

TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

**Amanda Roth:** Today is June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003, and I am in the Special Collections Office with Professor Susan Blake. First I'd like to thank you for taking part in this project.

**Susan Blake:** My pleasure.

**AR:** Can you start with telling me a little bit about your family, your childhood, and where you grew up?

**SB:** I grew up in Milford, Connecticut. My father was a chemistry teacher, high school chemistry teacher. Later on he became a public school administrator. My mother was also in public education. When I was a child she wasn't teaching. About the time I was ten and my younger brother was about seven, the principal of the elementary school we went to learned that she was a certified teacher and persuaded her to become a substitute. So for the rest of my public school career she was subbing in three schools that were within walking distance of our house. Milford is on Long Island Sound. We lived about a half a mile up from the beach. In the... some of my early memories are of summer trips to the beach. My mother would take Bruce and me to the beach in the afternoon, and we'd, you know, play in the sand bars and wade and so forth. And then we knew that it was time to come home and, in the, in the afternoon and get dinner when we saw the oyster boats going across the horizon to the, up to the harbor. They don't do that anymore. They haven't for a long time, but that was one of my memories. The place where we lived was a development that had been built during World War II, kind of

comparable to Levittown<sup>1</sup>. Small, cape-cod houses. Lots of them. And the population of the town burgeoned in those days. This was a New England town with a green at the center and a classic white New England Congregational church. And in the, you know, I'm a baby-boomer, and (*laugh*) you could see the baby boom in Milford as elementary schools were built, you know, one after another in my day. I spent the first, kindergarten and through the middle of third grade in a classical school, square brick, four big classrooms on each floor with a cloakroom. We went into the cloakroom to, we considered that the backstage when we put on plays at school. So that was a great resource in the, in the classroom. And then in the middle of third grade I went to the, one of the new schools built with these, for the expanding population. That was sort of the end of one kind of cultural moment and the beginning of another, education at Milford. Anything...

**AR:** Can you tell me about your high school and how you decided to go on to higher education?

**SB:** My high school was also a, you know it reflected the building and town. For the first year I went to the one high school in town, Milford High, in the center of town. Went on double session that first year in the afternoon because it was overcrowded. The second year I went to the new school that was being built. It was called Jonathan Law High School. At that time we had, sort of tracking in high school, and I was in the so called accelerated track, so the other students in my classes were fairly consistent. They had a... most of us took classes together. So I took the highest level of academic subjects through high school. I was the valedictorian. And I guess I never considered anything other than education because it was in the family, and, and I liked school and did well in school. I always felt that I would teach whatever grade I had just

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<sup>1</sup> Levittown became typical of post-World War II suburban America housing boom. The original Levittown was on Long Island, New York. Low cost homes were built with shopping centers, playground, and schools.

gotten through. And I didn't think about college teaching until I was graduating from college, and I got a masters degree along with my bachelors. I went to Brown<sup>2</sup> for college. In those days you applied to and were housed at Pembroke which was the coordinate college, although the degree was Brown, and the classes were all coeducational. There was a placement office at Brown, but what it did for me that I can remember is that it provided information on how to get babysitting jobs while you were in college. It didn't provide me with any career counseling. And so I really kind of didn't know what careers were available. Some of my classmates wanted to go into publishing, and they did that by reading, graduating from Brown and going to Katharine Gibbs Secretarial School in Boston, getting the secretarial skills to begin as secretaries in publishing firms, and the idea was they would work up that way. But anyway somehow I realized or discovered that with a masters degree I could teach on the college level. And of course I wasn't certified to teach in the public schools. And I applied to a couple of places, state, secondary state universities in the mid-west where they were still hiring instructors on I think a three year terminal contract to teach freshman composition. And so I got a job at Western Michigan University<sup>3</sup>, in Kalamazoo, and I only stayed two years. At that point decided I liked it well enough to go to graduate school, get a Ph.D and do that. But there was never really a sense of here are my options, which way am I going to go. It was just kind of a flow toward a career. To go back to high school, other things that I was involved with. I was treasurer of the Keyette Club which was a service organization affiliated with Kiwanis<sup>4</sup>. I was, I performed in plays. The drama group was. Also variety shows, annual variety shows. Did acts. One act I remember was when—this must have been when I was a freshmen and taking Latin. Our Latin class, you

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<sup>2</sup> Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.

<sup>3</sup> Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

<sup>4</sup> An international community service organization.

know, performed something, something in Latin with sheets for togas, you know, with this variety show. What else?

**AR:** Can you tell me about your graduate school experience, especially were your peers and professors mostly women or men?

**SB:** Oh they were all men. (*Laugh*) College and graduate school. Let me start with college. There, in the English Department at Brown there were three women that I knew of. One was Barbara Lewalski<sup>5</sup> who was a well known nationally, you know, esteemed professor in 17<sup>th</sup> century literature. I didn't have her because the year that I would have taken, that I took that course she was on sabbatical, and I had a visitor who was a man. The other two were graduate students who taught some of the introductory courses. They were both to my eyes old. They were probably forty-five-ish. Both single women. Very kind of gray haired and tweedy. And I had one of them for one of my lower level classes. So I had one, that was my one female professor in college... or instructor. She wasn't really a professor. In graduate school I went to the University of Connecticut<sup>6</sup>. There were a couple of women on the faculty. One of them taught children's literature and was quite, became quite well known as an authority on children's literature which I did not take. I could, I can kind of picture another one whose area I forget. I never had class with her. So I had virtually no female professors in either college or graduate school.

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<sup>5</sup> Lewalski is a professor of English at Harvard University. Her works include *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography* (2000), *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (1985), *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century English Lyric* (1979), and *Milton's Brief Epic* (1966).

<sup>6</sup> University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut.

**AR:** At what point did you become interested in African and African-American literature? And did you feel that this interest helped or hindered you when it came to being hired as a professor?

**SB:** That's a good question. You know, I graduated from college in 1968. So the years from '64 to '68 were critical years in American racial history. So I was involved, you know, at least mentally and emotionally, not very actively in these, in those issues at the time. Then when I left college, you know, after... that masters was at the same in the same four years as the bachelors. So it was a funny program that I'm sure Brown doesn't still do where you could get a masters degree by taking electives and graduate courses in your, in your major. So, you know, I got this, without taking any more courses, I got this masters degree which allowed me to go teach at Western Michigan University. And Western got a significant, you know, percentage of its students from Detroit. Detroit had erupted in riots in those days, and I was also, the news that I was listening to was focused on Detroit. And I was just very interested in the, you know, dynamic of the increasing voice and... what's the word?... grasp of power, you know, by black people. And of course it's a sense of justice that represented. And I, and also I had black students from Detroit in my classes, and I wanted to engage them, and I wanted to engage all students who were living in this time, and used materials by black writers. And that's really what got me interested in doing African-American literature as a subject was using materials in freshman composition courses and dealing with race as a subject to discuss in those courses between 1968 and 1970 at Western Michigan.

