



## Beth Rietveld Oral History Interview, June 11, 2014

### **Title**

“A Leading Voice for Women at OSU”

### **Date**

June 11, 2014

### **Location**

Rietveld residence, Corvallis, Oregon.

### **Summary**

In the interview, Rietveld discusses her upbringing in a conservative household, her development as an independent thinker, and her collegiate experience at the University of Illinois. From there she notes her first professional job at Southern Illinois University, her active participation in the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association, and the experiences of sexual harassment that she encountered as a member of that group.

Rietveld then shares the circumstances of her move to Oregon State University, the status of the recreational sports program at the time, the role that she played as Assistant Director - with particular attention paid to the expanded training curriculum that she developed for student staff - and her doctoral studies in College Students Services Administration.

The majority of the session focuses on Rietveld's association with the OSU Women's Center and the culture of activism that the center helped to foment across the university. In this, Rietveld recounts the crucial importance of the Faculty Womens Network in providing an early platform for women to discuss issues of importance. She also describes the Womens Center's efforts to combat its own history of homophobia and the collection of radical feminist groups that later emerged in response to issues of gender marginalization and sexual assault. Rietveld likewise recalls the efforts of the membership of the President's Commission on the Status of Women to address a whole host of issues including salary equity, campus climate for faculty of color, work-life balance, childcare, and personal leave.

The interview concludes with a discussion of Rietveld's involvement in professional organizations, including the National Women's Studies Association, which presented her with a Lifetime Achievement award. She also notes her interests in retirement, especially quilting, her desire to write a history of the Women's Center, and her encouragement to students of today that they find and express their own voices on issues that are important to them.

### **Interviewee**

Beth Rietveld

### **Interviewer**

Janice Dilg

### **Website**

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/rietveld/>

## Transcript

**Janice Dilg:** So, today is June 11th, 2014. My name is Janice Dilg, and I am here today interviewing Beth Rietveld at her home in Corvallis, Oregon. Good morning.

**Beth Rietveld:** Good morning.

**JD:** So, it always seems to make sense to sort of begin at the beginning, and just have you talk just a little about your family background, and your education, and how you came to Oregon State University.

**BR:** Okay. I grew up in the Chicago suburbs, at the south suburbs, and I'm the oldest of four children. I have three younger brothers. And I think there's a lot of things that—that I could say about growing up in Illinois. We came from a very conservative family, a very right wing, traditional, religious, all of the things that I sort of grew up with. I often will talk with my brothers about how I turned out to be quite different than they did, because I tend more toward the liberal than the conservative. And often they would say they didn't understand what it was I did with my job, and I would have to explain over, and over, and over again.

But I grew up, I think, always questioning, because things would be stated as fact, or be stated as: this is the way we believe. And there was probably a time in high school, and then a little bit more in college, where I started questioning authority, questioning what everybody had always told me was correct. As I met people who were different than me, I realized I like people who are different than me. It sort of expanded my world. And I couldn't understand why my family was frightened of, or negative about, people who were of different faiths, of different ethnicities, different sexual orientation. I think all of those things kind of pushed me a little bit to explore and come up with my own opinions.

And I think that is the way I developed, and that is what I decided that I need to teach others, in terms of the students I've worked with over the years. Questioning authority has come pretty natural for me [laughs], and I think probably because my dad was an authoritarian and we weren't allowed to question, or we weren't allowed to push back, and when I finally got to a place where I could, I did. And so I love my family and I respect where they come from, and we often have very difficult political discussions. And then finally I say, "You know, let's just agree to disagree," and we move on.

I went to the University of Illinois for both my bachelor's and my master's degrees. And I've played piano since I was four years old, and everyone expected me to be a music major. And I think my very first rebellion was to not be a music major, or a music educator. So I tried to think of something that was as far from music as possible. Science didn't interest me, but psychology was something that I thought, "I could do psychology. I could be a school counselor." And this was in the early '70s, when women basically became teachers, nurses, secretaries, or, in my mind a school counselor was sort of pushing boundaries a bit. I know now that the world is open to women, but at the time there weren't a lot of things that I could consider for a career.

So I became a psychology major, and became very active at the University of Illinois. I was very glad to go to a—I went to a fairly large high school, and went to the University of Illinois, which had 35,000 students at the time. And I really liked being active in student events, student activities. I ran for office; I got scholarships. I did a lot of things to really involve myself at the university, and truly enjoyed my time there. I finished my bachelor's degree in three-and-a-half years, and finished my master's in one year. So I was a 21-year old looking for my first job.

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** And I actually got my master's degree in Recreation Administration, partly because my last year as an undergraduate I worked in the recreation center, and loved every minute of it! So I started working in the recreation center and was offered—I actually hadn't considered graduate school, and I was offered an assistantship. I was finishing my degree in December, and I had no idea what I was going to do. [0:05:01] I certainly didn't want to move home. So someone said, "Well, if you want to keep going to school, I'll pay you to go to school." And I thought, "Somebody's going to pay me to go to school?"

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** It was fabulous! So I worked in campus recreation at University of Illinois. I had two quarter-time assistantships, which ends up being, you know, close to 30 or 40 hours, even though it's not supposed to be.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** So I also worked in student activities, and when I finished my degree, I could have worked in either direction. I knew I was going to be in student affairs in some way, shape or form. But I loved recreational sports, and I loved working with student events. So I finished my master's degree. I continued to work at the University of Illinois for another four or five months on student orientation, the summer orientation programs, and then got my first job at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, in recreation, campus recreation. And loved my work there, didn't particularly like living in Edwardsville, so I moved to Saint Louis, which was eleven miles away. It was a little bit more of a—I think for a young person, being around people my age, I played tennis, I got involved in—oh, I played piano through college, and then I played piano as sort of a side thing. On weekends I'd play at different clubs in Saint Louis. And it was just another form of income, and another way to meet people.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** So I did that for three years before I came to Corvallis. And working in recreational sports was—at that point was something I truly enjoyed, especially working with hiring and training student employees. That was sort of where I got most of my joy.

**JD:** So, to just step back a second.

**BR:** Mm-hm.

**JD:** Kind of given the traditional focus of your family, was it expected by your parents that you would go to college?

**BR:** It was expected, I think because I got good grades. My friends were all going to colleges, mostly went to religious, small liberal arts colleges.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And I chose a state university partly because I just, I needed to grow. I needed to break away. So I was a little bit of a ground-breaker, at least in terms of my family and the people that were part of our social circle, or our church circle.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** I didn't go to the church college, and I didn't do what everybody else did. So many of my friends married each other. I mean, they met in high school; they got married some time either during or right after college. They stayed living in the same community with their parents. And I knew that there was a big world out there, so I was ready.

**JD:** And how did you pay for college?

**BR:** My dad paid for tuition, which was \$350 a semester. [Laughs] I remember! In this day and age it seems like such a small amount. I also earned money playing piano, so that was sort of my spending money. So I was supported by my family, which was really fortunate. In my last two years in college, I did work at the university, in recreational sports, and in the Dean of Students' office. It was actually the Dean of Campus Programs and Services, so I had some opportunities to make some hourly wage-type jobs.

**JD:** Okay. And when you say you played piano in clubs.

**BR:** Mm-hm?

**JD:** What kind of clubs?

**BR:** They were bars. I also played for a lot of university events. If the Alumni Association was having an event at the Student Union, I would often be asked to play. And one of my mentors was the Dean of Campus Programs and Services.

He insisted that I join the musicians' union, because I was charging less than union musicians. And so it was the first time I learned about unions, and I sort of didn't want to have to do that, but I did make more money as a result. And he said, "We can't play in the same places you play if you're not charging the same amount we charge." So.

**JD:** Right.

**BR:** It taught me a lot about sort of the outside world.

**JD:** And what your skills are valued, should be valued at.

**BR:** Right, exactly.

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** Exactly. And maybe that was the first time that I started to realize that when you have a gift or talent, you should be paid for it. Once in a while I would play for a function that I'd volunteer, but most of the time I felt that I needed to be compensated. So it was the very beginning of learning about salary equity and what the rest of the world is facing. [0:10:02]

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And I was young and naïve, and had a huge, huge learning curve. But, yeah, I enjoyed it a lot. And I did have the privilege of having my parents pay for college, which was a real gift. Graduate school was covered by an assistantship, which was also wonderful. And I remember, my first job I made \$12,000 a year, and \$1,000 a month was pretty darn good! [Laughs] And of course, back in the day that covered a lot.

**JD:** Right.

**BR:** But it was the beginning of learning a lot about university salaries, and how entry level people come in, and how hard it is to get those, you know, the cost of living raises, but then the merit raises, and then how do you ask for more?

