

MSS 664, University of Delaware Women's Studies oral history collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Special Collections University of Delaware Library / Newark, Delaware 19717-5267

Phone: 302-831-2229 / Fax: 302-831-6003 / URL:

<http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/>

***Transcripts in this collection created by Marie Laberge unless otherwise noted.**

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Use of materials from this collection beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law. Permission to publish or reproduce is required from the copyright holder. Please contact Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library, <http://www.lib.udel.edu/cgi-bin/askspec.cgi>

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

TAPE LOG

Mae Carter helped initiate and chair the Committee on Women's Studies which led to the creation of the Women's Studies Interdisciplinary Program in the early 1970s. As Special Advisor to the UD President's Office, she also led the Commission on the Status of Women at UD and was instrumental in the creation of the Office of Women's Affairs.

Name of person(s) interviewed: Mae Carter

Other people present: Robert Carter (husband) – in another room

Interviewer: Marie Laberge

Date of interview: July 19, 2011

Location of interview: 604 Dallam Ave, Newark DE 19711 Home of Mae Carter in the dining room

Special conditions (noise, interruptions, etc.): Nothing specific

General description of contents: Mae Carter discussed her experiences at UD in the office of Continuing Education and with the development of Women's Studies Program, as well as the Commission on the Status of Women, the Office of Women's Affairs, and sexual harassment on campus.

Recording Format and disc number: Video Interview

Total Running Time: 77:44 minutes

Page 1 of 5

TAPE LOG

Page 1 of 5

Counter No. Contents

00:00 Introduction

00:45 Background--From California, spent most of life in Berkeley, graduated from UC – Berkeley in Home Economics during the war, class of 1943. Active on campus, worked in defense industry. Married Bob Carter who worked at refinery. Joined university women's group, AAUW. Had house built from own design. Had Children, active in PTA, running for school board when transferred.

TAPE LOG CONTINUED

Page 2 of 5

Counter No. Contents

4:32 Came to DE in August 1956. Bob working at refinery, Mae joined AAUW in DE. Did a library study for AAUW, school and town libraries, won award for school library study, other activities of AAUW, include running women for school board, AAUW. Discussion of conditions of local library. Helped organize Friends of Newark Library. Raise money for Library. Called the four people who helped start it "the bookends"

11:00 Heard about job in the University Extension to help women return to school and applied. Worked part time doing educational counseling for women returning to school. Work discussed, classes women took. "Three to get ready" class to help women make decision about returning to school. Small discussion groups very important for women. Also did vocational training for women at the time. Provided legal contacts as well. Also counseled men in course prep classes.

16:39 Too much work for part-time job, lead to conversations with President of University (Trabant) and led to creation of Commission on Status of Women at UD. [Was working full time when she chaired the Commission.] Jeannette Sam, Affirmative Action officer at UD. Discussion of early work of Commission issues addressed. Concerns of staff and issues addressed.

18:54 Committee exploring the creation of women studies. Faculty women told they should get out of women's studies, many untenured faculty. Mae would take only tenured women to meet with President Trabant. Barbara Kelly confirmed she had been told to get out of WOMS.

20:51 Started describing Extension program courses "Women's Studies" to advertise them. Adele Robertson, head of Academic courses in Extension program for women, suggested asking Departments if they would give courses on women. Successful with English and History depts. Barbara Gates did English course on S contract, History course taught by graduate student.

23:01 Commission [on Status of Women] did a lot to raise awareness; had small budget. Did commission work in addition to regular job. Discussion of work office staff. Attended faculty senate meetings. Commission had support of the President Trabant.

25:10 Discussion of Trabants. [President's wife] Jerry Trabant was denied access to graduate school and was told she was not admitted because she was a woman. Both supportive of Commission.

25:45 Commission was to take some of issues out of Women's Studies. First course on Women's Studies. People involved. Did not have WOMS number, were instead a "Special Problem" course. The dean said it was not the priority of the college.

27:35 Attempt to get sexual harassment policy at UD and resistance to it. Bought space in Review to present information about sexual harassment what it is, why women do not report it and what you can do about it. Jeannette Sam, formerly at UD, worked for office of Civil Rights, wrote policy for sexual

TAPE LOG CONTINUED

Page 3 of 5

Counter No.	Contents
-------------	----------

harassment for them. She knew what to put into it because she was harassed at UD. Faculty Senate debate on SH. Examples of SH at UD. Students active on it. Speakers series discussed.