**AR:** And did you think...

**SB:** Oh yeah. You had more questions. Okay so I went to graduate school, and I identified that as my interest. There were not... That wasn't a subject that people took at that time. At the University of Connecticut there was one faculty member who was interested in that, and it was Donald Gibson, who was black himself. He'd gotten his own degree in American literature. He'd done his dissertation on Stephen Crane<sup>7</sup>, but he was teaching an African-American literature course on the undergraduate level, and he agreed to take me on as a graduate student in that field. But I couldn't take any courses in the field. I audited his undergraduate course. Possibly another one. I can't remember. And did research on my own. You know, I wrote a dissertation on folklore in the works of several black writers. And I believe it did help me get a job in 1974. That was a time when that was a field that colleges were beginning to realize they needed to have, and there were very few people trained in the field, and a high percentage of those who were trained were white. There were very few black scholars available at that time. So Lafayette was one of many schools that had identified that as a field it needed. And, so yes, I think it was a helpful factor in getting a job.

**AR:** What was your experience of looking for a teaching position in 1974 like?

**SB:** Some, around then probably either while I was on the job market or maybe a year or two earlier I think it was *The Chronicle of Higher Education* had, you know, quoted somebody to the effect that the University of California<sup>8</sup> on its own could use all of the Ph.Ds generated in the United States at that time. That was not my experience of getting a job. (*Laugh*) By 1974 the job market was tight, and one of the things I remember is that in, I think one of my professors at

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<sup>7</sup> Crane (1871-1900) was an American novelist and poet who is best known for his work *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895).

<sup>8</sup> University of California, California.

UConn asking me about which schools I had prospects at and I mentioned Lafayette along, and, yeah Lafayette along with a few others. And he said, “Isn’t Lafayette a men’s school?” You know, assuming how could you possibly, you know, teach at a men’s school. He didn’t realize that it had become coeducational just a few years earlier. But that assumption, you know, really stood out. I had interviews at Lafayette, Haverford<sup>9</sup>, Purdue<sup>10</sup>, possibly a couple of others. I can’t remember. But I remember feeling that my fate, you know, was determined by chance. You know, I could be at little tiny Haverford or humongous Purdue. You know, and I ended up at Lafayette. I, when I went, I took, had my Haverford and Lafayette interviews on the same trip, and I took a bus from probably my parents home in the New Haven area first to Philadelphia, and had an interview there, and then came up to Lafayette. I got to Lafayette at, for an interview at 4 o’clock on Friday afternoon. And the interviewers were the head of the department William Watt<sup>11</sup>, the second most senior person in the department, Jim Vitelli<sup>12</sup>, and the outside member of the search committee Clay Ketcham<sup>13</sup>. Clay was one of two women at Lafayette who had been there some time. She was the wife of, or had been the wife of a male faculty member who had I think died by then. And she had worked her way into becoming the Education Department at Lafayette. So the three of them interviewed me and, in Bill Watt’s office. And then I went home with Bill to his house and had dinner with his wife and probably one or two of his daughters was there. And after the dinner we sat around the living room and, you know, made like a family, and played with the dog and so forth. And then we went to bed, you know, in the second floor of the Watt’s house. And, you know, I remember the, the familiarity of the whole thing. And I, you know, the good manners that my mother taught me.

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<sup>9</sup> Haverford College, Haverford, Pennsylvania.

<sup>10</sup> Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

<sup>11</sup> William Watt, English Department.

<sup>12</sup> James Vitelli, English Department.

<sup>13</sup> Clay Ketcham, Education Department.

Sometimes I think I got my job because I accepted seconds of Cindy Watts creamed spinach, you know, for supper. And it was very uncomfortable going to bed in one of the bedrooms on the second floor of one of these College Hill houses where there's a central hall and bedrooms around it and one bathroom and everybody can hear everything that goes on. And, and I needed to use the bathroom more than once that night and felt just, you know, great anxiety, you know, about going as well as great anxiety about not going (*laugh*) so. That's part of the whole, the old way of faculty hiring. I was in a cohort. There were four new, new English Department members hired my same year which is an enormous number in one year. I think the department was only twelve at that time, so they were hiring a third. And our cohort helped the department open up the hiring process. We, the first thing said was, "The whole department has to meet the candidates. Not just the two top people." And we were very lucky in that the next year we also had a job, and the senior men were very wary of opening this up to the whole department. They thought there would be dissension, and, you know, it'd be just chaotic trying to hire somebody with everybody getting their two cents worth in. But we were lucky. And the clear top choice was a woman named Hana Wirth-Nesher<sup>14</sup>, and so the young people, you know, and the old-timers agreed, and it was a very collegial moment, and I think that really helped open up the hiring process. At the time I was hired the principle that you could use the old boy network, you know, had just recently been shaken. So my job was advertised nationally. I responded to ads in the MLA Job Information List<sup>15</sup> which is the thing we depend on still. The, so I was in a transitional period. They were advertising nationally, but the interview process was still very much the way it had been before. And we were part of the effort to make the whole hiring process professional.

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<sup>14</sup> Hana Wirth-Nesher, English Department.

<sup>15</sup> The Modern Language Association (MLA) Job Information List is a database of academic job openings in English and foreign languages.



**AR:** Did you receive any offers from other colleges, and if so, why did you choose Lafayette?

**SB:** I didn't receive any other offers.

**AR:** What was your impression of the College when you accepted the position?

**SB:** I called my graduate advisor and said, "I've got a job. It's a good job. It's not a great job."

*(Laugh)* As for more specific, concrete impressions, you know, I met those three people. The campus looked kind of like, you know, what I expected a small liberal arts college to look like. I was glad to have a job.