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** Which is always hard.

**JD:** And speaking of entry-level positions, then in 1979 you accepted a position as Assistant Director of Recreational Sports at Oregon State University. Talk about how you learned about that position, and came to take that job and move to Oregon.

**BR:** Well, I knew the director of—at the time it was called Physical Recreation, so the Director of Physical Recreation at OSU was also the executive director of the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association. And I, as an undergraduate and graduate student from the University of Illinois, went to the annual conferences of this association. And University of Illinois was one of the top schools in campus recreation, and had a beautiful facility, which a lot of schools followed suit in the years after that. The University of Illinois had a very large program, so I came from a place that was pretty well known. And I also did a lot of multi-media shows, just mostly to advertise our programs to the students at the University of Illinois. And so I started at the national conference, the—gosh, what do you call it? It was a media festival. And people would bring their slide shows. This is back before PowerPoint and before computers.

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** But we put together slide shows, and some would be single slide projectors, and some would be synchronized, three projectors that would fade in and out. But I remember putting music to my slides, and putting together these elaborate shows that took a lot of time and effort. But I started the media festival at the national association. So I was known by the director at Oregon State for some of the work that I had done. I also was really big on writing articles about my experiences. So I wrote articles about media, and I wrote about publicity, how to draw students to your recreational programs.

And one of the very last articles that I wrote when I was involved in the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association was on women and recreational sports, because I actually joined the sports association three years after women were allowed to join. So it was a men's organization in the '60s, and women were only allowed to join in 1970, and I joined in '73. So it was also maybe the first time I realized how differently women are treated in professional organizations. We were sexually harassed. There was the party atmosphere after the sessions were over. And I learned really fast that women were hit on by all of these guys. I found out later that they kept score on how many women they could bed during the time of the conference. I mean, these are all things that as I got older, I would talk to people about. Because I realized this is—it just felt yucky to me.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** But eventually I felt that, yeah, the guys are just—I don't want to say, "Doing what guys do." I found that's the ugly side of when guys get together. And that became sort of the beginning of my interest in how women are treated in professional organizations, how women are treated in this field. How many women were there as directors for recreational sports? Almost none. And that took years to change. And then sexual harassment was really a part of my life, as an undergraduate student, as a graduate student, in both my first two jobs. And so that became sort of—not abnormal; it was normal for me. It became an interest for me to do more research [0:15:00], to talk to other people to find out if my experience was unique, or whether other people were experiencing still the same things. And so when I came to Oregon State, I was still faced with sexual harassment.

I started working on my doctorate, and my very favorite class was Legal Issues in Higher Education, and my final paper was on sexual harassment in higher education. And I researched every sexual harassment case that had been filed up to that point, and this was in the early '80s, so there weren't that many sexual harassment cases in the books. And this was before Anita Hill, but Anita Hill sort of brought the issue to light. It was just one of those unspoken things that just kept happening over and over again. So I loved being at Oregon State. I was interviewed for the job, and when they flew me out for my final interview—I had a phone interview—and they flew me out in July, and I was flying over Mount Hood. And they took me to the coast. I was here for three days and they took me to the coast, and I thought this was the most beautiful place on earth.

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** Coming from the corn fields of Illinois, I had to say this is paradise! So it was actually a two-person staff, a director and an assistant director. We had a lot of students working at Dixon Recreation Center at the time.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** It was a young program. I had lots of opportunities to come up with new ideas, and new ways to grow, grow the program. There are now 30 employees, full-time employees, that work in recreational sports. So it's amazing to me to watch the transformation over the years. I've seen the facilities grow, and I was a part of that. I've been there through a couple of construction projects. And so I learned a lot, not just about hiring students and training students, but really about the facility maintenance, and the budgeting, and the business aspects of working in the field, so.

**JD:** So, expand a little on what the recreational program was when you came in 1979, what the facilities looked like, kind of just the workings of the place.

**BR:** Well, Dixon Recreation Center was only three years old when I came here, and the previous assistant director had left to get married and move away from Corvallis. So I came into the practically brand new facility that had three basketball courts, and ten racquetball courts, and four squash courts, an aerobics room where we would hold our fitness classes, and a single weight room, very tiny locker rooms. And in fact, it's almost laughable because the locker rooms were, if you got five people in there at a time, it was crowded.

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** And so you had the rest rooms; you walk into the locker area and then you'd have the shower area. And so when it was first built, it was not expected to—I don't want to say it wasn't expected to grow, but Langton Hall was right next door, and Langton had showers, so a lot of faculty members would go and keep their lockers or their baskets over at

Langton. And so I think it was just thought that this was going to work out just fine. We didn't have fitness classes. We had the beginnings of sport club program, and so we had a ski club, and a rugby club, and soccer clubs, and those sorts of things. But we had a grad assistant who worked with the sport clubs. We had a couple of grad assistants that worked as facility supervisors, and they would have to work late night shifts. We always had to have professional staff on duty, so the grad assistants were the professional staff after five or six o'clock. And intramural sports were held through Langton. They were completely separate from the recreational sports programs.

**JD:** Interesting.

**BR:** And so at the time, we didn't do a lot of—it was mostly recreation. So students would come in and use the facilities; we would check out equipment and racquetball racquets. We didn't do towels. We didn't have laundry facility, so we didn't give out towels. People had to bring their own. And it was a very small-time operation that has now grown to a huge operation with complete laundry facilities, and first aid facilities, and training, and massage. And it's amazing what has grown out of that very, very small program.

And at the time we had probably 25 or 30 student employees, and so my job was to hire and train those student employees. We would spend one or two days, and as I was there for fourteen years, we eventually had a week's worth of training. So we really expanded the training, especially around risk-management issues and safety, first aid, CPR. [0:20:03] All of those things became really, really important. And one of the things I learned at the end of my time is that I was training students to be leaders, and so leadership was important to me. I maybe didn't label it as leadership at the time, but afterwards as I was talking about it, I was training students to take charge of the facility, all aspects of it, from membership to customer service, to safety, making sure students understood all of these different aspects. And I was training them for their future careers, in whatever direction they were going to go. Even if they went into engineering, or science, or agriculture, they were learning skills that were going to benefit them in the future. They were communication skills; they were management skills.

So I really—and then we added diversity training, and I mean, there were so many aspects of the training that kept growing and growing, because it was very important that we make people feel that they were important from the moment they entered the building. And so that was the joy for me, was working with students, and training of students, and then watching them graduate. I still keep in touch with a lot of students that worked at Dixon Recreation Center in the '80s, which is really nice. So that, to me, has made it all worthwhile, to see them grow and thrive, working on their grandchildren, before me!

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** [Laughs] But no, it is nice to have seen the development of those skills over time.

**JD:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm. And so you're talking about diversity training, and kind of what was the population of the students and faculty who used the facility when you first started there? And how did that change over time?

**BR:** Well, there were a lot of faculty that worked out on a regular basis, and I insisted that the students get to learn their names so that they were greeting them by name. I felt that that was an important part of customer care. And I had never been through any training. You know, afterwards, I'd read articles about Nordstrom and Disney, and all of these different places that really care about the people that come in, and treating people well. But at the time, I just felt like I like to be greeted by name, so let's do that.

There wasn't a lot of diversity at OSU in 1979. On our staff we had one black student. I mean, at the time, there weren't—and the students that came—when I came in the students had already been hired for that first year. But I learned over the course of the fourteen years that I was there that some of the best student employees were international students, were students of color who could relate to the student athletes who did come in and use the facility. And at the time, when there were I think 12,000 students, maybe 10,000 or 12,000 students at OSU, the diversity was not—it was not as great as it is now, and I still think we have a long way to go.

We had student athletes who would come over to Dixon to exercise, even though they were over at Gill Coliseum or other places for their training. Weightlifters—or not weightlifters—wrestlers would come in and use the saunas so they

could lose weight, so they could make weight. And we'd see them in their rubber suits, coming in. I always worried that somebody was going to pass out.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** Or worse, in the sauna. But we did have a lot of student athletes who would come in.

**JD:** And I guess I was wondering about the gender mix too. Title IX was just really kind of starting to get going at that point, and whether women felt comfortable coming into the facility?

