

Donation of the Month

Evening Gown
Donated by Darcy (Bunyard) Brooks
2007.34.1





Photo: 1963 Rogers High School
Homecoming Queen, Darcy Bunyard
Photo courtesy of Darcy Brooks

his beautiful gown was worn by Darcy Bunyard who was crowned Homecoming Queen for Rogers High School in 1963. It is a classic example of a late 1950s and early 1960s evening gown. This dress is made from yards and yards of frothy white tulle net. It has a strapless bodice with stiffened, boned seams on either side of the waist and the netting crosses over the bust. A white velvet ribbon below the bust and netting accents the narrow fitted waist.

The skirt is flared out from the waist and full length. It is made up of four separate layers: the first layer is a white taffeta underskirt with netting around the bottom hem. The next layer is an underskirt with ruffles

made from netting which acts as a crinoline to stiffen and hold the skirt out. Next is a sheer layer of net and finally, the outermost layer of net with appliquéd flowers in white lace. Originally the dress only had the lace appliqués on the skirt; the donor had white iridescent sequins and clear glass beads added to the flowers. A cotton hoopskirt was also donated with the gown; the hoopskirt was worn underneath the skirt to give it extra volume.

Evening gowns of the 1950s and early 1960s are often known for their glamour as well as for their feminine silhouettes. Strapless dresses with small waists and large flowing skirts were common characteristics for evening gowns from the era. Fabrics were usually chiffon, satin, taffeta, or tulle nets like the gown featured here. Thanks to mass production, many women could buy more affordable evening wear inspired by designer fashions and styles worn by Hollywood starlets. Today, vintage fashions are very collectible and inspire modern clothing styles. Clothing in the museum's collection helps illustrate the history of different eras and changes in social styles. The museum houses examples of clothing dating from the 1850s through the 1980s in its collection.

Source Information:

Mo, Charles L. Evening Elegance, Mint Museum of Art. Loftin & Company Printers, Charlotte, NC, 1998.

Smith, Pamela. Vintage Fashion & Fabrics. Alliance Publishing, Brooklyn, NY, 1995.

"Fifties Fashions Women: Evening Prom and Fancy Dresses," <http://www.fiftiesweb.com/fashion/fashion-we.htm>

"1950s Evening Wear,"
http://www.fashion-era.com/Vintage_fashion/a10_collecting_fifties_vintage_1.htm#1950s%20Prom%20Dress

Rogers Historical Museum donation file.