

Please Note

This oral history transcript has been divided into two parts. The first part documents the presidencies of John G. Kemeny and David McLaughlin and is open to the public. The second part documents the presidency of James O. Freedman and will be open in 2023 which marks twenty-five years following the end of his administration.

This is part one.

Mary C. Kelley
Mary Brinsmead Wheelock Professor of History

An interview conducted by
Mary S. Donin

Hanover, NH

July 28, 2008
August 7, 2008

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Rauner Special Collections Library

Dartmouth College

Hanover, NH

INTERVIEWEE: Mary C. Kelley

INTERVIEWER: Mary S. Donin

DATE: July 28, 2008

PLACE: Hanover, NH

DONIN: Okay. Good. Alright. So let's just have an opening sentence to put us in time and place.

KELLEY: Have you spoken to Jere [R.] Daniell [II '55]?

DONIN: Not yet.

KELLEY: Absolutely necessary.

DONIN: Yes. He's on the list. I'm trying to get all the faraway people done first.

KELLEY: Right.

DONIN: Because every time he sees me, he says, "I'm not going anywhere." I said, "Okay, good. Just checking, because if you move to Florida, I'm going to have a problem."

Okay. So today is Monday, July 28, 2008. My name is Mary Donin. I am here in Rauner Library with Mary Kelley, formerly the Mary Brinsmead Wheelock Professor of History at Dartmouth College, and currently the Ruth Bordin Collegiate Professor of History, American Culture, and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan. And you also held another professorship called the John Sloan Dickey Professorship?

KELLEY: I did.

DONIN: In social sciences?

KELLEY: Yes, I did.

DONIN: Was that before?

KELLEY: That was before the Wheelock Chair. What happened is that those Third Century Chairs—the John Sloan Dickey was a Third Century Chair—it was a term appointment. It lasted for five years, and it was partly awarded to people... It was awarded on the basis of scholarly achievement. But it also had a very important teaching component. So one's teaching record was also part of the selection process. And in those five years, you take a particular curricular project and try to bring it to fruition. And the project that I chose... Because it was the years in which we were trying to develop a more broad curriculum and integrate the study of women into all facets of the curriculum, my project and what I used the money for was to encourage people to develop courses on women's sociology, women's literature, women's psychology, women's history across the curriculum, in order to see that the study of women was integrated across the curriculum. And you offered enough incentives, in terms of support for the course and monies to do the research, to begin the course, and various forms of stipends.

It was very successful, and did work, and courses entered the curriculum permanently, as a result of that initiative.

DONIN: Now, was this happening after the Women's Studies Program had been made a major?

KELLEY: Yes.... No!

DONIN: Before?

KELLEY: I believe it was before the major was installed. And in fact, that's correct. It was, and I believe it helped to see that that major could be installed.

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: Very much so.

DONIN: Great.

KELLEY: And then when that term chair ended, Jim Wright was the dean of the faculty, and he told me at that point that he had hoped that I would be able to have another chair. It depended on when and where, and within a year. And he also was very wonderfully generous in making that.

The Brinsmead Wheelock Chair was, I think, the first chair named for a woman at the college. And he knew that that would mean a great deal to me.

But now Leo Spitzer tells me that the one that he held—and you must check this with him when you see him—was actually the first woman. I think it's the Kathe something or other chair [Kathe Tappe Vernon Professor of History].

DONIN: Oh!

KELLEY: So I could be wrong about that. But I was told the Wheelock would be the first chair named for a woman. I guess it was probably the first chair that Jim raised the money [for] and saw that it was named for Brinsmead Wheelock. Which was great.

DONIN: Yes. Okay. Well, let's back up, though. Back in 1977, did Dartmouth find you, or did you find Dartmouth?

KELLEY: [Laughs] I found Dartmouth. I applied...I had been teaching at Lehman College, City University of New York immediately after taking my Ph.D. And it was a wonderful... It was an absolutely wonderful place to teach.

And I would say, still to this day, regardless of all the places that I've taught, which have only been four in number, it was the most socially responsible position or socially engaged position I took. Because all of my students were first-generation college, all of them worked 40 hours a week, all of them did their work on their parents' kitchen table. And you could see a kind of democratization of education that was very powerful. And it's the circumstance of the institution itself.

I loved teaching at Lehman College. But the city went down the drain financially, and I left, literally, one step ahead of a paycheck—a pink slip.

DONIN: Oh!

KELLEY: And I went to [University of] North Carolina at Charlotte for a year. The teaching load was eight courses a year and no support for research—or very little. And I could just see my scholarly career disappearing before my eyes.

So I knew I had to leave there if I could. And I did go on the market and I applied for this position at Dartmouth, which had been defined in what I call, a kitchen sink ad. That is, everything from immigration to women to labor to intellectual to religion—you know, just anything—to garner as broad a pool as possible. Charles Wood was chairing the department, and he told me that, at that time, there were 400 applicants for the position.

DONIN: Wow!

KELLEY: They brought eight people to campus, and I was the last one to come. And I got the job. I was so glad! I felt like, when I arrived here, I didn't feel like, I knew, that I had died and gone to heaven. It was then a five-course load. Yes, it was. And we were already on, obviously, the year-round. But it was so supportive of research, so supportive of teaching in terms of being able to give you all kinds of support financially for experimenting with your teaching and improving your teaching...even before they had all these teaching centers as they have most places—as they do now at Dartmouth. It was still a place that was just so extraordinarily fine. And I had these wonderfully talented students. I was very lucky, very, very lucky.

DONIN: Now, you weren't put off by what Dartmouth was going through at that point in terms of, you know, coeducation and not enough women?

KELLEY: I wasn't put off by it, no. No, I wasn't at all. But I did take it as a challenge. Dartmouth was a very, very different place than it was even a decade later, by '87.

There were a couple of structural issues that were very problematic. But, of course I didn't know about them when I accepted the position. They used to recruit to what was

essentially an old boy system, which meant calling down to HYP, Harvard-Yale-Princeton people and saying, “Who’ve you got this year in the pipeline?” You know, “Send them along.” There wasn’t even that much national advertising going on for a while. And that part was inherently, structurally, discriminatory toward women faculty potentially coming to the institution. And you go into a national search, not only are you more professional, but you’re going to get a more diverse pool.

