980s are presented and discussed in this chapter. Research reveals Donnelly as an educational leader in herself first, then in business and civic activities, and ultimately in women's higher education. This research includes oral histories, re-examination of primary and secondary sources, and as conversations with other researchers.

A Visionary Leader for Women

Donnelly was a long time benefactor of Lindenwood College for women and a visionary educational leader through her forward thinking on academic advancement of young women ("The banner to KC", 1937). Early evidence of Nell Quinlan Donnelly's

educational advocacy for herself and other young women were first noted in 1931, in a published interview with Mrs. Paul F. Donnelly titled *Women Executives are Just People* by Dora Albert in the *Independent Woman: A Magazine for Business and Professional Women*. It stated she married at the early age of seventeen but Donnelly started her career “doing the unusual” by attending college after marriage. In a 1940 *Lindenwood College Bulletin* celebrating the Silver Anniversary of Nelly Don, Donnelly was interviewed by Martha Miller Gray, Lindenwood College alumni, class of 1905 and asked about her ideas on the opportunities for girls in business today. Her reply was “that the field for women is unlimited--if one uses her talents and has perseverance,” (*Creator of Nelly Don dresses*, 1940, p. 3). By the 1950s Donnelly’s visionary thinking was documented in the Lindenwood College Board of Director Minutes (1958) which reported “Mrs. Reed informally spoke upon the importance and desirability of improving the Mathematics Department of the College” Para. 20) This was evidence of foreseeing changes needed in the type of education programming for young women, and demonstrated Donnelly’s role in a paradigm shift from Lindenwood College’s traditional liberal arts. Nell Quinlan Donnelly continued her purposeful civic and philanthropic service from the 1960s - 1980s making it possible for Lindenwood College to offer various specialized programs through the Mathematics Department, which employed highly regarded faculty to instruct and train women students for careers.

Educational Leader in Self (1907-1909)

In 1907 when Nell Quinlan Donnelly decided to further her education and enrolled to Lindenwood College for Women, then a finishing school, she had full support from her husband and parents. This was the first noted indication of educational

leadership, a fierce self-directedness in the pursuance of a college education and later graduating with a Seminary Diploma in 1909, despite being married. Nell was described as an ambitious young woman who desired a more diversified education (*Creator of Nelly Don dresses*, p.3). Since having been out of school over a year after graduating high school and already married, she engaged in her studies seriously at Lindenwood College and attracted the attention of the faculty. She soon made a place for herself in the life of the college and became active in campus affairs while her scholastic record was excellent. Donnelly often said the relationships she had with various people during her two years in college were inspirational and gave her an outlook that had never failed to be of value to her (*Creator of Nelly Don dresses*, p.3).

After graduating from Lindenwood College for Women in 1909, Donnelly returned home to Kansas City. In 1911, she and four other Lindenwood College alums chartered the first Kansas City Alumni Chapter, eventually becoming a significant benefactor. The Kansas City Alumni club, often under the leadership of Donnelly, served, hosted and entertained Lindenwood College presidents, faculty, students and other Lindenwood College stakeholders in her home. The chapter also initiated monetary pledges and challenges to raise money for Lindenwood College while Donnelly would often match monetary donations. Her donations as a member of the class of 1909 were noted regularly for over 60 years in the Linden Leaf Society section of Lindenwood College publications, often listing her as an Honor Class donor.

Lindenwood Women and Leadership

By 1919, 10 years after Nell Quinlan Donnelly graduated from Lindenwood College for Women, she became a revolutionary entrepreneur pioneer in the fashion

industry. In 1923 Donnelly Garment Company employed over 250 people, mostly women, and modernized “ready to wear” dress sizing for women, revolutionizing dress manufacturing and production in the process. At the same time, Lindenwood College had become a four year accredited college and the first Bachelor of Science degree was conferred to Pauline Weissgerber in Home Economics, May 1921.

It was during the early 1920s that Lindenwood College’s Home Economics department expanded offering various degree and certificate options while the clothing and textile program [Costume Design] benefited scholastically and financially from Donnelly. In an article titled “Who is Nelly Don” in the *Cosmos Monitor*, McNary (1927) wrote:

“Nelly Don” may not be known to all girls at Lindenwood at the present time, but she is an admirable character to the older students. Especially those in Home Economics and the Art Departments will be reminded of her great success gained through her own initiative while her husband was in France during the World War. “Nelly Don” is an old Lindenwood girl and after completing her course here she went home and built up a million dollar business. Every year she offers prizes to girls of Lindenwood in the Home Economics and Art Departments for the best “made” and “designed” dress. “Nelly Don” dresses are worn by Lindenwood girls who do not know her connection with Lindenwood and her great success. (para. 1)

McNary’s factual account of Donnelly’s presence at Lindenwood College in the late 1920s is just one of many archived publications that cross reference documentation acknowledging her service as an educational leader. In addition, a friend of Senator

Reed (Donnelly's second husband) named William Gordon congratulated him on his marriage to Nell and exemplifies her character as a woman ahead of her time.

Your wife is an artist of the highest type and of the greatest possible utility. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" and anyone who can add to the attractiveness of the house-wife by a substantial addition to or improvement of her wearing apparel is a public benefactor. Those heroic women, who, as heads of family households in this country, have done so much to carry us through the awful business depression of the past four years, are entitled to most of the credit for the maintenance of the American home intact and for saving from total collapse, this greatest of our American institutions.

All honors should be paid to your distinguishable wife [Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed] who contributed so substantially to the appearance and utility of the real head of the household and her hand-maids, in the homes of the American people.

(Wedding congratulations Gordon to Reed, 1931, paras. 1-2)

This excerpt written during a period of time when America was rebounding from The Great Depression described Donnelly in the present and foreshadowed her innate ambition and leadership aspirations.

During the time period between 1920s-1950s Nell Quinlan Donnelly's presence and participation expanded Lindenwood College costume design and art programs. Throughout the era scores of students benefited from Nelly Don prizes and scholarships which were widely publicized in Lindenwood College publications (Annual Nellie Don prizes, 1934; Dressmaking prizes, 1937; Lindenwood College, 1929; "Nelly Don", 1925;

Nelly Don keeps right on, 1934; “Nellie Don sends cable”, 1927; Nellie Don’s generosity, 1932).



Figure 18. Dressmaking class, Lindenwood College costume design class (c. 1920) (Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).

Her prizes and scholarships were awarded yearly at the spring fashion show sponsored by Donnelly Garment Company and vested stakeholders; Lindenwood College home economics department, costume design students and the Kansas City, St. Charles, and St. Louis Lindenwood Clubs. Proceeds from ticket sales, from style shows often reaching 200 attendees or more were donated to the college’s scholarship fund (St. Charles Alumnae, 1949b).



Figure 19. Lindenwood College costume design students modeling their own fashions at spring style show (c. 1937) (Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).

Lindenwood College View Books often publicized the costume design program and encouraged enrollment because of its famous alumnae (Roemer Silver Jubilee, 1939).

Donnelly had a personal interest in the fashion productions and often served as an advisor throughout the year before the big spring production. She hired graduates from Lindenwood College's costume design program and many returned to mentor and put on style shows from Donnelly Garment Company to give inspiration to the Lindenwood girls competing for Nelly Don prizes in the spring (Barton, 1938). Donnelly and her fashion designers from Donnelly Garment Company were judges of the designs and dresses.



Figure 20. Lindenwood College spring style show model (c. 1940s)
(Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).



Figure 21. Lindenwood College style show model (c. 1951) (Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).



Figure 22. Dressmaking class and costume design (c. 1950s) (Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).

Donnelly shared her expertise in style and fashion to help young women dress properly for college life as well as budgeting for clothing expenses. In conjunction with other major clothing retailers, who exclusively sold the Nelly Don brand, she would sponsor a series of fashion shows and teas for girls leaving for college, university, preparatory schools, and careers (Nelly Don, “Donjenu” dress line, 1939 folder 33) in the 1930s and during World War II. Dressing for college and/or work was equally as important as attending college.

Lindenwood Fashions
presented by
CLOTHING CLASSES OF LINDENWOOD COLLEGE
under the direction of
MME HELENE LYOLENE, MRS. MIRIAM HOUSTON
AND MISS MARGARET LINDSAY

Narrators: Lorraine Klockenbrink and Dot Hall
 Music: Barbara Sutton
 Lighting: Mollie Carr

1. At your leisure
2. Looking thru sunglasses
3. Made to suit
4. We go together
5. Summer going dresses
6. It's a date
7. Lindenwood Romantics

S T U D E N T S

Blackwell, Martha	Meyer, Jane
Blevins, Janice	Montgomery, Juanita
Brown, Sharon	O'Bannon, Marjorie Ann
Carlson, Kay	Pallissard, Norma
Comer, Marilyn	Palmer, Prue
Elliott, Mary	Pena Flores, Wilma
Fawley, Marilyn	Prinster, Pat
Flora, Nancy	Reese, Pat
Gage, Jane	Rowell, Editha
Gomel, Jean	Smith, Charleen
Hinrichs, Louise	Stigall, Nancy
Kirchherr, Mary	Taylor, Jane
Klockenbrink, Lorraine	Todson, Mary Ann
Kruel, Arline	Verploeg, Virginia
	Wetzel, Helen

A T H O M E
HOME ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT
 Class exhibits in the lower hall, foods laboratory, and clothing
 laboratory. Refreshments in the apartment

OUR THANKS TO
Buse's Flower Shop for Flowers and Stage Decorations

ROEMER AUDITORIUM
Friday Evening, May 11, 1951
 Seven-Thirty O'Clock

Figure 23. Lindenwood fashions, spring style show announcement (c. 1951) (Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).

The term coined “Dress Doctors” by Przybyszewski (2014a) was created. In her book titled *The Lost Art Of Dress, The Women Who once Made America Stylish* is used to identify a remarkable group of early 20th century women who taught American women how to stretch every yard and dress well on a budget (Przybyszewski, 2014a). Nell Quinlan Donnelly was a Dress Doctor without equal: designing, teaching, manufacturing, producing, selling and educating American middle class women on affordable, stylish, and fashionable dress. She particularly took an interest in designing clothing that was reflective of wartime constraints, but still stylish and affordable for young women. Donnelly understood that the fashion industry was presented with ever changing exigencies of wartime (Men want women’s clothes to be feminine, 1943; Mme. Helene Lyolene, 1943).

