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**WOMEN AT THE CENTER:  
HISTORY OF WOMEN'S STUDIES  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE**

**TAPE LOG**

Professor Bonnie Scott is Professor Emerita at San Diego State University. She served as a professor of English at the University of Delaware and as Coordinator of Women's Studies in 1980- 1981.

Name of person(s) interviewed: Bonnie Scott

Other people present: Family members present

Interviewer: Marie Laberge

Date of interview: June 26, 2012

Location of interview: Bethany Beach condominium

Special conditions (noise, interruptions, etc.): Family members present at start of interview, Husband Tom Scott responds to a question.

General description of contents: Spoke about developing Women's Studies program at UD, obstacles to development, faculty retreat, significant contributions of Women's Studies, critiques of Women's Studies, favorite memories of UD

Recording Format and disc number: Video interview

Total Running Time: 43:06

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**TOPIC SUMMARY**

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0:22    Background Information - went to Wellesley College, good motivator for seeing women role models because all female. Graduated in 1967, went to UNC Chapel Hill, studied modern British Literature, Virginia Wolfe and James Joyce. Moved to Delaware when husband hired in Psychology, 3 children. Discussion about women in English Department friends, secured position in English Department, involvement in Women Studies.

2:30    Supervised Women Studies course in 1973, working with [Ken] Ackerman, [Lindy] Geis, [Mae] Carter. Course was run through continuing education, night class. Different weeks didn't go with each other, good start, more diverse students by age.

4:12    Support from administration: enthusiasm from people wanting to teach, skeptical administrators.

5:30    Efforts to consolidate Women's Studies, more than just Women Studies – psychology, English, intro classes formed, suggest cluster of courses.

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7:27 Discussion about part-time v. tenured faculty in women's studies. Negative feedback for centering around Women Studies, was more security going into English than Women's Studies. Depended on how chair feels about taking time out of teaching for teaching Women's Studies.

8:45 Started writing differently, first book was Joyce and feminism and was told it was not scholarly writing. Discussion about articles, tenure review, vulnerabilities because work not considered historical. Scholarship not appreciated.

10:55 Scott didn't get coordinator position for Women's Studies department, but woman who did was better qualified because more focused on Women Studies. She was put in bad place, tenure in English but office in dorm, not recognized. Office then in 34 W. Delaware house, which wasn't really part of campus then, considered isolated.

13:03 Search for another coordinator – Joyce [Walstedt]

13:30 Man chimes in (husband, Tom Scott) email from Joyce, wasn't as invested in Women's Studies, worked in Psychology.

15:40 Discussion about retreat 1976, Barbara Kelly had them do exercises in the morning. Were inventing new way to be community, relaxation, how to negotiate with department, relate to each other because all trying to juggle between departments. Discussion about what Women Studies needed, imagining ahead for minor/major.

18:50 Started having same people teaching consistently, but no core faculty, internships starting, idea of having conferences, linking of programs.

19:33 Scott served as Coordinator fall after retreat. In 1980, hired people who taught part-time courses, reached out to people from more departments to teach, developed newsletter. Office was a mess, hired office coordinator, ran resource room, regular schedule of having advisor, year of evolution, working with department chairs.

23:20 Maggie Andersen as faculty director, people didn't have lines until 1986.

23:47 How did women's studies survive? Determined people to keep it going, people going above and beyond, money to hire part-time people for intro classes, wanted to promise consistent curriculum.

25:00 Lack of interest in new faculty, compare SDSU with UD – interesting to compare.

25:35 Early 1980s, no major until 1990s. Needed to work toward major, did lots of advising to put together suggested pattern of courses, informal curriculum. Students interested in department, not many interested in working on projects.

26:51 Obstacles? Trying to get decent budget, little offices in art slides library, see some improvement, new coordinators keep women's studies up to date but always a struggle.

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28:09    Strengths of field – Women's Studies has evolved, recuperative work, history of women not well organized or taught. Critique, how to ask right questions, critique methodology, phenomenology. Not a fan of waves of feminism. Listen to viewpoints not your own. Sexuality studies, dynamics of power, intersectionality is key. Oppressions configure in different ways for different people, blur lines of gender/biology.

31:50    Work in English so why Women's Studies? Not separate things, always intertwined, trained her to ask questions in different way.

32:35    Most significant contributions of Women's Studies? Empowering women, sending young women out who change things, men too, feminist pedagogy changes way teach.

33:42    What still needs to be addressed in field/academic world? Identity politics bad for Women's Studies even though did good work. Learning to have good conversations within Women Studies, how do we learn to work amongst selves? Too easy to lump women's studies with other fields when budget tight, corporatization of universities.

35:33    Response to critics that Women's Studies not a legitimate field? Ridiculous, has accomplished and made differences in lives, serious not esoteric.

36:10    Women's Studies programs getting shut down. Why has Delaware lasted 40 years? Won't close down department with many students, track record, mass of devoted faculty who has produced scholarship.

37:34    Discussion about transition to Gender Studies, neutral. San Diego State University won't do it because first women's studies department. Concern with gender that it waters down woman aspect. Women's lives/experiences is core, likes working with gender.

38:44    Memories of department at UD, most creative and dedicated students who have gone on the higher degrees, some stay in touch. Sense of sistership with faculty members, excitement of having developing program, retreat. Knew things were going to be different, enough people working on it, but conservative place took too long for department and major to develop.

40:40    Different ideas about how to distinguish major from department, lucky when get supportive dean.

41:16    Likes staying in touch with Delaware, exciting about anniversary, collecting testimonials.

42:53    Testimony – evolved with women's studies, positive evolution.

43:06    End of interview