And then secondly, the other part, which was actually much more important to me and I felt was very problematic, and I saw it every day in my classrooms, was they had double-pool admissions then, and double-pool admissions meant... This was the deal that, as I understand it, had been struck with the trustees and with the alumni, as they moved into coeducation: that they would never decrease the number of men who could come into Dartmouth, who would be accepted at Dartmouth, each year. That pool would remain the same. And the numbers of women would be added onto that pool.

So you had double-pool admissions. And because they weren’t going to increase the size of the college—that’s why you went into year-round operations, so you didn’t have to build more labs, more dormitories, more athletic facilities—you could basically have a mobile population. And that part struck me as perfectly fine, keeping the size of the college at a thousand or so or maybe, go to 1200. That seemed to me to be fine. And the off-campus programs, which got installed at that point as a way of moving people in and out of the campus, I thought that was also a very good idea, intellectually, because getting students to go other places and to see a wide world; and that all struck me as fine.

But this double-pool admissions meant that it was much more difficult for women to enter Dartmouth, in terms of their record, than it was for men, because it was such a restricted pool.

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: And what that meant is that, first of all, there were also many fewer women in your classroom than men. And you didn’t

move up. Like what Amherst and Williams did is that they went for 50/50 as fast as they could get there. It took them about four years to make it happen. But they went to single-pool admissions, and that's how they made it.

Dartmouth didn't do that for years. And so, you had fewer women in your classes, and those women pretty much, across the board, were better prepared than the men.

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: And the dynamics that that created in a classroom were simply awful. And if it was a woman who was the professor, in some ways that almost exacerbated it. Although, I think it made women, the women in the classroom, slightly more comfortable, slightly more a sense of being secure. I'm not saying that the men teachers were sexist men. That's not what I'm saying. It was just the presence of another woman, who happened to be in authority, in a classroom, would have made them feel more comfortable.

But I had experiences in these classes that were unbelievable. In the spring of '78, which was my first year here, I was teaching intellectual history, as I did all the years I taught here. And I walked into the classroom, and they listed the faculty as M.C. Kelley, J.R. Daniell, or something. So there was no gender attached to them in the listings in the department, then. So you didn't know if the person teaching happened to be female as opposed to male. So I walked in, and I made the usual comment I make: this is history blank, and are we all in the right place? You know, in case they'd wandered into the wrong room. And there was a man sitting in the corner, right near the door—this was over in Reed Hall—right near the door, and he looked up, and he said, "Are you the professor?" And I said, "Looks like it." You know, trying to.... "Looks like it." And he said, "Not to me." He was out the door in a flash. [Laughter]

DONIN: You wrote that story in here, I think.

KELLEY: I did, yes. [Laughter] And then the one about Faith Dunne, who was in education. You know, about, you can't be a professor because you're not a man. [Laughter] Or whatever. That stuff happened.

I mean, this sort of preconception about who a professor was, was very, very much alive.

And what I said in that talk, you know, about it was the most male—you know, this is great, but what Nathan Cobb called, about the Delta in Mississippi and the “most southern place on earth.” And I said, in that speech, this was the “most masculine place on earth.” It really felt that way. It felt that way in such a powerful sense.

And the other... I don't think I used this, but when I would talk to women students or I'd talk to other women faculty, I would say, “You know, the way you survive at a place like this and the way you change a place like this is to be a feminist.” And they'd say, “What do you mean by that?” I'd say, “Because if you're a feminist, you understand that this is structural. It's not about you as a person. This is a structural situation, and structures can be changed. If you think it's about you, you'll believe what they're saying about you, and you'll never make it. You'll never be happy here.”

DONIN: Uh huh.

KELLEY: You'll never be able to feel that you can contribute to change, because you'll internalize this negativity that is being expressed by some people about you. And don't. It's not about you. It's about a place that was all male for more than 200 years, and what would you expect when you're trying to move into coeducation?

Coeducation isn't just about letting women in and hiring some women faculty. It's about changing a whole ethos, a whole way that you think about education and the whole way you think about relations between the sexes. And that has to change over time. And it took time.

I was thinking about what I'd say here about those days. It was daunting, but I wasn't distressed by it or depressed by it. And partly, it was because I was teaching in a wonderful place, and I had wonderful students. And partly, it was that in the recruitment that they did, there were a lot of people like me, who were feminist women, and who were determined to change the place, for themselves but also for our students, male and female. So we started a Women's Studies

Program. So we started a Women's Center. And all of that was a real struggle.

But I want to emphasize that in the years in which we were involved in it, most generally, the administration was very supportive of us. And they threw money at us to do things. We'd say, we need to do this, we want to do this, and we'd do a good proposal, and we got the money to do it.

DONIN: Mmmm hmmm.

KELLEY: The administration wanted this to happen. I mean, they saw that the situation was not a good one for women or men at this institution. That it needed to be improved, that we needed to become coeducational in the fullest sense of it. And they were very supportive, generally.

DONIN: Did John Kemeny, did he play a role... Did he play a part in your decision to come here, John Kemeny?

KELLEY: I admired John Kemeny enormously. But, no, he didn't. You'll get two different takes on John. There are people who thought that he didn't support coeducation all that much.

DONIN: Really.

KELLEY: And that he had other plans, like moving my *alma mater*, Mount Holyoke College, up the river. I heard lots of stories about this, and I'm sure they're in the archives, too. But the John Kemeny I knew—and he was president when I came, of course—was to me, an enormous hero. Because if you're a woman at Dartmouth, you're an outlier. But he was an outlier, too, a Hungarian Jew, you know, smoked cigarettes and never went to bed before three. [Laughs]

DONIN: And not athletic at all.

KELLEY: No! [Laughter] And he was just so committed to changing this institution, in terms of a Native American presence here that was real and not token, and in terms of the place becoming coeducational.

Now, how he got there, that's disputed by certain people. But by the time I got here, he was fully behind it. And Jean—is Jean still alive?

DONIN: No.

KELLEY: Did you get to interview her?

DONIN: Yes, for Kemeny's oral history, yes.