By the early 1940s, Lindenwood College addressed the effects of war, especially on young women, and revised the college curriculum to meet the needs of war and peace (Lindenwood revises curriculum, 1942a). Particular emphasis was targeted on the wartime effects on wardrobe planning and budgeting for young women. As part of the curriculum change, Nell Quinlan Donnelly, named as “the good friend of the college” sent two nationally known stylists to instruct the girls in the ways and means of addressing the changing conditions regarding dress and fashion industry careers after the war (Fashion counseling, 1942; Mme. Helene Lyolene, 1942). Nell’s personal French designer and consultant for Donnelly Garment Company for 18 years, Madame Helene Lyolene and Mrs. Virginia Staples a fashion industry expert, worked with Lindenwood College. Findings revealed more published evidence from 1941-1952 connecting Nell Quinlan Donnelly and Lindenwood College to Madame Helene Lyolene (Robb, 1951),

whereas findings connecting Mrs. Virginia Staples were only from 1941-1943 (Mrs. Staples to give fashion advice, 1943a; Mrs. Staples to give advice to students, 1943b).

THE KANSAS CITY STAR, MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 1939.

IRDENWOOD • SMITH • MISSOURI • STEPHENS

WELLESLEY • SKIDMORE • KANSAS STATE • VASSAR • UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

CONNECTICUT • ROCKFORD • ILLINOIS • INDIANA • IOWA • KENTUCKY • MISSOURI • NEBRASKA • OHIO • PENNSYLVANIA • ST. LOUIS • ST. PETERSBURG • TEXAS • VIRGINIA • WISCONSIN

CHRISTIAN

Emerg. Bird. Thayer
Downtown Shopping Center
Since 1863

It's Open!
Our
Exclusive

**Nelly Don
Donjenu
Shop**

with young
ideas for col-
lege & career
wardrobe
... and for all fall
fashion-minded. Sizes
9 to 17! It's the only
Donjenu rendezvous
in existence... and
it's full of fashion
treats for YOU!
Donjenus are priced
2.95 to 10.95

**TUESDAY . . . is
Eastern College Day**
MISS MARY PHIL TAYLOR,
Wellesley '40, will be
at our College Con-
sultant's desk ready to
answer your campus
questions before you
go East.

Donjenu Shop,
Third Floor

Figure 24. Nelly Don “Donjenu” dress ad (c. 1939). (The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City, folder 33).

Fashion Authority



Mme. Helene Lyolene, noted Paris designer, who was in charge of the Nell Don fashion show presented at Lindenwood last month.

Fashion Counselor



Mrs. Virginia Staples, who will have charge of Lindenwood's new fashion service on the campus.

Figure 25. Lindenwood College “fashion stylists” (c. 1940s). [Fashion counseling, 1942; Mme. Helene Lyolene, 1942]. Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives.

Madame Helene Lyolene, an internationally famous designer and stylist of women's fashions began her career in Paris in 1929 (Madam Helene Lyolene, 1947; Home economic students, 1946; Mme. Helene Lyolene, 1942; Parsons School of Design, 1942; Reeder, 2010). She was educated in Russia, Switzerland and Germany; taught at Columbia University, 1940; fashion critic at Parson School of Design, 1936-1944; lecturer at Cooper Union, 1942-1942 and conducted an experimental course in fabric design using draping methods at the Brooklyn Museum in 1941 before consulting and teaching at Lindenwood College in 1942 (Blanck, 1941). She also taught at Rhodes College of Design throughout the 1940s and the Kansas City Art Institute where Nell Quinlan Donnelly later became an Honorary Trustee in the 1950s.

When war closed the Paris couturiers, Madame Helene Lyolene came to America as a style consultant. She began designing because she loved beautiful clothes, even though she had no formal training in design but became a success because she knew how a dress should look (Mme. Lyolene to visit, 1943). Madame Helene Lyolene mastered the art of draping, from which most of her ideas were created and commercial patterns were never used. This was the same experimental draping methods she taught at the Brooklyn Museum in New York which was to educate and train American designers, fashion education leaders and students on improvement in style and workmanship. Lindenwood College costume design students were privileged to study under Madame Helene Lyolene and learn this method of design which was not widely used in America (Mme. Helene Lyolene, 1944; Home economic students, 1946). She also counseled student's individually regarding personal attire, academics and the fashion industry. Additional oral history findings collected from Lindenwood College alums (1947-1951)

further detail student relationships with Madame Helene Lyonene the impact she had on their lives beyond Lindenwood College.

Nell Quinlan Donnelly shared some of the same humble beginnings as Madame Lyonene, being self-taught and not formally trained at a fashion design school, having first designed clothing for dolls and both had encouragement from friends to transfer their talents into designing dresses for young women (Mme. Helene Lyolene, 1942). Madame Helene Lyolene stated in the *Lindenwood College Bulletin*, 1941 that she believed America was destined to become the design center of the world and she was helping this country make that achievement. She became a naturalized American citizen in 1946 (Madam Helene Lyolene, 1947).

Mrs. Virginia Staples, a graduate of the School of Journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia was employed as a fashion writer and assistant advertising manager at Famous-Barr Company in St. Louis, Missouri. Mrs. Staples was in charge of the new fashion service on campus and served as a Fashion and Budget Counselor from 1941 through 1943. Her services included help with wardrobe planning and purchasing, make-up and coiffure suggestions, advice on caring for clothing, ideas on complexion and figure care, budgeting clothing allowances, how to shop smart and any other assistance that may have been needed to ensure an enhancing appearance and increase poise (Fashion Counselor, 1941; Mme. Helene Lyolene, 1943). Many times young women sought personal counsel which was offered when budgeting and personal attire was a concern. In addition, Staples published a book titled "My Finances" which was given to all Lindenwood College students (Fashion counselor to help Lindenwood, 1941). Alongside both stylists, Miss Beulah Spilsbury, head of the fashion department at

Donnelly Garment Company, would also hold student seminars and help coordinate the spring style show held at Lindenwood College (Mme. Helene Lyolene, 1942; Nelly Don shows, 1948).



Figure 26. Nell Quinlan Donnelly aka Nelly Don (seated) and Beulah Spilsbury head of design and public relations (center) at Donnelly Garment Company (c. late 1940s) (The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City, folder 35).

The opportunity to have two highly qualified professionals from the fashion industry at Lindenwood College was noted as the most valuable aid to young women that school year, 1942. Lindenwood College's home economics department and costume design program, along with the general school population, were afforded professional fashion and clothing industry resources in the form of real life work, integrated learning, and educational leadership. Lindenwood College's costume design program was not previously renowned, but became regarded as such through the visionary perspective of Donnelly and her company. With the help of Donnelly Garment Company personnel and

others, she was able to build a more comprehensive design program and continue to be innovative in the delivery of fashion programs and curriculum.



Figure 27. Lindenwood College costume design student (c. 1939-1940), “design and the development of patterns are encouraged because of famous Lindenwood Alumni” (Nell Quinlan Donnelly), *Roemer Silver Jubilee*. (Lindenwood University *Mary E. Amblers Archives*).



Figure 28. Lindenwood College costume design students (c. 1950s) (Lindenwood University *Mary E. Amblers Archives*).

Nell Quinlan Donnelly's generosity and servitude was endless and the Lindenwood College community knew her as its most successful business woman alumnae. Lindenwood Board of Director notes indicated that Nell Quinlan Donnelly had been paying one-half of Madame Helene Lyolene's salary for her tenure as guest lecturer and fashion stylist. A President's report dated October, 11 1951 suggested that the Board of Directors express their appreciation for Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed's generosity in accepting the responsibility to pay Madame Helene Lyolene's entire salary for the year. When the Board of Directors expressed the need for her to pay the entire salary, Nell complied with the request promptly and gladly (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1951-1953, p. 10). Nell Quinlan Donnelly was still supporting the costume design program and giving Lindenwood College what they wanted (Nelly Don and home economics, 1950, p. 3), but soon she would focus on what, in her estimation, the educational programs at Lindenwood College needed. During the 1950s, Lindenwood College was still known as a "finishing school" and many affluent St. Louis and Kansas City young women attended. The culture was centered on "homemaking" in spite of relevant academic offerings taught by well-trained instructors, themselves degreed from well-known and prestigious colleges and universities (K. Smith, personal communication, March 22, 2015). In 1952, Miss Sophie Payne Alston was hired as Chair for the Home Economics department with promise of being able to make the department "what it should be in a women's college" (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1951-1953, p. 5).

Lindenwood College Costume Design Students 1945-1951

Oral histories were collected from October of 2015 to July 2016. They focused on participant's relationships with members of the costume design program and their

personal experiences at Lindenwood College extending from the mid 1940s to the 1950s.

The three participant's decision to attend Lindenwood College was based on someone they knew personally, a parent, sibling and a teacher. Maggie *Burton* Jones stated "My father chose it for me, and I decided that's where I could go, because I love to sew."

Helen *Wetzel* Clotworthy's sister had graduated from Lindenwood and she thought "Well, I want to try that out." Juanita *Montgomery* McClellan stated, "I was probably influenced by a high school teacher that had gone to Lindenwood".

Additionally, they felt societal norms for young women at Lindenwood College and beyond were constraining. All three participants spoke about the culture at Lindenwood as "more severe than it is now" and to have been associated with "a lot of rules" remembered Jones and McClellan. "We [Lindenwood women] were expected to be young ladies and we knew how to do that". Lindenwood was a "training school for women," and still had a lot of teaching about how you dressed up when you left campus - "you put on hat and gloves," stated by Clotworthy. Girls were not allowed to wear slacks or jeans except for a "casual Friday or a picnic or something." Lindenwood was still a "prep school and/or girls college," and girls got a "good education along with being taught proper, a way to act" explained Clotworthy.

All three participants graduated with a home economics degree with an emphasis in clothing and textiles. McClellan recalled that most young women completed a two year program, got married, and joked that "they went to college for an MRS. Degree. Maggie Jones further stated that "we didn't have to work in those days, we stayed at home and lived with our families as married women, and jobs weren't available to us in those days." The 1940s to early 1950s historically were a time of change for women as

their roles in society were even more so challenged by gender equity, prompting Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed to advocate for equity by the late 1950s. Two of the three participants become full time homemakers.

