

Alumni Award

Lucy Webb Hayes

Class of 1853

With this presentation of the Distinguished Achievement Citation, the Alumni Association Board of Directors is proud to recognize **Lucy Webb Hayes** 1853 for her role in defining what it means to be a social advocate and for her commitment to women's equality.

Hayes attended OWU at a time when women were not allowed to earn degrees. Never deterred, she enrolled in a college preparatory program and studied French, Composition, Grammar, and Penmanship. She was frequently praised by university administration for her good conduct. She graduated from a special non-degree program OWU offered to women.

After transferring to the Cincinnati Wesleyan Female College to study subjects from Geology to Music, Hayes married Rutherford B. Hayes and became the first First Lady to have a college degree, as well as the first presidential spouse to be called "First Lady."

In college, she spent significant time studying the intersection of social and religious issues and wrote several essays about women's rights. Hayes was a strong supporter of African-American civil rights both pre- and post-Civil War, and actively supported women's suffrage and temperance. She was a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and was President of the Methodist Missionary Society.

For her work in defining the importance of the role of "First Lady" and her constant pursuit of educational opportunity despite opposition, the Alumni Board is pleased to present Lucy with the Distinguished Achievement Citation.

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