Adding a Plank to the Bridge:

Julia Armstrong-Zwart's Leadership at UC Santa Cruz

Interviewed and Edited by

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Table of Contents

Interview History

Julia Armstrong-Zwart was hired by Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer in 1981 as Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Matters of Informal Grievance and Affirmative Action and served as the University of California, Santa Cruz's first ombudsman. In 1983, she stepped down as ombudsman, to assume the position of assistant academic vice chancellor for faculty relations, and continued to serve as special assistant to the chancellor for affirmative action. In addition to her work as assistant vice chancellor for faculty relations, she held the position of assistant chancellor for human resources, with responsibility for the offices of Academic Human Resources, EEO/Affirmative Action, Labor Relations, Staff Human Resources, and Title IX. She retired from UCSC in 2001.

In this oral history, conducted by the Regional History Project in the summer of 2013, Armstrong-Zwart describes how she worked with other key UCSC administrators, faculty, and staff members to transform the cultural and politics of UC Santa Cruz and the University of California system. They accomplished this through vision and much hard work, strengthening existing affirmative action policies and creating innovative programs such as the Target of Opportunity faculty recruitments, establishing retention and faculty development programs, and founding a Title IX office devoted to sexual harassment prevention.

Armstrong-Zwart's oral history is also a historically valuable record of the life and career of a pioneering African American female leader in higher education administration. As the interviewer, I found her vivid storytelling and incisive thinking engrossing and inspiring. Her sense of humor and love of language was also a delight.

Julia Armstrong was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1941. Her father was the only black policeman in downtown Chicago. He had immigrated from the South and was born in 1882, only one generation after slavery was abolished in the United States. He married Julia's mother, Fairfax "Fairy" Hayes, who was originally from Jacksonville, Florida. Fairy had recently escaped a difficult marriage and had three small children at the time she remarried. The family lived on the South Side of Chicago.

Fairy was a devout Catholic woman of white and African American heritage, who as Armstrong described it "worked white and lived black," and experienced the emotional tensions that come with a closeted life. By passing for white, she was able to secure a series of bookkeeping and other financial services positions in Chicago. She sacrificed financially to send Julia (and her siblings) to a series of parochial schools.

From an early age, Catholic nuns gave Armstrong the academic encouragement and mentoring that was to serve her throughout her career. She attended high school at Nazareth Academy in Kalamazoo, Michigan; college at Marquette University in Michigan and St. Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana, where she majored in Spanish and philosophy and spent the summer teaching English as a foreign language in Quito, Ecuador. She then went to graduate

school at Johns Hopkins University. In 1961, the year she arrived, Baltimore was still segregated, although that soon changed. She was the first black student to enter the department and completed her MA and all but the PhD dissertation in Spanish literature.

Armstrong's first husband was an Italian American from the Bronx. They married in Cleveland, rather than in Maryland, because of the anti-miscegenation laws common at that time. Her husband received a Fulbright and they moved to Florence, Italy, where they had two sons and Armstrong enjoyed being immersed in Italian language and culture. After her husband finished his dissertation, they returned to the United States, to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. At a faculty party, Armstrong met the coordinator of a federally funded project on the study of bilingualism and was soon offered a position researching bilingual elementary school curriculum programs and writing abstracts of scholarly publications about bilingualism. At the University of Michigan she also helped publish the proceedings for an international conference on bilingualism.

Her husband then took a position at the City College of New York, directing the program of study abroad in Bologna, Italy. It was there that Armstrong first discovered that she enjoyed working with students outside of a classroom setting, serving as what she called "an unpaid dean of students" for two years. She and her husband then moved to Amherst, Massachusetts, where her husband took a teaching position in the French and Italian department and Armstrong was hired by the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to develop

and teach a course called *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* to English Speakers.

It was at the University of Massachusetts in the early 1970s that Armstrong was first introduced to affirmative action programs. She became, at the age of twenty-nine, the first female and minority dean on campus. A strong feminist, she helped organize a New England Minority Women Administrators group, which thrived for many years. Meanwhile, as the feminist movement shifted the culture and politics of the 1970s, her first marriage, based in the gender roles of the 1950s, ended in divorce and Armstrong became a single parent.

Seeking to leave provincial New England, Armstrong applied for a position at the University of California, Santa Cruz as Special Assistant to the Chancellor in Matters of Informal Grievance on Affirmative Action. She was hired and arrived on campus in August of 1981. In her oral history she describes her close and productive relationship with Robert Sinsheimer as well as her relationships with subsequent chancellors.