Nell Quinlan Donnelly was responsible for bringing Madame Helene Lyolene to Lindenwood College. Supporting departments and programs at Lindenwood was a lifelong mission for Donnelly. When discussing Lindenwood in the 1950s, Clotworthy stated “well of course she was a designer in Kansas City, she was an older woman when I knew her name” and “Nelly Don” was older and appealed to older women than college girls,” she added. Mrs. McClellan answered “I don’t know whether she came to Lindenwood or not, no memory of it.” Clotworthy concluded “and fact is, I might not even’ve been aware of Nelly Don in college, I think my mother had some of her clothing, I guess that’s how I became aware of her.” The same was stated by McClellan “Nelly Don was a brand that my mother might have worn, a line of clothes for older women”. Jones, the oldest of the participants had more to report. She stated that “Nell Donnelly was a dressmaker out of Kansas City and she had a wonderful following.” She also knew that Donnelly had been a student at Lindenwood College and that is why she offered scholarships “that I [Maggie] was able to get.” Jones expressed she [Nell] was “exciting because she had been able to put together a business for women” and everyone knew Nelly Don clothes, at least down in Wichita, Kansas.” Jones received several Nelly Don Prizes and recalled that designs had to be “just right and they [judges] were really picky it has to be well done or it would not be accepted.” She continued with “Nell Donnelly, I thought so highly of her because she did so much for Lindenwood, and she was on the Board, I remember that, and she had a lot to do with Lindenwood succeeding as a girl’s

school.” She concluded with “she offered Madame Helene Lyolene to come and be with us six to eight weeks every semester, she was really wonderful to have, a foreign dignitary, a foreign designer.”

The relationships between Madame Helene Lyolene and the participants were most revealing in that they all were personally drawn to her. Even though Clotworthy and McClellan were only there one year, they both had endearing relationships with Madame Helene Lyolene. McClellan added that Donnelly paid Madame Helene Lyolene’s salary and sent her as “a gift to Lindenwood.” All three participants knew her ancestral history including she had fled Russia via France and later migrated to America. “I always loved her, she was good to me and she was one of us [students]” stated Jones. She continued by stating that she had gone to visit Madame Helene Lyolene in Kansas City, they had become friends and would write letters back and forth and she had helped her design her wedding dress. Clotworthy confided that “she was real, she wasn’t above you or anything and she was very helpful.” All three participants commented that Madame Helene Lyolene was one of their favorite teachers and commented on how she expanded their knowledge in dressmaking, most importantly the “seven or nine pin fitting while designing a garment, making your own patterns and not letting anyone be fitted with a girdle” remembered McClellan. Clotworthy stated “it wasn’t that I wasted a year at Lindenwood, I really learned a lot from her [Lyolene].” McClellan remembered enjoying her class French design and her stories. She also thought of Madame Helene Lyolene as “very liberal and democratic,” she was an “aristocrat and a very independent woman” and McClellan stated an analogy she [Lyolene] always said “she always buttoned her own buttons.” Jones commented that she was liked by students and faculty,

“kids respected her “and Clotworthy added that she [Lyolene] and Ms. Margaret Lindsay, instructor in the clothing and textiles program “made an impression on me to remember them.” Clotworthy and McClellan both remember her [Lyolene] sitting in a chair and smoking cigarettes and “she may have let us smoke in the lab,” forbidden for American college girls but something we [students] thought was exciting. An analysis of oral histories proved that Nell Quinlan Donnelly, through her connection to Madame Helene Lyonene, enriched the Lindenwood experience according to the three participants.



Figure 29. Madame Helene Lyolene (seated) instructing costume design students (c. 1944) (Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).

Transformative Years and Unlimited Opportunities

As Nell Quinlan Donnelly's dress business expanded under her leadership, she continued her goodwill for others, including the company, by supporting educational opportunities. The 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s marked several significant acknowledgements of Nell Quinlan Donnelly achievements. She was named honorary member of Kappa Chapter of Kappa Pi, a national honorary art society at Lindenwood College (Mrs. James A. Reed honored, 1935), awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Lindenwood College (1949), and an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from Coe College (1952) (Alumnae certificate, 1965). Her involvement in higher education had become more pronounced as her vision for college women expanded as she advocated, "unlimited opportunities" for women in math and science, an evolutionary framework of thinking, a visionary one for young women. Donnelly's mindset of encouraging young women to study academic areas of math and science came from her personal experience. Donnelly engineered her own sewing machines to perform at capacity levels that best suited manufacturing and production needs. She had mechanical and technical abilities enabling her to become a master mind of mass production and distribution of ready to wear dresses.

Nell Donnelly's increasing desires to support academic programs relevant to women at Lindenwood College are noted in the Board of Director notes. Lindenwood College Board of Director notes dated May 22, 1944 was the first document in this study that reported Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed formally and officially giving money [gift] to the college with board approval. The board notes read:

Dr. Gage reported that an offer had been made by Mrs. James A. Reed to bear one-half of the expense of an expanded course in Home Economics to be given by Lindenwood College. He estimated that the total cost of this expanded course would be approximate \$2,400.00.

Nell Quinlan Donnelly's offer to pay [gift] for the expansion of Home Economics courses further confirmed her desire to ensure that programs, assumedly, costume design and clothing and textile were taught by the best instructors in adequate facilities and relevant vocational curriculum. By the late 1940s, Board of Director notes dated October 18, 1948 recommended that Nell Quinlan Donnelly receive a letter thanking her for donating \$1,350 to support of one of the "French Girls" who was part of the cultural exchange program for foreign students. This was another program Donnelly financially supported (Our Lindenwood ambassadors, 1985-1986).

In 1949 the home economics department inaugurated a new program - Home Management and Vocational Preparation as a special major. Lindenwood was the first college in America to implement a vocational program of this type that covered traditional course work required for bachelor degree and a range of academic areas of study distributed over five academic departments (First women on board, 1949, p. 1). The premise for this type of college education, according to the school newspaper was "the wife to be upon graduation will not concentrate in only one field" and should "be a woman who will have had a well-rounded education and will have left college with the completion of an extensive liberal arts curriculum" (First women on board, 1949, p. 1). The publication also stated that "the field of fashion was not passed unnoticed" as Madame Helene Lyolene was still a guest lecturer in the costume design program even

though women's roles and choices were challenged by societal norms (First women on board, 1949, p. 8). The article recognized the new program as an academic achievement for college women, but subsequently minimized the field of fashion and Madame Helene Lyolene by a statement made about the French designer that read "when she's not pinning hems or correcting dress lines, she is fascinating her students with tales about France and its renowned designers" (First women on board, 1949, p. 8). It was also during these later years and the start of the 1950s, Nell Quinlan Donnelly became more concerned with academics and curriculum involving women's education at Lindenwood College. This would continue into the 1980s. College publications and Board of Director notes confirmed her commitment to provide unlimited opportunities to young women at a time when the options and /or expectations were limited.

The same life works that earned her honorary recognition now became evident in her transformative efforts to further improve math and science education opportunities for young women, specifically at Lindenwood College. It was during this period of time that Donnelly informally started referencing "unlimited opportunities for young women" (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1958-1959). Many progressive and forward thinking educational leaders thought that women, more importantly college educated women, should be intellectually inclined to enter scientific fields, but societal prejudice frequently denounced female's abilities to succeed in math and science (Park, 1957). Lindenwood College, along with many other small liberal arts colleges, faced the same stigmas as new science and technology vocational training emerged in the 1950s. Even more so after the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik and Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (1958) that denoted the importance of math, science and foreign language, all areas

that challenged the future of home economic departments and programs (Park, 1957). Donnelly focused her interest and money towards further development of existing and new math and science programs, the hard sciences she had been advocating for since the 1940s. By the 1950s she stated there are unlimited opportunities for women in these fields, if they pursued them.

By the late 1950s many colleges and universities began dismantling home economic departments and programs and dedicated money and facilities to the hard sciences. Home economic programs began to close down by the late 1960s at Lindenwood College. Donnelly's gift giving to Lindenwood College changed by the mid-1950s when her focus shifted from what Lindenwood College "wanted" versus what she thought Lindenwood College "needed" academically for young women. At the same time, enrollment numbers had begun to decrease and young women's educational desires and future opportunities were widening by the 1960s (Lindenwood Board of Director notes, 1967). Praybyszewski (2014b), legal historian and educator stated in *Time* magazine that "science majors would have better knowledge of how to knock Sputnik from the sky than women taking costume design courses" (para. 2). Donnelly had the same mindset. *Time* magazine also noted historian of science Margaret W. Rossiter, along with a statement from the Bureau of Home Economics in the 1950s, reported that Home Economic programs had become "reorganized out of existence" (Praybyszewski, 2014b, para. 2). Also by the late 1950s, Donnelly sold her share of Donnelly Garment Company, which became Nelly Don, Inc. and retired at age 68. The dressmaking and garment industry had changed and findings show that Nell's philanthropic and educational interest in women became a priority in her life.

