

Averett Tradition: Rat Night / Rat Week / Rat Court

During the years when Averett was a junior girls' college, the older girls (the seniors) were "big sisters" to the younger ones, the freshmen. Rat Night was a night in early autumn when the big sisters selected their little sisters, and true initiation into college life began for the newcomers.

Rules for Rat Week, like these, were read in solemn voices to the new girls:

- Rats must address each senior with "Miss" and then her name.
- Rats could wear no make-up during the week.
- Every rat must wear her hair braided on one side, and tied with either a ribbon or a string.
- Every rat must wear her dress backwards, or inside out.
- Every rat must wear different shades of hose with one sock on one foot.
- Every rat must carry her books in a pillowcase.
- In the dining room, rats must eat with only knives and spoons, no forks.
- Rats could not have dessert.
- Rats must allow seniors to precede them into the dining room, and must not speak while they are in there.

For one or two weeks the juniors were to wear Rat Hats (beanies) and nametags with the school colors, blue and gold. Although there was never any hazing or rough treatment allowed, numberless errands and degrading tasks were assigned by the seniors to the rats.

Rat Court ended the crazy week and at the end of that evening's festivities, all rats hurled their hats into the air at the same time. The juniors were rats no more!

This tradition died out with the expansion to a four-year program.