**AR:** Were there any faculty members or members of the administration who acted as a mentor to you as a new professor?

**SB:** No. There... Bill Watt's approach was kind of ironic and bemused. He had been chair of the department since the time I was born. There was this, you know, enormous difference of position between us. And I was about the same age as his daughters. So I always felt that he was a, he was kind, he was supportive, but he was a little surprised and didn't kind of know what to do with, you know, having a, the equivalent of his daughter as a colleague. Jim Vitelli had difficulty... I guess doing anything critical or relating on a professional level. And there was also an assumption that junior faculty at that time would not get tenure. There was a quota, fifty percent in a department could be tenured. And in my third year, let's see, '77/'78, okay my third

year I had an NEH<sup>16</sup> fellowship in residence at Brown coincidentally enough. And Jane Curry<sup>17</sup> who was the only other woman in the department, and she had been hired the same year I had. She had something that, that gave her leave as well. And Jim took the two of us to lunch one day. We had this nice lunch, and we chit chatted about this and that. But we, you know, we knew there was a reason he was taking us to lunch that he never brought up. And finally at, at the end probably as we were walking back from the faculty dining room Jane said, “Okay, Jim,” you know, “why’d you invite us to lunch?” And, and he said, “Well, I just wanted to tell you both that you should make the most of your years away because you’ll be on the job market.” And it wasn’t that they were planning to fire us. This was just his advice that, you know, we weren’t likely to get tenure at Lafayette, so we should be doing what we could for ourselves. And one of the reasons he gave that we were unlikely to get tenure was that they had to think about leadership in the English Department. Again there was this assumption that well it was the men who were hired in our time who would become the future department heads, and so, you know, we would be the ones to be dropped off.

**AR:** Did you ever regret coming to Lafayette?

**SB:** No. No. Didn’t have a choice. But it’s been a good place. I, of course, hated it at, you know, at many points. But, and was very frustrated at many times in those first few years, but always felt that, or at least in retrospect I felt, that progress was always being made, and it’s a place where you could ameliorate the situation. You could do things and have a positive result.

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<sup>16</sup> National Endowment for the Humanities.

<sup>17</sup> Jane Curry, English Department.

So, you know, when you look at a career of now twenty-nine years there's been an enormous difference. So, it's been a good place.

**AR:** Lafayette went coed four years before you got here. How would you describe the College's success in assimilating the women into the environment during your first few years here?

**SB:** They certainly didn't do very well about assimilating faculty. It was harder for me to see the students' perception. The women were a minority of the students at the time, and when I spoke at the Lafayette Leadership Forum<sup>18</sup> a year or so ago I looked at my old grade books and realized first how large my classes were, twenty-eight, thirty in a college writing course, and what a small percentage were women. I could have twenty-eight students and twenty-four of them would be men. Occasionally. That wasn't, that didn't reflect the proportion in the College, but. So women were, you know, a minority in the, among the students as well as among the faculty. In all kinds of ways the institution assumed things that either favored or were based on what, on men and men's experience. From a faculty point of view... Well first of all there were, and I counted, you know, last year for that talk<sup>19</sup>, I think ten women faculty in the first year or two I was here. Two of them were older. Clay Ketcham was one, and Midge Bradford<sup>20</sup> who was Bob Bradford's wife. Bob was in the English Department. Midge was in biology. And they had gotten their positions just because they were, they were academically trained, and they

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<sup>18</sup> The Lafayette Leadership Forum is an annual event during which students who have displayed leadership potential are offered various panels and training events.

<sup>19</sup> On March 19, 2002, the Association of Lafayette Women presented a panel discussion on coeducation. A copy of the transcript from that panel is part of the Oral History Project and is stored in the College Archives.

<sup>20</sup> Mary Bradford, Biology Department.

were available in the early days. Although they never, they didn't get faculty status until sometime after the College began hiring women, young women after 1970. And then there were eight of us who were all extremely young, of course not tenured or, you know, no kind of power. And it was hard for the institution to know what to do with us. So one thing was, and, and there were efforts at welcoming that, that were a little off. So the, there was a club called the Adrienne Club<sup>21</sup>, named after the wife of the Marquis de Lafayette, and it was a club for faculty wives. I mean and Jane and I got invitations to come to the Adrienne Club. We recoiled at this. I mean, we appreciated that people were trying to be, be nice, but the idea that women faculty, the way, the place women faculty fit in was in is with the faculty wives. And so there was that. When I came Bill Watt was very helpful in helping me find an apartment, but I couldn't get faculty housing. When I asked about faculty housing he just said, "Oh, well that's for families." And women were more apt to be single than men being hired, so that was the way in which the institution hadn't figured on women and, and the, the singleness of women in, you know, in the faculty. The, one of, in those early days we, the few of us founded Professional Women of Lafayette to deal with, partly, it was partly a, just a place to get together and talk about our experiences and, it was sort of a support group. But it was also a group that, an advocacy group to make changes, to make things better for women faculty and women students. One of the humorous things at that time was that the men's locker room in the new, then new Kirby Field House had a sauna, and the women's didn't. And we thought about how we might liberate the men's sauna, but before we did that, before we actually, you know, took any action they built a sauna for the women. But, you know, it was just one of the little things that wasn't, didn't

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<sup>21</sup> The Adrienne Club, named for the wife of the Marquis de Lafayette, was formed in 1941 by Ruth Lewis, the wife of Lafayette College president William Mather Lewis. The group initially consisted of faculty wives, secretaries, and the library staff of the College. The club was originally organized to contribute to civil defense requirements.

accommodate women. Other little things... Oh one of the other women was Mary Fehrs<sup>22</sup> in physics. And I think she's the one who said that in her building they had difficulty with restrooms because there was the faculty restroom and the student restroom, and there was no provision for, you know, women in the restroom situation. Another thing was if two or three of us had lunch together in the snack bar which in those days was in the basement of Marquis, you know, some male faculty member would come by and in a, in an attempt to be jocular say, "What is this, the women's caucus?" So there were little ways in which we knew that many men on the faculty and the institution as a whole kind of didn't know what to do with us.

**AR:** In your perception what was the role of fraternities on campus in the mid to late '70s?

**SB:** It was very strong. And the thing I remember most was the outrage that women faculty felt on behalf of women students because that was, women students got to eat in the men's fraternities, and they had to apply. And they got judged on the basis of their looks and how attractive they would be to the men. And it was just outrageous that something as basic as meals would depend on being subjected to that kind of, you know, selectivity. The freshmen, the book of freshmen, you know, names and faces... Was it separated then? I'm not sure. Probably not. And I'm also, I was going to say they, that the guys called it the pig book. Is that, you remember? Yeah okay. I was wondering whether I was thinking back to my, my Brown and Pembroke experience, but they, you know, maybe this was universal. Maybe it happened in both places.

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<sup>22</sup> Mary Fehrs, Physics Department.

**AR:** As a female professor were you ever asked or expected to be part of committees or organizations which dealt with coeducation issues?

**SB:** I don't know that, that coeducation was an issue exactly on faculty committees. I was on the Admissions Committee. And the percentage of women admitted would have been an issue there, so yes, that was. And I'm not sure whether that issue came up during the particular time I was on the Admissions Committee, but it was an admissions issue in those early days, and I was on that committee at some point. That's the only committee responsibility I can think of where that that was an issue.