For Donnelly, the 1950s was a decade dedicated to numerous civic and educational appointments in both Kansas City and Lindenwood College. In 1952 she donated 731 areas of land in Jackson County to the Missouri Department of Conservation to create the James A. Reed Memorial Wildlife Area in remembrance of her late husband (Wilson, 1993). This contribution to the state of Missouri was another statement of her generosity as a desired need to give back to her community as well as a dedication to her former husband. In the late 1960s, she would later donate a collection of her late husband, James A. Reed's law books to the Margaret L. Butler Library at Lindenwood College. Mrs. Florence *Bloebaum* Null, class of 1905 spoke at 1965 Alumnae Certificate of Merit luncheon and praised Donnelly on her tireless vested interest in scholarship programs and commended that she wanted to always be part of the plan at Lindenwood College. The philanthropic, civic, and cultural appointments held by Nell Quinlan Donnelly centered on her involvement in education and the arts, in which she had always been an active participant Nell Quinlan Donnelly retired from Donnelly Garment Company in 1956 at age 68 and dedicated herself to public service for the betterment of women and society as a whole. She involved herself in activities and events that sought to better educate the public, most often women or the disadvantaged. Donnelly served as a member of the Kansas City School board from 1958 to 1971 (Alumnae certificate, 1965). The *Star Times* reported after the Kansas City School board members accepted her resignation with regret, they gave her a standing ovation as she left (Doyle, 1971). Board members stated that Mrs. Reed was a pleasure to serve with and those who served on the board with her learned to love, admire and respect her and expressed gratitude for her helping new board members become familiar with school business (Doyle, 1971). In

Kansas City she was an Honorary Trustee of the Kansas City Art Institute and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Kansas City Philharmonic (Alumnae certificate, 1965; O'Malley, 2006a; Williams, 1991). She was a member of the Star Light Theatre Association that opened in 1951; member of the Kansas City Women's Chamber of Commerce, culture committee and co-chair for a Kansas City Ladies Club that held sponsorships for Lillian Murphy, a young up and coming soprano from Kansas City for whom Nell Quinlan Donnelly took an interest. Nell was a member of the Nettleton Home [The George H. Nettleton Home] Advisory Board in Kansas City. The Nettleton Home was established in 1900 as a place where homeless young girls and women sought shelter and employment assistance and later became a home for aged women (Adams, 1990; Alumnae certificate, 1965).

Another area of interest for Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed was farming, hunting, and wildlife conservation. She and her late husband James A. Reed owned a 7,000 acre ranch in northern Michigan where she fished, hunted and later at the age of 91 shot the first buck of the season and made headline news in the local press (Wilding, 1987). This interest led to her appointment of chairman of the board for Fairview Farms, Inc., whose company owned and operated farms throughout Jackson, Platte and Clay counties in Missouri (Alumnae certificate, 1965). For many years Nell was the only woman member on the Board of Trustees of The Midwest Research Institute, whose main focus was the field of science and she was included in the "Who's Who of American Women" (Alumnae certificate, 1965; Our Lindenwood ambassadors, 1985-1986).



Figure 30. Nell Quinlan (Donnelly) Reed (c. 1964) (Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).

Donnelly's first administrative appointment at Lindenwood College was on the newly established Advisory Board beginning in 1952 till 1957. Her recommendation from the Lindenwood College's Board of Directors and later appointment by the Presbyterian Synod of Missouri who assisted the Board of Directors (Advisory board, 1952). Donnelly, one of 10 appointed members will assist the Board of Directors; Dr. McCluer explained:

It has been felt that the college will be strengthened by this board... [and] not only in having the counsel of representative citizens in the area that Lindenwood serves, but in keeping these leaders acquainted with the work of the college. The character of the three that have been appointed gives promise that this hope will be realized. (Advisory Board, 1952)

In 1953, Donnelly was appointed to the Board of Directors of Lindenwood College, one of the first women (Mrs. James A. Reed, alumna 1953). She held this position from 1953 to 1969 at which time she was succeeded on the Board by her son David Quinlan Reed, a prominent Kansas City attorney. Reed continued his mother's lifetime interest in Lindenwood College's growth from 1969 to 1975 (Faculty news, 1969; The trustees, 1969; Directory of the College, 1973). Nell Donnelly was recommended by Dr. Franc McCluer, President of Lindenwood College, who detailed during an interview with the *St. Louis Star-Times* that the program he advocated for young women was one of "meeting the needs of the area and the challenge of the times" by providing programs and instruction designed to give young women graduates "resourcefulness of the cultured woman; the keen conscience of the good citizen and vocational competence in at least one area of activity" (The president retires, 1966, p. 6). By 1954 Nell Quinlan Donnelly was a member of the Faculty and Curriculum committee, one of the Standing Committees of the Board of Directors at Lindenwood College. Later sources detailed her funding of math and computer courses held at McDonnell Aircraft Company and the endowment of a math chair professorship. Both initiatives at the request of Donnelly were to be taught by the best trained existing faculty and/or a search to find qualified faculty as well as adequate teaching and learning facilities (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1967). In

1969, Nell Quinlan Donnelly age 80, was now appointed a Board of Directors Life Member, and elected member to The Board of Overseers at Lindenwood College in 1968 (Directory of the College, 1973). Donnelly's enduring loyalty, patronage and faith in Lindenwood College was still alive and well, she was still a living part of Lindenwood 60 years later. Many young women had come and gone but Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed was still there (The "well done" dinner, 1960).

Board of Director notes from the 1950s-1960s reported Nell Quinlan Donnelly formally and informally speaking about the "importance and desirability of improving the mathematics Department of the College" (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1958-1959, para. 20) an early precursor to STEM (Science, technology, Engineering & Math). Nell was familiar with the many practical applications of mathematics from her experience mastering the manufacturing and production of dressmaking. In Dr. Franc L. McCluer's Report of the President of the College 1958, a section titled "The Role of the Women's College" shared similar outlooks and outcomes for women as did Donnelly. As early as the 1930s Donnelly advocated, "it doesn't matter what sex a person is, but their capabilities, I am not necessarily a feminist because I am a business executive and negotiate deals with men because I am still feminine and a woman" (Albert, 1931, para. 4.). Nell Quinlan Donnelly's great-great nephew, Terence O'Malley (T. M. O'Malley, personal communication, June 13, 2015) stated the Donnelly was often considered "one of the boys" as a business executive in the boardroom, but as a mother and wife at home, which was evident in the personal correspondence between herself and husband James A. Reed and their young son during times when vacationing and business affairs separated them (Correspondence, 1945; 1960-1963; 1964-1966; 1967-1972). A published

memorandum after Nell's death titled *Do You Remember Nelly Don* written by James P. McGilley, Jr. stated the same. McGilley (1991) of McGilley Memorial Chapels wrote "She saw no reason why fashion models should not become sales-women and travel nationally if they had the desire to do so, and the talent to back it up" (para. 4). The question of gender equity and how it related to the sphere of a woman during Nell Quinlan Donnelly's life was evident as to how she ran her business and personal household. The societal conflict between domesticity and modernity challenged college age women and more so the colleges and universities they attended. Dr. Franc L. McCluer's Committee on Education Beyond the High School, made a statement that was reminiscent of the gender equity mindset and women's place in society:

Women are partners with men in our free society. They share with men the responsibility for political decisions and for the community welfare. The education that addresses itself to the whole personality will best prepare young women for this responsible citizen. (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1958-1959, para. 9)

The Committee on Education Beyond High School stated, the college for women [Lindenwood College] had an "unusual opportunity" for women, the same mindset that Donnelly had concluded; "unlimited opportunities for women in math and science." The committee pointed out to young women attending a liberal arts college the demand for an increase in the number of mathematics teachers would have been one way to increase the supply for engineers [math and science] (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1958-1959).

By the close of the 1950s Nell Quinlan Donnelly continued her commitment to Lindenwood College by representing the college at The Missouri College Joint Fund

Committee, Inc. That same year she announced a pledge to Lindenwood College \$1000.00 each school year, for a period of 10 years, designated for a salary of a distinguished mathematics teacher (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1958-1959). The Board of Directors notes also stated that Mrs. Reed (Donnelly) noted that she estimated the salary for the type of teacher she had in mind at the approximately \$10,000 per year. She further discussed the need and importance of mathematics instructors not only for Lindenwood College but community itself (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1958-1959). President McCluer expressed the appreciation of the college for Nell Quinlan Donnelly's offer and informed her that her suggestion would be given serious consideration as a future option (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1958-1959). In 1959, Nell Quinlan Donnelly became a member of the Long Range Planning Committee representing the Board of Directors along with members from the faculty and administrative departments (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1958-1959). Nell again reported her readiness to gift \$1,000 a year for 10 years to supplement an additional salary for a distinguished teacher of mathematics (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1958-1959). It would eventually take another decade before Lindenwood College took action to implement new math and science programs under the leadership and financial support of Nell Quinlan Donnelly. Nell Quinlan Donnelly never conceded, she knew it was more than just giving and offering but actively participating in the decision making process that impacted future plans for Lindenwood College. Results from a later study conducted in the early 1970s by the Institutional Advancement Consultants Incorporated that Nell Quinlan Donnelly participated in under the leadership of President Dr. William Spencer, reported "An institution's priorities are not always the same as the donors"

(Institutional Advancement Consultants Incorporated, 1977, p. 11). This statement provided potential evidence of Lindenwood College's reluctance to readily accept her academic proposals along with the purpose of a liberal arts woman's education in the 1950s.

Nell Quinlan Donnelly an Educational Leader for Women 1960s-1980s

Historically, the 1960s were a time of change in America and Lindenwood College experienced and became part of the change as the culture, vision, and mission for students widened. The Board of Directors established The Development Program to help with future planning of the educational direction Lindenwood College would pursue. Donnelly was appointed to the new Development Program (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1960). Again it was not a coincidence that Nell was a member.

A time extending from the 1960s to 1980s were the last decades that Nell was publicly active at Lindenwood College. It was during this time that she would finally see the change she had hoped for over the past decades. It was also a time when Lindenwood College sought other educational alternatives to better provide what students needed to be successful beyond college. Two major changes simultaneously happened at Lindenwood College during the 1960s. The elimination of Vocational Training for Teachers in home economics in 1963 and closure of the home economics department happened in 1967 and the expansion of the math department included new courses in digital computer science 1962-1967. College programs changed across America as a result of women wanting to be more than just a good wife and home-maker. College women were beginning to want more than a liberal arts degree; they wanted educational options that led to unlimited opportunities that promoted and lead to gender equity and women having more options to

contribute to society. A memorandum from Dr. Franc McCluer stated “Of all the changes that have taken place in the past hundred years, probably none has been more drastic than the change in the status of women” (Memorandum Lindenwood College, 1965, para. 2). McCluer also believed that women are a vital force and will assume increasing responsibilities in all fields of business, the professional sector, and the arts (Memorandum from Lindenwood College, 1965). This became evident at Lindenwood by the late 1960s as programs and course offerings changed and with the enrollment of men. Findings from Lindenwood College publications dated from 1961 to 1962 featured two math symposiums that promoted industry student relations with a theme of “What women can do with their mathematics in industry” (Math symposium promotes, 1961, p. 4). Prominent industry leaders McDonnell Aircraft Corporation, IBM, and Monsanto Chemical Company sponsored the events. In addition, a 1962 mathematics symposium reported “increased interest in the study of mathematics at Lindenwood College is revealed by an enrollment in math classes of 339 as compared with 54 ten years ago” (Mathematics symposium, 1962, p. 11). As the image and role of women changed, McCluer acknowledged such by addressing the Lindenwood student; “A Lindenwood student knows that the vast majority of her contemporaries will be employed outside the home for many years after her graduation from college. This awareness has increased interest in the preparation for careers in the field of science” (Memorandum Lindenwood College, 1965, para. 11). Nell Quinlan Donnelly’s persistence and efforts to initiate new and innovative math and science programming for the past decade was coming to fruition. A decade later, *The Lindenwood Colleges Bulletin* (1973, Making good use), highlighted a math student who had worked on special projects for McDonnell- Douglas; formerly

McDonnell Aircraft Company, and were later paid for their services and both student and company “look to future benefits of the relationship” (p. 7). Donnelly’s vision of unlimited opportunities had now become a reality and mission for future students at Lindenwood College.

