

Association for Lafayette Women

Panel on Coeducation

March 19, 2002

TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

Amanda Roth¹: Okay. Welcome everyone. This is put on by ALW. I'm Amanda. I'm the treasurer. I'm going to give you just a really short background to coeducation before we have our speakers, and we'll be introducing them as soon as I'm done. In the 1950s a student at the all male Lafayette asked his history professor² about coeducation. The professor replied, "Oh, girls in class. You give a girl an F, and she comes into the office and cries." By the late 1960s that professor had radically changed his opinion on coeducation, and he became the chairman of the Faculty Ad Hoc Committee on Coeducation. Over the course of a few years that committee along with numerous others thoroughly investigated the pros and cons of coeducation at Lafayette. In the spring of 1968 the Special Commission on Coeducation recommended to the president and trustees that Lafayette admit women as soon as possible. The commission based their recommendation on both practical and academic concerns. They argued that the presence of women on campus would increase the academic quality of the College, would contribute to extracurricular activities, and would provide a more natural social environment. The next year alumni were given the opportunity to voice their opinions on the subject. Fifty-six percent of the respondents opposed coeducation. On the extreme

¹ Amanda Roth, Class of 2004, A.B. Philosophy and Women's Studies.

² Albert W. Gendebien, Department of History.

end of things were comments from one alumnus from the class of 1937. He claimed that the type of “unreasoned reasoning” which supported coeducation at Lafayette was the same type of thought which caused a private school to propose coed showers for elementary school children to satisfy their curiosity about the opposite sex. Another alumnus claimed that the school ought not give up its unique all male status for the sake of a few pretty... pretty faces in classes. Fortunately, the students, like the faculty, were much more supportive of coeducation with seventy-seven percent favoring Lafayette going coed. In the fall of 1970 the faculty and students got their wish, despite worries of crying and opposite sex showers, and women were admitted to Lafayette for the first time. In 1970 a hundred and twenty-three women entered the freshman class and another twenty-three transferred in to the upper classes. That made the male female ratio somewhere between fourteen to one and seventeen to one. Not really sure.

Maria Mignogna³: I’m going to introduce the speakers. On the far right we have the first speaker is Christine Capone Sandy. She graduated from Lafayette in 1974. She was one of the first twenty-five women accepted to Lafayette. She entered as a math major and finished with a degree in art history. And then she went on to grad school, and she obtained a degree in landscape architecture from Cornell University⁴ where she worked in New York pursuing that. She now resides in Easton, and she home-schools her two children. And then next we have Karen Komlos. She also graduated from Lafayette in 1974 with a psychology degree. She is now an architectural designer, and she has her own business with her husband who is also a Lafayette grad. She has two children, and

³ Maria Mignogna, Class of 2003, B.S. Chemical Engineering, Co-president of ALW.

⁴ Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

she currently lives in the Lehigh Valley. Next we have Professor Susan Blake. She's the head of the English Department. She joined the faculty of Lafayette in 1974. She teaches American literature, African literature, and popular genres. She is the author of *Letters From Togo* a book describing her experiences as a Fulbright Professor in West Africa. And last, but not least, we have Professor Susan Basow. She joined the Psychology Department in 1977. She is now the Charles A. Dana Professor of Psychology and was the head of the department for six years. She helped to establish Lafayette women's studies program in 1983, and she chaired that program for eight years. She is a clinical psychologist, and her research includes gender, women's body issues, and homophobia.

Christine Sandy: I was thinking back to why I came to Lafayette College in the fall of 1970, and I wanted to throw in a few ideas of what it was like at that time. You, you may recall that there were things such as Woodstock⁵ happening in 1969, but there were a lot of us who were still just very eagerly doing our class work in high school and looking forward to going to a good college. But in the background there was this uneasiness. There was the Vietnam War. We were looking at news broadcasts at night on TV which would show us, you know, horrific sights, and death tolls. I remember the morning I woke up to hear that Robert F. Kennedy⁶ had been killed. I remember where I was when

⁵ Woodstock was a rock festival held near Bethel, N.Y. on August 15-17, 1969. Approximately 450,000 young rock fans attended the concert, which featured such performers as the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and the Who.

⁶ Robert F. Kennedy was a U.S. Politician who was a spokesman for liberal Democrats and a critic of L. Johnson's Vietnam War policy. In 1968 S. Sirhan assassinated him while campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination in Los Angeles.

John F. Kennedy⁷ was killed and Martin Luther King⁸, and that was all part of it. It was somehow I think maybe similar to today with things that happened last September⁹.

There is this uneasiness in the background as you go about trying to chart the journey of your life. So I have to say I think this threw me in a bit of indecision when I was a senior. And I was a good student, and I knew I loved math at the time, and finally my guidance counselor said to me, "You know you worked on rewriting the student government constitution, perhaps you'd like the challenge of entering a school newly going coed." I said, "Hey, that's a thought." (*Audience laughter*) There were several at the time. I was particularly interested in Lafayette because with the engineering school there was a good math department, and I was saying before, that I believe at the time we entered of the 140 some students, women students there might have been four women in engineering, so it was a very low number. And so I think really what drew me to Lafayette after all my interviews was the outreach on the part of the school. I lived in Chatham Township, New Jersey, and they sent alumni representatives, student representatives, to my home. My parents were involved in the interviews. It was very, a very comforting environment. When I came here for my interview it was very friendly, a little on the formal side, but actually for my personality, liking some structure, I felt at ease about it. And I cannot remember a moment that in my Lafayette experience, that I was ever treated with disrespect. It was really very uplifting for me. So I made my decision to come to Lafayette College, and I was in for quite an adventure. I would have

⁷ John F. Kennedy was the thirty-fifth president of the United States. His term of service was 1961-1963. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963.

⁸ Martin Luther King was a U.S. Civil Rights leader who believed in nonviolence. He was awarded the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize. In 1968 he was assassinated by J. E. Ray.

⁹ On September 11, 2002, New York's World Trade Center and Washington, D.C.'s Pentagon were attacked by terrorists.

to say that the one thing, that we were talking about before, the women who came really were up for the adventure. They were a great group of women. Albeit some were disappointed with the meager facilities for women. For example if you played field hockey, you waited til the football team finished with the locker room to go in and shower. I mean there were some real gaps there in terms of providing adequate facilities for the women. We were all in Ruef Hall, which was called New Dorm when we came, and we were we were given the privilege to vote on how we wanted to arrange male visitation in the dorm. Phil Shroeder¹⁰ who's assistant to the president was the dean of student housing, and he was really a very nice person to work with. I later worked with him as a resident advisor too. And I can remember him, you know, leading this discussion, and then just the women met, and we all decided, the majority rule, there were very few who were not along with the majority. The majority ruled that men were to have twenty-four hour access to the dorm. Now actually I think that was quite progressive because I had interviewed at Duke University¹¹ before I came here, and I stayed in an all girl dorm. And when a friend came to visit me, a high school friend who was attending, a year older than myself, over the intercom would come, (*In a southern accent*) "Ms. Capone, you have a call in parla number one." (*Laughter*) And the discussion among the girls at Duke at the time, I remember, they were talking about going coed dorms by wing. And the big concern was that the boys would get in, and they would read your bra size on the drying racks. (*Audience laughter*) They would know, you know, more about you than you wanted to reveal. So there were some very... a real panoply of issues at hand. So also, too, it's my understanding that not too long before we

¹⁰ Philip Schroeder, Executive Assistant to the President and Administrative Secretary to the Board of Trustees.