**AR:** How would you describe the sexual and/or the dating atmosphere on campus in the '70s?

**SB:** I really couldn't say. You know, I didn't have that kind of experience with the student situation.

**AR:** What was the political atmosphere at Lafayette like when you arrived?

**SB:** Are you thinking of national and international politics? Campus politics?

**AR:** All of it.

**SB:** All of them? Well I arrived in 1974, and there had, this was kind of after the big dust ups over the bombing of Cambodia, Kent State<sup>23</sup>, and so forth. So I didn't witness those at Lafayette. What I heard was that the Lafayette reaction to those things had been fairly muted compared with that at other institutions. However, the fact that four people were hired in one year reflected the fact that the younger people in the English Department had all been terminated at least in part because of their participation in activities, political activities related to protesting the war in Vietnam and related issues. So there was a sense there that political activity had been damped down. As for college politics, Lafayette was a very patriarchal place. The, there were jokes that President Bergethon<sup>24</sup> would, you know, come over to academic buildings at eight o'clock in the morning and check up on who was in their office and who wasn't. There was a sense that, you know, this was a, this was a tight familial organization, and we were being checked. The, I thought faculty-administration relations were, were fairly abrasive. There was, and part of that came from having come from graduate school, being part of the youthful generation, the generation that didn't trust anybody over thirty, that had lived through Kent State, things like the, the, you know, police authorities bursting into apartments and killing the, you know, members of the Black Panthers<sup>25</sup>, you know, in the apartment. So although I was not very politically active myself, I didn't participate in sit-ins or anything like that, I had a mentality as did many of my peers that distrusted those in authority in institutions. So some of my sense of the abrasiveness between the faculty and the administration comes from that perspective that I brought with me as a member of that generation. But the whole institution was more rigidly

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<sup>23</sup> On May 4, 1970, on the campus of Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, the Ohio National Guard shot into a crowd of students demonstrating against the policy of the Nixon administration on Cambodia. Four students were killed.

<sup>24</sup> K. Roald Bergethon, Lafayette College President (1958-1978).

<sup>25</sup> Political organization started by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland in 1966. The party espoused armed revolution if necessary.

patriarchal than it is now. One of the ways in which it was, for example, is that department heads were head for life. So now when the department head position is a three year term that may or may not be renewed, and members of the department write memos saying who they think should be the next head. Things are much looser than they were. Department heads were sort of more part of the administration then than they are now.

#### TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

**AR:** What courses and responsibilities did you have in your first few years here?

**SB:** I taught College Writing. Generally I had two sections of College Writing per semester, and then, you know, I was hired to teach what we then called Black Writers. That was my upper level course. We didn't have the intermediate level courses that are now in place. I, when I arrived there was one Black Writers course on the books, and I got a second one established. So I taught it as a kind of a twentieth-century survey. That was English 47. And then English 48 was a special topics course which I, in which I did different things. At one time I did the Harlem Renaissance. One time Black Autobiography. Things like that. And my, well the, the first year course was, there were two versions of it. There was 101-102 for most people. And 103-104 was based on literature, and it would have been the course that the more verbally able students and ones who wanted to become English majors would have taken. So my load was pretty much a section of 101-102, a section of 103-104, and this English 47,48 which was the Black Writers.

**AR:** How much interest did you find was there for the Black Writers courses?



**SB:** There was a lot of interest. The courses weren't big, but I had a high proportion of black students in my courses which is not the case these days. They, I have had a lot of a students who took a lot of my courses. They might take, they have taken a total of three black writers courses from me if I changed the topic on the second one. I got a sense that they were just really glad to have black literature available. And then there were white students too who were very interested in the topics.

**AR:** Around the time you were hired was the College actively recruiting female or black faculty members?

**SB:** I would... probably yes and no. I think the people who hired me and in those years following were aware that they needed to increase the percentage of women on the faculty. Actively recruiting in any kind of concerted way, I don't think so. But I think they just realized that in the applicant pool they better pay attention to the women. And indeed in the English Department, you know, I was hired in '74, there were two. The next year we hired one. That was in '75. June Schlueter<sup>26</sup> came in '77, so it more or less was one a year for women. Now for black faculty members it was different, and there was a sense that it would be desirable to have more black faculty members, but nobody was very sure how to accomplish that. And as, you know, somebody who kind of was involved in this through the teaching black literature, you know, I knew a little bit more about the issues and became, I can't remember exactly how this happened, but I ultimately was instrumental in founding an ad hoc committee called the Black

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<sup>26</sup> June Schlueter, English Department and Provost.

Recruitment Advisory Committee. There was another person on that who was Earl Peace<sup>27</sup>, a black faculty member in the Chemistry Department, and we did some research. We tried to find out hiring methods that would encourage black scholars to apply, and it would help hire them. And we had a couple of workshops to try to educate department heads on these matters. We established a visiting speakers series to help people at Lafayette realize that there were black scholars out there and black scholars realize that Lafayette was a potential place of employment. We established a visiting professorship that ran for a few years, a visiting distinguished professor such and such. One year that was in the English Department. Again trying to, both to provide a black presence on the faculty and a black perspective in the curriculum on a temporary basis while getting everybody used to the idea and perhaps enticing some people to come for the longer term. Wasn't all that successful, but, but we worked on it.

**AR:** Was there a sense of camaraderie among the female faculty members?

**SB:** Very much so, yes. We were a social group. There was the Professional Women of Lafayette and where we, met for lunch at, you know, some sort of, on some sort of a schedule. And many of us socialized with each other. Four or five I would say, you know, some of, with their husbands and, and, and other non-female members of the faculty. You know, but we were, we did a lot of things together.

**AR:** Generally how were you treated by your male counterparts and did this depend at all upon the age of the professors?

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<sup>27</sup> G. Earl Peace, Jr., Chemistry Department. A copy of an interview Peace gave for this oral history project is stored in the College Archives.

**SB:** You know, very well treated by the people who were our age that I can remember. You know, I was friends with, I remember male faculty members who were, you know, roughly as new as I was. Older faculty members were kindly disposed and many of them made considerable efforts to be helpful. A lot of them, they, you know, didn't quite realize who we were or what we were. And, you know, one of the other, the other women was named Christine Drake<sup>28</sup>, and Christine and I looked nothing alike. She was Japanese. But we got, you know, called by each others names all the time. And, you know, there was, so we were such a minority, and, you know, a lot of people didn't know us. But the people who did come into contact with me anyway on committees, in the department, you know, made an effort, made a big effort to be helpful.

