

TWO DECADES OF MOMENTUM CLOSE THE CENTURY

The national women's movement developed in various ways in this country and around the world during the last twenty years of the century. The Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution, passed by Congress, narrowly failed ratification in 1982. Organizations focusing on women's issues proliferated.



Marion James, (Class of 1940), became the head of the History Department in 1961-1964, becoming the first woman to head an all-male department in Liberal Arts at UNH. She received a Ph.D. in English history from Harvard University and joined the UNH English Department in 1955, then moved to history. She traveled widely throughout her life and connected information from other countries with a course she developed on the City and History. She succeeded Phyllis Hoff as the third woman to be chair of the Academic Senate in 1983 and retired as a full professor in 1987.

Under the auspices of the United Nations women came together to build a global feminist movement. In Beijing, China in 1995, 189 nations agreed to formally identify women's rights as human rights and to make a commitment to remove barriers to equality and promote peace globally.

At the University of New Hampshire, an Affirmative Action plan was further defined. The more informal process that relied upon white male networks was replaced with a carefully outlined process for hiring faculty and staff. These policies required that minority groups such as white women, African-American women and men, Latin Americans and Asian Americans, would be included in advertising job openings, seeking candidates and ensuring that all qualified candidates were considered by formally designated search committees. The result was a gradual increase in the hiring of - primarily - white women.

Women assumed positions of responsibility and leadership throughout the institution. The first woman president, Evelyn Handler, was installed in 1980. Besides the traditional all women departments, a single woman headed one academic department out of 15 in the College of Liberal Arts in the early 80's: Jean Kennard in English. In 1989, the university appointed Carmen Buford, an African American woman, to be Associate Dean of Student Affairs, which began new movement towards increasing the diversity of the 97% white campus. By the end of the century, women held a number of influential offices:

President, Vice-president for Finance and Administration, Dean of Liberal Arts and Vice-President for Student Affairs. Women students were campus leaders as both president and vice-president of the Student Senate and led many campus organizations.

Yet there were campus issues requiring ongoing attention. Violence against women students continued to occur. Nationally one in four women experienced sexual assaults in their



Carmen Buford, the first African American to be Associate Dean of Student Affairs, came to UNH in 1989 from the west coast. She created the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs in 1991, which later became an umbrella organization for the Black Student Union, Native American Cultural Association, Hillel, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Alliance and the United Asian Coalition. Dr. Buford and psychology professor William Woodward founded the Race, Culture and Power minor. Her tenure ended in 1995, and she retired the following year.



Students hold a candle to symbolize need for a safe environment for all people. A yearly event sponsored by SHARRP, Take Back the Night, raises women's and men's awareness of the problems of violence and sexual harassment against women.

lives. The Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program (SHARPP) counseled rape victims and educated the campus about rape. In response to a gang rape in Stoke Hall in 1987, and in response to harassment during a SHARPP educational program for athletes in the Johnson Theatre in 1992, special committees were formed to address these issues and further educate the campus.

During the 1980s and 90s, The President's Commission on the Status of Women, continued to address women's issues by conducting studies and advocating for change in a number of areas. For example, the Commission:

- Published comprehensive annual reports on the status of women faculty in the 1980's; expanding in the 1990's to include students, staff, faculty and administration.
- Published a handbook on hiring practices to open doors for white women and minority women and men in 1980 and a study on retention of women faculty in 1981, 1994.
- Wrote a "Guidebook for the use of Nonsexist Language" for students and faculty, in 1983, revised 1996 and 2000.
- Supported a "Faculty Equity Study" in 1983; women faculty received pay raises of \$1000 for two years.
- Developed a series "Women in Leadership Initiative" workshops in the 1990's.
- Sponsored workshops to incorporate diversity into college courses from 1995-2000.

Supported by administration, faculty and staff and complemented by student initiatives, the advocacy of the President's Commission on the Status of Women formed the basis of women moving forward at the University of New Hampshire. The last twenty years of the millennium was a time of gathering momentum in which women's roles and participation in the university continued to grow and evolve, bringing women at UNH closer to equality.



Suzanne Huard, an information systems specialist, has been with the Office of Sponsored Research since 1982. A member of the President's Commission on the Status of Women from 1992 to 1994, she was active in the formation of the Task Force on Gay and Lesbian Issues in 1992, which was successful in creating a Gay and Lesbian minor and obtaining partner benefits for staff and faculty at UNH by 2000.



Brenda Whitmore, class of 1981, came back to UNH in 1989 and is now a Construction Manager in the Division of Facilities in the Department of Facilities, Design and Construction, a predominantly men's department. She oversees building alterations, updates, and restoration. Currently working on a Master's degree in Liberal Studies, Brenda is a member of the President's Commission on the Status of Women.



Evelyn Handler, the first woman to be president of the University of New Hampshire, was installed in 1980. A biologist by training, she was the only woman to be president of a land-grant college at that time in the United States. She was concerned that tuition be kept low to make a college education possible for low-income students. Plans for Morse Hall, currently the Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans and Space, were initiated before she left to become President of Brandeis University in 1983.



Jean Kennard became the first woman to become a full professor at the University of New Hampshire in 1977. She headed the English department in 1978, the first woman to do so. She received many awards during her tenure at UNH, including the Distinguished Teaching Award in 1986 and the University's Distinguished Professor Award in 2000. She was active in the Task Force on Gay and Lesbian Issues and was co-founder with Jack Yeager in efforts to create a Gay and Lesbian minor program, winning the Kidder Tolerance Award in 1994.



Patricia Bedker (M.S. 1980) is the first woman to be Associate Dean of Instruction in the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture. This appointment in 1996 followed her interest in animal science, physiology and adult learning in her various degrees finishing a doctorate in 1985 and achieving tenure in 1987. She sees her job as facilitating mediation and getting people in an individualist culture to work together.