KELLEY: That's right, I remember her dying. I remember that now. And she was astonishing. She was irreverent, witty, a true feminist, you know. And she would say all these things that presidents' wives generally don't say. It was absolutely great.

DONIN: She really changed the sort of model of what the president's wife is—

KELLEY: Yes, I agree with that.

DONIN: --at Dartmouth.

KELLEY: And I think Susan picked that up very much, Susan [DeBevoise] Wright.

DONIN: Sure.

KELLEY: So I would say that, daunting, yes. An enormous sense of accomplishment in everything we were able to achieve. On both counts. And having absolutely wonderful students. I was very lucky because I taught intellectual history and women's history, and both of those are self-selected. Not all students, regardless, are going to be interested in those topics. And those who are, are there because they are interested. It's not just that, well, they have to take something. And that made a big difference, I think. Although my classes were always more than full, well more than full.

DONIN: So, the history department then was looked upon as one of the more welcoming academic departments to women?

KELLEY: Yes, it was. It was, and it had women in it before me. You weren't going into a department without women. Definitely.

- DONIN: Because there were others that were not, I gather.
- KELLEY: I believe that's definitely true, that were not welcoming and did not... When they were recruiting women, they were doing it under some pressure—
- DONIN: Yes. Dragging their feet...
- KELLEY: --from the administration. History, no. Absolutely not. And we recruited a lot more women after I got here. And that also made it possible... History played a really important role in the formation of the Women's Studies Program.
- DONIN: Right.
- KELLEY: You'll be talking to Marysa Navarro [-Aranguren], I'm sure.
- DONIN: I'm waiting for her to retire. You know, we're supposed to not do these interviews until people are retired from the college.
- KELLEY: Oh, right.
- DONIN: So, yes, we're waiting.
- KELLEY: Yes.
- DONIN: Because she's definitely going to be interviewed.
- KELLEY: Oh, yes. And she was absolutely central to all of this.
- DONIN: But, I mean, that's part of your legacy, as well. I mean, other than your...I mean, in addition to your teaching and scholarship, the Women's Studies Program is part of your legacy as well.
- KELLEY: Yes, it is.
- DONIN: You were part of the initial group that put that proposal together.
- KELLEY: I was. Yes, I was. And I also co-chaired it, and I was involved in it very deeply. And Marianne Hirsch was very much involved in the Women's Resource Center and starting

that, too. That was truly her initiative. She had other people around her. But she was centrally important in that.

DONIN: What was the reaction, whether it was from the faculty or from alums, other constituent groups in the college, to the program, to the Women's Studies Program? I mean, there must have been some negative feedback that you guys had to deal with when you were putting this together.

KELLEY: Yes, and there was, from the faculty, on the floor of the faculty. It was politely stated because it was public. So, probably the sort of comments that you find very unattractive, we didn't hear. But there was: What's the reason for it? Why do it? Women are already in the.... Well, women were not in the curriculum. And it's kind of an add-on. And why do we actually have it? Why can't we have men's studies? It's all of those kinds of issues; when you pointed out you had men's studies throughout the curriculum, that's what the curriculum was: men's studies. Actually, I did say that on the floor of the faculty— [Laughs] — to one person who was very recalcitrant.

But what happened at Dartmouth in terms of establishing these programs—this is my opinion, other people may take a harsher opinion than me—is that the kinds of stuff we heard on the floor of the faculty were what you'd hear across the country. I don't think Dartmouth was truly unusual in that regard, about opposing women's studies. And also, the faculty understood the administration was supportive, too. And that helped a lot. What they said behind closed doors and at poker parties, I'm sure was quite different. And there were departments and there were faculty who were truly undermining women here. There's no question about it. No question about it at all. Fortunately, most of those people retired. They tended to be older. But they absolutely despised what happened at Dartmouth, and they despised people like me.

DONIN: And it wasn't just Women's Studies. Weren't they taking the same tack with... whether it was Afro-Am Studies or Native American Studies?

KELLEY: Yes. Absolutely so.

- DONIN: It was all the same sort of resistance, wasn't it?
- KELLEY: Absolutely.
- DONIN: Same arguments?
- KELLEY: Same arguments, yes. This is peripheral. This is not integral to the knowledge that people should be acquiring. This is all politically motivated. It doesn't merit consideration in its own regard. It's not valid knowledge that should be part of any liberal arts education. No, it was politically motivated by people who carried certain kinds of politics and were bringing them into the college and were infecting the college. That's what happened. That's the way it got phrased, behind closed doors.
- DONIN: Uh huh.
- KELLEY: It usually didn't get phrased that way to your face.
- DONIN: Right. So how did you develop your scholarship for the program? I mean, when you were first getting started, it must have been you people, yourselves, that were developing....
- KELLEY: We developed the curriculum, of course. But there was enough there, even then, in terms of teaching undergraduate courses. There were readers, and there were compilations, and there were...you did a lot of Xeroxing and pulling together, out of course packs, these programs. But there was a literature developing in all of these disciplines. And basically, you were moving.... In Women's Studies intro then, you just moved from discipline to discipline, what was happening in literature, history, psychology. You know, you chose a main set of disciplines and moved through them that way. And there was plenty of material to assign...plenty of material. And you also assigned autobiographical material of people who were feminists or people who were writers or whatever.
- DONIN: Did you have any men that came forward to teach?
- KELLEY: In Women's Studies?
- DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: Leo Spitzer.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

KELLEY: Tom Luxon came forward.

DONIN: Oh, Tom Luxon.

KELLEY: Ivy Schweitzer and Tom taught Women's Studies, Intro to Women's Studies together. This was a good bit later. But they did, yes.

DONIN: Well, there was a lot of team teaching, wasn't there?

KELLEY: Women's Studies was always team taught.

DONIN: And representing different disciplines, or, I mean, different departments team teaching?

KELLEY: Yes, that was absolutely different disciplines. The first time we taught it, a woman named Elizabeth Baer, who moved on to Washington College, Lynn Higgins, who's still here, and myself taught it. The three of us were the first to offer, and we did it for one or two years, I think. And then it rotated out, and other people did it. And usually, when you had a team teaching, one person stayed on to the end, and then you brought two more on. Or, however you did it, so you had one person as a connection as you moved forward into a new teaching team.

