Left to right: Hildred Coy, Miriam Palmer and Inga Allison

Coy, Palmer, Allison: Three intriguing women who shaped CSU history

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During Women's History Month in March 2023, we introduce you to three women who were key early contributors to CSU. Their stories illustrate the powerful and wonderful benefits that flourish when a welcoming, strong and educational climate. The intellectual development. The new knowledge. The gems for individuals, communities and the world. These are the foundational principles that form good, productive citizens. Supporting students in the University and the area influenced in the lives and work of women from the schools founded before the state's first land-grant institution.

Libbie Coy personified town and gown.

In 1884, she was in the very first class of three graduates from Colorado Agricultural College – and, even more than that, she was the first woman to graduate from college in all of Colorado.

When she graduated, Coy became the de facto first lady of campus. She was hired as an instructor, was a co-founder of the Alpha Phi sorority and became a fixture in her husband's many administrative roles. Coy was a charter faculty member who served a stint as college president, launched college fund-raising campaigns, and was a tireless volunteer in Fort Collins — all during advocates of education.

Libbie Coy started preparatory classes of Colorado Agricultural College in 1879 and graduated with her bachelor's degree in 1884 at the age of 21.

Libbie Coy was a gifted student – smart, motivated, with her own unique vision for the future – and she began to contribute to the college community when she started preparatory classes at Colorado Agricultural College in 1879. She was 16.

The college had opened on the outskirts of Fort Collins a year earlier, on Sept. 1, 1879, nine years after it was founded. In that first fall year, those three students flocked to the new college from nearby farming communities to attend preparatory classes before moving into more rigorous college classes.

Coy, the oldest daughter of a Fort Collins pioneer family, was among them. At 16 years old, Coy was the youngest student in the preparatory classes. Her classroom was in a single-wall structure known as the Main Building, which now about the farm ground like a sagging root fully rotted. In that building read College Avenue and Laurel Street. Coy took algebra, botany, chemistry, physics, literature, logic, philosophy and history.

She graduated in June 1884 at 18 years old. Along with her were sweetie "Lon" Loomis and George H. Glover. Coy was notable not only for her scholarship but also for her leadership. Glover was the student – smart, motivated, with her own unique vision for the future – and she began to contribute to the college community when she started preparatory classes at Colorado Agricultural College in 1879. She was 16.

The first graduating class from Colorado Agricultural College included, from left, Lon Loomis, Libbie Coy and George Glover.

With that singular achievement, Coy stands as an enduring symbol of our land-grant university's commitment to educational access and inclusion. Coy illustrated another trait of the land-grant mission: the idea that educational benefits flow from the university to the broader community and its surrounding knowledge, creating ripple effects in society.

Coy's own journey was a testament to that. She was a prolific writer and a voracious reader. Her interests were diverse, and she was known for her interest in current events. Coy's writings reveal a person who was interested in the world around her, who was interested in the world around her, who was interested in the world around her,