

Class of 1933 – Willa Blanche Vance.



In 1931, Willa joined girls from many Memphis high schools in the afternoons to learn to knit and to socialize. “During the depression,” Mrs. Lowry recounts, “no one could afford to buy enough yarn to make a whole sweater, so we saved our money and bought one skein at a time.” During World War II, she knitted scarves and sweaters for the Red Cross.

In 1989, Willa extended the same goodwill to her neighbors when she thought of the homeless people standing in soup kitchen lines in the cold and recruited a friend to help her knit caps for them. When she needed a way to distributed her caps to the poor, Willa approached MIFA, and, in 1990, the Love Caps program began. Since then, 600 knitters and crocheters have produced more than 65,000 caps and lap robes for MIFA Meals clients and others in the community. Many of those who lovingly craft these items for MIFA do more than help others – they also experience the joys of knitting while socializing, just as Mrs. Lowry did in her high school days.