Throughout her career at UCSC, Armstrong's focus was on "how to change the institution, how to move the institution, how to change the culture of the institution in order to foster affirmative action and equal employment opportunity." When Armstrong arrived at UCSC in 1981, Chancellor Sinsheimer's reorganization of UC Santa Cruz's college-based structure into a more traditional, departmentally based university was already in full swing. But UCSC, with its cadre of young professors who had come of age during the antiwar and civil rights movements of the 1960s, with its emphasis on

interdisciplinary programs such as women's studies, community studies, American studies, and history of consciousness, was what Armstrong terms as "more fluid and flexible." "There was also an egalitarianism to this campus," she reflected, "I have to say, I fell in love with UCSC. There was something about the idealism. . . It felt that things were possible here."

For the first eighteen months Armstrong served primarily as ombudsman for the campus, which allowed her to build relationships and understand the structure and history of the campus. But as time went by she began to be concerned about a future conflict of interest in the two parts of her position: "that the more I got involved in affirmative action, that potentially it could compromise my role as the fair witness."

Chancellor Sinsheimer agreed to reconfigure her responsibilities and she turned her focus to the academic personnel process. Armstrong worked together with Professor Richard Wasserstrom, who chaired the Senate Committee on Affirmative Action, to create an innovative Target of Opportunity Program which funded faculty positions for the best-qualified woman or minority candidate that departments could find through outreach. The Target of Opportunity Program was eventually adopted by the rest of the University of California and became one of several major contributions UC Santa Cruz has made to the development of affirmative action in higher education.

The backlash against affirmative action was fierce, and Armstrong-Zwart shares her recollections of Proposition 209, which in November 1996, amended the California constitution to prohibit state government institutions from considering race, sex, or ethnicity in the areas of public employment, public

contracting or public education. Regent Ward Connelly spearheaded an effort within the University of California system to dismantle affirmative action even before Proposition 209 was passed by the voters, and the Target of Opportunity program was suspended in 1995.

However, this did not mean the end of UC Santa Cruz's efforts to recruit and retain faculty and students of color. As Armstrong-Zwart recalled, "…fortunately we had a momentum that had been built up and we continued to hire women and minorities in fields and departments where they were underrepresented." Part of that momentum was maintained through Armstrong-Zwart's close oversight of the academic personnel process to ensure that efforts to increase diversity and equal employment opportunity were sustained during faculty searches and promotions. In this way, affirmative action and diversity programs were institutionalized within the academy rather than being "add-ons." Armstrong-Zwart attributes the success to "willingness on the part of different levels of administration to accept responsibility for affirmative action, instead of having it all reside in the affirmative action officer."

In this interview, Armstrong-Zwart also discusses the evolution of sexual harassment prevention policy at UC Santa Cruz over a twenty-year period. One important milestone in that history was the establishment of the Title IX Sexual Harassment Officer position held by Rita Walker for the past two decades. Armstrong-Zwart also served on the UC systemwide committee on sexual harassment and helped UC Santa Cruz's groundbreaking sexual harassment policies be adopted by the other UC campuses.

Armstrong-Zwart is a strong believer in what she calls "mutual mentoring," a concept that emerged from African American culture and from her involvement in the women's movement and witnessing how women mentor each other. She explained, "Every individual has a set of skills and abilities that we have and that we can share with other people, that help them along the way. My grandmother had a saying that I probably heard all of my life, which is—and she was talking about what it meant to be black in America—she said, "You know, when you cross over the bridge, you don't just keep going forward. You go back and you add a plank to that bridge to make it stronger so the next person can come over more easily. That's what I think mutual mentoring does. You are adding a plank to the bridge that you came over to make it stronger for the people that come behind you."

Armstrong-Zwart concludes her oral history with some insights on how she balanced her personal and professional life. She also talks about her seventeen-year marriage to Frank Zwart, who served as UCSC's campus architect from 1988 until 2010. She describes their relationship as "a really supportive friendship as well as marriage."

It's been my pleasure and personal inspiration to work with Julia Armstrong-Zwart on this project. Our four interviews took place on July 2, July 9, July 16, and August 13, 2013, in a room at McHenry Library on the UCSC campus. I transcribed the interviews verbatim and lightly edited them. Armstrong-Zwart carefully reviewed the transcript for accuracy and added a few footnotes. I thank her for the generosity and graciousness she brought to every stage of this endeavor.