¹¹ Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

came there was a rule on campus that, after all these young men would have dates come for, party weekends ruled the social scene, and they would come, and they would often be put up in guest houses on College Hill. And they would... and the young women could come to the dorms, but there was rule if you entered a boy's dorm room the door had to be opened, and three feet had to be on the floor. And that, the resident advisor was responsible...

Susan A. Basow: Any three of the four... (*Audience laughter*)

CS: So actually I thought that Lafayette in retrospect had taken a rather progressive stand in throwing this to the women to make the decision for themselves. In terms of being the first women, there was the first year a great deal of hoopla about it. I remember my mailbox being jammed with formal little invitations to come to this fraternity or that fraternity. There were nineteen fraternities and living groups and as we were discussing earlier, all the boys belonged to one of these organizations because that's where they slept and ate. There were really were not any other options. Marquis was for freshman, and we had no student union or center like Farinon Center. And that I think would have been the really... the jewel in the crown for us, if we had had a center like Farinon. Because for the women, as we then went into our second year, some of the women cooked in New Dorm in the kitchen areas. Are they still there, the kitchen areas?

Audience: mm hmm yeah...

CS: So that meant... I can remember watching some of my friends. They lugged pots and pans, all the ingredients for dinner, plates, silverware, nothing was left there. Everything had to then go back to your room. I mean, this was really an inspiration to find a living off campus, you know, that was what happened then that, quite quickly, a lot of the women went off campus. Socially I remember that, it seemed to me it was a little bit of a throwback to the fifties. I remember my first date at Lafayette. It was for the weekend. It was a party weekend. That meant that you were going to go to a number of different events with this person. And my date came in a shirt and tie. He brought me a souvenir, a little mug, a Lafayette mug, for the weekend. There was a wine and cheese party with a folk singer. It was at Phi Gamma Delta, which at that time there had, there was a very bad fire there toward the end of our stay at Lafayette which gutted the building, but prior to the to that, there was a grand open staircase when you would go through the front door. So that all the students at this wine and cheese were sitting in this sweeping staircase, and I was thinking, "Gee, you know, it's like Wally out of *Leave it to Beaver*,¹² you know it's really, really neat." It's sort of cute. They would get dressed up to go to the football games, although I chose to try out for cheerleading at Lafayette my first week as a freshman. Up until that time, in fact I have a picture here... our student, I happen to have a copy of our student handbook. This is our first year. These girls went to Centenary College¹³ that were on the cover of our student handbook. Lafayette invited girls from Centenary to try out for the cheerleading squad up until the year we came. Then we came. We tried out. Friday... Friday afternoon rolled around before the first home game, and we were handed these, those big shaker knit varsity sweaters, the

¹² *Leave it to Beaver* was a family sitcom that was aired between the years 1957 - 1963.

¹³ Centenary College, Hackettstown, New Jersey.

maroon sweaters with big “L”s. What do we wear with them? Gee, guys wear white slacks (*Audience laughter*). Well we had nothing. So the whole group of cheerleaders went downtown to a fabric store. We bought white wool and stayed up using my roommate’s sewing machine and eight of us had white pleated skirts the next day. And this was the kind of pioneer spirit I like to think about at Lafayette. We laughed at it. It, it was fun. It was a challenge, that kind of thing. And when I take my children to a basketball game, and they see the cheerleaders they say, “Oh mommy you did that?” Oh no way. Our cheerleading was very tame compared to the gymnasts who are out there now. It’s a lot different. When it wasn’t a party weekend sometimes you... It seemed to me you wouldn’t see any boys, and it really was a quiet time. It really ruled the social scene. And that was... There were a lot of complaints from the women about that initially. I think that things started to change then in terms of the fraternities losing a toehold. One of the things that I remember the fraternity houses were in really good condition, physically. That was because at that time they were allowed to order the freshman boys who were pledging to work like slaves Sunday night after a weekend, polishing, scrubbing. Apparently since that time it was ruled unconstitutional (*Laughter*) or whatever, that you couldn’t demand from a freshman what you didn’t demand from the students in the upper classes. Well it was... in a certain sense it was a shame because it really, everything really was really in tip top shape at that point. I can remember that... My professors were very polite to me. In my classes I... probably there would be about a quarter to a third women because most of the courses that I was taking would be, you know, freshman classes the first year. Later on I chose to become an art history major because of a wonderful professor who was here, Johannes Gaertner¹⁴. He was a real

¹⁴ Johannes Gaertner, Professor of Art History and Head of the Department of Art and Music.

Renaissance man... knew Latin, Greek, and probably eight other languages. Had a European flair to his teaching. Very different I expect from what a class is like here now. You would enter his class, which was in Jenks Hall, and that's part of the Simon building, and you would enter his class and the lights would go out for a slide show. He would enter in a white shirt and a tie always. If you sniffled he handed you a tissue. You didn't ask any questions, and he was off on a wonderful discussion of, "Ah, yes, this Fragonard¹⁵ the swing..." and maybe some of you may know that Rococo¹⁶ painting of the woman in the swing¹⁷. He was always very interested to let us know what that piece meant back at the time. There's the little man, he said, "Ah, yes do you see the little man kneeling in front of her, and her and her foot forward slipper coming off her toe. Now you must realize pantaloons were not introduced to Queen Victoria, that little man is seeing all sorts of funny little things down there." (*Audience laughter*) There were all these little quips like: "Ah, that Rubens¹⁸, what a terrible reproduction, the color of cooked shrimp." Now mind you most of the women had TB back then and they were skinny as a rail: "Those big fat obulent women. That was the dream." Or, "Oh, the Venus De Milo¹⁹, you think this is beautiful? Well back then, it was just decoration." We have records that three feet of a repetitive freeze cost the same as the Venus De Milo." Or he was always interjecting these wonderful things that just sat on the edge of my seat. Loved his class. And he also encouraged me to take languages, sciences. It

¹⁵ Jean-Honoré Fragonard, a painter of the Rococo style.

¹⁶ A style of painting that existed in France between the years 1715-50. This art style was represented light, elegant, and elaborate ornamentation, as well as delicate brushwork and sensuous colors. The themes of the paintings were commonly based on mythology or courtship.

¹⁷ A reference to Fragonard's painting, *The Swing* that was created in 1765.

¹⁸ Peter Paul Rubens, Flemish painter and sculptor.