But, you know, it was hard to...it's very hard, it was very hard to staff these courses in the sense that people were taking programs. People had demands in their own departments. And, most important, now that I recall this—we didn't experience it as much in history because there were a lot of us, and so therefore you could have one or two of us out doing programs—but in other departments, where you didn't have so many people, the chairs and the faculty in the department could be very recalcitrant about releasing people. And that was partly based, they would say, on the need for them in the department; partly, it was based on them not thinking this was actually very important. And

people would be told, who were not tenured, that this will not help you. You should be careful about this. It will not help you to do this.

DONIN: Really!

KELLEY: Sure.

DONIN: It would affect your tenure possibilities?

KELLEY: Well, you were teaching outside your department, you were taking time in developing and learning a new field; that you should be focusing on your own material which you're already familiar with. That's the benign part of it, that you don't have time in these six years to do anything else, and you need to focus on this. I don't agree with that argument.

But the stress and the pressure on women here, without tenure—and almost all of us were without tenure—was enormous. Because we were doing all of this work. You know, we were doing all of this developmental work with the curriculum and with the programs. And yet, we were of course having to meet, as well we should, the same standards as everybody else who wasn't doing anything like this. So the pressures were extreme. And sometimes, I think, people who were discouraging others from coming into the program were doing it with their good intentions, worried about what the impact might be for them. In other cases, I think they didn't approve of it.

DONIN: Did it, in fact, impact tenure decisions for particular people? Do you know?

KELLEY: You mean, did it mean that they didn't get the work done to get tenure?

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: No, I don't think so. I don't know of anybody.

DONIN: But they created this atmosphere... It created this atmosphere to make them feel even more pressurized.

KELLEY: Some people, not everybody. It was some departments, not all departments.

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: Plus it's just very hard to staff programs at a small college because the departments have a full curriculum to mount.

DONIN: Right.

KELLEY: They also have all these off-campus programs in the languages.... One of the greatest places that people worked, in Women's Studies-related matters, came out of the language departments, and yet those departments were also sending people off campus, all the time.

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: And that wasn't easy for tenure either because you were.... I used to think, well, they must love going to another place, to a country that they are doing research on. Then I thought, they don't have a minute to do any research. I mean, so what? So those programs are very demanding, and you disrupt your whole life to take them, and so you don't get work done on your own scholarship. So the system itself made it hard, I think, just the whole tenure system and moving through.

DONIN: Yes. Now, what's interesting to me is the timing that took place in terms of the... You got the program established, and then eventually, it became a major, down the road quite a few years. But you still didn't have the.... The Women's Resource Center, the actual women's center, didn't really happen until you'd established the program. Is that right?

KELLEY: That's right.

DONIN: Yes. And was that on purpose, because there just wasn't time to do both?

KELLEY: Yes, it was. Because the Women's Studies Program, in some ways, was serving as a women's resource center. And it took a while for us to recognize that that was absolutely not a good idea. That you needed to have an academic

program, and then you needed to have a resource center that dealt with other issues. And that that also had a negative impact on the attitude towards the Women's Studies Program, that it wasn't truly academic.

DONIN: Oh....

KELLEY: That it was basically dealing with the challenges of coeducation and how this was affecting women, and it was counseling, as opposed to teaching academic subjects.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

KELLEY: So it was for two reasons: First of all, you couldn't do it. You're not trained to do it. I'm not trained to counsel people.

DONIN: No.

KELLEY: I was doing it all the time, at my office, but I'm not trained to take that on, in any formal role. And secondly, that it dispersed the energies—which there was too little energy already possible, I mean, how much energy we all had. But secondly, it also had an impact on the attitude toward the program. So you needed to separate them. Very much so.

DONIN: And I read this—and I still can't believe it—but Dartmouth was the first of the Ivies to have an established Women's Studies Program?

KELLEY: Besides Penn. The phrasing is very carefully done, and I think it's right in my talk. It's something about the first previously all-male Ivy League....

DONIN: That's what it was.

KELLEY: Yes.

DONIN: Yes, previously all-male.

KELLEY: You always had to be careful because Penn did have a program first.

DONIN: That's pretty extraordinary.

- KELLEY: It is.
- DONIN: Considering, first of all, they were the last... Dartmouth was the last to go coed.
- KELLEY: That's right.
- DONIN: And the first to establish this program. I don't think people give them enough credit for that...I mean, give you people enough credit for that.
- KELLEY: Oh, thank you. It was very exciting and very daunting. But it was an exhilarating time in my life. And there was this whole feminist community here that was truly important to us being able to go forward. And we also had a... They had these, what are called, University Seminars where people doing scholarship in medieval history or Latin American literature, or whatever, could get funds from the college—I'm sure they still have this—and have monthly meetings where a dinner is given, and then a paper is given at the dinner, and then there's conversation. It was a way to stimulate research and scholarship at a relatively isolated college. And we had a Feminist Inquiry Seminar right away. In fact, it was established before I got here. And Brenda Silver was the key person in establishing that.
- DONIN: You were a fairly...In that first decade, though, say, '72 to '82, it was a fairly small group. They were still sorely lacking in....
- KELLEY: In feminists, yes. [Laughs] Yes. It started really, I think, '72...Brenda came in '72. She was one. And Marysa was already here. Colette Gaudin was here. And there were a few other people, not very many.
- DONIN: Marilyn--?
- KELLEY: Oh, Marilyn was great, Marilyn Austin Baldwin was here. But she had a kind of peripheral relationship to the English department and was also in administration. I mean, she was one of the people who did not get a tenure-line faculty position in the English department. And she should have. That would be my opinion of it. But that happened long before I got here, that decision was made. And so, there

were those women who were very, very crucial in terms of leadership, without question. And then, I would say in '75, '76, '77, they hired...more and more women were being hired.

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: And so you had, by '80 or '81 or '82, you did have... There weren't enough of us, but you did have a community of people. And to staff in a very, you know, kind of marginal way, which is one or two courses in the Women's Studies Program. Nothing like what there is today. And you had enough people for a Feminist Inquiry Seminar to be the liveliest on campus. You also had just a core group of women in classrooms across the campus, and that just made an enormous difference. But you had to get to that minimal number of both students and faculty before you could actually begin to see change taking place. And you could also begin to not feel as if you were a guest at this institution.