Copies of this volume are on deposit in Special Collections and in the circulating stacks at the UCSC Library, as well as on the library's website. The Regional History Project is supported administratively by Elisabeth Remak-Honnef, Head of Special Collections and Archives, and Interim University Librarian, Elizabeth Cowell.

—Irene Reti

Director, Regional History Project, University Library

University of California, Santa Cruz, May 1, 2014

Early Life

Reti: So today is July 2, 2013. This is Irene Reti and I'm with Julia Armstrong-Zwart for our first session of our oral history. We are at McHenry Library upstairs on the fourth floor. Let's start, Julia, by talking about where and when you were born, and where you grew up.

Armstrong-Zwart: I was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1941, and I grew up there exclusively until I was eight. I should probably backtrack. My father had been a Chicago policeman. In fact he was the only Black policeman in the downtown precinct. My father was born in 1882 and he was twenty-six years older than my mother. It was almost as if he were old enough to be my grandfather. When I was four years old, he retired, so in a lot of my childhood memories, until he died in 1949, my father was larger than life and occupied full stage. When he met my mother, he was a fifty-eight year old childless widower, and my mother was a young, divorced woman with three children under the age of five.

Reti: Oh, my goodness.

Armstrong-Zwart: They met. It was a very unlikely match up.

Reti: How did they meet?

Armstrong-Zwart: My mother's former mother-in-law introduced them. My mother was visiting her ex-mother-in-law, who lived in Michigan City, Indiana. She was visiting from Chicago. My father was a friend of her former mother-in-law. My mother had left a belt at her ex-mother-in-law's house. The next time my

father came to visit my grandmother—I always called her my grandmother but she wasn't my grandmother by blood—Grandma Hayes gave my father the belt and asked, "Could you drop this by Fairy's?" My mother's name was Fairfax and she was known as Fairy in the family. "Could you take this to Fairy Hayes? She left it here." So he did and they met. (laughs)

I had two older brothers and an older sister. They were half siblings, but since we grew up together and we had the same mother, they were my brothers and my sister. We never thought about the "halfness" of it.

I went to parochial school. My mother was Catholic. My father was a nineteenth century Southern Black man. He wasn't particularly religious, but he had all kinds of reservations about the Catholic Church. It took my mother four years to convince him to let me be baptized, but she was persistent, and I did go to parochial school.

My father, as I said, died in 1949. At that time, my older sister, who was nine years older than I was, was going to boarding school in Minnesota, a Catholic boarding school, and the younger of my two brothers was going to a Catholic military school in Wisconsin. At the time my father died, my mother's mother was living with us and helping out with the kids, but she was getting older and my mother was really concerned about me. She found this wonderful Franciscan convent school in northern Minnesota, and the following year I went to school there.

I had started school when I was four. The Catholic schools didn't have kindergarten. The local public school did, and my mother figured at four I was ready for school. But since I was born in June there was no way that she could fudge that my date of birth was close enough to entitle me to go to school when I was still four. So she just sent me, and after about a month the teacher sent a note home saying, "We know Julia is only four but she's doing okay. Please send her birth certificate." (laughs) Because they had to have it. So I started school when I was four.

Reti: I did too, actually.

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) Did you have to go through the same thing?

Reti: I don't know. That's very young, I know.

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, as the youngest of four children, you pick up a lot and I think you get school-ready sooner. It's like preschool, having older siblings.

Then in first grade I started at the parochial school, Saint Anselm's, which was our parish church; the school was attached to it.

Reti: This was in Chicago?

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. In Chicago. I went through the third grade there. That's when my father died, at the end of my third grade, and then I went to boarding school in Minnesota.

Growing up on the South Side of Chicago was wonderful. It was interesting, during the sixties, people started talking about "the ghetto." I realized that the ghetto they were talking about was my home. From the outside, it looks like the ghetto. From the inside, it just looks like home. It was a mostly all-Black, working-class/ lower-middle class neighborhood within walking distance of the University of Chicago on the South Side. It was a very safe environment. We could walk to the local movie theater and come home after dark, and there was never any fear that anybody would bother you. If you did something wrong, your neighbors would chastise you and then tell your parents. It was a community.

