

By [Haley Cihock](#) Published: August 7, 2015, 9:01am Updated: August 7, 2015, 7:39 pm

AUSTIN (KXAN) — The iconic University of Texas Tower was under construction when Margaret Berry was a student on the 40 Acres.

“I lived at Scottish Rite dormitory and loved it,” said Berry. “Tuition was just \$90 for the semester. It was a happy time. Got to know a lot of people right away.”

In the decades that followed, she devoted much of her adult life to supporting and chronicling the traditions that unfolded in the shadow of the tower.

Saturday, August 8, Berry will celebrate her 100th birthday at the UT Alumni Center, with hundreds of admirers honoring her contributions. Newly-appointed UT President Greg Fenves and Vice President for Student Affairs Gage Paine plan to attend the event.

“It might not be easy, and I say that because of emotional things. I get all teary-eyed,” said Berry. “They’ve been too good to me. Too good.”

After earning a history degree from UT in 1937, Berry began teaching at elementary schools in El Campo, Freeport, and Galveston, Texas. During the summers, Berry earned a master’s degree from Columbia University in New York City.

In 1947, Berry began her administrative career at Navarro Junior College as a dean and history instructor. She became dean of women at East Texas State in 1950.

After 10 years, Berry left to get her doctorate in higher education at Columbia University. She moved to Austin in 1961 to write her dissertation on the student life and customs at The University of Texas and became associate dean of women at UT in 1962.

Known as UT’s unofficial historian, Berry wrote four books about UT’s history, traditions, leaders, and its buildings:

- UT Austin: Traditions and Nostalgia
- The University of Texas: A Pictorial Account of its First Century
- Brick by Golden Brick: A History of University of Texas Campus Buildings
- UT History 101: Highlights in the History of the University of Texas.

“Students need to know something about their university, the background of it,” said Berry. “They need to know that this is one of the top research universities in the country. And what begins here changes the world!”

Berry retired in 1980, but taught freshmen seminars on University of Texas history from 1995 to 2002, and stayed active in the Austin community.

“I’ve just found other things to do. One is to write books, read, listen to music, be with people. There are so many things you can do and it’s a lot of fun. I enjoy life here. I enjoy life. Life is good.”