¹⁹ A Greek statue of Venus in marble

was probably the closest to a classical education that you could have. And then when I was in a seminar with him, there were just four of us. He would teach with the Socratic method²⁰, always asking questions, but always looking at you and saying, “Now that’s very interesting. What do you think about thus and such?” Gave me tremendous self-confidence about my own thinking process. He was just a real gift in my life, and I have to say that’s a major part of my happiness with my Lafayette experience, was Johannes Gaertner. I think that the women were very supportive of each other. I think great friendships were formed. I, to this day my dearest friends are my Lafayette friends. We’ve gone many different paths. That education inspired people to do a lot of different things. Of my friends they’re top corporate executives, there’re some stay at home moms, there are several who chose never to have children. It’s a real mix, and we remain supportive of each other, which I think is a real gift. And as far as what I think about the issues that faced us and would face the women here today... Life is really a journey, and the experiences you have here, the opportunity to develop interests that are outside of your sphere, learning to build relationships with people, all these issues were the same for us too. I think that our Lafayette education provided a set of challenges that really readied me to enter the world where I entered fields where men were dominant. I was able to work in banking or landscape architecture with ease I feel because I was treated with great respect here, and I I expected it, and where I would, you know, work or study and had confidence that I deserved it. And so I think that when you feel that way you can enter a situation that’s somewhat threatening and stay somewhat detached and look at it for the experience it is, and go on. *(Audience applause)*

²⁰ Method of teaching inspired by Socrates and based on questioning.

Karen Komlos: I would reiterate everything Chris said. First you have to remember the time that we were in. As Chris said it was 1970. We were in the height of the war. In high school I had a boyfriend who was attending Princeton²¹ when I was a senior. And I would spend every weekend at Princeton, which was my goal. My goal was to go to Princeton. And we went through the student strike²², I don't know if you remember the logo of the fist and strike, and we went through the bombing of the ROTC buildings²³, and we went through... I was there every weekend going through this. I was there when we were bombing Cambodia and everybody, you know, it was when the strike happened. Our mindset was so different. I was... I personally was very political, politically involved. I spent my senior year in high school down at our train station picketing the war. There was no thought in my mind that I wasn't going to go to an all male school. Every school I applied to was a school that was all male going coed. I applied to Princeton, here, Colby²⁴, Hampshire College²⁵ was a brand new college, it wasn't even accredited yet. It was pass-fail, and it was very wild. I was ridiculously rebellious. I don't know what my parents were thinking. But at the time, I didn't think I was rebellious. At the time I was me. This is who I was. I was... and I would say that Chris said the same thing. We were very confident women. We were feminist before there was even the word. There was not a feminist movement when we were here. There was no such thing. But I felt that I... at that time and place I wanted to do something that was extraordinary and going to an all male school, being a groundbreaker, doing something

²¹ Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.

²² On May 1, 1970, approximately 300 Lafayette students marched around the circle in downtown Easton in protest against President Nixon's decision to order ground troops into Cambodia.

²³ Reserve Officer Training Corps.

²⁴ Colby-Sawyer College, New London, New Hampshire.

²⁵ Hampshire College, Amherst, Massachusetts.

really cool like that was my vision. When I applied here, plus I was from New York, so to be in Pennsylvania was whoa, two states away, I thought it was really far from home. (*Audience laughter*) And I thought, that's great, but when I applied here I applied as a fine arts major and Dick Haines²⁶ who interviewed me, who ended up being a client of mine in my own business later on in life, said, "Oh by the time you're a junior you're gonna have, we're gonna have a fine arts major no problem." I came with a portfolio. I came with the whole ten yards, and don't worry about it, it'll be here. Well, of course, it wasn't here when I was a junior, so I ended up being a psych major only because there was no such thing as fine arts. (*Professor Basow frowns. Audience laughter*) Not to say that it wasn't, but it was... I knew I was not going to make a career out of that. And as I said to the ladies before, being here, and I think to this day it's the same, and hopefully in most colleges, a college trains you to think, so no matter what you, what profession or what profession you end up in or what major you choose may have nothing to do with where you eventually will be. And it is a good thing to remember that your area or your degree may not have anything to do with what career you end up actually being in. It's... in fact I think it's good to be flexible. So, anyway I came, and when I came I... you know, I don't know, it seemed to me a natural thing, it didn't bother me that I might have been one of two or three girls in a class. It was... it was normal. It didn't bother me to use the men's room. It didn't... It was just the way it was. And I didn't think anything of it my freshman year. I did think in the beginning the boys were really stupid. They would sit out, you have to remember these boys, a lot of these boys in those days, they came from prep schools, all male prep schools, and then they go to an all male college, and a lot of those juniors and seniors at the time, they had never had a girl as a friend.

²⁶ Richard Haines: Director of Admissions.

They could not talk to a girl as a friend. They were only here... they only had relationships with girls, as girlfriends. And that was a very hard thing, I remember, that these boys just could not accept. I remember, I don't know if you remember this Christine, sitting, there steps in front of New Dorm at Marquis, there used to be a gang of boys that just sat there on the steps going all the way down watching us come in and out. Do you remember that? Coming in and out of New Dorm. They just would sit there and watch us. It was pretty bizarre and there were a lot of really stupid boys here who just didn't know how to handle girls. But and exactly what Christine was saying, we had you know in those days the social strata was frat parties... you have your homecoming weekend, your football weekend, every home game was a party weekend, and you would have your date for the whole weekend which was horrible. If you didn't like your date. You know, I remember dumping my date on Saturday cuz I couldn't stand him on a Friday (*Audience laughter*). And I just, I would just take off and hide the rest of the weekend cuz it was... They were there were some boys here who were just really, you know they'd be drinking, and I wouldn't want to drink and it you know, you just... It was a horrible social system. It was terrible.

CS: I remember they used to have mixers for the boys, and they had them still when we came. I remember going with a couple of freshman boys up to Marquis, and there were the girls from Beaver College²⁷ and they were all dressed up, patent leather shoes we were all sort of...

KK: We were hippies.

²⁷ Beaver College is now called Arcadia University. It is located in Glenside, Pennsylvania.

CS: Well there was a range there, but I do remember that they were really dressed up and some of the boys had dressed up for the event too, probably the boys who went to the prep school and they were into that scene. But I think after that first year they stopped having the mixers.

KK: Yeah, yeah they didn't... they did not. They brought in girls from Centenary²⁸, they brought in girls from Cedar Crest²⁹ and all that. But after... what you ended up just like any student anywhere you found your group of friends that you had. I was in a different group from Christine. I was very rebellious. I was a hippie. I was into a whole lot of different things that Christine wasn't into. Chris and I took a lot of classes together. We shared Dr. Gaertner, which we, I would say the exactly the same thing, our art professor, he made a tremendous impression on me, my whole life. I will remember that man with love. He... the best thing that ever could happen to you is if you were actually invited to his house for a dinner party. You would have to dress up. You would go... You would sit down. You would have all these different courses. His wife would serve, and then after dinner you would go into his parlor. You would have a little sherry, which was, you know, just so cool, and you would talk deep, deep, deep stuff. And I remember I actually got the luxury of going twice, and I remember one time I actually wanted to leave a little early, and he wouldn't let me. You had to stay 'til he was ready with the... that the conversation was actually over, and then he would say you can all leave now.