DONIN: Right.

KELLEY: I never felt as if I was a guest in the history department. But I did feel sometimes as if I were a guest at this institution. And my students felt that a lot.

DONIN: Oh, and for a long time.

KELLEY: And for a very long time.

DONIN: I mean, it took them 23 years to just reach parity.

KELLEY: Yes. I'll never forget when we reached parity. We had a faculty meeting shortly after we reached parity, and I've forgotten who it must have been. It wasn't Jim. I don't think he was president yet. No, he wasn't. And I remember feeling—because it wasn't being announced and celebrated at the faculty meeting—I finally got up and said, “You know something very important happened here. We achieved parity.” And they were, Oh, right! And everybody's clapping. [Laughs] That was an enormously important day.

DONIN: Huge for the women, and for the students.

- KELLEY: And for the men. It was huge for everybody.
- DONIN: Yes. Okay, let's go back to the establishment of the program. It took a long time to finally become a major, and that was because the staffing question really held it back.
- KELLEY: Well, you couldn't...you had to have the courses, you had to have curriculum to staff a major. And it took a long time to get there because we only had so many faculty teaching courses in departments. We only had so many faculty teaching in the program who could offer core courses. We had to get that momentum. You had to get that number, just a basic consolidation of a program, to staff a major. [Margaret] Peggy Darrow was the chair of Women's Studies when we took the major to the faculty. And it was surprising how easy it was. I mean, you know, there was relatively little opposition.
- DONIN: Yes, the vote was very... It was like everybody in favor, three against or something.
- KELLEY: Of course. It would've been embarrassing not to be in favor.
- DONIN: Right. How could you not?
- KELLEY: How could you not?
- DONIN: Especially, by then. It was....
- KELLEY: Right.
- DONIN: We were into the... It was late '80s at that point, I think, when it finally became a major.
- KELLEY: Right.
- DONIN: The end of the.... Well, it may have been by the time Jim Wright.... I don't know if it was Jim Freedman's or at the end of [David T.] McLaughlin's ['54 TU '55] time. I think it was actually the beginning of Freedman's.
- KELLEY: I think it was the beginning of Freedman's time.

DONIN: Presidency, yes. When you had the change of administration from John Kemeny to David McLaughlin, did that impact the feeling on campus for the women, to lose the support of the Kemeny administration?

KELLEY: To lose John Kemeny felt awful. And that has nothing to do with David McLaughlin.

DONIN: Right.

KELLEY: It just felt like the passing of the person upon whom you could totally rely, who you knew his instincts were right, in the right place, which meant he supported...he supported diversity. And he had a profound reason for supporting it, because he was himself a part of a population that had faced severe discrimination in higher education, not to mention in all other dimensions of existence. And he understood it. It was palpable for him. And so you didn't have to explain it. He'd been there, seen it; it was there for him. And he never talked about it in these ways. But you had confidence that that was the case. And in all of these programs, you knew that he understood their importance, their validity, that these were knowledge production that was important and that had to be included in any education that called itself a truly liberal arts education. All of that was John Kemeny. You felt as if he were there with you, and that was very important. And Jean, too.

And David McLaughlin was a very different person. Absolutely different. He did not carry with him that experience, obviously. Nor did he carry with him the same values. It's that simple. I was on the presidential—I was the untenured faculty member on the presidential search committee that selected David McLaughlin.

DONIN: You were on that committee?

KELLEY: I was the only untenured person on it. [William W.] Bill Cook and David Baldwin, the person married to Marilyn Austin Baldwin; he was in government, and Bill Cook was in English. And Bill and David had been here much longer than I had been. Bill was by far the first African-American recruited here, I think. Oh, no, I'm wrong about that. The man in theater is the first one.

DONIN: Errol [G.] Hill.

KELLEY: Absolutely. Errol...and, oh, you've got to talk to Errol.

DONIN: We did.

KELLEY: You did, okay.

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: Did you talk to Errol's spouse?

DONIN: Grace was there. She never left the room.

KELLEY: Yes. Did she speak?

DONIN: Yes, she did.

KELLEY: She is wonderful, absolutely wonderful.

DONIN: Yes. [Laughter]

KELLEY: She was a great support to me. I just think that she is wonderful.

DONIN: A remarkable couple.

KELLEY: Remarkable couple. And that was a very... That was the time before faculty had a vote, so we had only "influence." And it was a very difficult and a very demanding search. It was a stacked search committee. The trustees who were on it had decided that David should be the president before it all began, and they were open about it. They said, well, you'll have to show us somebody better than David. And what was worse about it, and what I never understood about David McLaughlin, because I think he honestly didn't understand it, is he remained as chair of the board while he was a candidate for the presidency.

And he never got it. That's a generous view of it, that he didn't get it. I think maybe he did get it, and he wasn't going to yield before it. And so we did interview lots of people. But the search was not perceived as being open from the very

get-go. And so, people weren't going to risk their own sense of being exposed to come into a search where they thought that the presidency had already been decided.

So, to my mind, it was a failed search in the sense that it wasn't open, it wasn't fair. And it certainly wasn't perceived as being fair either. I don't think that David McLaughlin understood what that cost him, entering the presidency. It cost him in terms of the confidence of the faculty. And I can almost refer to the faculty as a body, which is usually very wrong to do. There was enormous suspicion of him, for that, for what he had done, the way he'd handled himself in this selection process. And then, in terms of the credentials he brought to the position, which were...I mean, they would always say that it was the business model and that Dartmouth had kind of gotten, the wheels had kind of gotten off. And they needed a different kind of model. They just wanted one that was like them. [Laughs] Sorry to put it that bluntly, but that was what I thought was going on with the trustees, and they were going to have their way this time. So they did.

DONIN: I assume it was not...it was not unanimous among the trustees.

KELLEY: I don't believe....

DONIN: There must have been some dissenters.

KELLEY: It was... There were dissenters. Have you talked to any of them?

DONIN: I have to go back and look. We certainly talked to a lot of them, and that was sort of before my time. Most of the interviews had already been done. And since it's all still locked up for another....

KELLEY: Can you look at it?

DONIN: Oh, yes, I can look at it.