A 1962-63 Lindenwood College publication included Donnelly as a business executive, along with an industrial technician, homemaker, and a biochemist who were all said to be representative and proof of its programs. This was one of the first publications by Lindenwood College that had student’s representative of careers beyond the realms of a traditional liberal arts finishing school graduate. More publications of that type followed the 1962 announcement by McCluer that stated:

Mrs. James A. Reed (Nell Quinlan) of Kansas City Missouri, an alumna and member of the Lindenwood College Board of Directors, has made it possible [gift] for the College to offer, through the Mathematics Department, a specialized computer course using the facilities available at McDonnell Aircraft Corporation, beginning the second semester of this year. (BOD notes, 1962)

It was reported in the same correspondence that Mrs. Reed (Donnelly) feels that “the opportunities in this field are unlimited” (BOD notes, 1962, para. 1). The College considered the course to be especially significant in meeting the needs of today’s business world, and was very grateful for Mrs. Reed’s interest and support (BOD notes, 1962, para.1). In the same Board of Directors report, it became apparent the college had begun efforts to move forward with new programing that more suited the growing change amongst women.

For more than a century Lindenwood College had emphasized the value of a liberal education for women. Educated women become the teachers in the home, the churches, the schools, and the colleges. The professions (science, medicine, law) are turning to them as the nation's unused potential to meet manpower needs. To a constantly increasing degree, women are assuming positions of responsibility in the world of business. (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1962, p. 10)

The academic and societal position of Lindenwood College had begun to move towards one that saw women as more than just educated homemakers or teachers, which had been the accepted societal norm over the history of the college. This was one of two educational initiatives that Nell Quinlan Donnelly funded and supported from 1962 - 1967.

The Lindenwood College Bulletin ("Opportunities unlimited", 1962) first published an article that featured the specialized computer course at McDonnell Aircraft Company. The new course offered through the math department had met the pre-requisites Donnelly felt were needed for the expansion of the existing math program. Students considered for admission to the program were also held to staunch pre-requisites which included three semesters of calculus for the 15 student maximum enrollment ("Opportunities unlimited", 1962). The program was staffed with Lindenwood College professors as well as the expertise of industry professionals. This type of hands-on teaching and learning was the same that Donnelly encouraged earlier for Lindenwood College's home economics department, especially the costume design programs. It was also during this time Nell Quinlan Donnelly was awarded the Alumnae Certificate of

Merit in 1965. Mrs. Nell Quinlan Donnelly was presented the award by President F.L. McCluer and honored by the alumnae for her distinguished public service. Florence *Bloebaum* Null presented the award and commented:

I met Nell more than 50 years ago at the very beginning of the term at Lindenwood and it became evident that she was a person of purpose and drive. Her interest in the school was manifest and to this day it has not wavered.

(Alumnae certificate, 1965, paras. 3-4)

The alumnae club acknowledged all of her time given, and her contributions through her suggestions that encouraged the club to maintain the interest which was always so much in evidence (Alumnae certificate, 1965).

After Donnelly received the Alumnae Certificate of Merit award in 1965, the Nell Quinlan Reed Fund was established in 1967. Donnelly defined the fund, "It is my desire to promote excellence in the field of mathematics at Lindenwood College in St. Charles, Missouri" (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1967, para.1). She further elaborated:

In furtherance of this goal, I desire to assist the College in maintaining and bringing to its mathematics department an outstanding faculty to educate and train the students of the College in all facets of this field of study and to instill in them a desire to utilize and apply their training in mathematics upon completion of their formal education at Lindenwood, para. 2.

As evidence of support of Nell's push to make Lindenwood a more academically serious school, Mrs. Arthur Stockstrom, Board of Directors member, offered her opinion in 1954 emphasizing the advantage of remaining in the same school for four years. She said "a person is unable to get continuous worthwhile learning unless she is in a continuous

worthwhile environment” (College is a privilege, 1954, p. 4). Lindenwood was becoming that more rigorous academic environment for women.

An impressive gift personally donated by Donnelly was named the *Nell Quinlan Reed Professorship* [Nell Quinlan Reed Fund] valued at over \$100,000, was given to Lindenwood College for the endowment of a professorship in mathematics. The announcement was made by President Brown in June, 1967. Nell Quinlan Donnelly, age 79 succeeded in the second initiative she envisioned for Lindenwood College (Undergraduate center, 1967). The Nell Quinlan Reed Fund supported the planned Undergraduate Center for the study of Mathematics which was a vision President Brown shared with Donnelly and had outlined in his inaugural address the prior year. Lindenwood announced with the addition of an “outstanding mathematician” for the Nell Quinlan Reed Professorship, Lindenwood College’s already strong mathematics department would be in a position to provide an exceptionally high level of mathematics teaching and learning for a liberal arts college (Undergraduate center, 1967, p. 5). Donnelly required the same staunch acceptance pre-requisites as the first math and computer initiative she offered in 1962. Junior and senior level students were recruited for the new program and a number of tuition scholarships were offered with a preference given to women students, although the College agreed to admit men into the specialized program (Undergraduate center, 1967). The new progressive math and computer initiatives that Donnelly passionately advocated for over 10 years became an “integral part of the new curriculum and promise to be a significant feature of the forward look in education at Lindenwood” (Undergraduate center, 1967, p. 5). This academic and cultural change at Lindenwood College, to support what Nell thought students needed as

skills and knowledge sets in order to pursue *unlimited opportunities*, would be further summarized in a Board of Directors report from President Brown, 1967:

We deal with students, and they are part of a generation that is deeply concerned about the issues which threaten our civilization. Young women, particularly, concern themselves with stirring problems which affect the quality of life. Where once they wanted piano lessons, they want economics; where once they wanted dressmaking [Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed revolutionized both from 1916-1957], they want History of the Far East; where once they wanted courses on social etiquette, they now enroll in courses in religion and philosophy. We have seen to it that Lindenwood meets these needs. It has meant adding new faculty in academic areas of central concern [math and science]; we had only one political scientist, while four people taught piano; we only had one economist and one sociologist, while two people taught home economics for six majors. (p. 2)

Undergraduate Center for Study of Math to become reality in 1968



Figure 31. Lindenwood College Nell Quinlan Donnelly signs paperwork for funding \$100,000 math professorship (c. 1967) (Undergraduate center for study, Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).



Figure 32. Lindenwood College computer and math programs supported and funded by Nell Quinlan Donnelly (c. 1962-1967). Undergraduate center for study, 1967, (Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).

By the early 1980s, 60 years after Nell Quinlan Donnelly gifted the first Nelly Don Prizes and Scholarships in the 1920s to costume design and art students, Lindenwood College approved a new clothing and textile Bachelor of Science degree in Fashion Merchandising (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1980). There was no evidence that Nell Quinlan Donnelly had an association with the new program. But, by 1983 at the age of 94, Nell Quinlan Donnelly was presented with a plaque that celebrated her as one the two most active members of the Kansas City Alumnae club (At their annual, 1983). The award was given in recognition of 25 years of devoted service on the Lindenwood College Board of Directors and the “prestige brought to the colleges and the club as a prominent citizen of Kansas City” (At their annual, 1983, p. 2). An excerpt from a speech read by fellow alumni Judi Batton Brougham, class of 1960, praised Nell Quinlan Reed on behalf of the club:

For the thousands of dollars she donated to the college, made important business contacts in support of Lindenwood, travelled back and forth to campus four to eight times a year at her own expense, spent many hours reading, digesting and discussing reports long distance and have hosted many parties in her home on behalf of Lindenwood, entertaining college presidents and representatives, thank you (At their annual, 1983).

Closing remarks from Brougham on behalf of all members of the Kansas City Club further affirmed Nell Quinlan Donnelly’s affinity for Lindenwood College, “All of this time and generosity spent on Lindenwood College is a witness to Nell’s love of the college, which we can share with her, for it holds a very special place in our hearts” (At their annual, 1983, p. 2).

Nell Quinlan Donnelly was named a Lindenwood Ambassador in 1985-86, this was the last formal title of recognition found in this study, and she was 96 years old (Our Lindenwood ambassadors, 1986). In the same year, one last known gift was given to Lindenwood College by Nell Quinlan Donnelly before she died in 1991 (Our Lindenwood ambassadors, 1986). Her donation was publicized in the Lindenwood College Renaissance Ambassadors, 1985-86 publication under the President's Club. The change had finally happened, and Nell Quinlan Donnelly was there to witness it as she was the visionary behind the change.

Epilogue of Mrs. Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed 1889-1991

This study set forth to publicly acknowledge Nell Quinlan Donnelly as a phenomenal woman who spent 41 years as an entrepreneur in the garment industry and a 60 year relationship with Lindenwood College which included 25 years of voluntary public service to the Lindenwood Board of Directors.

One could only imagine the lens Nell Quinlan Donnelly viewed the world through, left home at the age of 16, married by 17, off to college at 19 and made her first million dollars by age 27 (O'Malley, 2006a). Whether known as a multi-millionaire, pioneer in the garment industry or Nelly Don, Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed proved to be more than her public titles. James P. McGilley, Jr. wrote in a memorandum after her death titled "Do You Remember Nelly Don?" "If indeed there is a hall of fame for women who believed in the limitless potential of women, then Nell Quinlan should be inducted" (McGilley, 1991, para. 4) Her tireless efforts to set new standards for women by extending boundaries that encouraged gender equality was her life story, a story of unlimited opportunities. This same true essence characterizes Nell Quinlan Donnelly as

an advocate and visionary leader for young women. Thus, adding to the existing body of knowledge pertaining to Lindenwood's history, women's history, women's higher education, math and science [STEM] and the fashion and business industry.