²⁸ Centenary College, Hackettstown, New Jersey.

²⁹ Cedar Crest College, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

CS: It was wonderful. (*Audience laughter*)

KK: It was. I mean, you had to... he was... you know if you guys ever just get just one professor your whole college career, one professor that you will remember when you're fifty like us, that he was just fantastic, you'll be lucky. You really will. All you need is one. But we, I was lucky enough to get a bunch of friends. We would... We did a lot of fun things. I remember, you know, we would mud slide down in front of when it would rain, we would take the trays from Marquis I guess it was, and we would mud slide and go down from in front of New Dorm almost off the hill. I mean it was scary. We were nuts. (*Audience laughter*) And then we would also do that when it would snow. We would go from South College, go all the way down from the top of South College and go, you know, with the trays. They probably don't let you do that now.

Audience: They do.

KK: They do. Oh we loved that, we just loved that. And I remember, your first experiences. I had my first blind date. Remember Fran Mustaro³⁰?

CS: Oh sure.

KK: Fran Mustaro. I shouldn't say his name but, he was drop dead gorgeous. I was a stupid freshman. He was a junior.

³⁰ Francis Mustaro, Class of 1972, A.B. History.

CS: He married a red-head.

KK: He did?

CS: Yeah. (*Audience laughter*)

KK: This is before I met my husband who was, I met my husband April of my freshman year. So I met him fairly young.

SAB: Was he a Lafayette student?

KK: Yeah. He was a junior. And but this is my freshman first semester, and I don't know how I got hooked up with this, but he was drop dead gorgeous football player and, you know, he walks by. He's like the dream boat of the campus. And I got hooked up with him and somebody else, I can't, maybe Selma Widrow³¹ I think it was...

CS: Oh she was a live wire.

KK: And, yeah, to for a blind date. And we went to a basketball game with my friends, and I went up to South College where my friend lived, John Lynch³². And he fed me screwdrivers, which I thought was orange juice. I had no clue what it was. I must have

³¹ Selma Widrow, Class of 1974, A.B. English.

³² John Lynch, Class of 1974, A.B. History.

had about fifteen. (*Audience laughter*) And I went, you have to figure, I just... I don't think I was even eighteen yet. I was... I turned eighteen in February. And I was unbelievably drunk all of a sudden, just like that. And I went into Marquis to have dinner, and I can remember standing up, lookin at the clock, standing up, everybody's eating dinner there. And I look at the clock it's like quarter to seven, and I just started. I just screamed. I announced to everybody in Marquis, "I am so drunk, and I got, I have a blind date with Fran Mustaro in fifteen minutes!" Well I remember friends carried me back to my dorm. They just threw Scope down my throat so that I wouldn't smell, and I remember Fran coming in through the door, taking one look at me and turning around and leaving. (*Audience laughter*) And I was devastated. We actually went to see *Love Story*³³ that night. You remember that you? Do you know that movie? I mean, that's how old we were. *Love Story* with Ali McGraw. And that's about all I remember of it. But, and that was my one and only date with him. (*Laughter*) But that, and that was my only time, and that was... that cured me of drinking, I'll tell ya that. There was no drinking like they have now. I think now you have in all campuses you have situations where social problems. It's much different. We didn't have that. We had... at least in my experience. If you go to a frat party they would have beer on tap. and you'd see boys drinking and puking and being stupid in general, but no problems sexually, no problems with assault, no problems with stealing, no problems with, you know, horrific death problems, or anything like that. No tragedies. Really we never had any of that. We were, this... we were in a different... I was in a different time space. It was... it was free love. There was sex, drugs, rock and roll. That was our motto in those days, and and that was really what it was like for us for four years. It was... it was... it was, but you have to

³³ *Love Story*, a romance/drama film released in 1970.

put it into context of that time frame because that's... every campus on in the country was very, very much like that. I... my school experience here really I would say started not to go downhill, but got to be different when I had to be forced to be moved off campus because there was no housing. I could live on campus freshman and sophomore year, but then your junior year, they had no place for girls so you... And there were no sororities. There was just no place to go. So we I had to get an apartment off campus. I lived off campus on McCartney Street in junior year. Senior year I lived on Cattell Street. Lived with four girls. And it was, I loved it, but it was a totally different feeling of going to school. And you were isolated. You weren't part of the College anymore. You didn't have that spirit. You didn't... It was much, much different, and I wish it wasn't like that 'cuz that really I think was a tremendous drawback. There was no really, no intramural, I don't remember any intramural sports for girls. We didn't have anything, you know, there were no clubs that I remember that you know...

CS: I remember, when I see the new fitness center...

KK: Yeah, oh, to die for that...

CS: I think of a Saturday a girlfriend and I went down to Alumni Gym and ran the indoor track. It was an track...

KK: Yeah, we had nothing like that. Yeah, we had absolutely nothing. They had, you know, we... I had, actually what I ended up doing my sophomore, my junior year,

because I lived off campus, I got a puppy. I had actually met my husband to be as I said April of my freshman year. So we lived together off campus, and we got dogs. I would take my little puppy to class. I took him... (*Laughter*) Yeah. I took him... When we to, when we went on psych field trips in the bus, when we would go to like Allendale³⁴ or wherever we went.

SAB: Allentown State, yeah, State Hospital³⁵

KK: Yeah, I took my little puppy in my lap on the bus. And, I mean, you know, they let us... and you didn't think twice about it. I'm sure they don't... You know they wouldn't let you do that now but, you know, we... I don't know, we just didn't take... we didn't think twice about it. We just did it. But I would say that my education experience here was okay. I would say to be honest with you my high school experience was better than my college experience. I went to an extremely progressive, unbelievably one of the best high schools in the country, and Scarsdale High School³⁶, I don't know if anybody knows about it. When I got here... in New York. When I got here the topics of classes were so boring, and so, I don't know medieval I thought, you know. (*Laughter*)

Audience member: I went to Scarsdale.

KK: Did you really? Good for you. Well then you know what I'm talking about. I mean when I came here, you know, I was in honors French in high school, honors

³⁴ A reference to the Annendale Correctional Facility.

³⁵ A reference to the Allentown Aging Home.

³⁶ Scarsdale High School, Scarsdale, New York.

