

UC Berkeley

The 150 Women Project - Holding Series

Title

"Academic Pioneers: Women at Berkeley in the 1970s and 1980s." Interviews with Berkeley's pioneering women professors, Berkeley, CA. Conducted 2019-2023.

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ACADEMIC PIONEERS

Women at Berkeley in the 1970s and 1980s

Women faculty who arrived at Berkeley in the 1970s and 1980s had a unique experience as the first generation of women who joined the permanent faculty in significant numbers. Their predecessors had come as individual women thinly scattered through the faculty ranks, and their number had reached an historic low in the late 1960s. Professors Emeritae Paula Fass (History) and Christina Maslach (Psychology) have been interviewing and recording representative women from this cohort from across the campus over the past three years, with the financial support of the Edward A. Dickson Emeriti Professorship research award. Some of these interviews are being made available at the 150th Anniversary website.

Among the topics that interview subjects considered are the following: first impressions of the department and campus culture in regard to women; interaction with female faculty already at Berkeley and with new female faculty across the campus; work load and teaching experience; student responses to having a female professor; how their choices of research areas were affected by coming to Berkeley; how they understood the tenure process and what their experience with that process was like; the role of affirmative action in their own and in the hiring of women who came after them; socializing with the wives of male colleagues and with their male colleagues; their experience of family life with spouses, partners and children.

The interviews are the source material from which Professors Maslach and Fass will analyze what this experience as a first substantial generation of female faculty meant to these women, to their departments, to the campus culture, to their families and to the following generations of academic women (their students and colleagues).