**BR:** I think women were comfortable coming in, and eventually added aerobics classes and things like that. They played racquetball. Not so much—they weren't seen on the basketball court or the weight room so much. And I remember having a lot of women say, "Couldn't we have a session in the weight room when there aren't men in there?" And at the time there was only one weight room. So it really—I know we went around and around the subject in our staff meetings, and ultimately it didn't change for years and years and years. We did have a Saturday morning session, I think, but before we opened. But once we opened, it was kind of the men's domain. So it took a while.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** It took a while. And I don't think I fully understood—I was not a weightlifter, so I didn't understand. There might have been a couple of women who really advocated, but there wasn't a huge demand, so we didn't make a lot of changes. [0:25:00] I do remember a few issues that came up during the time I was there. One was eating disorders. We would occasionally have women who would hang out at Dixon and work out for four or five hours. And they had an obsession with exercise, an obsession with their weight. And I occasionally would have to talk with the student or walk with them over to Student Health to have an evaluation done, just so that—and I don't know whether that would have been a violation of privacy today.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** We were mostly concerned with the safety of the student. So I remember doing that. Another time we had a student playing racquetball wearing a sports bra, and the director told me I needed to go down and talk with her. And it's funny, because nowadays you see women running in sports bras, and it's not that unusual. And she wasn't very—she wasn't well endowed; it wasn't showing anything except that she was wearing a sports bra. And I think it was unusual, and the director was uncomfortable with it.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And I was uncomfortable with asking her to cover up, but I was pretty much told that that was one of the things I had to do. So, you know, over time there were more and more women that discovered Dixon, partially just to keep in shape. There were a few sport clubs that were focused on women, but there wasn't—it took quite a few years, probably into the mid-'80s. More and more women were using Dixon, playing organized sports. It was often sororities would have intramural sport teams. And of course, they called things like powder-puff football. [Laughs] I don't know that we—it took a long time for women to be taken seriously.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** But at the time, I also remember we had a great women's basketball team in the '80s. Aki Hill was the basketball coach, and going and watching women's basketball back in those days was phenomenal! So, there was a rising interest in sports.

**JD:** And so you were there for quite a number of years.

**BR:** Mm-hm.

**JD:** Doing some doctoral work along with that.

**BR:** Yes.

**JD:** Maybe talk about how you were weaving all of these different pieces together. [Laughs]

**BR:** Well, I came in '79, and in '81 I decided, if I want to move up in some way—I could see myself being an assistant director of recreational sports forever. And that wasn't what I wanted to do. I mean, I didn't see any upward mobility, unless I expanded my background or got some additional experience in some other areas. So I started working on my doctoral studies in College Student Services Administration. But interestingly, I didn't take my CSSA classes. I started working on my minor classes, because I had a lot of things that would transfer from the Illinois that would count as credit for my doctoral degree. So I had a minor in—my second minor was recreational sports. It was kind of created with some exercise—well, I guess the program was called Exercise and Sport Science, and with some of my recreational classes from Illinois.

So I kind of combined that as one of my minors, and then my second minor was going to be Adult Education and Business Administration. So I was kind of thinking about how I could work toward being a director of recreational sports, or how I could expand into student activities in some way. I don't know that that was first and foremost in my mind. I still saw myself in recreational sports, but I wanted to be able to move up. And I also felt a little bit controlled in my job, by the director. He was a very hands-on director, and I needed to find ways that I could have more control. I'm not really good at taking orders, and I felt like I was constantly being told what to do. And I knew that I had enough smarts to figure things out for myself, and that's kind of the role I was looking for.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** So I started working on my doctorate, working full-time. So I was taking classes. If I left for an hour-long class that met twice a week, I had to make that time up, so I had to stay till 6 o'clock, or come in earlier. I basically was working 8 to 5 or 8 to 6, anyway. Occasionally I would have evening classes. And then there's the homework on top of that, which was by the end—by the time I finally decided to stop working on my doctorate, two things intervened. One, my last class was a computer science class, because you either needed a foreign language or you needed a computer science, in order to get a PhD. And I decided I didn't want the Ed.D; I wanted the PhD. [0:29:59] You needed a foreign language, which would have taken me four years to do, because I took Latin in college and high school, so I would be starting over with some other language.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** Or you needed computer science. And at the time, you were working on these Apple II computers and you were writing code, and it just about killed me. I mean, I was taking class two nights a week and I was spending time on the computer lab two nights a week, so that's four nights. And with all of the work I was doing, I was in a fairly new marriage, and I felt like I just didn't have any time for myself. And I hated the computer stuff; I really didn't like it. I didn't like having to write the code. And in this day and age it seems kind of silly even to talk about it, but at the time that was what you had to do.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And the other thing was I got pregnant. And so I decided I was going to focus on raising my children. And as much as I wanted to advance, I still didn't see that as being—I felt that being a good mom was more important to me at that time. That's probably a little bit of my past creeping in, thinking that you—at the time, I wasn't sure I could do it all. Now I know I can, but at the time.

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** It just became a focus to just be a good mom. And I hated that computer class. I knew I hadn't taken my student services classes yet. I'd taken my business administration. I pretty much had my minors wrapped up, and I was going to save my CSSA classes. I loved, like I said, Legal Issues in Higher Ed. Forrest Gathercole taught the class, and he was phenomenal. And he kept me engaged. The other thing that crossed my mind when I took that class is, I would love to be an attorney, but I would love to do the research, background stuff, not necessarily to be in the courtroom.



**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** But I'd love to be able to do the deep research. And I knew that writing and doing research was intriguing to me. So, and I also thought I could pick up the PhD later. Well, if you let too much time go by you can't do that; you have to start over. And there were times I regretted not finishing, but I have to say it was the right decision for that time, for me.

**JD:** Well, and you did start to transition out after a period of time. You became the interim director, and then the assistant director of student involvement. Just kind of talk a little about moving into these other positions.

**BR:** Okay. Well, let's go back to when I'm in recreational sports. A couple of things happen. One was the beginnings of the Faculty Women's Network. And that happened while I was in Recreational Sports, and probably started raising my awareness of issues I had experienced, but nobody had shared their own experiences. And I mentioned sexual harassment. One of the things that came about—and I wasn't the first person to suggest Faculty Women's Network, that was Liz Gray. Liz Gray was a professor in Counseling Education. She had experienced some forms of discrimination in her job, and she went to Joanne Trow and Mamie Orzech, two—in fact probably the only two women in higher level administrative positions at OSU at the time. And this was about '85-'86.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And she went and said, "We need to have a forum for women to come together and talk about issues. And it might be issues of salary. It might be issues of discrimination. It might be issues of, you know, we're not being promoted in the same way that men are. We've got to get out of this Old Boy's Club mentality." And so Joanne and Mamie, I think they held four or five forums, and it was either brown bag lunch, or it was something that was right after work. But they set up several different forums, and we would meet—I think we met at the Hawthorne Suite in Milam Hall. And I remember going and sitting probably in a room of 25 women, and they were talking about some of the issues.

I think Joanne or Mamie just said, "Okay, what are the issues? What are some of the things that you're facing?" And I had just had my first child, and I had to come back to work early. I was given very little time to be with my son. I sort of resented that a little bit. But I had to be back at work; there was no alternative. There was nobody that could fill my job, and so I was kind of pushed to come back. I was going to take three months off. [0:34:59] I came back part-time after two months, and I resented that a little bit, because I didn't want to have to leave my first child. So I was dealing with childcare issues. I was looking at being in a men's world, recreational sports.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** I mentioned the conferences. But I was also part of a department. It was the Memorial Union, Student Activities, Recreational Sports, and Student Media, and we all were part of the Memorial Union. We called that—that was sort of the umbrella organization. And it was all men in that organization. And then we would have coffee breaks at ten o'clock in the morning, but the women would meet at ten and the men would stay later. And they talked about sports. Sometimes I'd hang around, and I realized I wasn't really welcome. And I was not one of the secretaries; I was one of the professional staff, so I felt like I could stay with the other professionals. But I was supposed to be with the women's group, and they would talk about recipes, and they would talk about their children and their grandchildren.

And I loved everybody I worked with. I mean, they were all good people. But I realized then that I wasn't part of the boy's club. And they talked about budget, or they talked about upcoming issues, or upcoming hirings, and I wasn't part of those conversations. So the Faculty Women's Network, as I sat there and listened to other people, I realized this is happening all over the university. This isn't just happening to me. And sexual harassment was happening—it was rampant. Not just students being harassed by professors, but it was young professors, young assistant professors being harassed by department chairs. And people were just sharing openly about some of the—and they said, "But I don't want to get in trouble."

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** So they weren't willing to act on it because they were frightened for their jobs. And I was, in the same case, the same situation. I was sexually harassed by my boss, and I did go and talk to the Director of Affirmative Action. Pearl Gray was an amazing woman! I went and talked with her, but she said, "Do you want to file a formal complaint?" And I said, "No.