French. They made me take freshman Spanish here. Why? You know it was stupid. You know there was just all kinds of dumb requirements that they made us do, which I'm sure hopefully you don't have to do any of that now. But on... but as Christine said I never was treated disrespectfully by any teacher with the exception of one that Amanda knows of, which I'll tell you of. I took a philosophy class freshman year with Ralph Slaght³⁷, who's still here apparently. And he was calling the roster. I guess this was even the first day or second day of class. And he was calling the roster, and he called me, "Mister." And I said, "No." And then I came back, I think I... my recollection is, his is a little different, but my recollection is I came back like for three different classes, and he would constantly call you by your last name and did not call you by your first name or even put a suffix in front of your name. It was always, you know, like "Smith," "Jones," you know. And I just said this is, I'm not gonna be treated like this. And that was, so I remember dropping the class. I'm not sure he... I don't know, maybe I'm not even right. But he... I did not realize until my fifteenth reunion when I came back and he was happened to be here. He came up to me. He recognized me. And he reminded me of that story. He remembered that. He told Amanda that story today I guess. And so, I mean, on the one hand I don't remember with that exception being treated any differently than any other male student, but that's my recollection. Maybe the professors had a different, you know, recollection. Maybe they... maybe they did change their curriculum. Maybe they were on tiptoes with the girls. I don't know. But for me there was no difference. The only thing I do remember is making sure that I scheduled all my classes around *All My Children*³⁸ so (*Laughter*) Absolutely. Erica³⁹ was only seventeen

³⁷ Ralph Slaght, Department of Philosophy.

³⁸ A daytime soap opera drama that premiered in 1970.

at the time, and I couldn't miss her. And that was, you know... So we had a fun time here... it was really. You know, we did have wonderful moments. And like I said I did meet my husband. I have lifelong friends here... we've had. You know I have women friends and men friends that I still talk to, email everyday. And... were I to do it again... I have a son who's a freshman in college right now. He's at Virginia Tech⁴⁰, and I would have to say, that if I... looking at it now, I would go to a bigger school for myself. And that is because the academics here for me at the time was a disappointment, for me. Maybe not for Christine or for other women. But I was in a curriculum that was just growing in fine arts. It didn't have enough classes. It didn't have good professors yet. It didn't even have the major. They treated it very... they didn't treat it, period. I didn't have counseling to get me a career. When I graduated my senior year the way I got a job was I opened up the phone book. In my second semester of my senior year I said, you know, "I don't even need to go to classes anymore. I'm just going to get a job." And I opened up the phone book, and I got a job. I went under "A" for advertising and "A" for architects and there was a... architectural firm that began with "B", Buckl and Jakowski⁴¹. I don't... Are they still there? They're in Easton.

SAB: Yeah...well it's Buckl. It's not Jakowski...

KK: He gave me my first job. I walked in there, boom. Got a job. Just like that. In an architectural firm. I had no, absolutely no experience, no knowledge. I didn't know how to hold a pencil. He taught me everything. And the only reason that I got that job is

³⁹ Erica Kane is a recurring character on *All My Children*.

⁴⁰ Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, Virginia.

⁴¹ The architectural firm is now known as Werner A. Buckl Associates and is located in Easton.

because I was a woman. I know it. This was 1974. But at the time it didn't even, it didn't. You know that's me looking back on it now. I know why I got that job. But I stayed in the architectural business and I've been in it for almost thirty years. But not through any guidance from here or from anything else. It was from my own pluck. And that's probably what Lafayette did for me too. (*Audience applause*)

Susan L. Blake: Life was not so much fun for the women faculty in those days.

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

SLB: I'm... I think I was invited because I'm the woman faculty member who's been at Lafayette the longest. I came in 1974, and I was trying to remember how many women faculty there were at that time, and I counted on my fingers and, you know, I remembered these various people. And I remembered eight, and I figured well there must have been... there must be a couple I don't remember. And so I said probably ten. And I checked in the Provost's office, and indeed there were ten in 1974. And that was six percent of the faculty. We were not only few, but we were all very young. I was twenty-seven and the system in those days was very patriarchal. The department heads were appointed for life. Once you ascended to the rank of department head, you were appointed for life. So my department head had been department head since I was born. (*Laughter*) And I was the same age as his daughters. So... and this was true of most people's circumstances. So we were not only few and inexperienced, but we were...

They didn't know what to do with us, how to deal with us. It was hard for the senior male faculty to think of us as anything other than comparable to their own female children. Also we hadn't had any models of being female professors. I had no female professors in college or in graduate school. And, so I was doing something new, from scratch. So the, our relationships with our faculty colleagues were strained, and it was also difficult in the classroom. At that time seventy-five percent of the students were men. They were less enlightened than men are now. And I looked back in my grade books from my first year, and I had in the classes... the first year writing classes that I had, they were bigger then too. Some of them went you know up to about twenty-eight students. But the women I had were ten out of twenty-six, two of twenty-one, five out of thirty-one, and zero out of twenty-one. So we were young, inexperienced, and we had lots of male students in our classes, many of whom were very uncomfortable with having women in authority and would actually even say explicitly things like, you know, "I'm not gonna take orders from a woman." So we were trying to figure out how to be professionals in that environment. We formed an organization, Professional Women of Lafayette (PWL). And part of what we did was talk about how to be professors, how to deal with our colleagues, how to deal with the students, how to present ourselves in the classroom. Another thing that we did in our lighter moments then was to contemplate how to liberate the sauna in the men's locker room because there was no sauna in the women's locker room. We never actually got to that but our thinking about it I think probably had something to do with the fact that they built one in the women's locker room. (*Laughter*) Professional Women of Lafayette did... it was a place where we gathered because we felt under siege and not only did we kind of talk about the emotional

issues in being women professors, but we took on social issues to improve our workplace. And the organization is responsible for instituting childcare at Lafayette. It worked on maternity leave policies. The inspiration for women's studies came originally from discussions in PWL.

SAB: It helped change the tenure system.

SLB: It helped change the tenure system and the, and informally the hiring system. One of the things that happened... When I was hired there were four people hired in the English Department at the same time. The other one who's still here is David Johnson. And we... When I was hired, the year I was hired, I came in for an interview on a Friday afternoon. And I met the head of the department, the next most senior person, and the one woman faculty member who was not new and young, who was head of the education department⁴². And we talked for awhile in the department head's office, and then I was taken home to his house for dinner. And I believe that I got my job because I praised his wife's cream spinach and had seconds. (*Laughter*) Stayed overnight there, you know, and was sent on my way. I did not meet anybody else in the department. I met no students. And so the department head and the, you know, the second in command made the decision. Well there were four of us who were hired that way, and we insisted that the hiring process be made more open. We were very fortunate the next year. The head was nervous about this. He thought that if the decision were opened up to the whole department there would be dissension and controversy and chaos and so on and so forth. We were lucky there was one clear top candidate who happened to be a woman. And

⁴² In reference to Clay Ketchem, Department of English.