KELLEY: Well, go back and look at it, Mary, and make sure that you talk with [Robert Dudley] Bob Kilmarx ['50].

DONIN: He was interviewed for sure, for sure.

KELLEY: An extraordinary individual and a real ally to the faculty serving on the committee.

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: And a very dear friend of mine. But he was crucially important in that regard. And Walter Burke ['44] who chaired it, he himself was ambivalent. That would be my read of him. He didn't not support David. That's clear. He did. But he saw the problems, and he saw the issues at hand. And he was the one who was getting the most pressure of anybody from the other trustees.

DONIN: Sure.

KELLEY: And [Norman E.] Sandy McCulloch [Jr. '50] was the one who was unbelievable. He wasn't on the committee deliberately, and he was David's greatest supporter. It was unbelievable. And he was always nudging around the edge, you know, trying to find out what was going on, and trying to do all of this to shape the decision. And [Richard D.] Dick Hill ['41 TU '42] was on the committee, and he's the one who said, you've got to show me somebody better. He didn't think there would be anybody better, as far as he was concerned. And there wasn't, from his perspective. And we all gathered in Boston at the end, and the faculty spoke. And then we left.

It was at the Ritz Carlton. I was going down in the elevator, and David McLaughlin walked in and then came up in the elevator. We kind of looked at each other. [Laughs] And that was it. And of course he was told—we were told, and this was crucial for me for practical reasons—that David would never know anything about what happened inside the search, that it was confidential. And, of course, that was broken immediately. Absolutely immediately. Within two days of David becoming president, he called me and said, "I hope you'll be able to support me no matter what happened beforehand."

DONIN: How did that make you feel?

KELLEY: It frightened me, number one. It angered me incredibly because it wasn't fair to me or to David in a sense. And what was I supposed to say except, of course, I'll support you? You're the president.

DONIN: Right.

KELLEY: And that was it. And he did try, in many ways—which I also didn't like—he went out of his way to be very, very pleasant to me. And I thought that was fine. But I also didn't like it too much. There was something that made me uncomfortable about it. And he made mistakes in that regard as well.

I don't think that David McLaughlin was a bad person or anything like that. A lot of people do, but I don't. I just think he was very not the right person for this position. And he wanted it, he got it, and he had one helluva time in his presidency. It wasn't an easy presidency for him. And he was used to being able to tell people what to do, and they did it because that was the corporate model.

You don't do that in academic life. You persuade them. And they're recalcitrant, and they're difficult, and they're bloody independent. And, you know, any president comes to look at the faculty and wants to just tear out their hair. And that made sense to me. But David never understood that, and he never was able to do that model.

Plus, he didn't have the confidence of the faculty from the beginning. And what he didn't understand and the trustees didn't understand was that you cannot preside over a college without at least the minimal support of the faculty. To put it bluntly, they'll take you down sooner or later. And that's what happened to him. I mean they never thought, the trustees never thought that was possible. But if they'd looked at any other institution and seen anything similar, they would've seen that this was a presidency that was fated not to go as well as they wanted, as well as David wanted, as well as anybody wanted.

DONIN: Well, it never...I mean, the relationship never improved. From the description we've heard in other interviews of the first faculty meeting, where... Was it [Bernard] Bernie Gert who stood up?

KELLEY: Oh, gosh, yes, Bernie! Yes.

DONIN: And said...I forget what the line is. But it's been repeated any number of times. And it was just clear that....

KELLEY: What was it? I've forgotten. Something along the lines of, you're going to have to prove it to us. [Laughter]

DONIN: I can't remember what it was. But it really set the tone for bad relations. Getting off on the wrong foot.

KELLEY: And then David became paranoid about the faculty. They became this enemy out there, you know, always lurking around waiting to do him in. [Laughs] And, gee, there were people on the faculty who felt that way. But a lot of people didn't. They just thought it was a bad choice, and they didn't like other things that he did, and the way he handled himself. They didn't like—a lot of us didn't like—the fact that he was not nearly as assertive as he should have been about what was going on in athletics. Athletics was one of the last places that.... Now Louise O'Neal, I don't know if she'll talk to you because she left with great bitterness from this place. But she came in, and she was absolutely central to making the athletics change. And David didn't do enough support of changing that system. Because for women athletes, it was a very bad situation here.

DONIN: Difficult.

KELLEY: Oh, very difficult. Talk about feeling marginalized, they felt more marginalized there than they felt anyplace on campus in a way...except in the fraternities, of course, which dominated the social life. So that wasn't good.

And I think also that what happened to David—and this part about it, I'm sure I've mentioned Sandy McCulloch at the beginning—because Sandy turned against David by the end, and he was awful. He was awful to David that last year.

DONIN: Oh!

KELLEY: And he of course chaired the committee that brought Jim Freedman.

DONIN: And it's so ironic because he's so proud of his choice of Jim Freedman. And that must have been a real slap in the face to David McLaughlin.

KELLEY: Oh, it was. He was awful to McLaughlin. Because he had supported McLaughlin so fiercely and been, as I said, trying to intervene in the earlier selection process. And then over the course of it, he turned against David McLaughlin. And I don't know why. You'd have to ask him. I mean he wouldn't put it that way. But you'd need to ask him.

DONIN: Mmmm hmmm.

KELLEY: And of course he and Dottie McCulloch, his wife, who was a Mount Holyoke graduate, has been as generous to Mount Holyoke as Sandy has been to Dartmouth, they did this wonderful thing. They always gave the same amount of money to their *alma maters*. And so Holyoke has really benefited.

DONIN: Yes. Lucky couples who can do that.

KELLEY: That's right. Exactly. So I'd say that David's last year was simply terrible. Have you talked to the man who was the head of the medical school for a while?

DONIN: Well, we've got a.... John Hennessey? Did you mean John Hennessey?

KELLEY: No, I didn't mean John. Is John still alive?

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: You need to be sure to talk to John.

DONIN: We've done a big interview with him.

KELLEY: But what about the man who was brought from Yale to head the medical school?

DONIN: Oh, yes, Bob McCollum.

KELLEY: Bob McCollum. You need to talk to him.

