1916
Jeannette Rankin is the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.
America enters World War I.
The British Royal Air Force is founded, only 8 years after the Wright Brothers' flight.
The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing women the right to vote is passed by Congress on June 4th.
The 19th Amendment is ratified on August 18th.
Edith Wharton becomes the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for fiction.
The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) is created.
First game is played at Yankee Stadium between the Yankees and the Boston Red Sox.
Nellie TayloeRoss is elected in Wyoming to succeed her deceased husband becoming the first woman to serve as governor of a state.
Miriam Amanda Ferguson is inaugurated as the first woman governor of Texas.
1925
Ruth Brown McCluney and Grace Odell

Written by Paul J. Viera

Following Ruth Brown’s graduation from El Paso High School in 1916, sixteen-year-old Ruth Brown received a scholarship from El Paso’s University Scholarship Club, which afforded her the opportunity to attend the college of her choice. At first, she announced that she would attend the University of Kansas. However, Ruth’s father, Charles H. Brown, insisted that his daughter postpone attending Kansas and instead attend the School of Mines, then located adjacent to Fort Bliss.

As one of only two female students attending TSM in 1916, Brown could not live in the dormitory. Instead, she commuted from her El Paso home by streetcar to the main gate of Fort Bliss, and then walked one-half mile across the parade ground and past the stables to attend classes in the school’s main building. When that building burnt down in October 1916, Brown remained at TSM and became one of the first students to attend classes at the Franklin Mountains campus on October 29, 1917, which were held in the new chemistry building.

After three years attending TSM and the College of the City of El Paso, Brown became UTEP’s first female instructor when Dean Steve Worrell offered her the position of chemistry assistant with a salary of $250 per year. While Brown did not graduate from the School of Mines, she did graduate with a teacher’s certificate from the College of the City of El Paso (CCS). Brown transferred to the University of Kansas where she continued her study of chemistry. After graduating with her B.S., she returned to Texas to teach high school.

Grace France Odell, born 1899 in Kansas, came from a cattle ranching and retail merchant family. Odell graduated alongside with Ruth Brown from El Paso High School in 1916 and the two enrolled at the Texas School of Mines (TSM) in September 1916. At TSM, Odell joined the staff of the Prospector and played on the school’s first women’s basketball team.

In 1917, Odell, along with Brown, enrolled in the CCEP. In 1918, she joined the TSM and CCEP commencement ceremony. Odell received her CCEP diploma, which doubled as a Texas teacher certificate. Odell, however, did not go into teaching. Instead, she began work as a stenographer for the U.S. army and a local architectural firm. In 1920, Odell was selected as one of the first female delegates to a state party convention following the granting of the vote to women. Odell later married Raymond Dominick, a soldier stationed at Fort Bliss. The couple moved to Kentucky where Raymond earned his engineering degree. They relocated to Los Angeles and raised three children. Grace passed away in 1992 at the age of 94.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The first class of women came to UTEP in 1916 and by September 1917, women made up one-half of UTEP’s enrollment.
Ruth Monro Augur
Written by Paul J. Viera

Ruth Monro Augur was born in Austin, Texas, on November 14, 1888, to Charles Manwaring Augur and Cecelia Hall. Raised in Denver, Colorado, she studied painting under noted landscape impressionist artists Robert Henri and William M. Chase at the New York School of Art. When her father, an army officer, was transferred to Fort Bliss, Augur made El Paso her home.

Augur’s association with the new Texas School of Mines (TSM) began with the school’s establishment in 1914. In 1911, Augur served as a society and sports reporter for the El Paso Herald, and received a promotion to society page editor in 1916. Her journalistic duties placed her in contact with the school as she reported on the various functions held by faculty and students. In 1915, Augur began a close association with TSM’s dean, Steve H. Worrell, and his wife Kathleen. With the beginning of the fall semester in 1917, Dean Worrell hired Augur to serve as the school’s new registrar. Augur provided a degree of the humanities to the rugged engineering school in its early years. Utilizing her graphic artist skills, she designed the school’s first logo and seal. As a musician (she played the cello), she performed at many of their social functions. In April 1919, Augur wrote and directed the first theatrical performance staged by the school and featured the students of TSM.

After leaving the College of Mines in 1929, Augur moved to California where she continued her career in the arts as a painter and the producer, writer, and director of a touring marionette puppet theater group. Ruth Monro Augur passed away on March 10, 1967, in Oklahoma City.

Carrie M. Crosby
Written by Guest Author

Carrie Crosby enrolled in the College of Mines in 1924, at a time when the only degree offered by the school was a Bachelor of Science degree in mining engineering. As a full time student, she became the first female to reach senior status in 1927. Carrie invested her time as a student by founding one of the first campus sororities (Omega Phi Delta), coediting the annual yearbook, and participating in the college’s women’s council. Despite her senior status, Crosby left TCM in 1928 without graduating and married fellow engineering student, Louis F. “Biff” Green. Carrie left TCM one year after it began its transformation into a baccalaureate college. It would not be until 1931 that TCM would receive authorization to award bachelor’s degrees.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

There are three campus buildings named after women: Bell Hall, Fox Fine Arts Center, and the Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center.