I'm scared. I moved 2,000 miles away from my family to come to the job. I don't want to be out of a job." And she said, "Well, you can't be fired if you file a complaint." I said, "Yes I can. I know that they'll make my life miserable. I mean, it would basically push me out of the job," And she said, "Do you want me to talk with your boss?" And I said, "I think I'm a little uncomfortable with that. What I'm looking for are skills that would help me address this if it happens in the future."

And she actually gave me a lot of good skills, of writing down notes. When something happens, write the date and time down. Write it in a notebook. Keep track. If something happens, address it right away. And for me, it was easier to write memos, and say, "When you said, 'blah-blah-blah,' it made me feel uncomfortable." And eventually it became this memo thing back and forth. It was really uncomfortable, but at least it gave me a feeling of control. I learned so much from other faculty.

And what happened after the series of forums is that we formed a committee to start scheduling topical conversations. And so I immediately signed up. I said that I would love to work with this. And I don't know how this came to be, but I became sort of the—the one constant that stayed involved with Faculty Women's Network as long as it existed. Part of it was decided we wanted to hold a reception every once in a while, just to get people together.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** So we decided to collect \$5 dues, and I became the secretary treasurer, so I collected the money. Once we had email, that took a while, but eventually when we had email, I'd send out the invitations. But for a while we'd go get them printed and I'd send them out. I'd address labels to all of the faculty women.

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** And that's how I got to know so many faculty women. And I got to know more about what's happening in Forestry, or what's happening in English, just because people—I was the person who kind of pulled people together. And I love information. I love trying to help people, and I think that is what eventually led to my breaking away from Recreational Sports. The funny story, the story that I find most interesting is how I became the director of the Women's Center, or how I moved into this new role.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** The funding source for the Women's Center—I was still in Recreational Sports, but the funding source for the Women's Center had been through the Dean of Students office. So it was state monies, and they decided [0:40:01]—this was after Measure 5?

**JD:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

**BR:** Budgets were being crunched. And that's when Broadcast Media closed, Religious Studies closed, and Journalism. There were a lot of things at OSU that went away. And the Women's Center was one of the things that was being cut out of the Dean of Students budget. And it wasn't that they didn't think it was important; they just felt that it was better suited for student fees to pay for the Women's Center. So at the time the Women's Center had a full-time secretary, and had three graduate assistants that sort of ran the programs at the Women's Center. And one was funded out of Women's Studies, one was funded out of the Dean of Students Office, and one was funded out of Joanne Trow's budget. And so the Dean of Students Office cut this from their budget, and the Memorial Union was going to try to—they had to go through student fees, the student fees process. But what they needed was somebody within the Memorial Union organization to be in charge, just to supervise.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And there were only two women in the organization that had full-time jobs, Ann Robinson and myself. Ann was the assistant director of student media, and she was on maternity leave. So I was the only woman. And so they came to me and so they said, "Beth, well, you're a woman. You can run a women's center." And funnily enough, I had been to a couple of programs at the Women's Center, but I wasn't all that involved in anything to do with the Women's Center, but I threw myself into it wholeheartedly. It was sort of like, if I'm going to learn something new, I'm going to do it with gusto. I'm going to find out everything I can.

And so I was still in Recreational Sports, but I supervised the Women's Center. That was the very beginning of the end of my Recreational Sports days. And I put some effort—I hired a half-time grad assistant. Because of the budget changes we were down to one grad assistant, but I let her pretty much run things. And she was outstanding; she was a doctoral student. She did a great job for three years. Diane Whaley was the first person I hired. The other thing that was happening at the time is the lesbian community, under the previous administration had been marginalized by the Women's Center. And there was a certain amount of homophobia. It was also the time of ballot measures that were proposed to discriminate against people based on sexual orientation. I think there was Measure 13 and Measure 9.

**JD:** Mm-hm, which would prohibit them from being teachers.

**BR:** Right, exactly. And so, the previous grad assistant at the Women's Center had all of these—there was an LGBT—I'm trying to remember what they were called at the time. There was an organization. And when they would hold their meetings, instead of posting them on the bulletin board she put them in the political notebook. And if people wanted to find out, they had to look through the political notebook. At some point, student employees were wearing buttons, "Yes on 9," or "Yes on 13." I can't remember which one was right around that time period, but in the early '90s.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** But there was definitely a homophobic atmosphere. And then there was the 100th anniversary of the Women's Center building. Benton Annex, which is the building that the Women's Center is housed in, was built in 1892, the second oldest building on campus, after Benton Hall. And so in 1992 they held a number of programs, but they also had ROTC raise and lower a flag. And at the time, gays in the military were banned. It was definitely something that rubbed wrong with the LGBT community, with Women's Studies, with the President's Commission on the Status of Women. So there was this big uproar about the Women's Center.

And so when I took over there was all this turmoil. And I had to learn as much as I possibly could in a very quick, very short period of time, about lesbian-bisexual women, what some of their issues were, how I could make them feel welcome. I put together a search committee for a grad assistant. Now, grad assistants usually are just hired by the person in charge. And I put together a search committee of ten people, and half of them were lesbians, partly because I wanted to open up the community as welcoming.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** I wanted to change the environment. And we hired an outstanding person who was able to build bridges. I worked really hard. In fact, I was looked at as just another administrator, and students—[0:44:59] it took a long time to build a relationship, but by the end I feel like I was embraced by the LGBT community. And as we get into a little of the Women's Center history, we actually started the Pride Center in the Women's Center, as the beginnings of a center for LGBT students. So, I came full circle, because I don't know that I had a lot of information to help me do my job, and I really had to educate myself. I relied on people in Women's Studies to help me. I didn't come from Women's Studies background.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** I had to read lots of books. I read *Ms.* magazine. I really had to immerse myself in literature. But I took it on with a great deal of enthusiasm. And the year after I began supervising the Women's Center, the director of Recreational Sports was looking to make some changes. They needed someone to supervise Educational Activities, which is the funding organization for student fee-funded organizations, so student government, international students of OSU, and a lot of other student groups. They needed someone to supervise the bowling center in the MU. They needed someone to continue to supervise the Women's Center. They needed someone to supervise the international food events that the student organizations would put on. So if they put on Africa Night, or Japanese Night, or Black History Banquet, or something, they needed somebody who could supervise the food preparation part of that.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And, oh, fundraising for student affairs. They put all of this together in my job description, and created a new job.

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** And of course, fundraising for student affairs was sort of at the bottom of the barrel, but nobody had looked at all of the Student Affairs Foundation accounts. And so I was able to do a lot of research. I learned so much in this job! It was the most disparate job description you can even imagine.

**JD:** Indeed!

**BR:** Because I was running bowling, and hiring a grad assistant to run the bowling center.

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** I was running—I had to hire a contract person to work in the kitchen with student groups that wanted to rent the kitchen and cook for the luau, or for something at the Black Cultural Center. And I had to hire a grad assistant for the Women's Center. So I had three grad assistants reporting to me. And then I had to stay up late evenings with the student fees process, listening to these budget—I had a group of students that make decisions on student fee funding.

But I have to say, it was a great learning experience for me, because I had to learn everything from budgets, to foundation accounts, to working with students of color, to working with LGBT students, to how to run a bowling center. I mean, it was probably—it was crazy-making! At the same time, I was going through a divorce. So, it was a time in my life when there was a lot going on. I had two young children and I was going through a divorce. But I was really glad to be making this change. I worked long hours, brought work home, and that wasn't always healthy, as far as my mental health.

But I have to say, there were some really positive things that happened in this transition. And I became more active in working with the Women's Center. Instead of just having a grad assistant there, I became more active in knowing what was happening, sitting in on job interviews. I'm kind of a hands-off manager, but I became more involved in the Women's Center because that was where I found a lot of joy.

**JD:** Mm-hm. And so, how long did this kind of mish-mash of positions go on before you started to migrate, kind of, more exclusively to the director of the Women's Center?

**BR:** It was four or five years of craziness, doing a little bit of all of these jobs.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** Eventually, the bowling center went back to the MU, and they hired a person to work with that. So, there were little parts of my job that went away. And as assistant director of student involvement, that was sort of the title that I was given.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** The director's job became available, and I applied for the director's job and did not get hired. And that was hard for me, because I kind of felt like I was doing all of these things to prepare myself to be a good director. And I realized being an internal candidate is hard. Any people that maybe you rubbed the wrong way at some point in your career, it's going to come back to bite you. [0:50:00] So it was not a good situation, and eventually we hired another woman through—that was a failed search—they went through another search and hired someone to be my boss. And I could tell at that point that we were going to have friction. There was not a smooth beginning to our working together.

