



### **Highschool:**

When Alice Schafer decided that she wanted to obtain a degree in mathematics from the University of Richmond she was slightly set back by her high school principal. When asked to write a letter of recommendation for Alice he replied “girls shouldn’t do math”. Afterwards he never sent the letter. Awesomely, Alice’s performance in school was stronger than the biased opinion of her principal and she was accepted to the University of Richmond with a full scholarship.

### **College:**

The University of Richmond turned out to be less liberal than when they gave her the scholarship. Women were not allowed in the library. As a result every time Alice wanted to do research she had to order the book she needed and had to read it in a study room designated just for women. Also, only women taught her for the first two years of her math degree. This may seem fair but the reason for this was because women were only allowed to teach up to the level of analytic geometry. The men taught the higher-level mathematics.

In analysis she had a professor who had the same reasoning as her past principal. Her professor was known of saying that he wanted to fail every woman that attended his classes. However Alice proved her position when she won the Crump prize which her professor took part in grading. Soon after she graduated with a B.S. in Mathematics.

Alice wasn’t stopping with a B.S. in math. So after teaching high school for a few years she began to attend the University of Chicago where she studied metric and projective differential geometry. In these areas she would obtain her masters and doctorate.

### **Overview of why it was so hard for women in math:**

At the time Alice was not the only woman to struggle with these issues. Women were intended or taught to become wives and family makers at the time. Because of this, math wasn't pushed onto women like home economics would be. To keep women out of math people went as far as to say that it was detrimental to their health. Medical reasons would be that a woman's biology would change drastically. Leaving a woman barren or impotent for some measurable time.