**AR:** What was the male/female ratio of your courses like in the mid '70s and how did this affect classroom dynamics?

**SB:** I'd have to look at the grade book that I actually brought to, to figure out that ratio. Generally speaking, you know, there were more men. And the men had a sense of belonging, and they were not as disposed to accord that sense of belonging to the women. My memories are very few. I do remember a discussion in the freshmen composition courses where you talk about topics, you know, issues. And gender was a big issue. Women's lib it was, you know, called in those days. And I can remember one male student saying, "Well I couldn't accept authority, you know, from a woman." And the, you know, with, with no apparent consciousness of what that meant in the situation he was in. So there was, it was a much more strained situation with

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<sup>28</sup> Christine Drake, Anthropology and Sociology Department.

respect to discussions of gender. The, in those days male students didn't think that what we would now call sexist attitudes and assumptions were things they shouldn't express. They thought they were perfectly legitimate. That this was just, you know, the free exchange of opinion. So it was more fraught that way. Now I think there's less of that, much less. And I don't, you know, long since gotten over expecting certain attitudes from men and others from women.

**AR:** Did you ever feel that male students treated you differently because you were a female professor?

**SB:** Yes. Yes. I think they... Some, you know... A few argued grades, resisted the way class was run, you know, in ways that I don't find now.

**AR:** How did you and other female professors cope with these kinds of issues?

**SB:** Talked to each other, you know. I can remember one incident where a student, a male student complained to the department head about my grade, and he, I don't what the department head said to the student, but he didn't ask me to change the grade and he, I got the impression that he probably wouldn't have given as low a grade, but, you know, I was within my rights to do what I thought was right, so. I mean, there was not a lot of conflict, but there was enough to feel the strain. And a lot of it was attributable to being a new young female professor in an institution that was predominately male and with people who expected to have a male domain.

**AR:** How did you end up getting tenure?

**SB:** The, I managed to show people that I was a good scholar for one thing. I published an article in PMLA at the appropriate time, and that was something that few people managed to do. And I also was active in the College service I guess. I had been on a couple of important committees, the Governance Committee, and the Admissions Committee. And my experience on those committees was perhaps part of what gave me the confidence to take on the issue of recruiting black faculty. And that gave me, you know, a leadership profile in the College. So then it coupled with the fact that two of the four people who came in my year had left before the tenure decision. It meant that, you know, we still had that fifty percent quota, so there weren't, the numbers weren't a big, weren't a problem in my year. And I managed to establish enough scholarly and kind of leadership presence to get tenure.

**AR:** Did many of the other women who were hired at the same time get tenure?

**SB:** No. As a matter of fact, I'm the only one left from those years. The other woman who, who was hired with me in English left. And of course when people left it didn't mean they just preferred to be elsewhere, but that they looked and said, "What, what are my chances here?" In her case, she married somebody who had better prospects elsewhere, and she looked around and said, "What are my prospects here? I think I'll go with him." Mary Fehrs in physics left. Would have stayed if, I mean, she has said, if she thought she would get tenure. Chris Drake was denied tenure. Some, several of the people at that time were on temporary positions

anyway. Rea Rabinowitz<sup>29</sup> in philosophy was I think a temporary person. Don't remember specific other situations, but, one way or another they've all fallen away.

**AR:** How would you characterize the 1980s in terms of female students becoming more assimilated and also female faculty?

**SB:** The 1980s. Well the first few women who were recruited, you know, began to have, get tenure. So you got a few more tenured women faculty members. And, you know, you can check with the Provost's Office about the percentages and so forth. But surely the percentage of women faculty members gradually climbed. So there was more of a critical mass. I would say it was probably about the end of the '80s when there were some key issues that made me anyway realize that critical mass had been reached. One was daycare. That was probably one of the earlier ones, but, you know, a daycare center got established on campus.<sup>30</sup> The more dramatic one was adopting a policy on sexual harassment<sup>31</sup>. And that was opposed, pretty vigorously opposed, by a lot of men from my own generation. And I can remember a special meeting, an open meeting about this where the male faculty members got up and made impassioned speeches about how a sexual harassment policy would violate academic freedom, how it would send many male faculty members to have their careers, you know, destroyed because of misunderstandings and so forth. And the women looked around and we were not particularly anxious because we knew that, you know, after these people had had a chance to voice their fears we would win.

And it had to do with a critical mass of women and of people who understood the issues

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<sup>29</sup> Rea Rabinowitz, Philosophy Department.

<sup>30</sup> The daycare opened in September of 1986. The Lehigh Valley Child Care, Inc. provides care to children from six weeks to five years of age.

<sup>31</sup> The first sexual misconduct policy at Lafayette College was adopted in 1982. In the fall of 1996 that policy was expanded.

involved. So there was a sense of comfort and reassurance at that point. There wasn't, there was by no means a, you know, a majority of women. And the percentage of women who had tenure or by that time even full professorship was still very small, but it was enough to have affected the culture.

**AR:** Was the instituting of this sexual harassment policy, did the College take it upon itself to do that, or was this advocated by the women?

**SB:** I can't be sure of that. I suspect that the College, I think by that time the College had Leslie Muhlfelder<sup>32</sup> as general counsel. It was something that she would have been alert to and bringing up. My vague impression was, would have been it was the kind of joint effort, but I really don't remember.

**AR:** Can you describe the rise of sororities and their effects on the campus in the late '70s and '80s?

**SB:** Well they, my sense is that sororities were established on a if "you can't beat em, join em" basis. And at first had, did not have, you know, houses, but were just sort of clubs. From a faculty point of view we were not that anxious to see sororities because we thought the whole Greek system was, you know, not a very good thing. And rather than see it expanded with sororities, we would have rather seen it wither away, but I guess realistically it wasn't going to wither quite then. And we could certainly understand that women students would feel that this

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<sup>32</sup> Leslie Muhlfelder, Class of 1981, A.B. Economics. In 1995 Muhlfelder became the Vice President of Human Resources and General Counsel at Lafayette.

was their only option. Gradually I think perhaps the sororities began to exert a... what?... stabilizing or maturing force on the Greek system. They were more interested in socially productive activities, perhaps in general. They've certainly taken hold and are now strong.

**AR:** What was the role of fraternities as the sororities began to develop?

**SB:** Well in those days fraternities were having keg parties, right? Is that what they call them? What was the term for weeknight? Pub parties. So they were the party givers. And, you know, those were, you know, part of a destructive fraternity culture. The problem of students coming to class on a weekday morning having gotten drunk the night before was attributable to fraternities. But, you know, I don't... The fraternity and sorority scene was, you know, never anything I was very close to, so. You've got better informants for that.