Figure 33. Mrs. Nell Quinlan (Donnelly) Reed (aka Nelly Don) at home, Kansas City Missouri (c. 1987) Wilding, 1987 (Lindenwood University Mary E. Amblers Archives).

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Appendix A

Lindenwood University Library / Mary E. Ambler Archives (Primary & Secondary Source)

✓		↘
Paul Huffman		Board of Director Notes, Lindenwood Bark, Lindenwood Bulletin, Lindenwood Yearbooks & other archived documents relevant to Nell Quinlan Donnelly

Lindenwood Alumni Center / Data Base (Primary & Secondary Source)

✓		↘
Elizabeth Wikoff King		<i>Student Alumni 1940s- 1950s / Oral Histories</i> (Maggie B. Jones, Juanita McClellan, Helen Clotworthy & Barbara Levy) <i>Board Member 1950s-1960s / Oral Histories</i>

Cornell University HEARTH Archives (Secondary Source)

→ Scholarly research literature relevant to dissertation topic

Nell Quinlan (Donnelly) Reed Family & Former Nelly Don Employees (Primary & Secondary Source)

→ Personal Communication / Terence O'Malley (great - great nephew), other family members & former employees

→ Movie Documentary / Autobiography "A Stich in Time"

→ Donnelly & Reed family personal archives

Lindenwood Faculty Personal Communication (Secondary Source)

→ Paul Huffman / University Archivist

→ Elizabeth Wikoff King / Alumni Center Director

→ Susan Mangles / Vice President of Institutional Advancement

→ Dr. Kristine Smith / Professor of History

Lisa S. Thompson personal contacts (Secondary Source)

- Janet Jones (retired Home Economics teacher)
- John Kylott (Business owner) Retro 101
- Beth Styles (Business owner) Parsimonia
- Claudette Walker (Fashion Historian)
- Dr. Laurel Wilson / Professor Emerita; University of MO- Columbia, Textile & Apparel Management Department

The State Historical Society of Missouri – Kansas City (Primary & Secondary Source)

- Monthly MO State Historical Society meeting/ guest speaker Terence O'Malley; great, great nephew of Nell Quinlan Donnelly
- MO State Historical Society / Oral History Workshop w/ Jeff Corrigan, Fredericktown MO
- MO State Historical Society Donnelly & Reed archives

St. Louis Historical Society (Primary & Secondary Source)

- Research Archives
- Shannon Meyer / Senior Curator

The Kansas City Museum/ Historical Garment District (Primary & Secondary Sources)

- Donnelly Garment Company & Nelly Don clothing, artifacts and etc.

Various newspaper circulations/ St. Louis, St. Charles, Kansas City and etc. / (Secondary Source)

Appendix B

Event → Interviewee → Interviewer → Historical Record

Sequence for Oral History Research

1. Formulate overarching question or topic/issue.
2. Plan the project; consider feasibility relative to outcomes/goals, time frame, budget, university resources, equipment, publicity and doctoral worthiness.
3. Conduct background research / non-oral sources.
 - See Appendix A / List of primary & secondary sources
4. Pre-interviews
 - Define population sample and selection criteria.
 - Compose and compile list of topics and questions.
 - Contact potential interviewees; explain project/ research study, location and interview details.
 - Send out consent letters to interviewees; make sure interviewee understands purpose of interview and intended use.
 - Practice interviewing.
 - Select appropriate recording equipment for project/study.
 - Select and confirm appropriate repository that has the capacity to preserve oral histories and make them accessible for public use.
5. Interviews
 - Make sure interviewee understands the purpose of interview and the intended use; the interview is not a private conversation.
 - Have interviewees sign consent form if not done so previously.
 - Any necessary field notes will be collected during and after interview.
6. Post Interview
 - Send thank- you note/card.

- Create a system to label and file all recordings etc.
 - Copy each interview tape; store original in separate place and use copy only.
 - Process [transcribe] interviews; make copies of all work and store separately.
7. Evaluate research and interviews reflective/ relevant to step #1
 - Analyze the interview, verify facts and compare results with research design.
 8. Organize and present results.
 9. Confirm archival depository for long-term/permanent storage.
 10. Send interviewee copy of transcript if requested.

Appendix C

Proposed Oral History Participant's & Questions

Possibly Interviewees:

- Lindenwood College Alums (1940s- 1950s)
- Nell Quinlan Donnelly Family Members
- Lindenwood Faculty/Board Members
- Donnelly Garment Company and/or Nelly Don Employees
- Educational and fashion/business industry stakeholders significant to this study.

Lindenwood College Alums (1940s-1950s) Questions

- Why Lindenwood College for Females?
- What was college life like for Lindenwood College young women in the late 1940s?
- What was your fondest memory of being a costume design student at Lindenwood College?
- What was the name of the program 1940s-1950 & what departments offered costume design and/or clothing & textiles? Was there a difference between the two programs & departments?
- What program of study did you complete? How many years and did you continue your education further? What career path did you pursue after attending Lindenwood College?
- What were the +/- of program?
- Why did Lindenwood college close the Home Economics fashion department & programs? Who/what were the influential factor(s)?
- Who have you kept in touch with over the years after attending Lindenwood College fashion program?
- When I say “Nelly Don Era” what does that remind you of or mean to you? To others?
- What do you know about Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed? Have you ever met her?

- As a young woman attending an all-female college in the late 1940s, how was Nelly Don perceived? What did she offer educationally to women (students & faculty) at Lindenwood and beyond?
- What about Madame. Helene Lyonene, Beulah Salisbury or Virginia Staples? Were you a student or an acquaintance of any of these women? How did they help you personally as a fashion student? What was their expertise in fashion education? Were they all friends?
- Do you know how Nelly Don and Madame. Helene Lyonene met? Was there a “French connection” in St. Charles MO?
- What other women/men had ties or relationship with Nelly Don or Lindenwood College regarding fashion/art programs?
- Were you a recipient of a Nelly Don Prize and/or Scholarship? What did you have to do to qualify or win? How many prizes/ scholarships were awarded a year? How much were the prizes and when & who awarded them?
- Did you ever have the opportunity to work for DGC and/or Nelly Don?
- What other types of awards, prizes and etc. did Nelly Don offer to students?
- How would you describe Nelly Don? Her success in the fashion industry? Was she considered a famous woman of her time? Did you consider her famous fashion icon?
- How and why do you believe Lindenwood College (faculty & staff) welcomed & supported Nelly Don and her guest lecturer Madame Helene Lyonene? How did American and French fashion benefit the department, students and the university?
- Why do you suppose Lindenwood University today has such a vague memory of Nelly Don’s legacy? Was it about her fame and money?
- Why do you believe Nelly Don is given less credit or not as well-known as other designers of her time?
- Have you ever purchased any Nelly Don dresses?
- What do you think of her 60 year affair with Lindenwood College?
- What can Lindenwood do now to revive the Nelly Don Era and add a piece of history to the current Fine Arts department?
- Why do you feel Nelly Don is relevant to Lindenwood history or not?

- (**Margaret Burton Jones Only**) I read that you were a house mother at Sibley Hall...1990s? What was Lindenwood like forty years later? What did you think of the fashion program?
- How are/were you involved with Lindenwood as alum?
- How did past alums contribute to fashion program during the Nelly Don Era?
- If you could meet with any of the mentioned women in this interview today, who would it be and why?
- Is there anyone else that you know that can fill in the gaps where written history was not recorded?

Barbara Wexner Levy Questions

- Why Lindenwood College for Females?
- What was college life like for Lindenwood College young women in the late 1940s?
- What was your major? Did you take fashion classes in the Home Economics department? If not, why?
- Did you know other young women in the H.Ec program? Maggie Burton Jones?
- What lead you to fashion industry, specifically shoes?
- Did you know Nelly Don, Madame Helene Lyonene (Nelly Don French designer) , Beulah Spilsbury (Head designer at DGC) or Virginia Staples (fashion journalist / University of MO-Columbia graduate)
- Why do you believe Nelly Don is given less credit or not as well-known as other designers of her time?
- Have you ever purchased any Nelly Don dresses?
- Life after Lindenwood College, what was that like for you?
- Why have you stay well connected to Lindenwood up till 2015?
- How did Lindenwood College prepare you for the fashion industry?
- How/when did “Barbara Reports/Views” start?
- What about your shoe collection?

- Are there other fashion industry accomplishments that you are credited with?
- What does Lindenwood mean to you today?
- Is there anyone else that you know that can fill in the gaps where written history was not recorded?

Lindenwood Board Members / Faculty

- What kind of woman was Mrs. James A. Reed? What kind of board member?
- One word to describe Mrs. James A. Reed work ethic?
- How successful was her son (Quinlan Reed) as a board member and continuing her legacy?
- “Nelly Don Era” was it an environment /culture of “women becoming consumers not producers”? Was this the mentality at Lindenwood? Faculty, students & societal norms...
- Nelly Don Era.... 1950s 1960s what was it like, her presence...was it well known?
- Nelly Don Prizes & Scholarships...Fashion shows how well known events on campus?
- French designer & guest lecturer Helene Lyonene, Head designer from Donnelly Garment Co. Beulah Salisbury, Virginia Staples....Fashion Consultant how well known on campus?
- Dr. Alice Linnemann / Art Department Dean, Interim President & Nell first costume design teacher, what is known about the history between the two?
- Four Administrative Board positions (board member/life time, alumni, advisory & faculty & curriculum)... What can be said about her commitment to Lindenwood and the education of young women?
- Were her acts of kindness a result of having a great teacher, Dr. Alice Linnemann, her first costume design teacher and Lindenwood College Alum? Was Nell playing it forward?
- Why didn't Nell leave money to the Art or Home Ec department? Was she aware that Lindenwood was going to eliminate Home Ec programs & department? Did she receive the inside scoop and was persuaded to endow money to the math department since she was a member of the Faculty & Curriculum board?