everybody agreed, and it became a very affirming experience toward openness and democracy. But this is the kind of thing that we were engaged in at that time. Gradually, of course, the situation improved, and I did a quick sort of review of the numbers and proportions of women faculty at different points in the period between then and now. And the proportion went from six percent that year that I arrived by to about twenty percent by the end of the 1980s. Interestingly, the percentage has not increased that much since... in the last ten years. It was up to about a quarter of the faculty in 1991-92, and it's at twenty-six percent now. So that's not a huge improvement in the last ten years. But what has happened is that the more and more women have been tenured and promoted to full professor. It's still small percentages, but in 1991-92 the percentage of women who were tenured was fourteen and there were two full professors. Ten years later the percentage of women who are tenured is twenty-three percent so that's almost twice as much, and there are eleven full professors. Not, not a lot. It's still only the... that eleven is out of fifty-five. But what has happened is that there's become a critical mass, even though it's not a proportional equity. There's become a critical mass of women faculty not only numbers but longevity, comfort, seniority, tenure, full professorships. Quite a number of the major faculty committees are chaired by women. Several of the departments are chaired by women. So there's, there's I think more comfort in fact than there is statistical basis for the comfort. And I... to me the change came in the mid 90s, which is not that long ago, right. about '95, '96, and it came with the institution of the policy on sexual harassment, which was very controversial. And we had open meetings in which male faculty members of my generation, you know, stood up and talked about all of the horrors that would come about if this policy on sexual

harassment were instituted. But I felt, and I don't know how you felt at the time, we were gonna win. You know, they could talk. We could let them talk. There were enough of us and enough, you know...

SAB: Allies.

SLB: Allies, good. That it was not gonna be a problem. And so the anxiety, you know, dissipated at that time. Of course the classroom has changed radically too. I expect to have many articulate feminist male students in my classes now, and I do. So the experience of teaching as a woman professor here has changed a great deal in this time period. Women, of course, are not the only minority in the professorate, and in the same time period there have been efforts to increase the percentage of black faculty. In the late 70s and early 80s I was involved in an effort to recruit black faculty members. And this came about because in the early 70s when I was first here there was, I think, one black faculty member, who then left at the end of 1979. So in 1980 there were zero. And we did a number of things. We had panels. We tried to educate departments about hiring opportunities and mentalities and so forth. We developed some programs, for example, to get visiting black professors to come and kind of give people the idea of that, you know, it could be done and to create networks of communication, let people know that we were a receptive institution and so forth. And in the period from 1982 to 94 the number of black faculty increased from zero to seven, kind of, you know more or less one a year in that period. And it's not that much more now. I actually don't know the number now, but it's, it's not significantly more than that. So in both categories, the

numbers, you know, and percentages have not increased greatly in the last ten years. And so we have a lot of work to do. Thanks very much. (*Audience applause*)

SAB: What I wanted to share with you tonight was something that... information that I learned as part of a committee that was set up in 1989 to evaluate twenty years of coeducation at Lafayette. And actually the life of the committee reveals a lot about how Lafayette was at that time, and in the twelve years roughly since then I think there's been tremendous strides made, so I think our committee's report would look different today. Just to give you a capsule view, the report was never actually... It was delivered to the president who had now changed. And it was filed away because it was a divided report. There was a majority and a minority opinion. And it was very controversial to evaluate just what progress had been made. There was no, and the divide was the classic "do you paint the glass half full or half empty?" And the members of the committee who were in favor of a very positive spin, talking about all the accomplishments, of which there were many, and we've heard you know some. Or whether or not you wanted to recognize the accomplishments but also note all the areas that were still, you know, glaringly in need of continued, you know, progress. And what was interesting, and I haven't remembered this of the seven members of the committee there were three of us who were on campus, two faculty members and an administrator. We all, were the... we were the minority opinion. The minority opinion of being concerned about issues like sexual harassment and sexism, which is more subtle and yet more pervasive than just saying, "Oh well the percentage of women as students now has gone from, you know, twenty percent or actually seven point nine percent in 1970, you know that very first class, the first year, to forty-two or forty-

three percent, which clearly is progress.” So there’s... I just wanted to give you an overview of some of the findings then of this committee for the twenty years between 1970 and what turned out to be 1990. Admissions clearly we went from a deliberate gender admissions policy where women were kept to twenty-five percent because there were not facilities. As we heard living space, the bathroom problem is always a major problem, athletic facilities, dining facilities, which turned out to be really big. We heard some mention of it, but it colored a lot about the status of women on campus, and of course the social options. In 1976 however, there had been enough residence halls built that had the right bathrooms. They had to have bathtubs was part of the issue, and...

(Laughter) It’s really interesting all of the accommodations. The things that had to be in place because women needed them study lounge, and apparently men didn’t, study lounges, bathtubs in addition to existing showers, kitchenettes, laundry facilities. I don’t know what the men did for laundry. *(Laughter)* Communication systems, provisions for private telephone lines, and security. So when... The housing that was there had to be converted to make it suitable for women. But when 1976 rolled around the admissions office went to a gender blind admissions policy, at least they said so, and women’s percentage of the class jumped to thirty-nine percent. With that it hovered around in the forty percent. And part of the reason it’s not... Nationwide women are fifty-five percent of college students, and part of the reason why at Lafayette it, although were getting close to fifty percent, it will probably never actually match the national average is one the large percentage of students who are engineering majors which is still even though Lafayette actually stands and has always stood in a very good position relative to the percent of women engineering students, they’re still a minority of engineering students. And also

our football team. This was also a divisive issue with the taskforce looking at coeducation, cuz they never wanted to talk about football. But when you have a sport that one out of eleven males play at Lafayette, it is a major component of life at Lafayette, because of the size of Lafayette and the size of the football team. So that affected everything, and that also affects the numbers as well. Financial aid women had proportionately less financial aid over the twenty year period. I don't know today, and a lot of that was because of coach recommended athletes. In terms of academics women as soon as they came to campus had a higher grade point average, and they have continued to this day to have a higher grade point average on average. In terms of athletic teams, in 1976 there were seventeen varsity teams that were all male, and there were seven for women. And a lot of the inequalities existed, that existed, were really attributed to the athletic program, not only the facilities, but the things the teams had to go through, when there were teams. Not only to practice after the men practiced, but they ate after the men ate. They had to provide their, pay for their own uniforms and wash them themselves, their transportation... I mean they were definitely second class for most of the time. It's different now. I do think there's more equity now. In terms of the living and dining and social options, they were really all interwoven, because as we heard with the meal plans women after their first year, you know, their only meal plan could be in a fraternity house. And so women had their dinners at fraternity house, but they were, of course, always guests in fraternity house. So that creates a different kind of dynamic between those who live in the house and are regular members and those who come for meals. And that only changed in, when Farinon was built, which is, you know, in the early 90s. Social life centered on fraternities. When women first came to Lafayette there were

nineteen fraternities. By 1990 there were eleven. And the proportion of men who are in fraternities has varied over the twenty years that we're talking about from sixty-five to eighty-five percent. The first sorority was established in 1981. By 1988 there were five sororities, and still about seventy percent of women were in one of these five sororities, but they had no houses on campus. Initially they had no houses at all, so they were a very different type of social organization than fraternities were. After awhile they did get a couple of houses off campus, but it wasn't until relatively recently, in the last ten years, that they came on campus at all. And they never had alcohol served there. They never had sort of the parties there. So social life centered around fraternities, and I don't know when it started, apparently not when you were there, but at some point fraternities were on tap everyday. I mean there were parties everyday...