**AR:** Do you remember that "Back to the Womb Party"<sup>33</sup> that was held by DU<sup>34</sup> in 1981? And what the response of the female faculty members in particular was?

**SB:** Oh we were outraged. It was an issue that PWL took up. Beyond that, I don't know if you have anymore specific questions?

**AR:** Do you remember and can you describe the rise of the Women's Studies Program?

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<sup>33</sup> In 1981 Delta Upsilon held a "Back to the Womb Party" which included red cotton to symbolize bloody tampons and hangers with material hanging from them to symbolize aborted fetuses. The party sparked a campus wide debate and garnered disciplinary action for the fraternity.

<sup>34</sup> Reference to Delta Upsilon fraternity.



**SB:** Some women faculty members thought there should be one, and they applied to the administration and got some kind of financial help to educate themselves in women's studies as a field for a summer or a year or something. And kind of cooperatively established a program. The, I was not part of that group. What I do remember was about the same time a group of women in the English Department co-taught a women's literature course. This was the beginning of the course that is now Literary Women. And we each led the course on a couple of texts in a women's literature course which was taught at night, and it was taught in 102 Pardee which was a big lecture hall, flat floor, you know, lots and lots of desks and a funny platform that you could easily fall off of in the front. So June Schlueter, Una Chaudhuri<sup>35</sup>... They were two other people involved. I was involved, and there were a couple of other people, and I don't remember at the moment, but that was the I don't know if that was exactly connected with the Women's Studies Program but it was the same kind of, you know, ideas and values that we were acting on.

**AR:** Were you at all involved in the development of the Africana Studies Program?

**SB:** Yes. I was on the committee that organized it, and founded it. I guess, I wasn't one of the central people on the committee, but I was there in the beginning. We established some courses and got it accepted as a, well a minor I guess.

**AR:** In 1993 *The Lafayette* reported that *The Princeton Review* had rated Lafayette as the number one school in the category of "Gay Students are Ostracized" and number thirteen in

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<sup>35</sup> Una Chaudhuri, English Department.

“Strained or Nonexistent Race/Class Relations.” How accurate do you believe these ratings were and did the College take any action to respond to them?

**SB:** I don't know what the College did to respond to them. And, you know, I've been at Lafayette and not a lot of other schools. I was, however, I had a sabbatical in '91/'92 which I spent at Wesleyan University<sup>36</sup>. And the contrast between Lafayette and Wesleyan, I mean, on the issue of sexuality was, you know, profound and dramatic. So I can readily believe that Lafayette was in the back of the pack whereas Wesleyan was in the forefront of the pack on of awareness of issues of sexuality, and, you know, embracing of different choices, and they're not choices, but different ways of being. On race and class it was less extreme on race and class than on issues of sexuality, but still, you know, strained. Black students have always been a, you know, a minority. Not a very, not a particularly growing minority. It was a pretty static percentage for decades. And, you know, the relations were not easy.

**AR:** It was not until very recently that the number of female students reached the fifty percent mark. How have things changed during the continual increase in the number of women students on campus?

**SB:** I think there's been a steady kind of easing of relations and perceptions relating to gender. I think about gender as an issue much less, you know as I, than I did earlier. I think the present day women students are, you know, outspoken, comfortable. So, you know, it's been kind of a, it's been a steady upward progress there.

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<sup>36</sup> Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut.

**AR:** Can you describe the problem of violence against women and how it changed throughout your years here? Specifically when did the term “date rape” come into use, and how did the student body, faculty, and administration respond to this issue?

**SB:** You know you can’t... Dates, you know, when terms came into use that’s not the kind of thing I can tell you. When, and I can’t even tell you when this was. I could... Actually, if you look on my CV and find out when I was on the Student Conduct Committee then I can give you the date for that. Under service there toward the end.

**AR:** ’89/’90.

**SB:** Okay. When I was on the Student Conduct Committee we had a date rape case, and it was a new-ish concept then. And I remember that one of the things I did was get Karen Forbes in the Counseling Center to provide the committee with some information on date rape, what it was, what it means, et cetera. So I can remember that that time, that dealing with that, the people on the Student Conduct Committee, which includes all staff faculty needed education on what was involved. That’s my experience with that issue. Whether there are more or fewer of those cases now than then, I don’t know. But that was my experience at that one time.

**AR:** Throughout the seventies, eighties, and early to mid nineties there were many articles, editorials, and letters to the editor in *The Lafayette* dealing with issues of equal rights for women, minorities, and homosexuals and other political issues. Was this representative of, of a larger awareness and debate on campus about these issues?

**SB:** Why don't you turn off the machine.

**AR:** Oh sure. *(tape stops and then comes back on)* How would you compare the political awareness, of the campus especially in the '70s, to the political awareness today?

**SB:** That's hard to say. I think the political awareness of the students I saw in my upper level classes, which were black literature classes was higher than the political awareness I see today. But students vary greatly. You know, some are very politically aware and some live in a fog. So, you know, it's hard to compare.

**AR:** In your opinion what was the student, faculty, and administration, administration's reaction to the recent War on Iraq<sup>37</sup>, and how did this compare to what you might have seen at the tail end of a reaction to Vietnam?

**SB:** Well Vietnam was virtually over by the time I came here, so I didn't really, I, you can't really compare the two. I think the response to Iraq was very muted. There were some students who were very upset. The, the things they did were, in response, were very measured, educative. The teach-in<sup>38</sup> was a terrific thing. But it was planned to be as little as disruptive as possible. I asked some of my students, I was teaching African Literature this past year, and I had a small group and most of the students in that class were, you know, interested in these things. And

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<sup>37</sup> The War in Iraq began in March 2003 when the United States and Great Britain invaded Iraq claiming that it possessed of weapons of mass destruction.

<sup>38</sup> On March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the first day after spring break, Students for Social Justice sponsored a walk-out in protest against the War in Iraq. In Colton Chapel a teach-in was also held, and it featured professors from numerous disciplines explaining different aspects of the situation.

some of them expressed, you know, some kind of frustration or dismay that other students didn't seem to be as, be very interested one way or the other. That wasn't a big issue. The, when we came back from spring break I kind of addressed the first class to these issues and tried to make some connections between the literature we were reading and issues that the war posed. And you know, they were polite with my line of inquiry, but, you know, they didn't really want to do this. They really wanted to talk about whatever the novel we'd been reading was. So it didn't seem to engage students. What I remember from the '70s was the political issues that the students I saw were interested in had to do with race, civil rights, and race relations more than the Vietnam War.