So I started looking at other jobs outside of OSU, and looking for other opportunities. Although I loved my work, if you're working with somebody that isn't a great match, it can be a hard situation. And I worked hard to try to make it work, and it wasn't working. Ultimately, I have to give a lot of credit to my boss. She's the one that decided I should move over to the Women's Center full-time. And that's the best thing that ever happened to me! I think partly it was to get me out of her hair, and partly because the Women's Center had a lot of needs at the time. There was sexual assault on campus. We needed to spend a lot of time figuring out how are we going to address this?

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And we didn't have a full-time person working on sexual assault on campus. We needed somebody either in the counseling center or the Women's Center, or someplace, that was focused. We had a couple of really nasty incidents that made it onto the front page of the *Gazette-Times*. And it became an issue that needed to be addressed. Now, I didn't get into the President's Commission on the Status of Women, but at the same time I was working with the Women's Center, I became co-chair of the President's Commission on the Status of Women, and sexual violence on campus became one of their focal points. And so that was one of the things that I kind of threw myself into. I didn't know a lot about it.

I went through a lot of training, and I became—I went through the volunteer training at CARDV, the Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence, because I felt like I need to be knowledgeable. If somebody comes in who's been either in a domestic violence situation, or she's been sexually assaulted, I need to be able to help her find the resources that she needs. But I also feel like the Women's Center, and especially working with all student employees, it's hard to make sure that every one of those student employees is trained, because they might be the first responder. So over time, that became kind of a focal point. So when I was made full-time, I don't think my title became full-time director, but eventually it became director.

**JD:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

**BR:** I think it was coordinator at the time. It was partly to just make my job a little bit more coherent, and to start addressing some of the wider needs on campus. And I loved it, because the needs on campus were becoming more and more. I was becoming more aware of them because of the President's Commission on the Status of Women, because of the Faculty Women's Network. And then student government had a Women's Affairs Task Force. And so things that were becoming important to women, the Women's Center was sort of the best place to start addressing all of these issues. And I loved taking on each new thing that happened. I don't mean it was good, because it was often very negative stuff—something happened to someone or to a group of individuals. But I love being a problem-solver. And so finding resources, finding ways of creating change on campus became kind of my focus.

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** And my passion. And so that was the beginning of my focus just on women's issues, and Women's Center-related things.

**JD:** Mm-hm. One comment that I read in some of the materials that either you provided, or OSU's Special Collections provided—you talked specifically about being around the radical feminists at the Women's Center, that that was not necessarily a group, or kind of a perspective that you had been a part of, but that you ended up—I believe this is an accurate quote, "Learning from them sneaky ways to get things done."

**BR:** Mm-hm.

**JD:** Talk a little about that whole process, and some of the sneaky things.

**BR:** Okay. Students at the Women's Center were pretty radical. And part of my taking responsibility for the Women's Center was to allow—each year we had a different group of students and a different focus, kind of a different flavor, if you will. [0:54:59] But when I first took responsibility for the Women's Center, we had some radical feminists, and I didn't identify. It took me a while to identify as a feminist, but I was definitely not on the radical side. And so, I had to learn that there is a place for radical feminists. There is a place for infiltrating through more devious means and more quiet means. I often felt that I could go and talk to the president of the university if I needed to, and I needed to maintain kind of a calm so that I could have access to people who could create change.

But there is also a place for students to do some kind of wild and crazy things. And so one of the things that happened, and this was in the early '90s or '94, '95, and it was around the time that we were having some sexual assaults on campus, and it seemed like everything was being kept under wraps. Everything was being quietly dealt with, but nobody was really talking about: how does the university address sexual violence on campus? What happens to the perpetrators? I mean, some things need to, because of privacy laws that exist now, be kept quiet. But at the time there were survivors on campus who see that this front page story appears, and then nothing. There's no further information. And so there was a group of students that were called the Daughters of—Daughters of—?

**JD:** Is it Demeter?

**BR:** Demeter, Daughters of Demeter. And they put together kind of this little newsletter, this underground newsletter. And I know several of the people were involved with Women's Center. But I kind of didn't know what was going—you know, I stayed away and I let them do their own thing. And one of the students, or two of the students, went around with the Dean of Students, Roger Patton, and they were talking about the sexual assault that had happened at Phi Delta Theta. And as they're talking to him, and he's sitting there with his hands folded, and they see his ring, his college ring, says Phi Delta Theta along the outside. And they realized he's one of them! He's a member of the same fraternity where the sexual assault took place! He's not going to do something that's going to mess up the Phi Deltas.

And so they started writing these sort of underground things, about—whether it was about sort of the university trying to sweep things under the rug, and they would raise questions. Really, why are these things happening? What are we going to do to support survivors? What happens when the next thing happens? How are we supporting the survivors that are on the campus now, when they read about something that is happening, and they say that—one of the things that was said to me as the director of the Women's Center, or supervisor, I guess—this is in my early days—"We have to let the law enforcement carry out their investigation before we can do anything." And I said, "By the time law enforcement does what they're going to do, you're not going to have any evidence. You're not going to have—the students are going to graduate. You're going to have this survivor trying to get through her degree with this perpetrator on campus. And she's going to be looking around every corner wondering when she's going to run into him." And it just didn't seem right to me.

And then we started doing research on what other campuses are doing, and they've got judicial boards, they've got all—you know, we started putting together materials that would help. Although, we weren't welcome. I mean, our ideas weren't welcome at the time. Now, all of those things exist currently.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** So I love that the Daughters of Demeter were doing their thing. Then there was another group called the Lesbian Avengers. And I love what they were able to do around homophobia in the Athletic Department. There was a basketball player, Boky Vidic, who was one of the best basketball players—this was past, or it was after Aki Hill was the coach. I think Judy Spoelstra, maybe, was the coach at the time. But Boky Vidic came out as lesbian. And this was when Dutch Baughman was the athletic director, and he was very—he was from Texas; he was very conservative Christian, and he wanted her just to keep it under the wraps, you know. "We don't need to have you talking about that on our campus. It'll hurt our recruiting for student athletes." And Boky? This was kind of early in the days when athletes weren't out. It wasn't safe to be out.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** But she was pretty darn sure she wanted to be who she was. And she came to the Women's Center and talked about her situation. [1:00:00] And the women at the Women's Center, especially some of the lesbian women that worked at the Women's Center, thought, this is wrong. You can't tell somebody not to talk about who they are. And so they went to a women's basketball game with banners, and they handed out lollipops with little tags on them that said, "Help us lick homophobia," [laughs] and passed them out. And of course, the Athletic Department was furious. They talked about it for years after, about how this really hurt their recruiting, and it was just such an awful thing!

And I'm just so grateful to Boky for being who she was, and being strong, and getting this activism going, because things have changed in the Athletic Department tremendously. I think there's a much more supportive environment. Marianne Vydra, who's the—they don't have a men's and women's athletic director, but she's the senior women's—she's in charge of women's athletics, but she also works a lot with the men's programs. She was there, and she was silenced in so many ways. And it's so nice to see that she can be who she is in terms of her job, and that we're supporting all student athletes, and not just those who are willing to toe the line.

So yeah, I love that students found ways of being the activist. And there were other things that happened in the '90s when we had groups of—there were actually five different Christian organizations that co-sponsored a group that came in and showed these great big posters of aborted fetuses in the quad. And it was very hurtful to those people who have had an abortion. It was hard things, hard visuals to look at. And then they also compared abortion to genocide, and so they had

images of the Cambodian killing fields, and the Jews in the Holocaust. They put these great big, you know, eight-foot, ten-foot photographs up. And they had people preaching about the evils of abortion. And so I got involved in this one.

This was before we had computers. You'd get on the phone and you'd call one person, they'd call five people, and they'd call ten more people. And we ended up the day that they were arriving—we found out from U of O that they were coming to OSU. So we got out there with sheets, and we put them up. They in no way covered up the images, but we put up sheets, and we wrote on the sheets, "It's your choice," meaning it's your choice to look at these images or not. And we also handed out green ribbons for free speech, because we support free speech, but with a sense of responsibility to our community. And we really didn't think it was fair to our Cambodian students, to our Jewish students, to our black students. All of these images were really hurtful to a lot of people. And we weren't saying anything about abortion. We were just saying, "This is not being responsible to our community."

So those are just some of the things, but the Women's Center became kind of a hotbed for activism, and I loved that that's what we were known for. People didn't like that I was silently, or maybe not so silently, supporting the students, but I think student activism is an important thing. I don't think we would have the Pride Center, or the Black Cultural Center, or some of the other—the Ethnic Studies Department. These all happened because of both student and faculty activism.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And I think of the Faculty Women's Network. I'm not sure that that would have gotten started if it wasn't for some people speaking out. And once you come together, you become powerful. And I learned so much over time, that this is how change happens. And so I am a strong advocate for change.