33:10 Worked hard, but it was too much. Commission had office in 34 West Delaware Ave. Decided women at UD needed more. Important socializing and discussion of issues for women at UD. Requested info on statistics of women faculty and students at UD in different departments and areas to increase awareness. Working in this in addition to regular job. Formed committee to draft proposal for Office of Women's Affairs. Submitted to president and accepted, to report to Provost and President.

39:00 Had insider information in Provost's office and pass it along. Print statistics about women's work.

40:00 Work of Office of Women's Affairs. Needed role models for students, developed Visiting Women's Scholars fund. Began to get more calls from Departments. Then developed women students travel fund.

42:20 With OWA, could not do as much with WOMS. Jan D'Armond did work in English Department. Needed someone to chair Women's Studies Committee. Donna Shavlik [former Dean of students] was lead early course, then Bonnie Scott.

44:20 Able to get position for Women's Studies coordinator. Found someone [Ellen Morgan] but no office, so put her in women's Dorm, Warner hall, a Women's Studies interest dorm. Ellen left because she was not well. Had another search that was contentious. Finally hired Joyce Walstedt, degree in Psychology. Halftime Psychology and half time Women's Studies. Didn't work well. Decided she would rather be in psychology and then she disappeared.

46:17 Had Women's Studies retreat. Office of Women's Affairs did women's studies on short term basis. Put classes in catalog and recruited faculty. 1976 retreat. Went as advisor because she didn't have a Ph.D.

47:32 Supporters of WOMS at UD, included Lindy Geis, Barbara Kelley, Barbara Settles and Barbara Gates. First time Barbara Gates and Akasha [Gloria] Hull went up for tenure, they were turned down. Got it the next year.

49:24 Students enrolled in the WOMS classes and said it changed their lives. They played a big role in courses. Older students had family so were less active then younger students. Younger students interested in sexual harassment issues.

50:45 Several people listed who were big supporters of WOMS. Successful in getting tenured faculty interested in WOMS and working on it.

TAPE LOG CONTINUED

Page 4 of 5

Counter No.	Contents
-------------	----------

52:15 Bonnie Scott, little status at time when she was first involved.

52:41 Naming program Women's Studies. We started before most people in other schools so we were more basic than other schools. Jokes about name of Women's Affairs Office.

54:20 New faculty hired who later become named professors, discussed. Originally when she was doing WOMS work it was dangerous for others because they wouldn't get promoted but I believed in it and did it. Lots of meetings.

55:30 Feminist politics of the period influenced it a lot. Delaware not as big a women's movement. Title I was important. Affirmative action officer replacing Jeannette Sam. University process discussed.

59:58 Resistance to Commission on Status of Women. Women faculty and staff supported it. Create subcommittee for faculty and staff. President supportive.

61:37 One of biggest issues was education of faculty, being on Commission played important role in educating faculty.

62:35 Was important to get a support programs for women faculty and staff to complain to and out from under WOMS

62: 57 Successes of OWA – a lot of programs started are still going: Women of Promise dinner, Visiting Women Scholar's fund, Student travel fund; increased awareness.

63:50 Office of Women's Affairs versus Women's Center; wanted to impact policy, Office of Student Affairs did not want a Women's Center. Funding ran out.

64: 30 Most proud that WOMS is now a department, only took 35- 40 years. Have had people tell me since I retired that we were right.

65:14 Still need to address number of women faculty at UD. Numbers. A lot more sensitivity, now have a sexual harassment task force.

66:25 ROTC women & Sexual harassment; developed policy on sexual harassment and process. Examples of sexual harassment and dealing with it. Example of one department and students response. Wanted to know if had a file on everyone in Department.

TAPE LOG CONTINUED

Page 5 of 5

Counter No. Contents

69:42 What still needs to be addressed? Need more faculty in department. Should not have to depend on other departments for classes. Marian Palley expanded faculty lines. Others supportive. Discussion of the Carter's named professor. President did not want a named professor in WOMS. We waited two years before naming professor.

71:30 Have not always considered self a feminist but after seeing women who had nothing through Continuing Education, made me a real feminist. Work in Continuing Ed and classes on issues made a difference. Local women lawyers involved in Women and the Law class.

74:44 Used to take people to lunch at Blue & Gold if I had a problem. Provost asked why he had a woman on the search committee and he said he didn't want Mae to take him out to lunch again. Took a lot of chances, that faculty could not take.

76:48 Had supportive children and husband. A Lot of people did a lot.

77:44 End of interview