**AR:** Do you have any awareness of the College's attempts at recruiting minority students throughout the years?

**SB:** Yes. Yes, there've been various attempts and, you know, at various times as, you know, on this Black Recruitment Advisory Committee and a couple of sessions on the Admissions Committee I've been aware of those things and they.... Are there particular...?

**AR:** Well have any of their attempts been particularly successful and if there any kind of thing that you think that the College ought to do today?

**SB:** I think that there have been some, you know, things have been minor successful results. One, certainly having scholarships for minority students has been a good thing. One of the things that happened when I was on the Admissions Committee, which by that time was the

Enrollment Planning Committee, was to put some restrictions on the way coaches used money for coach recommended athletes. The relationship between the amount of money they could apply to scholarships for coach recommended athletes and the admissions ratings of those students. That was done in, partly in an effort to overcome a perceived gap, big gap between the intellectual stature of black women and the intellectual stature of black men who were recruited for football. So, you know, that's had a great effect. Various efforts to, outreach in predominately black high schools and, you know, regions and so forth has had some effect. So, you know, efforts have been made, and it's an incremental slow business. Some have worked better than others, and you can tell by the numbers how slow the progress has been.

**AR:** How has the presence and significance of international students changed if at all since the time you came here?

**SB:** I think international students are much more visible and active and varied than they were when I came. I don't remember being very aware of international students in the early days. In the middle of my period here I worked with some who were terrific students, and you know, worked with them, you know, fairly closely. I had a research assistant once who helped me build up the collection in African Literature for example. He was terrific. But I'm, you know, more impressed with the number and variety and kind of campus presence of international students now, in the last few years than I have been before.

**AR:** During your time at Lafayette have you ever felt that there are divisions among faculty or students on the basis of religion? And in particular have you ever noticed any prejudice towards, towards Jewish students or faculty?

**SB:** I haven't particularly noticed, you know, an emphasis on religion. If you look around you realize that the percentage of Jewish people on the student body and the faculty's small. And, you know, the Jewish faculty in particular have been responsible by and large for, you know, curricular representations of Jewish experience. So it's, you know, they've kind of shouldered the burden. We're going, next semester Pat Donahue<sup>39</sup> is going to teach a Holocaust literature course. That may be the first curricular thing that focuses on Jewish experience that's going to not being, you know, led by a Jewish faculty member. There, may be, there may be others, but it's seems to me that's probably the first.

#### TAPE TWO SIDE ONE

**AR:** How has the tenure system changed over the past thirty years, and do you, are you satisfied with the system as it is today?

**SB:** Well it's changed a lot. When I came there was a fifty percent tenure quota by department. That meant that in a department of three if two people were tenured whoever was hired to be the third person would just go through a revolving door. He or she would be there, the assumption was, would be there for six years, and then they'd hire somebody else and keep going.

Gradually, and the College records will tell you the dates... I won't be able to do that... that got

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<sup>39</sup> Patricia Donahue, English Department.

eased. People understood that it was unfair. And the, what they did was they simply increased the percentages but a couple of measures did that. And then eventually adopted the principle that tenure is based on merit. And got rid of this, the requirement that, you know, only a certain percentage, that there be some ceiling for the number of people on tenure. At the same time the process of reviewing faculty for tenure and promotion has become much more detailed. A lot more work goes into it on the part of the candidate. There's much more overview from the departments and the PTR committee<sup>40</sup>. It seems to me that it's the direction of tenure processes has been toward greater and greater fairness. And in, you know, individual cases people can disagree on, on what the decision was. But I think in general every effort is made to make it as fair as possible.

**AR:** Do you find that untenured professors today may temper their political opinions because they're worried about getting tenure?

**SB:** I find that untenured faculty members are anxious about tenure and how they deal with that anxiety, you know, would, you know, depend on their individual situations. But interestingly enough I think they're more anxious than I was back in the fifty percent days. I wasn't actually that anxious. There was a sense of fatality about it. But I do think that it affects how they behave in various ways.

**AR:** When you received tenure did it, do you feel that it gave you more intellectual freedom?

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<sup>40</sup> Reference to Promotion, Tenure, and Review Committee.



**SB:** No. I didn't feel that I didn't have intellectual freedom beforehand, so. I felt it gave me job security.

**AR:** How and when did you come to be head of the English Department, and what responsibilities did this position bring with it?

**SB:** This is the end of my second year. I was associate head for two years before I became head. So I became head in 2001 and had been associate head since '99. The, I think there was a sense that, you know, the department kind of runs through the eligible people and, you know, it was, at the time I was appointed I was sort of the one who was eligible for that job who was, you know, ready at that point. And the responsibilities are legion. (*Laugh*) The responsibilities for personnel, for hiring and personnel review. And personnel review includes annual reviews of all junior faculty members, a so-called mid-term review of junior faculty members in their third year, tenure review, and then for tenured faculty we have reviews of associate professors every four years and full professors every seven years, and then when they come up for promotion to full professor. And in two years as head I've had all of those, you know, levels of review to do as well as hiring. Hiring is part of, you know, keeping the department staffed and all kinds of circumstances take staff away. So when David Johnson<sup>41</sup>, for example, was tapped to become Associate Provost, you know, somebody had to find somebody to fill his position. Or, you know, people leave or get sick or whatever. So staffing is always fluid. I feel responsible for helping the department keep looking ahead in matters of curriculum and how we do things so that we don't just get stuck in a rut, but say, "How could?...?" you know, "How could we do this better?" And then, you know, appoint committees to help study whatever the situation is. And

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<sup>41</sup> David Johnson, Associate Provost.

part of the, that involves looking at the department and saying, “Who,” you know, “who’s interested in this? Who can do this best? How, you know, who will work well with who? And what will be the way to make this happen in the most collegial and effective way?” Helping people to realize their best potential which means encouraging everybody in the scholarly areas that they want to go into. Helping junior faculty, you know, inspiring them on their scholarship, advising them on efforts to place articles and, and scholarship. Helping them think about courses they could teach that would excite them and excite the students and inter-relate with their scholarship. There are a gazillion little things like signing off on study abroad credits and stuff like that that are less inspiring. The, in the English Department the associate head does some of the, kind of clerical work like receiving the new majors, assigning new majors to advisors, coordinating the honors and independent study projects and things like that. The head, you know, deals with the administration, oversees the budget which is not particularly onerous in the English Department because it’s big enough to do what we need to do. So, you know, I don’t have to juggle things very much. We have, one of the interesting and valuable things we’ve done this year is reviewed curriculum. We, we’ve, that will be an ongoing process. Actually we, we started in many ways. Well it’s not like we started this when I became head, but, you know, in, in the time I’ve been head we, we worked on it the first year, in... ways that didn’t require a, a department overhaul. But this year we’ve, we’ve really looked at some of the premises of our curriculum, and, we’ve got some things in mind that we’ll be implementing next year. So it’s an ongoing process. So this year for the first time in about ten years we had a departmental retreat, and that had the practical purpose of helping us review our curriculum, but it also had kind of a morale boosting and community building purpose which was very successful in that.