I'm stressing that because when I went off to boarding school, it was located in a small, rural community called Belle Prairie, a *really* small community, outside of Little Falls, Minnesota, where Charles Lindbergh was born. The school was Our Lady of the Angels Academy and was run by an order of Franciscan nuns, half of them straight from Ireland and the other half Irish American. My mother took me up there and spent the night and then she left the next day. I was the only Black child in the school. I was the only Black person, probably, until you hit where my sister was in Crookston. There weren't a whole lot of Blacks on the ground in northern Minnesota in the late forties and early fifties. It was a great adjustment for me.

The first day at the school I learned something about courage and standing up for what's right. That first day, I was walking down the hall, and one of the boys in fourth grade called me a nigger. An eighth-grader named Alice Tracy—I

didn't know her, had never had seen her before; she didn't know me—swooped down on him, socked him, and said, "Don't you ever say that again." Nobody *ever* called me a nigger again. Alice Tracy did not become my friend. She was completely disinterested, standing up for what's right. That obviously has stayed with me all these years as something that you do.

Aside from that one early incident, it was a marvelous experience. Classes had two grades in one room. There were eighty children in the school. It was set on eighty-five acres; half of it was meadow; half was a pine forest. The Mississippi River ran behind it. The kind of academic attention that you got in small classes was just wonderful. I can't imagine that the life that I've had subsequent to that would have been the same. Certainly if I had gone to the public school it would have been very different, and even if I had stayed in the parochial school.

Reti: Did the teachers treat you differently because you were Black?

Armstrong-Zwart: No. Actually, it was really interesting. They'd never dealt with a Black child before, but one of the virtues of nuns is that they believe that all God's children can learn. So unlike some teachers in the public school system, who made assumptions about Black children, these nuns didn't. The ones from Ireland, the only thing they knew about Blacks was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. There was this wonderful nun—she seemed like she was seven feet tall; she was probably six feet tall—large, an Irish farm girl named Sister Mary Alberica. The food was horrible. The food was really very bad compared to my mother's cooking. One day at breakfast time Sister Mary Alberic came in and put down a bowl of soupy

yellowish stuff, like soupy yellow Cream of Wheat, and she said, [imitates Irish brogue] "Here, this is special for ya."

Reti: Oh, is this grits or something?

Armstrong-Zwart: I looked at it and I asked, "What is it, Sister?"

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: And she said, "It's cornmeal mush." (laughs) It was awful. I tried to eat it for her sake, but it was just water and cornmeal that had been boiled without salt, without anything. She just beamed; she was giving me something special because she knew that one of the battles that I had was around the food. I wouldn't eat a lot of the food. The Mother Superior, Mother Mary Edward, decided that no child was going to defy her around food. So I would have interesting horns-locking with Mother Mary Edward. Finally, she called a détente and she left me alone. I ate what I ate and didn't eat what I didn't eat.

Another advantage of the school became apparent when I was in, I guess it must have been the end of fourth grade, when they gave intelligence and ability tests. I was a reader. I was the kid on a softball field with a book; I would read between plays. Needless to say, I wasn't a good softball player. I'd sit on the bench and read. I just always read. I think that is probably why on the intelligence test I scored really high, because of verbal ability. When the nuns saw that, they said, "Well, you know, she can probably do fifth and sixth grade together," because

they were in the same classroom. So I did fifth and sixth grade together, which meant that I graduated from eighth grade at eleven.

Reti: Because you had started early to begin with.

Armstrong-Zwart: I had started early to begin with. The thing is I was always tall for my age, so nobody ever thought that I was too little to be in the class, which was a help.

But the nuns were fabulous. You asked a question [in the topic outline] about mentors. I'd never had a formal mentor until college, but along the way, the nuns who said, "Gee, this little girl can do fifth and sixth grade together. Okay, we'll do it." That's a kind of mentoring and fostering—

Reti: Oh, sure.

Armstrong-Zwart: Without it I don't think I would have flourished academically and intellectually the way I did.

The funny thing was coming back at vacation times. I went home at Christmas and Easter and then for the summer. The first year I came home at Christmas, I had a bit of an Irish brogue. I have an ear for accents and I pick them up easily.

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) My brother Jerry said, "Sister, no way!" He got rid of that very, very quickly. Then I went back to school and came home in the

summer with an even thicker one, but I lost it. You know, you don't have an Irish brogue on the South Side of Chicago in a Black neighborhood.

Reti: Yeah, I would imagine.

Armstrong-Zwart: But it actually was fun. I think probably that also was the first time my ear had ever heard language that was different.

Reti: What about your mom? You talked to me a little bit about your dad but I want to make sure we talk about your mom's background.

