

Mandatory bloomers rule creates IU uproar B1

A large pair of stuffed bloomers suddenly adorned the facade of "one of the (Indiana) University's leading organization houses," along with the placard: "Lest We Forget." What had prompted the impromptu decoration made interesting reading in the Jan. 13, 1928, issue of the Bloomington *Evening World*.

In a last-ditch effort to save the modesty of 1920s coeds on the campus, IU Dean of Women Agnes Wells had decreed that the women would be obliged to wear bloomers. Never mind that the Roaring '20s had (to a modest extent) "liberated" the coeds beyond the Victorian reach of the dean.

According to the *World*, "The decree that 'All women shall wear bloomers who attend Indiana University' is causing much widespread newspaper and ordinary gossip over the state, and, for the most part, is meeting with adverse criticism."

Indianapolis school officials felt compelled to declare themselves



Looking back

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opposed to the dean's version of modesty. Added the *World*, "Some say other school officials over the state are criticizing Indiana University' dean of women for her decree because of jealousy that exists among the schools and colleges, but others deny this."

Wells, who was still trying to stem the tide of flapper dresses, coeds smoking and a whole host of unmentionable liberties, was not without allies. The *Indiana Daily Student* prominently asserted in its editorial column, that the decree was unwanted, unnecessary, and unkind. The editorial went on to say that Wells' effort was for decency's sake, and the controversy should be

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