KK: No only on weekends.

SAB: Yeah, well it changed. I don't know when that changed. Fraternities used to be on tap every night, and there were parties every night. It was awful. And at some point, I don't remember what year it was, it was probably the late 80s...

CS: That was when they went dry?

SAB: Yeah and they were restricted to only certain nights of the week.

KK: Yeah, that was when they had the rape at Lehigh.

SAB: That's when they had the rape at Lehigh. We also had some incidents here as well. You've heard about the faculty. By 1990 there were still ten departments with absolutely no women on the faculty. But the biggest thing that we found as a committee, and this is where we had the most divisive kinds of conversations, heated conversations. We had conducted a survey, a standard survey, that was conducted at lots of campuses that tried to evaluate student's experiences of a lot of subtle things that people don't label as sort of sexism or even rape or harassment, but. For questions like, "Have you ever received unwanted sexual attention from a peer that has caused you to avoid a situation?" In 1990 half of the women said that they did. And, of course, we asked a sample of the entire campus, and twenty percent of men said that they did too. But, I mean, this is clearly a different atmosphere for women students and for men students. Nearly all women said that they received sexist comments from their peers. As many as forty percent said they received comments from their professors as well. And there, I mean, there were other findings of this kind. That you could see that some people wouldn't be happy to have this in the same report with all these wonderful other achievements. But just to give you an example, it really goes down I think in Lafayette history. A fraternity that is now defunct, Delta Upsilon, known as DU, which had a house where Farinon now stands, was known for being particularly an animal house. And, 1981, they used to have theme parties, you know, very much in the *Animal House*⁴³ tradition, maybe they still do. In 1981 one of their theme parties, which we found out afterwards, we being faculty, was

⁴³ This movie was filmed in 1978. A comedy, it depicts the college experiences of fraternity brothers.

called “Back to the Womb Party.”⁴⁴ And the decorations were a lot of red, but there were like red things, cotton things, that were supposedly tampons, bloody tampons. There were sort of hangers that symbolize abortion. A lot of things that were at best in poor taste. But very offensive. Now remember this is still the only social life, if women wanted to stay on campus, you know, this is it. There were only fraternity parties. And so a lot of women went. Well this time a group of women walked out. They were from ALW. (*Applause*) And they walked out, and they did more than walk out, they actually wrote and protested and complained. This was really a radical thing to do at Lafayette because if you were, and is still today, I mean, social pressure is the major way of keeping people in line because in a small campus if people are going to ostracize you it’s really like, you know, the Amish or the Mennonites, you know, shunning is like the worst form of punishment. And so people don’t want to be shunned, so they just keep quiet mostly. So it takes a lot to protest something, and especially something as ingrained as fraternity privilege. The one woman who was the leader of it was shunned. She was fortunately a second semester senior. It was the spring of 1981. Do you remember this?

SLB: Well I remember the party. I don’t remember the individual.

SAB: It was Chris Nafle⁴⁵. She went on to be a lawyer. And she was shunned. And also many of her friends turned against her cuz people, you know, they protested, but then they started getting the social repercussions and gave up on it. The faculty women’s group that Susan talked about, the Professional Women of Lafayette, also wrote letters in

⁴⁴ In February 1981, Delta Upsilon launched this party, which sparked campus wide discussion concerning gender relations within the campus community.

⁴⁵ Reference to Christyne L. Neff, Class of 1982, A.B. Chemistry.

support of that. And, I mean, it was clear... this was clearly somewhat of a turning point. DU did eventually, not because of this incident, but just of others like it later on get kicked off campus, you know, get disbanded whatever it's called. Disbarred I was going to say. But it was a radicalizing moment. And I mean there's some people who shone. Who you know really... I think, and for this one woman who I didn't... meet later, it was a radicalizing experience. And I think it was an early wake up call for a lot of fraternities about what behavior was not going to be tolerated anymore. (*Applause*)

Maria Mignogna: Are there any questions for the panel?

Alyssa Spiro⁴⁶: Actually I do have a question. A good friend of mine, his father was a student here in 70s, and was at least part of the student petitions to try to get women here. And he said that shortly after women got here that he felt that perhaps it was partially because, at least from a student point of view, they were just getting tired of having to import girls from other schools. And that the administration perhaps thought that by bringing women here, it would encourage the men to maintain a higher level of cleanliness. (*Laughter*) What were you feelings when you first got here. Did you feel you were here for some purpose other than just having the school go coed and have women here?

KK: I... I'll tell you a funny story. When I was applying to colleges I had two twin friends. They were twins at Lehigh. They were freshman at Lehigh. I was a senior in high school. And they said to me, "Lehigh's going coed. Why don't you apply there?"

⁴⁶ Alyssa Spiro, Class of 2002, A.B. Engineering, Publicity Coordinator for ALW.

And so I call Lehigh up and said, "Can I get an app, you know." "No, we're not going coed. But there's this little school down the road called Lafayette that's going coed in time." Lehigh, I think, went coed either the following year or the year after. And I had never heard of Lafayette before, so that's how I had even found out about Lafayette. I... my personal opinion, and from what I gathered when I was applying here, was that there... if colleges all... You have to remember the times now again. There used to be Radcliff⁴⁷ and Harvard⁴⁸. There was Swarthmore⁴⁹ and Haverford⁵⁰, right? There was all these you know male...

SLB: ...coordinates...

KK: ...coordinates right. And that was all disbanding, and it was financially sought. It was not... they were losing, you know, population. They were losing students. They were... Their grade point averages, their standing or whatever, was going downhill. The only way that these little schools were going to survive was to change with times. And if Lehigh was gonna go coed than Lafayette had to go coed. And I think it was not anywhere close to what your friend is saying, but more financially driven.

CC: That was my impression too. And I thought I also heard that there was some discussion about making it Lafayette University, that that was another avenue to encourage more people to come to the school. But it was a movement.

⁴⁷ Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

⁴⁸ Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

⁴⁹ Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

⁵⁰ Haverford College, Haverford, Pennsylvania.

KK: It was all over the U.S.

SAB: One of... our task force in looking at the original reasons along with... I think actually that both reasons... There were two main reasons that we summarized. One was that Lafayette, and I think this was probably the biggest one, was at a competitive disadvantage. Partly because it catered to only fifty percent of the college-going population. And partly because an increasing proportion of young men wished to attend coeducational institutions. But the second reason was the presence of women would provide strengths both within and outside the classroom. And I think part of the outside classroom was that it would, you know, I mean 'cuz I did hear and did read materials that had to do with, you know the way women are sort of responsible for making, you know, men be more, you know, chivalrous...

KK: Civilized... (*Laughter*)

SAB: Civilized. (*Laughter*) and I mean it's the task, you know, for centuries.

