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HAGGERTY: Let's start with your name, and maybe your original position or position now at UW and get ready for whatever you want to talk about.

ALLEN: My name is Carolyn Allen. I'm a professor in the English Department. I have been affiliated with Women Studies ever since I came here, virtually. That was way before it was a department and when it was a program, I've seen it under many different chairs and seen it re-shape itself many different times, so that's been interesting. My own scholarship it's pretty much on women writers, especially women writers in Paris in the 1920s, and then I do Feminist Theory.

[0:00:45.2]

HAGGERTY: In what year did you come here?

ALLEN: 1972.

HAGGERTY: So that's right before it became a program...

ALLEN: Yeah. It was barely a program when I came here. I guess it would have had program status, but didn't become a department until many, many years later. It was, though, one of the oldest. I think 1970 is the date that sticks on my mind as when it got itself together as a program, which makes it one of the oldest in the country.

HAGGERTY: Which is so cool.

ALLEN: Right.

[0:01:17.2]

HAGGERTY: And did you come here knowing you we're going to focus on the Gender Studies?

ALLEN: No. At the time that I came here there was very little scholarly work being done on especially contemporary women writers, which is what I was interested in. So for the first number of years that I was here I published mostly on male writers. And it was in the '70s feminist theory just started to get going. It took me six or seven years and then I started publishing more on women writers and teaching a Feminist Theory course. I taught with my colleague in the English Department, Donna Gerstenberger, the first course that was in English that was oriented toward women, it was a women and literature class.

In fact, I should say this in Donna's credit, when she was Chair of the English department and even before that she made sure that we had not one but two courses in English that were devoted to things related to Women Studies. One was a women and literature course, Women Writers, and the other one something like Women in Literature, which meant women characters, whatever the gender of the writer. So partially because we already then, from the '70s forward, had two undergraduate courses in women in the discipline, Women Studies – when it grew in its own way, in its own program – had a Social Science focus, partially because in Humanities, at least in English, which is of course the biggest part of Humanities by a long shot, had already had two women writer courses being offered. And so I started saying Donna and I taught the first graduate course together, right after I came here, the first graduate course that was in women and literature. That was in, I forget, must be somewhere in the '70s.

[0:03:13.6]

HAGGERTY: So she started those first courses?

ALLEN: She put them into curriculum when she was the undergraduate director. She later

when on to be Chair of the department, but it was when she was directing the undergraduate program that she made sure that we had those two new courses. And that was unusual because some graduate programs at that time – graduate programs where we all studied – might not have had not only not much attention but, say, no women writers even in their curriculum. Now of course it's completely different.

[0:03:44.9]

HAGGERTY: Absolutely. So was there friction within you and any other faculty in creating those?

ALLEN: No. And it was completely up to Donna's credit. So if there was friction I didn't hear about it.

[0:03:59.1]

HAGGERTY: What it was like teaching those classes? Did you have a lot of students that wanted to do those?

ALLEN: Yes we did, and so it was really interesting to teach it. I can't quite remember exactly which books we taught. We taught fiction and there was some early feminist criticism which is what we say in the English Department in the '70s, so I think we taught some of that stuff: Toril Moi and Simone de Beauvoir.

[0:04:35.9]

HAGGERTY: Very cool. And did you know when you were coming into UW that that is where you wanted to focus at all?

ALLEN: No I didn't. Well, I might have known that, but when you are first here as an assistant professor, your goal – no matter what department you are in – is to get your articles and materials published so that you can stay.

[0:05:01.0]

HAGGERTY: Do you want to touch on a little bit how you became a feminist or if you would call yourself a feminist?

ALLEN: I would certainly call myself a feminist. For 20 years I taught the Feminist Theory graduate course in the English Department, so for a long time— Oh, I don't know how to consciously respond to that question, I know that my first— I was particularly interested, for example, in the poetry of Adrienne Rich in the '70s and I had a chance to meet her and have dinner with her and that was great. And her partner gave me, at that time, a picture of the writer that I went on to write a book about, Djuna Barnes who is a writer of the '20s and '30s – she was. So that was nice. I have a picture in my studio at home, my work space, of Djuna Barnes that was given to me by Adrienne Rich's partner, so I always think that's great.

HAGGERTY: Wow, that's a big defining moment.

ALLEN: Yeah, her partner Michelle.

[0:06:05.9]

HAGGERTY: What was going on, on the campus when you became involved?