Armstrong-Zwart: My mom was an extraordinary person. She was somebody who grew up very poor, the oldest of six children. My grandfather was White and he married my grandmother, who was Black. They had to flee the South because of that.

Reti: Where in the South were they?

Armstrong-Zwart: This was in Florida, Jacksonville. My mother was born in Jacksonville, Florida. My father was born in Chappell Hill, Texas. My maternal grandfather was a carpenter by trade. He was able to work and support these six children, until he had an accident where a tool fell in his eye and blinded him, which pretty much made it impossible for him to work as a carpenter. Then it was sort of any job that he could pick up.

My grandmother had converted to Catholicism and she brought all the children in, but not her husband.

Reti: (laughs) There's a pattern here.

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) Another Baptist Southerner. The children went to Catholic schools, Catholic parochial school. My mother, who was really smart and diligent, went on to a Catholic girls high school, which was unusual at that time for a girl from her economic circumstances. My mother was born in 1908, and for Black girls at that time, if you were poor and you got an eighth grade education, that was really a good thing. So for her to go to high school was extraordinary. But there was no possibility that she would go to college. It just wasn't something that was on the screen. She was in Chicago, so I suppose she might have gone to De Paul or something like that, but the resources simply weren't there. I actually don't know how my grandmother and grandfather paid the tuition for my mother at Saint Elizabeth's. The sacrifice must have been extraordinary. My mother also worked in the summer and after school, and I imagine she contributed as well.

She married, as most girls did at after graduation. This was her first husband. They went to live in Memphis. She had two children very quickly and then after four years was pregnant with her third child. Her husband was both abusive and unfaithful, so my pregnant mother bundled up the two little kids, and took the train back to Chicago.

Reti: Wow, the courage. (sighs)

Armstrong-Zwart: Really. That just didn't happen. My mother had a wonderful view of life. She believed: God does not want me to be unhappy. So if I'm

unhappy, I have to do something about it because I know God wants me to be happy. That enabled her to do all kinds of things. She came back to Chicago. She was living back home with her mother and father, her two younger sisters, and two little kids, and then she had a baby. She was working and going to school and taking care of her children, with her mother's and her sisters' help.

Reti: What kind of a job did she have?

Armstrong-Zwart: I'm not too sure. Whatever she did, it wasn't clerical. I know one time she worked at the Curtis Chocolate Factory. She talked about how the smell of the chocolate made her sick. After she married my father, she didn't work at first. She told me, "You know, I knew that your father was so much older than I was, and I worried that if something happened to him and I had four children, I didn't know what I was going to do." So she looked for a job. My father was bent out of shape because he was a nineteenth-century man and he took care of his family.

I don't know how she persuaded him that it was okay, but she found a job as a bookkeeper. Since my mother looked White, she could get a White job. This was a bookkeeping job at Portis Hat Company in Chicago. Well, my mother knew nothing about bookkeeping, but she'd always been good at math, so she got the job. She said, "You can't imagine. The first six weeks I was studying all the time, keeping one step ahead of this job." Then she mastered it. As it turned out, it was a very good thing that she had a job, because my father died in 1949 after they'd been married nine years.

Reti: Not very long.

Armstrong-Zwart: But my mother always had the dichotomy of working White and living Black, which meant any friendship she made at work was strictly limited to work time.

Reti: So was she passing for White?

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, at work, but only at work.

Reti: So they didn't know where she lived and about her family.

Armstrong-Zwart: She always had to keep her private life very private. She passed for White almost her entire career until her last job, when she was the chief financial officer of the largest Black insurance company in the country, Chicago Metropolitan. Always before that she worked as White because she could get much better jobs than she could have otherwise. But it cost her, you know. That's really hard, to live that kind of life.

Reti: It's a closeted life.

Armstrong-Zwart: You never know when the "big discovery" will occur. It was also a problem for my sister and one of my brothers. My older brother had my coloring, brown-skinned, but my sister and the younger of my two brothers both looked White. That wasn't a problem growing up in Chicago because, as you probably know, African Americans are truly a rainbow of colors; but when they went to boarding school, first in Wisconsin and then in Minnesota, they, too,

were the only Black children in their schools, and unlike me—you look at me, I am what I am, the assumption was that they were White, and children, especially, can be cruel. Each of them in high school was "outed" and then had really unpleasant experiences for the rest of their high school years. I always thought it was fortunate that I didn't have to go through that. If kids had a problem with me being Black, they just left me alone, and I left them alone. I didn't have big revelations and "outings" and things that were real traumatic. They left scars on both my brother and my sister, so that when they were older they retreated into an all-Black community and rarely ventured out, because, I guess, it felt safer for them.

