I’m trying to live up to all the nice things they’ve said.

—Anne Koehler

A WOMAN AHEAD OF HER TIME

In the early 1960s, when she was a math major at Indiana University, Anne Koehler thought she had it all figured out. She would make her living by combining her two passions. “I would teach math at a school where they had horseback riding.” Instead, Anne embarked on a career in academia at a time when there were few other women in her field. She holds an endowed professorship in business administration and is professor of decision sciences and management information systems at Miami University in Ohio. “I’m teaching things I didn’t even study as a PhD!”

Anne grew up in Pennsylvania, where her father was a professor at Penn State. When the family moved to Indiana, she enrolled at IU. “The first time I saw IU was when I arrived as a student,” she recalls. “I loved the woods on campus. It reminded me of where I grew up.”

It was a time when female students lived in the Women’s Quad and were not allowed to wear slacks to class—unless the heating malfunctioned. Anne, an accomplished athlete, was disappointed by the lack of women’s sports on campus. “At my first student assembly, I heard someone say, ‘The men go through one door and the girls through another.’ I thought to myself, ‘Where do the women go?’”

Anne used her undergraduate years to excel in her chosen field of mathematics. She was urged to apply for a graduate fellowship, despite having already arranged her student teaching. “I have a triple attachment to IU,” she says of her BA, MA, and PhD.

Perhaps “a quadruple attachment” is more accurate. When Anne attended the first orientation meeting for the new graduate teaching assistants, a fellow mathematician named Don took notice. “I stood up to introduce myself, and he threw out his little black book.”

The couple was married in Beck Chapel. Don, a gifted musician and composer, introduced his new wife to Bloomington’s musical riches. “We went to so many wonderful concerts. I remember Aida in the old football stadium. At the end, real horses came galloping in.”
In the early 1970s, Anne was one of few women in a tenure-track position at Miami’s School of Business. She managed to raise two children while making her way up the ranks.

The Koehlers shared their love of music and math until Don’s death in 1983. Over the years, they had given generously to their alma mater. The gift to establish the Donald Koehler Scholarship was Anne’s most recent. “Matching the Promise made it really attractive by matching funds. It made it really substantial.”

Anne’s own accomplishments have also inspired giving. One of Anne’s faculty colleagues established a scholarship in her name, citing her “masterful teaching, dedicated service, and impeccable integrity.” Anne chuckles, “I’m trying to live up to all the nice things they’ve said!” Even when Anne is hard at work, Bloomington is never far from her thoughts. Hanging on her office wall is an old calendar photo of Dunn Woods. “It’s still one of my favorite spots.”