- DONIN: We interviewed him.
- KELLEY: Yes, he told stories about how there was one time when McLaughlin had all the heads in, in his office, and it was 7:30 at night, and he said, "You know, they're out there. They're going to get me. It's the end." [Laughs] And it was near the end of his presidency. But it was like.... He said, "How am I going to control these people?"
- DONIN: He was referring to the faculty?
- KELLEY: Yes.
- DONIN: They're out there.
- KELLEY: They're out there. [Laughter] Well, we were, I suppose. I'm going to have to go. I wanted to be sure to remind you that I'd like to pick up on talking about ROTC.
- DONIN: Okay. Yes.
- KELLEY: Because I chaired the Committee on Organization. That's what it's called.
- DONIN: Right.
- KELLEY: The year that we did ROTC. And that was crucial to what happened to Dave McLaughlin.
- DONIN: Alright. Well, let's pick up there.
- KELLEY: Did you also talk to the guy who was here who became president of...?
- DONIN: [Agnar] Ag Pytte?
- KELLEY: Yes.
- DONIN: A long interview with him as well.
- KELLEY: When did you do it?

DONIN: I didn't do it. This was before my time.

[End Part 1, Begin Part 2]

DONIN: Okay. So we're back with Professor Mary Kelley. Today is August 7, 2008. Okay, Professor Kelley, when you left last week we were still sort of getting to the end of the McLaughlin era, and you wanted to be reminded to talk a little bit about ROTC during McLaughlin's time.

KELLEY: The year after I was tenured and promoted to associate professor, that following year I was asked to chair the COP, and it was very early for me to be doing... anyone to be doing that. But Hans Penner was the dean of faculty, and Hans can be very persuasive. Ahem. So I did it, and that was the year that the provost, Agnar Pytte, and the president, David McLaughlin, decided that ROTC should return to the college. It had been... it had left the college during the Vietnam years. And he decided it should be re-instituted for a series of rationales.

But it had to come from the faculty, it had to come from the Committee on Organization and Policy and they had to consider it first. So we spent an entire semester considering the pros and cons of this. And from the faculty's perspective on the COP, it was almost entirely the cons of it, not too many pros for that. And we also were told by the president.... It was very clear to us that the president wanted this to happen and wanted us to bring forward a recommendation that it be re-instituted. And it was pretty clear to me from my beginning to chair that that wasn't going to happen.

So it was a very difficult semester, and a lot of research was done, and people.... For example, we went to the dean of admissions and asked them for information at other institutions that had re-instituted ROTC to see, if in fact, the claim that this would be important for middle-class students, middle-class males, in terms of allowing them to come to the college. That that actually, in terms of where they had re-instituted, that didn't hold water.

That made the president extremely angry, and we were disallowed from having any possible access to any records from that point on. That in turn antagonized the members of the faculty on the COP, all of whom were more senior than I was. And through the semester, I remember Penner saying to me later, "You know, I just couldn't decide what it was that you were trying to do," he said. "I kept wondering why you wouldn't press the question, why you wouldn't get it done." And then he said, "Afterwards I realized that your strategy was actually brilliant. You just let the faculty come one by one 'til you had everybody in accord, except one person." That was Dick Birnie, class of '65, who himself I think was ROTC. And very pleasant, very good, very decent, and I respected the decision he made. But aside from him, it was unanimous not to return ROTC.

When that report came out of the COP, it had to go before, I think it was, something like the senate; I've forgotten what it was called. It's since been abolished. Or the executive committee of the faculty. Both McLaughlin and Pytte were furious and were determined to make a big issue of it, and it was extremely uncomfortable for me. Lee Baldwin came with me. He was on the COP and was obviously much more senior than I was. He was a wonderful support. So we sort of had to face down the president and the provost, which was not pleasant. We also had to do that on the floor of the faculty, which wasn't so difficult because the faculty voted down ROTC very strongly.

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: Probably would have without the report. But the report provided them with a series of reasons and evidence. And then it had to go to the trustees, and I had to face them down, too.

[George] [B.] Munroe ['43] was on the board at that point, and Munroe had served in the Second World War. And like people who dislike what they're hearing, and want to find a way to discredit you, and happen to be male, and happen to have been in the Armed Services, I was told flat out by him in front of the rest of the board that I was not a patriot. Which was a little on the difficult side for me. It infuriated me. It didn't intimidate me, it infuriated me.

I remember Penner was there with me, and he said, “I looked at your face, Mary,” and he said, “I was afraid of what you might do or say next.” [Laughs] And I looked at Munroe, a person for whom I did not have an enormous amount of respect; he was deeply involved in apartheid in South Africa, Phelps Dodge was deeply implicated. And of course he was always saying that they weren’t. But there it was. But that had nothing to do with the price of bananas. And I just looked at him, and I said, “If you define patriotism that....” I said something like: If you define patriotism that way, then we are completely at odds. People who disagree with government policies or disagree with certain kinds of actions can be just as deeply patriotic as you claim yourself to be. And kind of the whole room went dead. It was a very difficult moment. And the person for whom it was actually the most difficult and the most embarrassing was David McLaughlin. Because he felt like Munroe had stepped way out of place and never should have acted as he did. And he certainly didn’t help the whole case. So there it was. And ROTC did not go through. And then....

DONIN: So you clearly had supporters on the board.

KELLEY: I had supporters on the board....

DONIN: Or I should say....

KELLEY: People who were willing to let it go through, let the faculty recommendation stand not to re-institute ROTC. And also were willing to accord the faculty, because it was about issues around curriculum—that’s one of the ways we framed it—is that they would not have access to the full curriculum because of the other demands that were being made on them in the program. Which was a very fine, appropriate, and smart, I might add, way to frame it because it made it other than political.

DONIN: Right.

KELLEY: And obviously there were a lot of politics on all sides in this kind of an issue. And it didn’t go through. But then the next year, when Dwight Lahr became the dean of faculty—Hans had stepped down—they brought up, what was it? I guess it

was Naval ROTC my year. It was another ROTC; it must have been Army ROTC.

DONIN: It was Army, right.

KELLEY: And then Dwight let it go through. I mean, he didn't stop it. He didn't support trying to stop it again, and so it did come back. It did come back. But that first round, it didn't. And had Penner still been the dean, it wouldn't probably have happened.