Not quite four years after my father died, my mother remarried a man from South Bend, Indiana, who worked at the Studebaker plant there. When I graduated from eighth grade, the family had already moved to South Bend, Indiana.

Every Christmas after my father died, my mother went out of her way to get something special as a family gift. The first year it was a used car. We didn't have a car. We never needed a car. My father must have been able to drive, but if we were going to go somewhere up in Michigan to visit family, he would rent a car and a driver and we'd all go up. But she got a used 1948 Oldsmobile, and she, again, didn't know how to drive. She taught herself how to drive (laughs) in parking lots in Chicago. She was *so* proud of that car because it gave the family the freedom to get out of the city and to do things.

The following year, in 1951, it was a piano because she wanted my sister and me to take piano lessons. The year after that it was a television. These were big things for the family. But a house was something she always wanted. She tried at one time. She had gone looking with a real estate agent, and there had been a house that she actually could afford. She went out to see it and everything was fine. Then she brought the family to see it, at which point the house was no longer available [because the agent saw her Black family].

Reti: Oh—

Armstrong-Zwart: Yeah. You know. So moving to South Bend meant she could have a house for the first time, and it meant I had my own bedroom and the younger of my two brothers had his bedroom. In Chicago, our apartment seemed large. Probably if I were to go back there now I would be amazed at how small it really was. It had two bedrooms, a kitchen, a living room, one bathroom, a dining room, and a sunroom, which was next to the living room, and there were seven people living in that house.

Reti: Sharing one bathroom.

Armstrong-Zwart: Sharing one bathroom. My mother and father slept in one bedroom, and I slept on a cot in their bedroom. My two brothers and my sister slept in the other bedroom. When my grandmother came to live with us, it meant my older brother slept on a cot in the dining room at night. I once said to my mother, "You know, Mama, looking back, I guess we were poor, weren't we?" And boy, she pokered up and said, "We were *not* poor. We always had enough

to eat. You always had clothes to wear. You never went without." And I thought, she's right, because she remembers what being poor is like. You know, it's all relative. We never felt poor. There were a lot of people much worse off than we were. And yeah, I guess it was strange having my older brother sleep on a cot in the dining room but—you know (laughs)

Reti: It was normal.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yeah. It was life.

But the house in South Bend had three bedrooms, just one bath, but three bedrooms. It had two stories, a yard, a garage for the car. By that time my older brother and my sister were married, so it was just the two younger children at home. My mother got a job at Notre Dame University in the accounting office. She worked there for I don't know how long, until they opened a television station on the campus and they asked her to go head up the accounting office there. So, until she moved back to Chicago, she was the head of accounting for WNDU TV. (laughs) I used to tease her, because my mother, every time she changed a job would lop four or five years off her age. She was very young looking. So as she would change jobs, different of us kids would age out. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) We'd have to drop off. By the time she was at the television station, I was an only child. (laughs) Actually, it was very funny.

I started high school in South Bend at a Catholic school that had just opened, Saint Joseph's High School. It was not coeducational—it was co-curricular. The building was shaped like an H. One long arm was for girls; one long arm for boys. It was three stories, and in the crossbar there were shared facilities, such as a cafeteria, bookstore, and other offices, patrolled vigilantly by the nuns and the brothers.

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: The Holy Cross nuns and the Holy Cross brothers. But it was—well, it was what it was, right? Let's see, when I first went to Our Lady of the Angels Academy it was coed, but the seventh and eighth grade boys and girls were getting a little too friendly, so the nuns decided it would be coed only through fifth grade. But there was one boy, Mickey Savage, the youngest of three brothers who had been in school there, and he was a little short, very non-pubescent boy. They decided that there was the Mickey Savage exception. (laughs) So Mickey got to go through all eight years.

Reti: Interesting.

Armstrong-Zwart: He was the only boy who did. There were only five kids in my eighth grade graduating class. There were Mickey and four girls. I was used to a mostly all-girl environment.

Reti: What were the expectations from the nuns of what options would be open for young girls?

Armstrong-Zwart: They didn't talk about them at all in elementary school, except they pressed the religious vocation, you know, that God may call you. They didn't talk about other options—that came later in high school. At St. Joseph's High School, the classes were levels A, B, and C, according to your academic records. I was in the A level, and for the first few weeks the nuns were convinced that I was misplaced and that I should have been in C. Again, I was the only Black child in the school.

