

1938

Catering to Coeds

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LINGERIE
SWEATERS
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Downtown Ames

Catering to Coeds

by Grace Strohmeier

MISS JEANNE STROHMEIER, Textiles and Clothing Sr., organized the first College Shop for a large department store in Evanston, Illinois, while employed there during the summer months. Her first job was to interest other people in her new project. She had to sell her idea to the manager of the store; she had to sell her idea to the employees for their cooperation and support; and she had to sell her idea to the college students in Evanston.

It was an adventure to Jeanne to shop as a "spy" in Chicago department stores, paying particular attention to the set-ups used in specialized clothing departments. She read fashion magazines



and newspapers and college bulletins to collect material on college clothing. A file of information on social activities in particular colleges was compiled.

The old dress shop of the store was converted into a College Shop by decorating with pennants of all big schools, megaphones and signs reading, "So You're Going Away to College!" In a niche was a large luggage display; an open trunk with miscellaneous articles sticking out of the drawers; several other pieces of luggage were beside it with sport shoes, tennis racket, golf clubs, a radio, a formal, a three-piece wool suit, and afternoon dress partially packed. A life size photograph of Jeanne in an ensemble from the store and taken in the court of Northwestern's sorority houses, added to the atmosphere of college.

A personal letter to prospects announced the services of a college trained clothing consultant. This letter said to every June graduate of Evanston high schools: "Of course, every freshman wants to look like an upper-classman the minute she steps up to register, and not like the little girl who has been outfitted by Aunt Sarah, Paducah, '05." This was the beginning of a college shop which will be opened every fall to enable the high school graduate to choose a suitable college wardrobe for campus wear. Jeanne asserts, "I've gained a wealth of experience which doesn't just start and end in the store, but includes learning the difference in standards of living, the cost of living and most of all, how to find your way about."

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