**JD:** Well, and you know, I can see there is sort of this thread as you've talked about the Faculty Women's Network, the Women's Center, and you just briefly kind of touched on the President's Commission on the Status of Women.

**BR:** Mm-hm.

**JD:** There's clearly some strong connections between the two. Maybe talk a little about your work with the commission—

**BR:** Sure.

**JD:** —to kind of pull those all together, and how they fit.

**BR:** Well, the President's Commission came about in the same year that the Women's Center was founded, back in 1973. And it was a commission brought together by President MacVicar to try to address some of the faculty concerns. And faculty were concerned about salary; they were concerned about women being able to rise through the ranks. There were a lot of things that happened in the '70s over time, and the President's Commission was started by President MacVicar to start addressing some of these things. [1:04:59] And it was a pretty powerful organization: lot of women, full professors and faculty. There were student affairs people. It covered a broad spectrum of the university.

And I got involved in the early '90s. So I really wasn't that aware, except that I was interviewed about—there was a study that was being done in the state of Oregon, and I know I went to a meeting, because there were some things that happened around the birth of my son that were not—I didn't think they were fair in terms of my time off, in terms of some of the things that I experienced around that time, making me aware of the commission.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** So that was about the same time that the Faculty Women's Network got started. But the President's Commission did a lot of things on campus, addressed mostly faculty concerns. I think eventually over time it kind of expanded to look at what we now call the professional faculty. When I first started we were called no-rank faculty, [laughs] which sounds like a horrible name, but the no-rank faculty were the ones that were the student affairs faculty, or the councilors or coaches, or office managers, not—secretaries were classified staff. But there were more leadership positions—the budget office, and the research office. We were all the no-rank, or now, professional faculty.

So the President's Commission when I got involved in the '90s was involved with looking at sexual violence on campus, looking at issues within the Athletic Department. There were always things being brought up, people's individual stories, and while we couldn't get involved—we didn't have an ombudsperson at the time, but Affirmative Action would often investigate if there were something happening within a department or a college that seemed to be inappropriate. We would often refer faculty for help.

I remember one time when I was—it must have been in the '90s. It was women of the volleyball team. It was student athletes on the volleyball team were concerned about the uniforms they were asked wear, and when they played against other teams, the other teams were wearing these long, tight bike shorts. But these women were wearing these very short—they almost looked like bathing suit bottoms.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And they hated what they were wearing, and they couldn't get anybody in the Athletic Department to listen to them. And I remember, that wasn't something I brought up to the whole commission. I just made a couple of phone calls and it was handled. I mean, they actually got to—sometimes they just needed somebody to start the ball rolling. And they, I think, were afraid of their coach, and they didn't feel that they had a voice with their coach. But I just made a couple of phone calls to a couple of other people, and got the ball rolling. And they got new uniforms within the next six months or so.

So sometimes the commission would address issues that crossed over borders, things that crossed the line. And faculty salaries were one of the things that kept coming up. But how do you address salary issues? It's really hard, because what happens in Engineering is very different from what happens in the Psychology Department, and there are different pay scales, and in different parts of the country, salaries are widely different than they are in the Pacific Northwest. So, it was one of those things that kept getting pushed down to the bottom of the pile, partly because we didn't know how to address it. And ironically, I—and I was on the commission from '92 until pretty much when I retired.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** So again, I think I maybe took a back seat role for a while, but then I took a leadership role again in my last few years. But my aunt taught at the University of Wisconsin, and she just happened to mention a salary adjustment that she had gotten at the University of Wisconsin. She worked at the Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin. And I said, "Tell me more. How did you get this?" And she said, "I got like a \$6,000 raise," which was pretty much, at the time. And I said, "Tell me more." And she said, "Well, they did a study at our university on salary equity." And of course my ears are perked up.

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** And I'm very interested, and I said, "Oh please, can you find out who did the study? Can you get me a copy of the results? Is there anything that you can do to connect me with this person?" And so I immediately made contact with the University of Wisconsin. And it really helped. If I had gone to some tiny little Podunk school someplace, it wouldn't have held up, but the University of Wisconsin was one of our aspirational universities. [1:10:00] It's a land grant university, and they do a lot of the same things that we do.

And so I got a copy of their study, took it to the President's Commission. We formed a salary equity committee, and I was the commission representative, even though I kind of—there were often times when I felt like, I'm just a student affairs person, or I'm just a Recreational Sports person, or I'm just—eventually I figured out, I have a voice, I have a brain, and I can speak up in—I can do as much as the full professor over here in some other department. I was often intimidated by people, especially if they were really good at debate, because that was something I was always taught to be silent, or to stifle my voice. But I was getting stronger and stronger in finding my voice. So I'm really pleased that I got involved in the salary equity committee.

I also have run for the faculty—I don't think this is on my vita, but I was on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. And that was elected by the Faculty Senate, and that by itself was huge because I'm not a teaching faculty. And the Faculty Senate would often argue that it was only their voices that were important at the Senate meetings, because they're making



decisions about curriculum, and about grading processes, and whether we're going to have pluses and minuses, and they'd make all of these decisions.

And I remember getting up as a Faculty Senator. I got up and I argued against two former presidents of the Faculty Senate, one from Agriculture, and one from Sociology. And I remember their voices saying, "We're the ones that make the decisions that impact other faculty." And I got up, and my legs were shaking, my voice was shaking, and I said, "But you're making decisions about faculty economic welfare. You're deciding about my benefits package. You're making decisions about some of the things that do impact my life. And when I have to vote on something that impacts curriculum, I probably read that material more than anybody else in this room, because I need to understand it before I vote. And so I spend a lot of time reading, and I will ask questions if there is something I don't understand. And if you're talking about semesters versus terms, or you're talking about grading processes, I'm dealing with a lot of these students who are being impacted by the decisions that you're making."

And I sat down, and I was shaking like a leaf! But I realized that getting up and speaking in the Faculty Senate gave me—for the first time, people knew who I was. And that's how I got elected to the Executive Committee. All you have to do is raise your voice once, and people say, "Okay, she can do this." So, salary equity became a faculty—it was brought up to Faculty Senate as well, and we needed someone from each college to be represented on this committee. And Kathy Heath, from Health and—I can't even remember; they've changed the name of the college so many times.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** But Kathy Heath had been a former Faculty Senate President, and she was a highly respected faculty member. She chaired the salary equity committee. And we had amazing people on that committee! Again, I felt like I know so little in comparison to all of these people, but I was the one that found the study at Wisconsin. So we kind of used that as a springboard for our own study. And there were a lot of problems with the study. In the end, we didn't have a pot of money that was used to improve the inequities that existed.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** They used money from the merit pool, the merit pot of money, which impacts everybody. And men were upset about that, obviously. I would have been too, but that was the fault of the study. We did the study; we figured out a good way of evaluating people.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** But we used a pot of money that—they needed to set aside some money for salary equity, and that didn't happen. And we haven't had a study since then. So that was 1997, and it's unfortunate that some of those inequities still exist. Some colleges do a really good job of finding those inequities and correcting them, but at least we raised the issue.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** So I think I've gotten a little off topic, but the President's Commission was able to address a lot of things. Campus climate was another issue. We realized that faculty of color were leaving OSU in droves. And they would come in and they'd work for two or three years, and they would leave. And it was not—Corvallis is a hard town to live in for a person of color, who might come from a place like New York City or Chicago, you know, some place that was full of diversity, [1:15:03] because Corvallis just isn't. We would bring people in, and they weren't finding their community. I know that I worked with an African American woman whose—she found her church community in Portland, but that's awfully hard, to go every weekend to Portland to find a community. And she left after two years.

So we saw a lot of faculty that would come in; we would bring in these superstars and then they would leave, because they were also offered higher salaries at other universities. We didn't have a good salary structure to be able to keep people here that were really the superstars. So we did a campus climate study. We got the money from the director of multicultural affairs, Phyllis Lee. She provided the money for the study. And this was shortly before she was retiring, so she said, "Okay, I'm setting aside the money. It has to be used for the study." She knew that it needed to happen. She had heard the individual stories about why they were leaving.

So we hired Sue Rankin out of Penn State University, and she came in and did a campus climate study. Again, there were flaws in the study. It wasn't done extremely well. We had a low return rate in our surveys. People who have complaints complained. You know, they answered the survey. But everybody else was kind of like, "What's the deal?" And so not very many people did the survey, which really hurts your return rate. And then you start wondering—we did over-sample faculty of color, students of color, organizations of students that represented the LGBT groups, that sort of thing. But the results were kind of pooh-pooed by all of the researchers on campus, who said, "For one, this is a stupid idea, and for two, you had such a low return rate we can't validate it."

