1938

Special Invitation for One

Jane Helser  
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker  
Part of the Home Economics Commons

Recommended Citation  
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol18/iss2/2

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Homemaker by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Special Invitation for One
by Jane Helser

Once a poor boy from Arkansas, William H. Danforth has become one of the country's outstanding business men as well as a noted philanthropist.

We at Iowa State know him best as the donor of the William H. Danforth Scholarships, which are awarded each year.

In 1936, nineteen girls from Home Economics schools throughout the United States were selected to receive this honor. In 1937, the number was increased to thirty, and this year, thirty-five outstanding Home Economics juniors are to receive this unusual opportunity to study their applied subject in actual operation.

Dorothy Clark, Home Economics junior, was recently awarded the Danforth fellowship from Iowa State college. Lois Madsen, Home Economics freshman, is the candidate for the Freshman award.

Mr. Danforth has for many years been the chairman of the board of directors of the Ralston Purina Company which he built up from a small feed store in Arkansas. Each summer he brings the current crop of scholarship winners to St. Louis, where the home plant is located. For two weeks they study, on salary, conditions in a large commercial establishment, and they learn of the various types of work which are open to home economics trained women.

The students live together in the nurses' home of Barnes Hospital, where they pay board and room from their salaries just as they would if they were actually working. The first two days are spent observing the huge Ralston Purina plant to get a general idea of all the departments which are essential to a large corporation.

Each day after that, the girls study the plant and hear lectures pertaining to advertising, salesmanship, commerce, personnel management, service, and publicity. Several of the lectures are illustrated with moving pictures and delivered by some individual who is an authority on the subject.

Scholarship winners are given the opportunity to observe and assist in some of the laboratory procedure.

At various times during the two weeks, the students are taken to observe home economics trained women in action. These trips are to department stores, tea rooms, hotels, hospitals, commercial kitchens and radio studios.

Each of the scholarship winners is granted a personal interview, at some time during the two weeks, with the personnel director of the plant who treats the girls just as if they were applying for actual positions. Mr. Danforth believes that training in applying for work is as important as training for the work itself.

On the last Saturday afternoon of the two weeks, the girls are allowed to do anything they please about the city of St. Louis, and their host sees to it that each girl can go where she wants to go.

After an educational and worthwhile fourteen days in St. Louis, the benefactor does not believe his work is finished and sends his guests on another two weeks stay, this time to the American Youth Foundation Camp on Lake Michigan at Shelby, Mich.

There, mixed in with three-hundred other camp girls, the Danforth Scholarship winners enjoy regular camp life and participate in the camp activities which are designed for four-fold development: religious, mental, physical, and social.

It is not until this period that the girls meet Mr. Danforth and have an opportunity to talk with him.

Minerva King, Household Equipment senior and last year's junior Danforth Scholarship winner from Iowa State College, describes the philanthropist as a modest, unassuming man who had a kind word for everyone. She considers her month as a Danforth Scholarship winner one of the richest experiences she will have in her life, and says it is worth working hard to receive.

The fortunate junior who is given this award is selected by the Home Economics faculty. Each head of a department nominates junior girls whom she thinks worthy of this honor. A board of five women, headed by Dean Genevieve Fisher narrows the list down to five and these five are given application blanks which they are asked to fill out. From the applications turned in, this same board of five selects the girl who goes to St. Louis as the guest of William H. Danforth, creator of the famous checker-board packages.

Florence Valencourt, Home Economics sophomore, was the only freshman in the United States to receive a Danforth Scholarship.

"Two weeks at Mr. Danforth's camp, 'Minivavne,' is enough to make a 'new woman' out of anyone," according to Florence. She says that being initiated into his program of "four-fold living" was a wonderful experience.

Marjorie Griffin, '37, was the first Iowa State woman to receive a Danforth Scholarship. She is now on the staff of Successful Farming Magazine in Des Moines.

This year's two winners will be given the ward at the annual Honor's Day Convocation which is held late in May.