

Hey Everybody, I Named the Great Danes!

By Kathleen Earle Fox, B.A.'67, M.S.W.'76, Ph.D.'96



I get quite a thrill when I see pictures of UAlbany's Great Danes in their purple and gold. I also get a buzz from seeing the mascot, a guy (or girl) in a droopy dog costume. This is more than the average fan or graduate feels: You see, I'm the one who came up with the idea for the Great Dane name in 1965. I won \$25 for my "Great Dane" entry in the "Name the Mascot" contest.

The "Great Danes" name was not popular with the student body in the fall of 1965, and I kept a low profile. The sports editor of the *ASP (Albany Student Press)*, Ray McCloat, "outed" me in an Oct. 29, 1965, editorial with a scathing attack on the new name. "To be entirely fair," he wrote, "we do think that contest winner Kathy Earle did present excellent credentials for the Great Dane in submitting her entry. She claimed the dog was 'typically American, bred for size, weight, strength, character, courage, speed, and stamina.' If it were running for office in the ASPCA, the animal would win in a landslide."

I was a new transfer to Albany, from Cornell University, in January 1965. Albany seemed like just the right place for me, and it was. I graduated in January 1967 with 60 credits from Cornell and 60 from Albany, and am considered an alumna of both. I later got an M.S.W. from Albany and a Ph.D. in social welfare from the Rockefeller College of the University.

In early 1966, I won the award that mattered most to me, the Shields McIlwain Poetry Award, which was given the first time that year. The ceremony was the morning of the day the clocks were turned ahead, and I missed it. When I got to Page Hall at what I thought was a half-hour before the awards ceremony, it was eerily quiet. I went in, and the usher asked me if I was Kathy Earle. When I answered that I was, he said, "They called your name a few minutes ago." Afterward, I went downstairs with the dignitaries to commiserate with my favorite professor, Carl Odenkirchen. He introduced me to the guest speaker and told him that I had missed the ceremony because of the time change.

"Well," said the gentleman, "I'm glad you didn't get the science award."

Kathleen Earle Fox, the mom of "three wonderful kids, aged 37, 27 and 17," has been a poet, a writer, a professor and a researcher. Now an artist, she resides in Tenants Harbor, Maine, with her husband, Stan, and finds inspiration in "the people, boats, harbors, animals, landscapes, flowers, birds and buildings" of the surrounding St. George area. Fox invites her fellow UAlbany alumni to visit her Web site, www.mainewatercolors.biz.

So, my two greatest accomplishments at Albany both missed. For the naming of the mascot, I was supposed to be anonymous and was quite willing to be, given the mood of the student body. And I missed perhaps my greatest moment, the poetry award, because I was not aware that the clocks had been turned ahead.

But my real best moment came much later when, in May 1996, I was hooded by my new favorite professor, Jan Hagen of the School of Social Welfare. And I was on time.