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

TAPE LOG

Barbara T. Gates is Alumni Distinguished Professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of Delaware. She served as Chair of the UD Women's Studies interdisciplinary Program in 1992.

Name of person(s) interviewed: Barbara Gates

Other people present: No one else present

Interviewer: Marie Laberge

Date of interview: January 12, 2012

Location of interview: Oral Valley, Arizona

Special conditions (noise, interruptions, etc.): Lawn care workers came to door, cat walking around

General description of contents:

Educational background (PhD). How came to UD. Started first women's studies course. Relations between administration and women's studies/ Tenure issues. Women's movement impact on women's studies at UD. How organized major & obstacles to forming major Key people in creating major. Hiring practices. Discussion of interdisciplinary work. Low point and high points. Negative side to forming department? Global impact of women's studies.

Recording Format and disc number: video on DVD

Total Running Time: 34:13

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TOPIC SUMMARY

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0:26 Discussion about educational background, how got PhD. Wanted to go back to school but had children to look after, Danforth Foundation sponsored to go back to PhD. Course at library for women in literature, Danforth brought women together who had hiatus in education. Studying Russian and French literature, 19th century British literature with women writers.

3:05 Discussion about how came to Delaware. Had been here for Masters. Asked to come for interview because of contacts. Hard time to get job in literature, 1971. Linked into Women's Studies right away, Mae Carter. Course with world literature and how women portrayed in it. Taught freshman English in day and world literature at night.

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5:51 Discussion of student reaction to course, drew people who really wanted it. First students were mixture of returning and new students. Really enjoyed teaching it, mostly women. Charles [Bohner] and Mae [Carter] very supportive.

6:57 New faculty teaching not legitimate, support from Bohner. Received no support from English guy whose friends had been fired and she and Akasha Hull hired. Older women weren't supportive and didn't know what new feminists up to. First push for tenure hard.

8:26 Discussion of letter to Trabant about worrying about tenure because involvement in women's studies, scaring people off. Messed up tenure because of politics. It was a problem for lots of people. Hard to coordinate because new area, covering all the material. Women's Studies Committee had supportive men, helped get first woman in Sociology, needed to network.

10:52 Discussion of women's movement impact on development of Women's Studies. Not individuals but rather community of women faculty here. Would have done anything for each other, powerful kind of sense of commonality same time as women's movement. Course Female Studies II. More jobs for women, women as writers stronger, support more than being put down. Could have devoted more time to writing/service on other committees but liked involvement in Women's Studies

13:08 Commuted for 10 years, not easy commute. Have to work at least as hard as everyone else, take on stuff didn't really like.

13:55 Discussion about how to organize department officially (support of administration, Mae Carter). Without Mae or Trabant it would have been harder. Depended on dean, allies in different departments. There were certain deans and certain chairs when we could get a lot of stuff done and times when couldn't.

16:10 Discussion of obstacles. First course had to get time off to do it or overload, some departments cooperative and some weren't. Lindsay Geis and psychology, sociology supportive. Be firm but work with men in order to get stuff done. Going "big Mach" politics, did best if work hard and do it well and not step on people's feet but still firm.

17:50 Pause interview because guys at door for lawn care.

18:10 Not clear about Ellen [Morgan] and Joyce [Walstedt]. Discussion about documents she gave. Doesn't remember details, Ellen came in 74, left for health reasons. Joyce came in as Director, Maggie [Andersen] or Bonnie [Scott] might remember. One of them was having breakdown problems. Concerned about both the human as well as the image projecting to university about WOMS when trying to build.

20:30 Bonnie [Scott] came in as coordinator and not a lot of funding. Went on retreat, wanted space and home for women's studies. Bonnie fought hard for space in Smith. Great colleague in English, Bonnie worked into department and respected for work with James Joyce. Hard working faculty member, really good researcher.

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22:40 Discussion of administrative help in hires. Depended on deans and their other priorities, women's studies and Black American Studies came at same time and want to help each other out but still try to vie for resources. [Akasha] Gloria Hull split across three departments which was probably hard. Continue to get strong people and build unit that way. Able to get in touch with deans through other faculty members. Barbara Kelley helped with Title IX.

25:00 Discussion about how program compares to other programs. Harder go at UD, less resources than other universities. Hard to get major and graduate program and move from directorship to chairmanship difficult. Always had numbers so why take so long? Just moved to department as other universities cutting programs.

27:00 Always try to do interdisciplinary and cutting across departments. UD sits and looks for long time before committing, interdisciplinary always struggled to do when at UD.

28:29 Question about low point and high points. Struggle to get major was a high point because of collaboration, low point was high point, jobs upgraded, major really in. Low points – push for things and nothing happened, hoping to get good strong people to carry on major. Danger that could move in opposite direction after so much work

30:10 Any downside to department? Hopefully not but understaffed, creates sense of community, energy and trust is important. Competing with other departments could be problem. Well-established sharing, the sharing will continue, may be more difficult for new hires, seen as peers. English department always has faculty doing things with other departments so may be different.

32:29 Recognition of gender issues globally. Women's studies/feminism changed globally but there are still issues that haven't changed, global work being done.

33:18 Concerned about records, Carol's book accurate but not 100%. Find people like Sandra to talk to

34:10 Doorbell rings, needs to pay for lawn care. End of Interview.