And the back story was, and I don't know whether it's true or not—I suspect it has some truth to it—was that McLaughlin basically had promised some of the older alumni that he would do it, that he would.... He couldn't return Dartmouth to what it had been, as some of them wanted it, and I'm not saying David wanted this; he did not. But he couldn't return them to a place where there were no Native Americans, no women, no blacks, and very few Jews. [Laughs] He couldn't do that. It wasn't going to happen. But what he could give them was ROTC, and he was determined to deliver. Plus he believed in it himself. I mean, that wasn't hard for him to carry through on. It didn't go against his own principles at all. And I don't know how much truth there is in whether he actually did make those sort of promises or not. But what is certainly true is that he supported it, he wanted it. And he was willing to fight hard for it. And also...he was willing to sacrifice, which would not have been the decision I would've made as president. He was willing to sacrifice whatever.... I mean, he already had problems with legitimacy. And that didn't help. It hurt him more to have done that.

DONIN: But wasn't there...that was one of the sit-ins that they had at Parkhurst, wasn't it?

KELLEY: Oh, yes.

DONIN: When they voted to have ROTC come back.

KELLEY: I think they did have a sit-in of some sort, yes.

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: So there it is.

- DONIN: Well, it was another nail in his coffin.
- KELLEY: It was not helpful to him, no. No, and it wasn't worth it. I mean...but for him, it was worth it.
- DONIN: ROTC came up again during Freedman's time as well.
- KELLEY: I think...did it? I don't remember that very well.
- DONIN: Well, I don't think it was as big an issue. But again, the faculty had voted to not have it.
- KELLEY: That's right. I do remember that now. Mmmm hmmm.
- DONIN: Not have it on campus.
- KELLEY: Right. It still is, isn't it? Or didn't it get moved to Norwich University? I've forgotten. Something like that.
- DONIN: Yes, most of it.
- KELLEY: That's right. That is what happened, I think.
- DONIN: Yes, at least all the sort of marching and military stuff was going on at Norwich.
- KELLEY: Yes. Right.
- DONIN: Right.
- KELLEY: Although there's something a little bit false about all that. You know, it's sort of, hide it.
- DONIN: Right.
- KELLEY: And it makes it seem like...for people who are enrolled in it, it must seem like somehow shameful what they're doing? And I don't think that's appropriate.
- DONIN: No.

KELLEY: So, I don't like the way it turned out, however. We're spared it, you know, if we don't like it. But the people who do it, are not.

DONIN: And how are they feeling about that? No....

KELLEY: And because, since we've officially made it appear to be somehow, well, shameful almost, or something that you really wouldn't want to be involved in.

DONIN: Yes.

KELLEY: And that's not any good for an 18-, 19-year-old kid...student. Excuse me, not a kid.

DONIN: [Laughs] Right. Okay, so just to finish up McLaughlin, you said you wanted to also talk about athletics, what was happening with athletics, I guess, and Louise.

KELLEY: Athletics was the last bastion in a way. Well, I suppose the fraternities are the last bastion in the drive for true and full coeducation. But athletics was the last bastion besides that. And a woman named Louise O'Neal, whom you've probably heard people speak of. She was the basketball coach at Connecticut, University of Connecticut, and she's the one who led the women's team to national prominence, a prominence it still has today.

She is one of the fiercest, strongest, determined individuals I have known in my life. She was an orphan. She was raised in an orphanage. And she brought with her self-reliance to the point of...just astonished. She was prickly, very prickly, actually. But that was all right. And she fought for women in athletics, and she took an enormous amount of trouble from the athletics department because almost everybody in that department, all the men, truly did not want equal access for women because it cost them money. I mean, that was mostly what it was. You know, it was going to cost more resources, resources that would come from male athletics—men's athletics. Plus they just simply were not interested in it very much; it was just very, very male in that basic sense, that place. And so she fought like the devil. And it happened, and it happened under her. It truly did. And then she wanted to be the director of athletics, and I've forgotten the person

who stepped down, and of course, wouldn't have wanted her to do it at all. And she didn't get it.

DONIN: It was Ted Leland who was the AD, wasn't it?

KELLEY: Yes. And he was not a particularly good AD, not good at all. And she just left in a fury that was not to be believed. It was very sad, very sad. I've rarely seen her since then. She went to Wellesley to become director of athletics there. I think she's now retired. And Josie [Harper] was her closest friend.

DONIN: Wow.

KELLEY: Yes. And then, of course, Josie became, eventually, the director of athletics. And Louise never forgave her for it, even, you know, that she would do it.

And for Josie to become director of athletics, not only a woman, but a lesbian who was out. What a revolution, if you think about it. I mean in those years. I mean, partly Louise didn't get to be director because she was very prickly as a personality, and she'd made a lot of enemies along the way, in that department, in fighting for women. And not doing it in the most gracious way always.

So there was a mark against her, and it was probably destined she wouldn't become the director. But to go from somebody who was fully qualified and who got turned down and who would have been very good, I think, to Josie, who is a very good director—I'm not saying anything about that part of it—but to somebody who...that's a revolution.

DONIN: But it took them a long time. I mean, Josie didn't become AD what? until about—

KELLEY: Late '90s?

DONIN: Early 2000s.

KELLEY: Early 2000s, yes. That's right. It was that late, wasn't it?

DONIN: Because there was.... Dick Jaeger ['59] moved from admissions over to be AD for most of the '90s.

- KELLEY: That's right, he did.
- DONIN: After Leland left.
- KELLEY: That's right. And he was good, but he wasn't charismatic or, you know.... Dick is a very lovely man, and I like him very much, very, very much. Is he retired now? He must be.
- DONIN: Yes.
- KELLEY: Have you talked to him?
- DONIN: No, he's on the list.
- KELLEY: Good.
- DONIN: Yes, because he was definitely there during the Freedman years, mostly. And I should think that the unfriendly atmosphere in the world of athletics would have made it exceedingly difficult to recruit women to come to Dartmouth, if they were interested in being—
- KELLEY: Yes.
- DONIN: --athletically active.
- KELLEY: Yes. And women who come to Dartmouth tend to be more like that than typically, women of the kinds of students that Dartmouth and the Ivies attract. It did.

[End of Part One]