**AR:** In your thirty years here there have been a number of changes in terms of curriculum and requirements. What do you think is the ideal kind of overall curriculum?

**SB:** (*Laugh*) I don't know if, that I think there's an ideal because I think there are so many things that, and skills and perspectives that we as faculty want to learn and want our students to learn, and there isn't time to do all of them. So you, any curriculum is a compromise. I think the premises of the present curriculum are valid. That students should be, you know, pushed if they don't think of this themselves to get a broad base, to explore different areas. They also need to focus on some area well enough to get a grasp on it. When I was in college we had similar distribution requirements, and people in the class after mine did a lot of work to institute a so-called new curriculum that was very free. They did away with distribution requirements. They established things like group independent study projects in which a certain number of students could get together and then go to a professor and say, "We want to do a project on x." And, you know, it was a course and all that. And, you know, that was good. But it has problems too. And students vary in their abilities to handle independence. For those who are independently motivated and very well prepared to begin with more independence can be very useful. For those who don't, aren't already as advanced, you know, more guidance can be helpful. So I guess I would say that, that there are opportunities here for independence. I've seen some students who do, have done, a great deal of independent work. There are opportunities for independence for those who can handle it, and there's some structure for those who need the structure. And it's a pretty good compromise.

**AR:** How do you feel the current administration is able to work with faculty and also with students?

**SB:** I think the current administration is, has helped to establish a very collegial relationship on campus particularly between administration and faculty. My sense of the relationship between the administration and the students is going to be more distant. But I think that's one of the successes of this administration. This doesn't mean that faculty don't criticize the administration on certain things. It doesn't mean that they don't think that governance should be handled differently in certain respects. But I think there's a mutual respect and a kind of ability to work together that is at least as good as, probably better than I've felt here under any other administration.

**AR:** How would you characterize the situation of female faculty today? Are there enough female faculty members, department heads, and full professors?

**SB:** Well there won't be enough until (*laugh*) they reflect the percentage in the population. The, the number however is... How do I put this? It's enough so that female faculty at various levels can work without feeling like a besieged minority. So we feel like we are part of the institution, you know, as much as anybody else.

**AR:** Do you, in your opinion are issues of harassment or mistreatment from other faculty, administration, or students still issues for female faculty members?

**SB:** I haven't seen them.

**AR:** What would you say is the current situation of black faculty, faculty members?

**SB:** Black faculty members are still a besieged minority. And it was that mentality, or that sense, that experience that led to the formation of PWL and kind of endless discussions over lunch and so forth of the problems we had and ways we could try to solve them. PWL has kind of fallen away because women faculty don't feel that that's the primary, the determiner of their experience anymore. Black faculty are not much more significantly, significant a, a numerical presence at Lafayette than women faculty were in the old days. So it's still a very minority situation for them.

**AR:** A number of the most significant faculty committees on campus are currently chaired by women. At what point in Lafayette's history did women begin to achieve such leadership positions?

**SB:** Depends partly on what you mean by begin because, you know, there were probably would have been individuals earlier, but it's been pretty recent, you know, certainly in the '90s. Exactly when, maybe, you know, maybe that... You, ninety, you gave me the date '93 but what, what was it that happened....?

**AR:** Gay students being ostracized. That was the number one...

**SB:** Oh yeah, that, that report. Yeah I don't know. If you could determine the date of the sexual harassment policy change<sup>42</sup>, I might date it to then. But, you know, that's a matter, vague perception and dim memory. But you could, you know, it is subject to finding out exactly by our, through archival sources. But you're right that a lot of faculty committees are chaired by women. A number of departments are chaired by women. Women hold a number of not only, you know, committee chairs, but chairs of the most, you know, significant committees. So I think that their leadership is disproportional to their percentage on the faculty.

**AR:** You mentioned daycare and the sexual harassment policy. Are there any other family or women friendly policies that you think Lafayette ought to institute?

**SB:** One of the issues that has always been something that people have talked about has been family leave. And the policy at Lafayette is fairly narrow at this point. It has to do with, you know, maternity. And it isn't, and I think it works pretty well for maternity leave. The policy of, of being able to take, to have a semester of alternate duties, not teaching is a, that's a very good policy, although I don't have personal experience with this except as, you know, a colleague of people who had, who'd taken that option. We don't have the equivalent for adoptive parents. That's a problem. And I'm now at the stage as are many of my colleagues where our family responsibilities have to do with elderly parents. It's very unclear, you know, how that works. We do have the opportunity to take leave, an unpaid leave, to deal with any sort of family situation, whether it's a critically ill child or a dying parent. But the... you don't always know when the parent's dying, right. This could go on for much longer than a semester, and your level of commitment may not be so great that you couldn't possibly teach for that semester. So how

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<sup>42</sup> The Lafayette College sexual harassment policy was expanded in 1996.

do you handle the need to make frequent trips away or, you know, whatever you have to do to help out. So that's a, an issue that a lot of faculty members, not only women, but, you know, often these things fall more on women than on men, are dealing with. And it's not all that clear exactly what the institution could do to alleviate it, you know. Daycare is a sort of a clear thing. But how to adapt to issues like the need to help out elderly parents is, it's more amorphous. But in general something along expansion. An accommodation for dealing with families as opposed to only maternity issues.

**AR:** What would you say was your best and worst experience at Lafayette?

**SB:** I'm not, you know, I'm not into best, worst, favorites, whatever. Nothing leaps to mind.

**AR:** Okay. Are there any funny or interesting stories or anecdotes that haven't been brought up by anything so far that stick out in your mind?

**SB:** I don't think so. Again nothing really sticks out.

**AR:** Is there anything that I didn't ask that you thought I would or that you'd like to bring up?

**SB:** Maybe I'd just like to kind of bring together some of, a theme about the hiring situation in the early days. The, I think my generation was in the middle of a move toward, a move away from the old boy network to professionalism in hiring. And that was consistent with or congruent with the, a shift from a familial to a professional understanding of the institution. And

the particular experiences that, you know, made me actually physically uncomfortable in, you know, for example, the upstairs of a department head's house are aspects of that shift from the familial to the professional identity of an institution of higher education.

**AR:** Okay. Thank you for participating.

**SB:** Thank you very much for helping me remember these things.