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

TAPE LOG

Retired now, Dr. Barbara J. Kelly was a driving force in the formation and development of women's athletics at the University of Delaware. She served as Chair of the Department of Women's Physical Education in the late 1960s and in various positions with the College of Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation. She was active in the early development of Women's Studies and served on Committee on Women's Studies as well as the Commission on the status of Women.

Name of person(s) interviewed: Barbara Kelly

Other people present: No one else present

Interviewer: Marie Laberge

Date of interview: October 5, 2012

Location of interview: Lewes Delaware in Barbara Kelly's home office

Special conditions (noise, interruptions, etc.): Late in the recording there is outside background noise from landscapers working in the area.

General description of contents: Barbara Kelly discussed her educational background, her work in the Women's Physical Education dept and her involvement in the early development of Women's Studies. She also discusses the important of the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Office of Women's Affairs, the people involved and the importance of women's sports.

Recording Format and disc number: Video interview

Total Running Time: 53:00 minutes

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TOPIC SUMMARY

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00:00 Background information; Born in Kent County, DE grew up there. College in Virginia so she could play sports. Saw a field hockey coach and was excited by the possibility of working in field. Majored in Physical Activity. Returned to Kent County, taught for 5 years. Went to school for Masters in Maryland in Health and physical Education. Came back to DE to teach high school. Friend offered job at UD.

02:52 When interviewed at UD , was told they didn't want anyone making waves about women playing competitive sports. Wanted to have opportunity to play sports. Taught activity classes, movement

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fundamentals, some sports classes, some health classes. Activity courses not coed. Health class had some men in it class. Men not happy to be on Hartshorn Building which was considered to be a women's building.

4:35 Chair left department, and she became a Department chair for a year. Then a male athletic director was hired and combined the two departments. The department of Women's Physical Education had been a group of women who were self starters and independent. The male director changed everything. They took us out of Hartshorn Hall to Carpenter Sports Building. Led to sense of loss of control and identity.

6:15 B.A. in 1955; M.A. in 1961, started at UD 1962 – 70 and then went to go on and get PhD.

7:00 Experiences at Univ. of Maryland, asked to coach women's field hockey team as a teaching assistant. The teachers were dedicated and committed. Until combined with men's departments, we were sort of off to the side and the thing that changed it was a push for inter collegiate sports for women. Since she was hired not to make waves, I took great exception to the push. Other schools made the push but not on our staff. Some believed that competitiveness was tied to war. Took a lot of maneuvering to get to NCAA for women.

10:40 Went on to get PhD when realized needed it to keep pace at University. Never had aspiration to be Chair etc those came later. Got PhD the same year as Title IX in 1972.

12:18 Involvement with effort to create WOMs. Gloria Steinem and later Susan Sontag came to campus. Events like that and reading those books felt like a push. Was on early Women's Studies Committee and helped develop the first WOMS class. Discussion about team taught class. Many in Delaware said women should not play competitive sports. Mostly women students attended the first class.

16:50 Mae Carter talked about bringing Barbara Kelly into meet President Trabant due to fear about younger faculty experiences. Didn't realize that was why. I recall saying are we after something specific or on a fishing expedition? Mae torn between Office of Women's Affairs & Women's Studies. They were able to work together but she may have been torn. She was good at getting higher administration to buy into it.

19:10 Had been reading about women's sports courses, there were text books developing and there was more of a push for these classes. My field developing the push for courses on Women and Sports. Someone in English said they thought first feminists at UD were probably Physical Educators because they were off doing their own thing and willing to get people together.

20:15 Heard women say they felt threatened if they went into WOMS. "If you don't watch yourself you'll get labeled one of these women's studies people." It was that kind of atmosphere. In own Department, recall a new chair that asked if she could work "for a guy like me?" Asked her what she would like to do, and chaired the graduate program.

22:52 Discussion of work on the Colburn Commission. Talked to Math Department professor, told her the reason they didn't hire women mathematicians was because women did not apply. He took great exception to the Colburn report, which had some force behind it when his comments were included. Within four or five years we had a woman mathematician.

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24:25 Art & Jerrie Trabant were both allies to WOMS. He was a sensitive guy and Mae had his ear. Was a strong figure, well travelled, and distinguished. He made a difference and Mae sensed it was an opening. Resistance was around where WOMS was going to be housed and who would pay for it.

26:15 Student involvement discussed. Black Student Union took the mike in Convocation somewhere between 1968 and 1973. Mary Ruth Warner who still teaches with Women's Studies.

28:15 First class helped create awareness and students also asking now what. Not much movement by administration.

28:45 Early staffing in Women's Studies discussed. Many thought Joyce Walstadt could stay on. Asked about retreat. Does not recall it. Remember meeting with the dean when they came back.

30:30 Always seemed to be turmoil about administration of WOMS within it. Thought was we had to do something to keep people with both WOMS and their discipline. Were just doing what needed to be done.

32:00 Commission on the Status of Women at UD. Trying to reach out to staff, professionals and faculty. Recall a Dress for Success event. After event with hundreds of people, a letter came from Maggie Andersen came asking "why didn't you just have a wet tee shirt contest?" It was perfect and an eye opener. Professional and staff needed advocate.

33:55 How you think Interdisciplinary nature of WOMS impact your own field? "It really put your feet on the ground. Maggie Andersen spoke at my retirement and said 'we were children together'" It was a growing up" experience.

35:02 Recall a meeting in Warner Hall, group of women getting together expressing their dissatisfaction with the climate at UD with Sandra Harding and Lindy Geis talking about their dissatisfaction. It was a hook. That was one of the things that attracted me to the whole women's studies and women's affairs perspective; it was a voice that needed to be here.

37:27 Impact of WOMS at UD – it seasoned it, started to attract really fine students. Leonard Stark. Shaku Bhaya, students like that made a difference. Also tenured faculty involve in program. Start of Office of Women's Affairs.

39:01 How do we explain UD WOMS longevity? Strong faculty and great students, with a voice in the administration. Discussion of different administrations. It had a good reputation because of people running the program. The centralness of it to the mission of the institution.

41:06 Changes in your own field over the 40 years. My field has changed from my doctorate. I came into field because I was an athlete and could teach future teachers. Still a little bit bothered by super competitiveness of women's sports. (Outside leaf blower sounds in back ground) Discussion of current women's sports.

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44:09 Still an issue of women's equity in sports.

45:00 Seeing Women's studies with Gender Studies – that is a bold step. It seems to be something that needs to be addressed. And to realize young folks don't know the history, when we didn't have bus or equipment.

46:30 Hard to pick one thing most proud of for career. On a different women's tombstone "She done the best she could."... "I tried to do the best I could, tried not to harm anybody but to move ball forward in a direction that would empower women to see themselves as equals or better." (outside sound in background)

48:45 "We may have ruffled feathers and had our own ruffled." Susan Sontag talk, young women thanked Sontag for bringing the issues forward. Moments like that they bring it all forward. You have to beat the bushes.

50:20 Colburn report "I could feel the electricity in the room." There are moments that you look back on and recall them.

51:00 Was US representative on International Women's Physical education group. Able to travel and meet with people from other countries.

51:30 Olympics discussed. Impact of women's experiences in sports on young women.

53:00 End