CS: It's a more natural environment. It's you know, you didn't... There was more structure though in general in colleges prior to that. I remember they used to have obligatory chapel everyday. I mean one of the songs does say, "Each morning to chapel, we came first..." or something like that.

KK: We didn't have that.

CS: We didn't have that, no. And they had Saturday classes too, and they got rid of that. So, you know, the impact of the late 60s and all

KK: It was changing.

CS: ...the history. You know, it was a... it was a changing time.

KK: Yeah you have to.... I remember that. I remember when the first day I was actually able to wear jeans in high school.

CS: Right. Me too.

KK: You know. It was such a change... and when you talk about the 80s here, and that party here. That to me is so disgusting

CS: Yeah, so grotesque.

KK: ...and we never experienced... Maybe we were in, you know, a somewhat age of innocence coming off of the late 60s. I don't know, but I mean it didn't seem like we were innocent at the time cuz we were doing a lot of nasty stuff that we, you know, I would never let my kids do. (*Laughter*)

CS: Actually I can remember at DU that we thought it was pretty disgusting that they had toga parties because seeing some of these big football players (*Laughter*) in pink tights and short togas was really something we could all miss.

KK: Yeah, but we, I mean, we all looked at it...

CS: It was funny.

KK: ... 'cuz they're stupid.

CS: Yeah, I mean that was a....

KK: I think a different time.

KK: I think... I think you're right. I mean we didn't have, you know, didn't have drinking all week long. You couldn't, we wouldn't have been able to go to class. I mean it was just...

CS: I think the coaches were much more restrictive about the habits of the players back when we were in school. But I do recall that I was... In my classes I felt for the most part that I was very happy that there were so many young men who were academically inclined. I really thought that it was a high caliber place to be compared to high school

where my classes were mostly all girls in the upper level classes. So I thought a lot of the men here were really academically inclined, and I remember being impressed that there was a fellow at my high school who was the quarterback and a real big man on campus in high school. And he wanted to come here, but it was my understanding he didn't... he wasn't accepted because his test scores were so much... were very high and his grades were a little toward the mediocre side. And so I had this impression that Lafayette students worked harder, you know, for what they got. I don't know if that's true or not.

Jackie Sekula⁵¹: I have a question for Dr. Basow and Dr. Blake. You were talking about how it was for female faculty members, and how it was actually, it was very difficult for you to originally get adjusted. Was there ever a point when you sort of thought to yourself, "I have the hang of this now. I've got my confidence." You know, like... cuz I know you were having problems. Can you cite any specific examples of the problems with the male students or the female students and kind of like explain how you got through them or...?

SLB: Well I can remember a couple of male students, and, of course, these would be kind of traumatic, so it wasn't that it was that many, but it was disturbing when it happened. You know saying to me in my office or maybe it was after class had just broken up, "I don't think a woman can teach me anything." I can remember a student who got a C on a paper getting very upset about it and going to the department head and making a gender argument, you know, among others about this. What I did about it was I swam. (*Laughter*) (*Swimming Motions*) I punched these guys, you know, with every

⁵¹ Jackie Sekula, Class of 2003, B.S. Chemical Engineering, Co-president ALW.

stroke. And then they graduated. (*Laughter*) You know. And times improved, and I got old. You know it wasn't all the outside. It was partly being... whenever you're new and young and inexperienced in a situation things are hard. But what happened here was that it was, there were several of these variables at the same time.

JS: So there wasn't an overall tension from the whole class?

SLB: No. No, no, no.

JS: ... a couple isolated incidents?

SLB: Yeah, but there were, there were things that challenged your position as the professor because you were a woman. And that came not only from students but also from your colleagues, in ways that they didn't even understand. And then the kind of thing like that "Back to the Womb Party..." there were episodes. That was a particularly gross one. But there were episodes of political or social, or a political or social nature that outraged and frustrated us often.

SAB: I mean having a support group was really critical. I think the Professional Women of Lafayette really served an important function. We were able to share war stories and get support from each other. And often times acted as a group, which has more power, to petition, you know, for various things to be done, to insist that a committee be established to look at this or that, or just to raise awareness. There... we had conducted studies as a

committee. I actually started a line of research - I'm sure I wouldn't have done it if I weren't here - that had to do with how male and female students treat male and female faculty. So really documenting that male students devalue female faculty members. And that was you know... and still. And that, I mean I shared it with the administration. I shared it with the committee that looks at faculty, makes decisions about faculty hiring and promotion and tenure. So, I mean, so part of the way, I mean somewhat like I think the first students. I mean women who can tolerate being in a minority position and a career, if they're not totally isolated where they're just tokens in one or two. I mean to the extent that they can, you know, have a meaningful, you know, number of supporters, they'll tend to, you know, fight and make and work for change. To be, you know, groundbreakers in that realm as well.

KK: The only comment that I would find that is rather, you know, would be, the thing that would be curious to do a study on is. I would almost submit that Lafayette is certainly not an isolated case in any of this. Because you have to put it all in historic perspective. When, as I said before, when Lafayette went coed, the word feminism was not in existence. There was...

SAB: It was, but it wasn't here. (*Laughter*)

KK: No, no. I mean Gloria Steinem⁵², all those... women's lib. I remember the quote, women's lib was starting when we were here. And we, you know, "Are you a women's lib...?" you know the burning bras, all that stuff. It was when we were here, and as you get, as awareness becomes more in the media and more in papers about sexual harassment and feminism and all that, everybody's awareness rises. And everything you look at things with a different perspective, because it's out there now. And I would submit that all that you experienced as professors and what we and the following women experienced would have been experienced in most schools.

SAB: Oh yeah. Oh absolutely. This was... right. This is not... Lafayette's certainly not a unique example of this at all.

SLB: And as I think you pointed out many schools were going coed at the same time.

Jennifer Carty⁵³: You said earlier that when you first started working here that there was kind of like a different mentality towards female professors versus male professors. Do you think that's been eradicated or do you think that still exists in the college now?

SAB: I think it's changed a lot. I don't think it's absent. I think we're talking somewhat generational. Where a lot of the people who you know, had much more traditional attitudes are, you know, now sort of retired or out of the system. But I think there's still,

⁵² Gloria Steinem was a United States political activist, feminist, and editor. She founded the National Women's Political Caucus, and a magazine entitled *Ms*. She also co-founded the National Organization for Women.

⁵³ Jennifer Carty, Class of 2004, A.B. English.

you know, as with any workplace setting. I think there's often, you know, different expectations and stereotypes that affect people's judgments about male and female faculty, but it's way better.

SLB: And I think it varies also by department and division. So for... there are some departments, the English Department is, I mean I didn't even count, which is, you know, how immaterial this is, at the moment, but it's half women. All of... all but one of the five or so full professors now in the English Department are women. So, you know, it's not such an issue in a department like English. It's more of an issue in departments, you know, where women are less well represented.

SAB: Yeah and I think there's still, there are still a lot of people who hold a lot of traditional attitudes toward gender roles...