Reti: Again.

Armstrong-Zwart: After a while, they realized that I could handle that level of work. I never encountered racial prejudice from any nun, ever. There were a couple of nuns in elementary school who I think were certifiably insane but it wasn't based on race.

Reti: (laughs) I'm laughing because I went to Catholic school.

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) Well, at Our Lady of Angels Academy the dormitory sister was this really insane nun called Sister Mary Bernadine. I mean, she was mean. She was really mean. If you did something she didn't like, she had penances for you. One was kneeling on rice with your hands above your head and you'd have to miss a couple of meals or something like that. When I started reading Charles Dickens I said, hey, I know what they're talking about here. But I decided we were going to drive Sister Mary Bernadine crazy so they'd have to take her away, and with four friends I set up a secret club. It was called the FTMC, the Five Trouble Makers Club.

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: We were dedicated to making trouble, to make Sister Bernadine go crazy. So we did things like replace the holy water in the little font by the dormitory door. We emptied it very carefully into a bottle (because it was holy water) and put rubbing alcohol in there.

Reti: (gasps)

Armstrong-Zwart: At the end of the year she disappeared, and we thought, did we do it? (laughs) Did we really do it? We didn't know. We sort of felt proud and guilty at the same time. I remember we talked about whether we had to tell Father Schmidt about it in confession on Saturday and we decided we didn't. If she went crazy it was because she started off that way, so we didn't have to confess it. (laughs)

High school. The first two years of high school at Saint Joseph's, more than focusing on school, it was really adjustment to having a stepfather who turned out to be an alcoholic. He wasn't abusive or anything like that, but I had never been around an alcoholic before. He was a "payday" alcoholic. Studebaker paid on Tuesdays. They didn't pay on Fridays because they didn't want the men to go out and drink up all their pay on the weekend. So he would go out and drink up all of his pay on Tuesday and then miss Wednesday's and Thursday's work. My mother was working and her paycheck was what kept the family afloat.

I developed a hatred of my stepfather. It was probably a whole lot of things, including missing my father, but I was so unhappy at home. Finally I said to my mother, "Please send me to boarding school. I don't want to stay here. I can't stay here." She found a wonderful boarding school outside of Kalamazoo, Michigan, called Nazareth Academy, run by the Sisters of Saint Joseph. For me, it was a refuge. It was away from all of the chaos of living with an alcoholic.

Again, it was a small school, where I got a lot of attention. (pauses) When I say "attention," it really was just acknowledgement that I was capable, and I was encouraged to be the best I could be. There was one nun, Sister Mary Joseph, who taught my senior English class—she was just wonderful. She was the one who talked to me about college. I always knew I wanted to go to college because education in my family was really very, very important. All of us had a chance to go to college. My older brother didn't want to do it. He had fallen in love and got married so he didn't go on to college. My sister went to college for a year at a Catholic college in Minnesota. She also fell in love and got married. My brother, who had gone to high school at Saint John's, a prep school in Saint Cloud, Minnesota, and who had been a triple letter sports man, did a freshman year at Notre Dame while he was living at home. He had been the "big man on campus" at St. John's until the revelation of his ethnicity, but he was no longer *the* big man on campus at Notre Dame. There were a whole lot of boys who also had been "big men on campus," so he dropped out and joined the Air Force. We all had chances, but I was the only one who finished college. I was also much younger.

The two years age difference; I wasn't about to drop out of college at age seventeen and do (clucks tongue) what? [1]

Sister Mary Joseph and the nuns there were very, very, very supportive. I had started piano lessons at Our Lady of the Angels Academy, and when my mother was going through a period where she just couldn't afford piano lessons anymore, she called the school and talked to Mother Mary Edward and said, "I can't afford the lessons anymore." I don't know, they were probably five or ten dollars a month. I mean, school tuition was forty-five dollars a month, but when you have three kids in boarding school— In fact, one of my aunts said, "You know, there were times when all your mother ate was potatoes—to keep you kids in school."

Reti: Oh.

