“My Princeton experience was not only life-changing, it was life-defining. Everything I have done and the person I have developed into since then have been influenced by that decision.”

Sue-Jean Lee Suettinger ’70

A casual announcement by a German professor during her sophomore year at City College of New York led Sue-Jean Lee Suettinger ’70 to finding herself at Princeton at a historic turning point. Always interested in the Chinese language, Sue-Jean applied for the one-year Critical Languages program, and in the fall of 1968 joined a small group of women — sometimes known as “Crit-Langs” — living at the Graduate College while attending undergraduate classes on campus. And the women of this group were invited to apply to Princeton for their senior year once the trustees made the decision in favor of coeducation. Sue-Jean thus broke barriers two times over: As a Crit-Lang in 1968 she was the first woman to perform in the Triangle Club show, and then in 1970 she was a member of the first class at Princeton to graduate women.

Forty years later, Sue-Jean is still very much engaged with Princeton. Through several careers (in international trade and investment, primarily in China and Asia, and most recently teaching Chinese, bringing her back to her primary interest and the benefits of the Critical Languages Program), three children, and three grandchildren, she has attended major Reunions, participated in Career Net Nights, and served on a regional Women’s Network Steering Committee. She is a longstanding member of what is now known as the Asian Alumni Association of Princeton, sitting on its board and currently serving as the chair of its board of governors.