ALLEN: Well, that's one of the ways that Women Studies changed a lot. When I was first here – and of course I started going to meetings – there were open meetings that were open to people in the community. So there were community activists who would come to the meetings, and seems like we had elected representatives or maybe they were volunteer, I can't remember, from the faculty and from the community, and from adjuncts. I have never officially taught within Women's Studies or now Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies, because I've always taught in English, because English has always had these spaces for people to do feminist work within the department. So I've always been adjunct and I've never

formally taught in Women Studies (GWSS) – “gee whiz” I’ll call it – which would be true of many of the adjuncts here. But I was active, went to all the meetings, all the staff came to the meetings, all the UW official faculty – which at that time was much smaller than it is now – and then lots of people from the community would come. So there was a much greater, more frequent interchange with community activists than I think maybe there is now. And I think that’s partially because at some point in there, late ’70s early ’80s the term “academic feminism” became kind of a bad word because you were in the academy and you weren’t out on the streets.

We had some struggles with a group which is still here Seattle called Radical Women because there was a person on the Women Studies staff who belonged to Radical Women and that’s where there was a lot of friction around being a feminist in the academy and being a feminist outside the academy. So it differed, that when we used to have big meetings, huge meetings, a lot of people would come and we would sit in a circle and talk about issues and it didn’t feel very academic specially compared to English Department faculty meetings, which I also of course going to.

[0:08:18.4]

HAGGERTY: Was the English Department one of the first areas that Gender Studies could come into?

ALLEN: Here. But also I think on this campus Political Science, and partially that is because we hired Nancy Hartsock who— she came after I did and she and I ended up teaching a course together, couple of times, a Feminist Theory course that was part Poli-Sci texts and part English Department texts. But Poli-Sci has always had a feminist theory presence, with Nancy and Christine DiStefano and others. And of course Nancy, when she retired she founded a fellowship here for graduate students, which was wonderful. And so we just last here had our first Harstsock

Fellowship person, a person from English has it happened it is a very interdisciplinary fellowship so people from different departments applied.

English has always had a feminist component. Poli-Sci always has. Sociology, especially because in the mid '80s we hired Judy Howard who edited the journal *Signs* with me, which I can talk about. So they had a feminist presence, and before that they had other people who worked on feminist stuff. Pepper Schwartz, for example, came to the University about the same time I did, in fact I think we might have come the same year. She's always been interested in, generally speaking, Sexuality Studies, but also Women in Academia and so there was a presence there. I suspect in History, I just don't know the history of other departments as well as I do my own.

[0:10:09.4]

HAGGERTY: So tell me about that general science.

ALLEN: *Signs*. It's called *Signs*. *Signs* – I'm sure you know – is the biggest of the feminist theory journals and always has been. *Signs* is interesting because it moves every five years by nomination and competition to different universities. Before it was here was at Stanford and Minnesota and I think Colombia, because it was founded by someone on the East Coast, Catherine Stimpson. They invited us to put in an application. So Judy and I did that, which meant going around to all of the people that had feminist interests, even in the Sciences and the Medical School and Law School, to get them to write letters of support – it was quite an elaborate proposition.

So then they brought it here, and then the next difficult thing was getting space to hold it. At University of Washington space is a big deal, [inaudible: 0:11:20.0]. We were very lucky, we had very nice offices in this building and we had a staff that was part from the University of Chicago which sponsors the journal, and

partly with support from the Graduate School. We used the Women Studies mailing address box number, so we had support there too. So it was really kind of a joint project. It's an interdisciplinary journal, as I'm sure you know. We were the second version of *Signs* to have co-editors and it was important for us to do that because that way we had somebody who could help vent [?] the Social Science submissions that we got and then somebody that could do the Humanities and so Judy and I worked that out, and we worked really well together, so it was fun.

HAGGERTY: And you said five years that it was—

ALLEN: Five years. So it was here from 1995 to 2000.

HAGGERTY: OK.

ALLEN: For example because of the millennium we published an article that was called *Feminisms at a Millennium* and we invited scholars from all over the world to write short pieces about what they thought about feminism and feminist theory at the turn of the century. So that is a really interesting issue of the journal, sort of a classic issue.

[0:12:38.6]

HAGGERTY: And did that relate a lot with what was going on on the campus?