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** So, that was one of the things that we did. And we also looked at work-life balance, and that was one of the last things I did, because it was also one of the things that I kept hearing the most complaints about. Women take on a disproportional amount of committee work on campus. They often were given the assignments of advising students; where the male faculty would be doing their research, women would be given more and more of the advising responsibilities. There would be orientation weekends where they, faculty, that were asked to go talk to the incoming freshmen were women. And the men weren't doing all of this stuff. And women also have full lives outside of their jobs. And so they were saying, "You know, I can't go to my kid's school program. What happens when my kid gets sick? I'm using up all of my sick leave."

There were other issues. And this wasn't just a women's issue, because we talked to a male faculty member who was diagnosed with cancer. It was hard for him to find the information about what the leave process was. It was hard for him to even work with human resources to kind of do the things that he needed to do to release himself from his responsibilities. A lot of people were being heartless, and saying, "Your classes still have to be taught." I mean, you don't necessarily say that to somebody with cancer, but he made it real—made us realize this wasn't just a women's issue.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** Women have to take time out to have babies, or to deal with difficult pregnancies, or to deal with special needs children, or to deal with elder parents. And the issues just kept coming, and coming, and coming. And disproportionately, women take those things on. It's not that men aren't taking on childcare and helping with elder parents, but the university needs to be a place that supports and helps sustain each of us in our full lives. And so we looked at other universities. Again, we were looking at aspirational universities or peer universities. And we looked at what's available on the web. So if I were diagnosed with cancer, or if I were having a baby, what information can I find that helps me make my next plans?

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And we found that our web information was lacking, our support from Human Resources. Two people would be getting very different information for the very same reason. Classified staff were completely—treated completely different than faculty or professional faculty. Different rules for different people. So, I learned a lot in the process of looking at work-life balance. President Ray made it a priority. They now have a full-time person working with work-life balance. [1:20:01] They now have one or two people working in an ombudsperson office on campus. Human Resources had to look at their website, in fact they came up with an entirely new website.

I feel like even when—I raise the hackles of people when I bring up issues, because a lot of people don't want to have to deal with one more thing. But if it's bothering one person, it's probably bothering ten people, or 100 people, or as we found out, there were more and more people coming forward with their stories. And a lot of change has been created. So, some people didn't like the way we went about our study, by looking at website information, but that's the first place anyone is going to go. And then they're going to approach Human Resources. We weren't meaning to criticize Human Resources, but we thought if two people are getting two entire sets of different information, that's not okay either.

So it really does become important to make information available, accessible, that you have a policy or process in place, that someone who's dealing with a life-threatening illness, or dealing with their first child, has equal access to the information that will help them, and that we need to have resources on the web that help people who are dealing with elder parents, and childcare issues. I also worked with childcare centers on campus, which is something else I didn't get

into, but childcare was a huge issue for young faculty. And then eldercare became even more—as I get older, I know that that that becomes much more of an issue.

So as we share our information—and we had a couple of open forums, and people would come with their stories and just—I was able to go to President Ray and I said, "You may or may not hear some of these things, but you need to know about what's going on with your faculty, with your staff, and with your graduate students and your older, your non-traditional age students." I mean, we need to have things in place for students as well.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** As the student affairs person, I'd be wrong to not mention that there were some huge student issues! Graduate students were treated completely different from one department to another, especially if they became pregnant in the middle of their program. So I just felt like this is something that we need to address. And I am so glad—I have a sense of pride that we now have a full-time sexual assault services coordinator, that we now have somebody who works specifically with work-life balances issues, that we have two people working in an ombudsperson office, that we have programs in place to educate students about sexual violence on campus. So much of this came because I, or students that worked with me, or faculty that came to me, raised the issue.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And sometimes raising the issue, whether it happened with one person's story, or whether it happened with twenty people that sat in an open forum, we were able to create some change on campus. And I became a thorn in the side oftentimes, because I would bring up the same topic over, and over, and people would say, "You know, you're sounding like a broken record." And I said, "I'm going to continue to sound like a broken record, because it's not right." And so in some small way, I feel like my being a pain in the side of some administrators—and I also think that some administrators really respected me, because I could come to them and I'd often come with solutions. I wasn't just a complainer. And I felt that that's one of the things that I don't like, is people who whine. I often work hard to come up with some solutions. Or I'd say, "We need to study this more, but don't study it for five years, please. Try to do something in the next year and a half."

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** Because I realize sometimes the universities move very slowly. President Ray is a fast mover. He likes to see things change, and that is one of the things I really appreciate. We had Beth Ray on the Women's Center Advisory Board, and I often used her as a sounding board, because I knew if I told her—I mean, you learn that this is part of the devious underground ways of—and I have so much respect for Beth Ray. She's so missed now, but she was somebody who had her ear to the ground, and it was really helpful, especially around women's issues.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** She was somebody that I could talk with, and things would change. [1:25:01] There were also times that I would get really mad and once I found my voice—it took me a while, but once I found my voice I realized I need to let people know that this happened on campus. And I remember one time walking into the Provost's Office unannounced. I didn't even let the secretary announce me. I walked right in. And I can't believe I did this, to this day. Roy Arnold was the provost. And I walked in because two women of color came to me in the same day and told me two very different situations, but they were both discriminatory things that had happened, both very, very unfair, and both—it looked like we were going to lose two women of color on campus. And just hearing their stories made me angry. And I walked into the Provost's Office and I said, "You need to know."

And the fact that I could do that? I ended up having a great relationship with Roy Arnold afterwards. Both women that left moved into—I mean, one woman stayed on campus and has moved into a higher level administrative position, which I was thrilled to see. The other woman became a President of American Indian College, and I was really pleased to see that as well. So some of the things have happened because I—I don't know that I necessarily helped either of their situations, but I did make people aware of problems.

**JD:** Well, you were so active, both in kind of your paid positions, as well as these other networks and things that were volunteer work on your behalf. And just looking at your vita, you talked earlier about publishing, but there's also a whole long list of kind of professional services that you were involved with, related to your kind of paid work.

**BR:** Sure.

**JD:** So we probably don't have time to talk about all of those, but maybe about kind of the value of being involved in professional organizations, or a service or two that just really kind of capture your—that importance, and why you spent time doing those.

**BR:** There were a couple of things that really made an impact on me. One was—this was an organization Joanne Trow was very involved in, and I'm going to forget the name of it. It was the first time I went to a conference that was all women, and I can't tell you what—it filled me with joy to be with women professionals! It was sort of like the Faculty Women's Network the first time we got together. It was like, "Oh, my! All of these people are having the same experience. What can we do about it?"

And so we got together. It used to be a student affairs-related organization, but it became an organization, a national organization of women, NAWA—National Association of Women in Education. And then eventually it was the National Association of Women in Higher Education. But it was the first time I went to a conference with all women, and that's where I connected with other women's center directors. I also met women who worked in senior level positions in universities, who actually had full-time jobs working on women's issues. And I was astonished that these positions actually existed! From that organization to the National Women's Studies Association, that's where all—NAWE eventually went away because of financial—it was just hard because so many professional women went to their own disciplinary conferences.

**JD:** Sure.

**BR:** It was hard to sustain this organization. But the National Women's Studies Association, sorry, became the home for women's center directors. And that—it became my new professional home. I loved meeting with 100 different directors from all over the country! We had a lot of commonalities, but we also got new ideas, and came up with different programs. I learned so much from those colleagues. It was just an incredible group of professionals! And I realized how important the work was that we did.

I mean, sometimes people would trivialize the Women's Center by saying, "Women's issues are all better now. We're not in the '70s anymore." And I'd say, "You know what? If women felt safe walking at night, if we didn't have sexual violence, if domestic violence didn't happen among our students and our faculty." You know, I knew about all of these things. I said, "All of those things are still happening." [1:29:59] And we still don't make the same as men, and we still get put down. I said, "We need a Women's Center. I hope for the day we don't, but right now we still do." And I had this group of professionals who understood exactly what I experienced every day. So that was my new professional home.

The other organization I was asked to serve on was the ACE. The American Council on Education had an Office of Women in Higher Education, and they met once a year, either—let's see. We met in Washington, D.C., in Los Angeles, in Miami, and then back to Washington, D.C. That was a group of senior level—they were university presidents, they were provosts, and women who had reached these upper-level positions. And I think that was another time I realized, the work that I'm doing may be looked at as just a women's center director, but I'm doing work that is as important as a lot of other people in the country.