- How many students were impacted from her presence and philanthropic contributions?
- How would you describe Nelly Don? Her success in the fashion industry? Was she considered a famous woman of her time? Did you consider her famous fashion icon?
- How and why do you believe Lindenwood College (faculty & staff) welcomed & supported Nelly Don and her guest lecturer Madame Helene Lyonene? How did American and French fashion benefit the department, students and the university?
- Why do you suppose Lindenwood University today has such a vague memory of Nelly Don's legacy? Was it about her fame and money?
- What do you think of her fifty year affair with Lindenwood College?
- What can Lindenwood do now to revive the Nelly Don Era and add a piece of history to the current Fine Arts department?
- Why do you feel Nelly Don is relevant to Lindenwood history or not?
- Is there anyone else that you know that can fill in the gaps where written history was not recorded?

Family members of Nelly Don

- Why did Nell choose to attend Lindenwood College for Females?
- What can be said to paint a clearer picture about Nell's beliefs and values about education and the business of fashion?
- Evolution of her name... Ellen (Nell) Quinlan, Nelly Don, Nell Quinlan Donnelly and Mrs. James A. Reed...what story can be told?
- What kind of opportunity to further acknowledge Nell's passion for education and fashion at Lindenwood and beyond can be rekindled through her legacy?
- What prompted the family in recent years to highlight Nell's place in American history?
- What qualities and traits qualified Nell to be named "One of the boys"?
- Was DGC and/or Nelly Don Company a family run business?
- Who was Nell's role model or inspiration?
- How did Nell mentor other women in the fashion industry?

- What do you know about the long time resistance of the Nelly Don Company joining the International Ladies Garment Workers? What were the benefits of belonging to the Donnelly Garment Workers Union?
- Were her acts of kindness a result of having a great teacher, Dr. Alice Linnemann, her first costume design teacher and Lindenwood College Alum? Was Nell playing it forward?
- Why didn't Nell leave money to the Art or Home Ec department? Was she aware that Lindenwood was going to eliminate Home Ec programs & department? Did she receive the inside scoop and was persuaded to endow money to the math department since she was a member of the Faculty & Curriculum board?
- How many students were impacted from her presence and philanthropic contributions?
- How would you describe Nelly Don? Her success in the fashion industry? Was she considered a famous woman of her time? Did you consider her famous fashion icon?
- How did Lindenwood influence Nelly Don? How did Nelly Don influence Lindenwood?
- Why do you suppose Lindenwood University today has such a vague memory of Nelly Don's legacy? Was it about her fame and money?
- What do you think of her fifty year affair with Lindenwood College?
- What can Lindenwood do now to revive the Nelly Don Era and add a piece of history to the current Fine Arts department?
- Why do you feel Nelly Don is relevant to Lindenwood history or not?
- What was life like after Nelly Don and her later years of retirement?
- What do you think she would say and want in regards of trying to rekindle and further her legacy at Lindenwood /fashion department?
- Has Nelly Don legacy inspired other family members to become part of fashion industry?
- Is there anyone else that you know that can fill in the gaps where written history was not recorded?

Employees of Donnelly Garment Company and/or Nelly Don Company

- What was the standard measure of excellence for both employee and employer?
- How did employees address her? By her surname?
- How many locations? What location were you employed?
- Where was Nelly Don brand sold? Any well-known buyers?
- How many employees?
- What were your first impressions of the Nelly Don Company?
- What was it like to work for Nelly Don? How long were you an employee?
- What was your first job there?
- What did you like most about your job....or least?
- How was business when you first arrived at Nelly Don?
- What benefits were offered to employees? Tell me about lunch time and holidays, especially Christmas time Nelly Don Company
- Nelly Don company was acknowledged as having a family like work environment, describe your personal experience
- In what ways was Nelly Don Company different from other businesses that you have worked for?
- Are there Nelly Don Company reunions? Any favorite stories about working at Nelly Don Company?
- What was it like at the Nelly Don Club House?
- Why do you believe Nelly Don is given less credit or not as well-known as other designers of her time?
- Have you ever purchased any Nelly Don dresses?
- What did you know about her life history?
- Did you know of her French designer Madame. Helene Lyonene, Beulah Spilsbury or any other top designers? Did she hire local designers?

- What resources did she offer to encourage employees to continue their education or their families? Did you know anyone who received monetary assistance to attend Lindenwood?
- Have you meet any fashion design students from Lindenwood?
- What were the demographic of employees....gender, age, race, skill set
- What do you know about the long time resistance of the Nelly Don Company joining the International Ladies Garment Workers? What were the benefits of belonging to the Donnelly Garment Workers Union?
- How did the Nelly Don Company change over the years of your employment?
- If you had one word to describe Nelly Don Company, what would it be?
- Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you would like to discuss?

Janet Jones

- What do you about Nelly Don from living in Springfield MO?
- How did you come to know the Nelly Don brand?
- Home Economics and Nelly Don, what comes to mind?
- Why do you believe Nelly Don is given less credit or not as well-known as other designers of her time?
- Have you ever purchased any Nelly Don dresses?
- Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you would like to discuss?

Open ended questions for Nelly Don stakeholders

***** Dependent upon stakeholder; questions from any of the participant categories may be asked and/ or addressed to a specific stakeholder if applicable**

- How did the university come to know or acknowledge Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed and/or the Nelly Don brand?
- Why do you think she was successful? How did or would the prime/ height of her business success be described then and today?
- Where there any "nay-sayers" concerning the Nelly Don brand? If so, why?

- What can you personally say about Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed and/or Nelly Don brand in an educational or fashion industry perspective?
- What can be taken from the educational and fashion industry perspective to inform the present and guide the future?

Appendix D

Chapter Five Notes

Women and Leadership

Oral histories were collected from Lindenwood College Alumni who attended from 1945-1951 and who were enrolled in the costume design program. This research study exhausted all possible resources to locate any living alum that attended Lindenwood College during the late 1930s-early 1950s. Fortunately, three alums were located who attended Lindenwood College were identified. All three were either enrolled in the costume design program, participated in the annual spring fashion and/or alum found in the alumni database made them eligible participants. Initial research findings alluded to the fact that participants would possibly have had a relationship with Nell Quinlan Donnelly and / or Donnelly Garment Company and Madame Helene Lyolene guest lecturer and fashion stylist for 10 years. A summary of excerpts from recordings provided the following findings.

The three participants attended Lindenwood College between the years of 1945-1951. The oldest participant, Mrs. Margaret (Maggie) *Burton* Jones, attended Lindenwood College from 1945-1948. She was from Wichita, Kansas and currently lives in Hot Springs, Arkansas and is 89 years old. Mrs. Juanita *Montgomery* McClellan was from Salem, Illinois and attended Lindenwood from 1950-1951; she currently lives in Saginaw, Michigan. Mrs. Helen *Wetzel* Clotworthy was from Springfield, Missouri and attended Lindenwood from 1950-1951; she currently lives in Forsythe, Missouri. Maggie *Burton* Jones was the only participant that graduated from Lindenwood College, while the other two participants transferred and graduated from other institutions. Mrs.

Clotworthy transferred back to Southwest Missouri State College, where she had attended as a freshman and Mrs. McClellan transferred with a good friend to the University of Kentucky, a coed institution. All three participants enjoyed their time at Lindenwood by expressing “I don’t ever remember any negatives at Lindenwood, it was a wonderful school and a lot of advantages, it was an experience you didn’t get at home” stated Maggie *Burton* Jones and Mrs. McClellan stated “I had good friends that I’m still in touch with over the years” while Mrs. Clotworthy concluded with “ I enjoyed my year at Lindenwood, and I had fun, and learned a lot from home ec, the sewing and I loved the dorm life”. All three participants graduated from a four institution with degrees in home economics, specifically in the areas of education and retail merchandising.

Both Juanita *Montgomery* McClellan and Helen *Wetzel* Clotworthy names were found in a 1951 Lindenwood Fashion program. All the students that were listed in the program were given to the Director of Alumni Relations in 2015 and entered into the alumni data base resulting in locating two of the three participants described. Maggie *Burton* Jones was discovered as a result of researching Madame Helene Lyolenes background. Findings from a Google search directly connected Maggie *Burton* Jones to Madame Helene Lyolene by way of a previous oral history collected by the Alliance of American Quilts in 2009. The findings were given to the Director of Alumni Relations and after a database search, contact information was provided. Subsequently, Maggie *Burton* Jones contact information from Lindenwood was invalid but since discovering her oral histories, contact was made with Alliance of American Quilts. I was then advised to contact the Daughters of American Revolution, which whom she was a member and local

chapter librarian in Hot Springs Village, Arkansas. The registrar was contacted and Maggie's correct contact information was received.

Nell Quinlan Donnelly a Visionary Leader of Women 1960s-1980

Before her death in 1991 at the age of 102, she continued to enjoy many of her hobbies including mechanics, politics, and hunting and fishing. It was also during this time she became a known philanthropist, advocate and voice for the welfare of Lindenwood women students. Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed's presence at Lindenwood College for girls lasted for over 50 years and encouraged the college to seek educational advancements for women students through better teaching and learning practices. Nell held numerous academic and philanthropic board positions in both St. Charles and Kansas City Missouri.

In an attempt to acknowledge Nell Quinlan Donnelly's numerous public service efforts chronologically, citations of sources were taken from collection of publications that covered a large span of time documenting her philanthropic efforts.

Research findings from this study did not render evidence as to how long the math and science programs were in existence. Dr. Kris Smith, Professor of History at Lindenwood (2015) noted the following via email after contacting a former Lindenwood math professor Dr. Soda:

I vaguely recall that the Reed family may have endowed a chair in Mathematics. There should be record of that. I recall President Spencer mentioning it to me once. As far as I know no one ever sat in the chair. I came to Lindenwood in 1969. I have no direct knowledge of Mrs. Reed, nor do I recall meeting her. The previous chair of Mathematics Robert Murdoch may have known her. He

subsequently went to Principia College. I never met him. I am afraid that is all I recall.