ALLEN: No, because it's an international journal so we wrote—Judy and I did the introduction, but in general when journals come to a campus they are part of the campus in that we hired graduate students, for example, to work with us. And of course we were located on campus, but the journal is not a local journal. And that would be true of all academic journals, not just *Signs*, but all of them.

HAGGERTY: OK.

ALLEN: One thing I should mention, I don't whether other people have mentioned it, but the National Women Studies Association national conference was here.

HAGGERTY: I hadn't heard that.

ALLEN: There's a lot of history, that's why I'm hoping that some other people who have been around longer, you'll talk to them because they can fill you in.

There was a group of people. Sydney Kaplan, I think, was the Chair of the program then, and Bettylou Valentine, Lexie, they worked together to bring the conference here. And it's a huge undertaking because it's a national conference. I think they had a great time and you should talk to Sydney, and she could direct you to Lexie. Bettylou Valentine died just very recently, maybe three months ago.

HAGGERTY: Oh wow.

ALLEN: But Sydney can give you lots of good stories about having the conference here. Sydney was Chair of the program for two terms, so ten years, so she has been Chair. Judy Howard, as I say, who is now the Divisional Dean for Social Sciences was Chair, Susan Jeffords who is now an administrator up at Bothell was Chair, Shirley Yee, lots of people before. And Sue-Ellen – you mentioned Sue-Ellen – she came here after I did. And if you haven't, you should talk to your lecturer Clare Bright because Clare Bright who was been here longer than I, she really would be somebody who could tell you about the history of the program on the first few years. She would definitely be somebody you should talk to.

HAGGERTY: Yeah, that name came up a lot for me in my research; I've been pushing for that.

ALLEN: I'm assuming you're going to talk to the people that have been Chair. Because

there are a series of people and they're all— except for Sue-Ellen who is retired and doesn't live in Seattle anymore, she lives in the Southwest, but everybody else is still on the faculty except for Sue-Ellen. And David moved up to Bothell too, David Allen.

HAGGERTY: Right yes. I wanted to get a few men in there too.

ALLEN: He is the only—We got a lot of national press when he was appointed because a man leading Women Studies – and it was still Women Studies at that time. And that wasn't that long ago because he was just the immediate past Chair before Priti, so it hasn't been that long.

[0:15:52.8]

HAGGERTY: Interesting. So we talked a little bit about those grad English classes that you taught. What other things have you taught?

ALLEN: Well, the graduate courses I was thinking of the one that Donna and I taught together because it was the first one. Then Nancy Hartsock and I taught those together. And then when *Signs* was here, Judy Howard and I taught a graduate course which we called the Signs Seminar which we taught them all—so it was very focused on contemporary, interdisciplinary versions of theory. We had students from a number of departments, graduate students, and talking about how *Signs* worked but also having them read *Signs* articles and feminist theory along with that. So it was nice to have those joint courses.

GWSS has a graduate PhD program now, but it hasn't always had one. And it took a lot to put that PhD proposal together to get it, and I wasn't part of that group, so you should definitely find out about that.

Nancy Hartsock and I sort of invented the first version of the Feminist Theory

Certificate which we still offer, which is what the department had before they had an official PhD program. We just declared that there would be one, so it was never formal but I just was looking on your website and it explains how for seventeen years before you had a PhD you had a Certificate program. Nancy and I did that just because we thought that people from other departments should be able to have recognition of their work in Feminist Studies and Feminist Theory. So that's how they did it, was by getting a Feminist Theory graduate certificate, and there's requirements and so forth and they're still in place. And now of course you also have a Sexuality Studies and Queer Studies certificate program too, for graduate students. It's nice because that means that people who come here and their primary scholarly work is in a different discipline, it's not specifically in this department but it allows them to also supplement that with a certificate in one of those two programs that you have now.

[0:18:21.8]

HAGGERTY: And was that popular when you—

ALLEN: Yes. Lots of people have taken—it's hard to know numbers, and I don't know the numbers, and of course I don't know anything about people other than people in English who have taken it, but I know several people have done that, and it has been great for them. So now there is a Feminist Theory sequence in Gender—I still call it Women Studies, I try not to. Anyway, I had not taught in that sequence, but I did teach Feminist Theory in the English department for years in the '80s and '90s. Now, fortunately, I have newer colleagues who help me out.

[0:19:02.5]

HAGGERTY: Great, and what are you doing now?

ALLEN: I'm teaching full-time in the English Department, still. I'm doing the same thing I've always been doing.