And I met a lot of people through that connection that actually helped me when I was—whether I was doing the work-life balance study, or whether I was doing something else, I was able to connect to other people around the country who were able to give me research, or connections, or websites, or whatever it was that I needed to do. So I finished my career with the women's center directors at the National Women's Studies Association in November of 2011, was my last conference. And my mom went with me to that conference, because I was given the Lifetime Achievement Award.

**JD:** Mm-hm. [Pause] A significant honor.

**BR:** And that's when I realized that my life's work, even though I felt like I kept hitting brick walls, and I kept—people saying, "You're raising too many issues, and you need to get back to doing what you're paid for." I do committee work, and I do national work, and I did state-wide work. The Oregon Women in Higher Education is another group I got very involved in. And I did so much of this because that's where my heart was! And it didn't matter if I was spending four hours in the evening working on my Oregon Women in Higher Ed stuff, or working on something, doing a presentation for the annual conference I'd be going to. It meant a lot that I was honored by my colleagues, because—and probably the most important honor I've ever received. And I know when I got up, and they read this whole list of things that I had done over the last twenty years—my mom listened to this, and she goes, "I didn't know you did all of that!"

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** She said, "Could I get a list of all of that?" She was just astonished! But I realized in listening to all of this, I got up and I said, "You know, everybody in this room is doing the same work that I've done. It's not extraordinary in that I've got this body of work, because all of us are doing this. The thing that means the most to me is that occasionally I have talked with a single student, and I have kept them alive, because of something that has happened in their life, and I was able to connect them with the resources that were able to get them away from a violent situation. Or that I have done something that has steered a student in the direction that they needed to be successful. That's what all of us are doing this work for."

And it really meant a lot to be honored by everyone, but I realized that all of the late nights, and all of the different committees that I worked on—at that point that was a great ending point, because I was really proud of—proud of all of the people I've worked with on all of those committees, and proud of all of the hours and hours of struggles we went through, proud of all of the changes that have taken place. And it was just—it was a great way to end.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** It was really a great way to end.

**JD:** Well, you haven't—you ended that part of your life, but you clearly are now retired, and have other pursuits, because life does go on.

**BR:** Yeah.

**JD:** I'd like to give you a little chance to talk about what your life is like now, and where you put your energies.

**BR:** Well, it's funny. I talked to a lot of people who aren't sure what they will do with retirement, and they are a little afraid of it. I had no fear whatsoever. One of the good things that happened [1:34:59]—right after I retired my husband went on sabbatical, and so we left the country. And that gave me some space. I didn't feel like I needed to know what was going on at the university every minute, and I didn't need to look over my shoulder to see what the Women's Center was doing.

And I'm glad I had that space, because I still had a lot of passion and a lot of care. But we lived in Tokyo for three and a half months, and then we lived in Paris for four months, and that was an extraordinary way to start retirement, an extraordinary way of connecting with people in other parts of the world. And travel will always be important in our lives, so I'm really glad I had the privilege to be able to do that.

The thing that I spend most of my time on, and one of the reasons why I wasn't afraid of retirement, is I'm a quilter. And so now I have the time to really throw myself full-force into creating quilts, creating baskets. I make baskets that are fabric wrapped around clothesline, and I make and sell baskets and quilts. People laugh at me. When I was in France, I was drinking a glass of wine and I was checking my email, and somebody sent me an email saying, "Beth, we need somebody to run for president of the Quilt Guild [laughs], and we thought of you immediately." And it's funny, because I said when I retire, I will volunteer. And I was thinking, oh, I'll be on the program committee, or I'll find some way that I can get involved in some aspect. And I wasn't planning on being president, but you know, it may have been my second glass of wine—

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** —and I was feeling very content, and I said, "Sure, I'll be President! Yeah, I'll run for President." So now being President of the Quilt Guild, and I've joined two other fiber arts groups, I'm taking classes to learn new skills.

And so for me, it's a joy to have the time and the space to create quilts, and to involve other people in quilting. I've worked on creating websites and brochures. It feels like an extension of my Women's Center job, because I was always involved in marketing. And I started a mentoring group for quilters. So if somebody wants to learn how to quilt, or they're putting on a binding for the first time, they can call somebody else, and I match them up, and I kind of feel like, yeah, I did—we did a mentoring program; we did women's leadership programs. You know, all of these things are kind of continuing on in retirement.

**JD:** [Laughs]

**BR:** I'm an avid reader, and I have contributed to the Corvallis Library. I've been a Random Reviewer for two books over the last six years or so. I was asked to review books that had to do with women's issues. So, that's been kind of fun.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And one of the books was *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and the one I just did recently was *The Round House*, by Louise Erdrich, which starts with a sexual assault, and then it's really about Native American jurisdiction versus the city, and county, and federal lands.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** And then it's also about the aftermath of sexual violence—how it impacts family, how it impacts the community. So, I want to get past being an expert in sexual assault, but you know, I think people still think of me. When they think of a topic around women's issues, they ask me to participate.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** I was also on the board of the Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence, and I asked the director to come and talk at that book review, just to let the audience know that we're talking about some difficult subjects, if anybody has a reaction to the topic we have support here, so. And I also felt it was a good way to promote CARDV, so I'm always finding ways of kind of being my marketing person.

**JD:** Weaving all of these different threads of your life together.

**BR:** Mm-hm.

**JD:** Well, I wanted to give you an opportunity, if there's anything that you wanted to talk about that we haven't touched on, to jump in now.

**BR:** Okay. One of my desires, and I almost hesitate to say this, because once I say it I have to do something about it — have wanted to write out the history of the Women's Center, and I made that a priority when I first left the Women's Center. I still have a lot of materials that I copied from Archives. I've got photographs and records that I need to give back. And I either need to give them back to Archives, or I need to do something constructive. And I have plenty of knowledge. I know all of the players; I knew all of the people who were involved in the beginnings of the Women's Center [1:40:00] and two have passed away. I've been to both of their memorial services. Joanne Trow is the third person, and she is just a font of knowledge.

I need to do something with this information while there are still people around, and still people who can tell their stories. You have inspired me. I think what you are doing now for OSU, and for the history project, it gives me the impetus to take this and to maybe even use some of your methods, with some questions, maybe using video recordings, or even some phone recordings, where I can talk with some of the people involved in the past, which would connect me with some people from my past, which would be great fun!

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** Maybe even to work with some students at OSU. And I did talk with one of the librarians at OSU about getting some students involved in talking with some of the people from the past, because they would have a different perspective than I would have. I definitely have my own biases, and I need to have some people without bias asking some questions, just about, what are some of the memories of the people that worked there in the '90s, and people that worked there in the '80s, before I was involved?

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** So, maybe you've pushed me in a way that will get that project done. If not, I've got a lot of materials that are going to Archives, and somebody in the future will do it. But now that I've said it, I probably will find a way of acting on it. It might interfere with my quilting a little bit, but I still have a lot of passion, and I also feel like there are a handful of people that have a lot of knowledge about not just the Women's Center, but women's issues on campus. We can't lose that.

**JD:** Mm-hm.

**BR:** We can't lose that. I'm glad you're doing what you're doing, and you're talking to some amazing people who had an impact on OSU. I'm really grateful for that, and I'm grateful to be part of this project.

**JD:** Well, that's wonderful. And I would also like to offer you the opportunity, if you have any kind of thoughts or advice for current students, and faculty, and staff at OSU, that you'd like to perhaps take us out on.

**BR:** Well, one of the things I've learned over time is that there's power in numbers. So find other people who have experienced some of the things that you have, and find ways of creating change. Find your voice. Some people would ask me what my job was, and I'd say, "Helping students find their voice." It's so much easier to say that than, "Battling sexual violence on campus." Helping students find their voice is such an important piece of what I did, and whether it was an individual who needed to find their voice to create their own personal change, or whether it's a group that isn't recognized on campus, that needs to find space or find recognition, or it's a group of faculty that don't feel that their salaries are equitable with others on campus.

And so for me, it's: find your voice, and find others that have similar experiences, and keep creating change. Challenge authority. Don't stop. Don't give up, because I think that's one of the things that would have been so easy for me. And there were times, like I said, when I rocked the boat, that I felt like, okay, am I putting my job on the line? Am I heading down a slippery slope? And yeah, I was. Every time I did something, I was taking a chance. But I persevered. I could have lost my job, probably, in some cases. There were times when I got people really angry. But there were times when I was really angry. And I'm kind of a quiet angry person, but I also like to see things happen. And some things took years to change, and some things were able to change quickly because it just needed to be—the issue needed to be raised.

So, what I would say to anyone, and particularly to students, because students often feel that they have no power—students have tremendous power on campus. So much has changed on our campus because of student activism and student voice. So I would say: just keep finding that voice. [1:44:37]