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

TAPE LOG

Janet Louise is a retired after 25 years of service as an instructor at the English Language Institute (ELI) at the University of Delaware. She served as the first office administrator in Women's Studies in 1975.

Name of person(s) interviewed: Janet Louise

Other people present: No one else present

Interviewer: Marie Laberge

Date of interview: January 14, 2013 at 10:45

Location of interview: Interview took place in Janet Louise's home.

Special conditions (noise, interruptions, etc.): None, but video was a little glitchy

General description of contents:

Childhood moving around a lot. Did not go to college right away because raised family. Went back to college at UD. Went to graduate school in Nebraska. Part of Delaware Women's League of Voters, committee woman, active in Delaware Women's Political Caucus. Started La Luna newsletter. When heard UD starting Women's Studies program, offered to be office coordinator. Support on campus, issues with Ellen Morgan's successor Joyce. Delegate to first Women's Studies convention. Left UD's Women's Studies after two years and eventually faculty at English Language Institute (ELI) which allowed her to travel. MTV and music videos and ELI/linguistics. Significant changes in Women's Studies. UD's department still around because of faculty and own building gave them autonomy. Working with women's studies gave her a backbone. Interdisciplinary aspect is important. Hopes women stay forward thinking and engaged in larger community. Feminism and ELI. Thanks to Marie for doing project so history won't be lost.

Recording Format and disc number: Video on DVD disc

Total Running Time: 42:52

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TOPIC SUMMARY

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0:28 Name change? During graduate school.

1:00 Background – from Wilmington, mother married man in army, born in Wilmington but lived in a variety of places, created wanderlust. High school at William Penn, did not go to college right after high school, started family.

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3:28 Why go back to school? Lots of time on her hands as homemaker, League of Women Voters brought about major changes in herself. Interested in government, study group, realized needed more education because other women were college educated. Took a course in women studies, took accounting but knew it wasn't her direction. Didn't know majors had to be declared. Went to Jim Newton – new liberal studies program culture worker. Learned linguistics would be her avenue to revolutionize the English language pronoun system, went to Nebraska for graduate school to study with radical lesbian separatist.

5:45 First women's studies course was intro to women's studies, taught in 3 sections, took it in nontraditional way because for 1/3 of class she was travelling in Europe (1971).

6:49 Involvement in early women's movement – League of Women Voters well known as good government study group. No one tells you what/how to think, had a lot more time so in several study groups. Newark Parking Authority which got her into local politics. Republican party asked her to be committee woman – getting people registered to vote, on campus a Delaware Women's Political Caucus, willing to criticize candidates from opposite party. Became state co-chair of women's political caucus, went to first national convention in Texas and was elected to the National Steering Committee.

10:39 Local Delaware women's political support, La Luna – newsletter fashioned after Lesbian Connection newsletter. Anything submitted was published which brought community together ie, potlucks, meetings, art, book clubs, etc. in 1970s.

12:30 Exciting to meet a lot of famous women through caucus group, new frame of thinking. Excited to hear about women's studies program at UD from Ellen Morgan. Said she needed office staff so volunteered herself because of secretary background. Became office coordinator, in Warner Hall, nontraditional because during the day it was WOMS and at night it was back to student's dorm room.

14:20 Office work – lots of fun, newsletter once a month, very busy time bringing people to campus. Mary Daly came, 20 hours/week, office things, student questions, Ellen busy meeting people so didn't spend too much time in office at same time, informal meetings at own house .

16:20 Support or not on campus? Got support from Will Shainer in charge of finance in Arts and Sciences but was slightly patronizing, Helen Gouldner, team of women's studies people, Mae Carter, Akasha Hull, Sandra Harding, Bonnie Scott, Margaret Andersen. Supportive time from community and campus. Wanted WOMS program to succeed, popular on campus, enough people who did, nice marriage of academic and community world.

18:50 Student reaction – excited for program as well, eager to find out what was on campus, dynamic outside of campus too.

19:30 In Warner Hall for one year (two semesters), didn't do things in summer.

20:00 Moved to 34 W. Delaware, had 3 rooms, Mary Anne Neville [McGonegal] [work study student and social activist] , Joyce Walstedt's office, library, no third floor just the second floor.

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21:00 Ellen Morgan there for a year, had to leave for health reasons, came back in September and needed to find someone to put in the spot, in program for another year and a half.

22:06 How program developed. In office and was among more militant behavior times, given freedom to do her job, her position was to marry community and academic world. Ellen was true feminist and believed in equality, felt nurtured by her. Joyce was not a feminist and didn't understand values of feminism and sense of community. Joyce tried to understand as a psychologist that it is a different way of doing things but didn't have experience being that type of leader. Joyce's lack of experience and my own intolerant attitude for any lack of feminist values in WOMS leader so didn't get along. Endured each other for two more semesters and then decided it was time to resign,

25:15 Despite tension it was exciting times because first WOMS convention held. Delegate to convention through involvement in women's studies in community. Went to Trabant for funding, Trabant was big supporter of program. Community of women already involved in WOMS stepped up. Joyce wasn't best choice but they all grew and learned. Hard time but helped WOMS become stronger more quickly, Recognize what is necessary to do to become respected organization on campus.

28:39 Retreat to keep organization going, transition period – not in office at that time. Work study work Plato Project. Got WOMS minor – goal to get knowledge not a degree. Took classes that interested her the most, took all the WOMS classes and couldn't have a major so she got the minor with a Liberal Studies major. Class "Language Power and Sex" pointed her towards linguistics and a way to revolutionize language attitudes.

31:40 In Nebraska for 3 years, came back to DE and got job offer to teach in China for 7 months, came back for faculty position with English Language Institute.

32:20 Travelled extensively, MTV and ELI topic, linguistics is her ticket to travel.

33:05 Significant changes in WOMS – WOMS is a major now, impressed when see how administration of WOMS has continued to grow. Knows importance of support people behind you. Symbol that university acknowledges WOMS is here to stay. Needs backing of staff and faculty, still works in interdisciplinary sort of way because life isn't a narrow channel.

35:25 How has UD's WOMS stayed when other university's programs are closing? Still enough people who started program are in positions to talk about it and work for it (Mae Carter, Maggie Andersen), others there to undergird what WOMS has struggled hard to gain, autonomy of own building can kind of call the shots with own space.

37:30 Most significant contributions of WOMS at UD – gave her backbone, gave her education she needed. Just one of many who have benefited from WOMS being here at right time and having faculty and support staff that has taken in so many different kinds of women and shown way of moving forward. Appreciate interdisciplinary aspect of WOMS, can't work any other way.

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38:30 Still need to address libraries but now people have books on devices, hopes there continues to be forward thinking by women and men, being in touch with what's happening in the world, staying current, not getting stuck in ruts.

39:35 Feminism and ELI – women who are feminists at ELI, women with traditional values came and learned they could do other things with their lives, or continue studying but with new eye and awareness of who they are in the process, exciting part of job. Lifted out of own community and big and exciting shock.

41:10 Final thoughts, want to thank Marie for doing project because easy to have history lost, glad going back to the beginning. Easy to sweep some things under the rug but important to know who we are and who we were and how we've grown and learned how to deal with good/bad/ugly. Moving along fine but then a snag and must reevaluate, confidence in what she's seen over the years in WOMS.

42:52 End