HAGGERTY: That's great.

ALLEN: I teach Women Writers still, the course that Donna put into the curriculum. I don't teach Feminist Theory much anymore, although I could. I'm interested in my own work now and something that's related to issues of gender but it's not the same thing: theories of emotion and affect and how people respond to reading, and does that differ according to one's identification, racial identification, ethnic identification, gender identification and so forth. So it's related but it's not Feminist Theory per se.

[0:19:57.5]

HAGGERTY: So we kind of talked about the *Signs* journal. What was going on with Women Studies around the country as you were kind of figuring yourself out here?

ALLEN: We were always lucky because we were one of the best known programs because we were one of the earliest programs. And when Judy and I were editing *Signs*, we always went to the National Women Studies Conference and often talked about *Signs* there. In fact, you're making me remember now; we always give a reception there at the Women Studies Conference. *Signs* would sponsor a reception with food and everything which generously the University of Chicago paid for, which is a good thing because Washington wouldn't have had the money to pay for it. We didn't really need to raise the visibility of the journal because it's such a well-known journal anyway, but it was fun to meet people and see some of our authors and people who were going to submit and things like that.

What else was going on? It's always hard to know what's going on at any other given university. Certainly the tension between so-called activist feminists – street feminism, and feminism in the academy, that was also an issue. And it was always an issue around issues of race because, I'm sure you know, the feeling of women

of color that feminism for a long time suggested white feminism. I actually think there's really a history of Black women involved and especially Black women as opposed to other ethnic positions, involved in the early days of second wave feminism in the '70s and so forth, there were collectives. But I worry that a lot of that history has been lost because third wave feminism was quick to say, "Oh, it was just a white girls thing," which in fact is not true. But it is also true that feminism in the academy has always needed to remember that intersectionality – which of course is where the focus is now – is so crucial, and I know that that wasn't always the case.

I think those would be two of the kinds of tensions that were going on that happened at the National Women's Studies conferences, around issues of race. I know that at several conferences they were meeting in small groups, kind of like—I never participated in consciousness-raising groups and things like that because that was little bit before my time, but I certainly was interested to have people come together to talk about stresses around various points of identification and they often happened at Women's Studies conferences.

[0:22:56.0]

HAGGERTY: And do you think that we have created that distinction, it's a lot clearer between the activism and the academia?

ALLEN: I think it's better integrated but in general the history of activism in this country has so declined since— if you go back to when I was young in the late '60s and the amount of street demonstrations and protests and it has radically shifted. So it's not just about issues of gender and race and sexuality. We have lots of things, the Civil Rights Movement, Anti-War Movement, all those kinds of things, you just don't see people out on the streets for anything like that anymore.

[0:23:39.0]

HAGGERTY: Do you focus on that on any of the classes you are teaching now?

ALLEN: No, because I don't teach the history of feminism, I teach feminist theory, but there are certainly people who can do that. I mean, Shirley Yee is a Women's historian although she concentrates particularly in 19th century materials. You know Angela? She could tell you about the days of street protests and so forth. So if there is a less visible activist component it is because there is a less visible activist component whatever you're talking about, whether you're talking about race or gender or ethnicity, at least as far as I can read in the paper.

[0:24:24.3]

HAGGERTY: Yeah, absolutely. And do you ever look at Black feminist writers?

ALLEN: Oh, I always—I would never teach a course without writers of color in it. So that's just part of what I have always done, I would never teach a course that was just white women.

[0:24:46.5]

HAGGERTY: Great. We are getting towards the end. Is there anything you really feel important, needs to be said?

ALLEN: No, I think it's great that you're having this project. And it has really been fun to see Women Studies and then Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies develop over the years. And I loved having my colleagues in the department. For years and years, Shirley and I went to the gym together, so that was fun. Judy and I got to be very good friends through *Signs* and we had actually been friends before that so that was great. It's a great faculty they're all doing a good job, I say “you” as a representative of the department. So otherwise, no, I can't think of anything. But I know there is a huge history that at least from the presence that you all have on

the web right now, is completely invisible. And so if there is not a repository for things— it's helpful you have Sue-Ellen's papers, but somewhere there should be the history of the founding, the people who were involved. And for that, of the people who are around here I definitely think Clare Bright would be a person you should talk to and you could move, as you probably are to various other Chairs, because I'm not the only one who's been around here for a while. So that's it.

HAGGERTY: Thank you so much.

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