Unfortunately, in the interim, Mr. John Nichols died January 31, 2017. Future research studies as related to this study can further investigate Bittner and Murdoch association, if any with the math and computer programs initiated by Nell Quinlan Donnelly. In addition, Huffman, University Archivist-Reference Librarian [Lindenwood] stated that the only information that he had about the partnership with McDonnell was that she gave an undisclosed amount that allowed women to have a course called “Introduction to Digital Computer Programming with Application” (Huffman, P, personal communication via email, April 22, 2017). This research study also attempted to collect information from McDonnell Douglas Corporation archives, now the Boeing Corporation which was inconclusive. Mr. Henry Brownlee, historian and archivist for Boeing Corporation in St. Louis, Missouri reported after a search of their data bases, no information was found regarding Nell Quinlan Donnelly or a partnership with Lindenwood College that offered a course for women named “Introduction to Digital Computer programming with Application” in 1962. But, findings from the last 20 years (1970s to 1980s) indicated that Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed was active at Lindenwood College and continued to prove her undeniable loyalty, support and love for the college. She was still associated with the Board of Directors, an active benefactor and participatory alumnae member vested in the future of Lindenwood College. In 1969, Nell Quinlan Donnelly was 80 years old and now a member of the Board of Overseers at Lindenwood. She held that position till 1975 at which time she became an Honorary Life Member at age 86 (BOD notes, 1969 & 1975). In spite of her age, Nell was a trusted member who regularly

attended Board of Director meetings in St. Louis while her residency was in Kansas City, Missouri. During these years her philanthropic desires continued. In 1973, Board of Director notes reported that Mrs. Reed pledged a generous gift that helped the alumnae annual giving surpass the previous \$22,000 to \$50,000 (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1973). By 1977 at age 88, Nell once again initiated The Challenge Grant with the John M. Wolff Foundation which both helped to raise new alumni gifts. According to a Lindenwood College publication (Alumni giving up, 1977) the alumni gifts to Lindenwood College increased 145 percent in 1976-77 due to the Challenge Grant (Alumni giving up, 1977). Nell Quinlan Donnelly and a St. Louis Foundation gifted \$15,000 towards the challenge, another alumna gifted \$10,000 and the other \$14,715 was gifted by 522 donors who had responded to a Phon-athon campaign (Alumni giving up, 1977). During the same year, the Board of Directors invited Mrs. James A. Reed (Donnelly) to serve on the one of the advisory boards. A motion was granted and Nell Quinlan Donnelly at 89, was an advisory member of the Lindenwood College for Men [social sciences division and natural science and mathematics division], again this would be no coincidence that she was recommended and appointed to the advisory board and she accepted (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1978).

Appendix E

Nelly Don: Educational Leader Timeline (1889-1991)

1889- Ellen (Nell) Quinlan Donnelly (Reed) born in Parson, Kansas Missouri

1907-1909 -Nell Quinlan Donnelly aka Nelly Don attended Lindenwood College and studied costume design with **Dr. Alice Linnemann**, Lindenwood College art & art history instructor, Donnelly's class advisor & LU alum; **Donnelly participated in the following:**

- ❖ Class of 1909 Annual Board
- ❖ Business manager for the Linden Leaves; Lindenwood College yearbook
- ❖ Phi Delta Sigma, Secretary
- ❖ Kansas City Club, President
- ❖ Senior tennis club, President

1909- Nell Quinlan Donnelly received Seminary Diploma from Lindenwood College

1911- Nell Quinlan Donnelly was one of five Lindenwood College alumnae who founded the Kansas City Alumni Club

1913- Dr. Alice Linnemann appointed Lindenwood College interim President

1916- Nell Quinlan Donnelly famous "Pink Gingham Apron Frock" debuts at George B. Peck Dry Goods Company, KS selling out all 18 dozen dresses (216) in a day

1915- Lindenwood College for Women known as "**The Wellesley of the West**" originally envisioned by Col. Butler and recognized under leadership of Dr. Roemer

1916-1917- Nell Quinlan Donnelly made her first millionaire dollars at age 27 becoming the second women millionaire in the US

1919- Donnelly Garment Company (DGC) established and **Nelly Don** label launched

1920s –Lindenwood College Spring Style Shows, **Nelly Don Prizes and Scholarships \$5 (\$71), \$10 (\$143) & \$15 (\$215)** offered till 1950s

1921- Lindenwood became a four year accredited college; Pauline Weissgerber was awarded the first BS degree, Home Economics

1937- Nell Quinlan Donnelly; Honorary Member of Kappa Pi (National Honor Art Fraternity)

1940s -1950s – Nell Quinlan Donnelly provided financial assistance for three influential women **Madame Helene Lyolene, Virginia Staples and Beulah Spilsbury** to assist and teach young women associated with Lindenwood College Home Economics program; Costume Design

1941- Harry M. Gage elected President of Lindenwood College; mutual friend of Senator James A. Reed, **Nell Quinlan Donnelly's** second husband

1944- Nell Quinlan Donnelly offered to pay one-half of the expenses to expand a home economics course; estimated cost **\$2,400.00 (\$34,000.00)**

1945-1948- Margret “Maggie” B. Jones, Lindenwood alum and costume design student studied and worked personally with **Nell Quinlan Donnelly's** French designer Madame Helene Lyolene

1948- Nell Quinlan Donnelly donated **\$1,350.00 (14,000.00)** to support one of the “French Girls” who was part of the cultural exchange program for foreign students that she help fund

1949- Nell Quinlan Donnelly received Honorary Doctorate of Law degree from Lindenwood College

1950s- Nell Quinlan Donnelly represents Lindenwood College at The Missouri Joint Fund Committee, Inc

1950-1951- Lindenwood College costume design students Helen *Wetzel* Clotworthy and Juanita *Montgomery* McClellan studied under **Nell Quinlan Donnelly's** French designer Madame Helene Lyolone

1952 - 1957- Nell Quinlan Donnelly first administrative appointment at Lindenwood College; newly established Advisory Board. She was one of ten appointed members to assist Lindenwood Board of Directors

1952- Nell Quinlan Donnelly received Honorary Doctorate of Humanities degree from Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

1953- Nell Quinlan Donnelly, president of Donnelly Garment Company operated largest dress manufacturer in the world

1953-1969 - Nell Quinlan Donnelly appointed to the Board of Directors as a member; third woman appointed

1954- Nell Quinlan Donnelly appointed member of the Faculty and Curriculum committee, one of the Standing Committees of the Board of Directors at Lindenwood College

1956- Nell Quinlan Donnelly retired from Donnelly Garment Company at 68 years old

1958-1959- Nell Quinlan Donnelly announced a pledge to Lindenwood College of \$1000.00 each school year, for a period of 10 years, designated for a salary of a distinguished mathematics teacher (Lindenwood College BOD notes, 1958-1959)

1958-1961 -Board of Director Notes p.4 indicate **Nell Quinlan Donnelly** concerned about young women's educational futures; Donnelly's interest in raising awareness in Math & Science careers for women led to her personal advocacy of "unlimited opportunities" for young women at Lindenwood College

1959- Nell Quinlan Donnelly became a member of the Long Range Planning Committee representing the Board of Directors

1960s – Nell Quinlan Donnelly appointed to the newly established Development Program to help with future planning of the educational direction Lindenwood College would pursue

1962 - Nell Quinlan Donnelly funded (unknown amount) and implemented a new specialized computer course, "*Introduction to Digital Computer Programming with Application*" in partnership with McDonnell Aircraft Corporation utilizing facilities at McDonnell Aircraft Corporation

1965- Lindenwood College presented **Nell Quinlan Donnelly** the Alumnae Certificate of Merit Award

1967- Nell Quinlan Donnelly established the *Nell Quinlan Reed Professorship*; endowment of **\$100,000 (\$753,000.00)** for Math Professorship Chair for a new math program

1967- Lindenwood College close Home Economic Programs; programs & curriculum turning point for women at Lindenwood College

1968- Nell Quinlan Donnelly's leadership established the **Center for Study of Mathematics**

1968- Nell Quinlan Donnelly elected member to The Board of Overseers at Lindenwood College

1969- Nell Quinlan Donnelly appointed Board of Directors Life Member at Lindenwood College at age 80

Late 1960s – Nell Quinlan Donnelly donated a collection of her late husband, James A. Reed law books to the Margaret L. Butler Library at Lindenwood College

1976- Nell Quinlan Donnelly and a St. Louis Foundation donate a **\$15,000 (\$67,000.00)** alumni gift

1977- Nell Quinlan Donnelly, age 88 is appointed to the Lindenwood College for Men Advisory Board (Social Science Division & Natural Science and Math Division)

1983- Nell Quinlan Donnelly at age 94, was presented with a plaque that celebrated her as one of the two most active members of the Kansas City Alumnae Club and 25 years of devoted service to Lindenwood College Board of Directors

1985- Nell Quinlan Donnelly at age 96, named a Lindenwood Ambassador, this was the final formal title of recognition found in this study

1986- Nell Quinlan Donnelly's last publicized monetary gift to Lindenwood College published under the President's Club donor list **\$500.00-\$1200.00 (\$1,100-\$2,700)**

1991 - Nell Quinlan Donnelly Reed dies at age 102, Kansas City Missouri

1991-1992- Margaret "Maggie" Burton Jones, 1948 Lindenwood College graduate & oral history participant was a Housemother at the Sibley House dormitory

2015-2016- Oral Histories were collected from Maggie B. Jones, Helen Wetzel Clotworthy and Juanita Montgomery McClellan; costume design students from 1945-1951 who studied under Madame Helene Lyolone, **Nell Quinlan Donnelly's** personal French designer for over 25 years; as well as their personal stories as related to Nell Donnelly

Vitae

Lisa S. Thompson of St. Louis, Missouri earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Human and Environmental Sciences with an emphasis in Textile and Apparel Management from University of Missouri-Columbia, a Master of Arts degree in Family and Consumer Science Education, and a Master of Arts degree in Special Reading from Fontbonne University. She also earned an Educational Specialist degree in Instructional Leadership with emphasis in K-12 Literacy Education from Lindenwood University.

Thompson's interests include recording oral histories related to fashion as a culture and women's history depicted through dress. She also is a fashion historian and stylist for *The Modern Classic Society*, a non-for-profit organization she operates specializing in the collecting of historical/vintage era clothing and textile pieces for teaching and learning experiences.