Armstrong-Zwart: When she said to Mother Mary Edward that she couldn't afford it, Mother Mary Edward said, "Julia really enjoys the piano and she's doing very well. So we'll just let her keep on doing it." I never knew. I never knew. Then once I was in high school, I kept up with music. My music teacher at Nazareth Academy was a teacher named Sister Mary Thoma, who was determined I was going to go on to college and major in music. She would enter

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[1] My sister, Virginia, went on to complete B.A. and M.A. degrees in Education in her forties—Julia Armstrong-Zwart.

me in these competitions and I'd have to go play. The last one that I played in, I was fourteen and I played Mendelsohn's "Six Pieces for Children." Not only was I tall for my age—when I graduated from eighth grade and I was 5′ 6″ and weighed a hundred and twenty-eight pounds, I was *zaftig*.

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: So at fourteen I was no less *zaftig*. (laughs) I played the "Six Pieces." I was nervous and all of that, then one of the men—three White men were the judges—turned to the others (I could hear him) and he said, "Huh, she sure is built, for a child."

Reti: Oh—

Armstrong-Zwart: And that was it. I wouldn't do competitions anymore. Sister tried to get me to enter others, but I wouldn't do it. That was the end of doing that kind of thing. People don't realize the impact these kinds of off-the-cuff comments have on a child.

When she realized I wasn't going to major in music, she decided I had a religious vocation. She said, "You should become a nun. I see God's calling in you." Well, one thing I knew *very* clearly at age fifteen, I did not have a vocation (laughs) to become a nun.

Reti: I know you went to Catholic schools and you were part of the Catholic Church, but did you consider yourself religious?

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, and no. I always loved the music. I loved the pageantry. I loved the ritual. Probably my whole moral and philosophical formation is essentially Catholic. But when I was in parochial school, a nun in religion class said that all Protestants, of course, were going to Hell. My father was a Protestant, but I knew *my* father wasn't going to Hell. So for me, that was the wedge, and after that wedge, I was always a little skeptical. In fact, my Latin teacher at Nazareth Academy said, "You are the most cynical child I have ever met. If Albert Schweitzer were giving a lecture, you would notice that he had knocked knees." And I thought to myself (laughs) if he had knocked knees, I—you know—(laughter)

Reti: (laughs) That's cynical?

Armstrong-Zwart: I think it was because she was reverent, and I wasn't. I was never disobedient. I was a good kid. But the nuns could look at me and tell that I was a skeptical kid. And for them—what was it Frank [her husband, Frank Zwart] quoted to me, "The power of accurate observation is viewed as cynicism."[2] So there was always something a little off, and it wasn't my race. It was what was going on inside my head.

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[2] http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/George_Bernard_Shaw

Sister Mary Joseph, though, was the one who encouraged me to go to college. Nazareth Academy was really interesting because in many respects it was a finishing school for young Catholic women. It wasn't a prep school for college. It was a finishing school. They taught us how to pour tea. That's where I learned how you set a formal table and how to manage have multiple forks and spoons and all of that. None of that fazes me now because they were preparing us to be the wives of successful Catholic men.

Reti: Because this is the late 1950s?

Armstrong-Zwart: This is 1955 through 1957. Our senior year we had a Marriage and Family course, taught by the most misogynistic priest you can imagine. Why they picked him I don't know. He felt he was there to teach us our place. I can remember him saying, "You know, one thing you have to learn, girls, is that when you're married, if you want your husband to take out the garbage you can ask him, and if he doesn't do it, you don't ask him again. You take the garbage out." And I'm sitting there—talk about cynical— (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: Right.

Reti: If your mom lived by that she'd be dead.

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) I mean, he worried about how long or short our uniform skirts were. There was one girl in the class from Detroit. She was a tough little Italian American girl and she had attitude. He was fixated on her in a

way that was disturbing at the time and, in retrospect, is even more disturbing. I think he was attracted to her and his way of dealing with it was to harass her awfully, I mean, really in an ugly, ugly way.

I knew I wasn't going to get married. I was fifteen years old when I graduated. I turned sixteen the following month. I wasn't going to get married. My mother always reminded me: "Yeah, but as soon as you graduated you said, 'Mama, you know I'm not staying in South Bend.'" I wanted out of the Midwest or out of South Bend, for sure.

Undergraduate Years

The only school I wanted to go to, for some reason, was Marquette University. I was admitted to Marquette and I had a really good time my freshman year in college. (laughs) It's all so innocent now, in retrospect.

Reti: You were sixteen.

Armstrong-Zwart: I was sixteen. Again, there weren't a whole lot of Black students there. In the dorms if there was a Black student, there was usually only one, so she'd always have a single room. Then in the first couple of weeks of the semester, I met a girl from Cleveland, Bunnye Casimire, who was *so* cool. I was always shy; I may have been cynical, but I was always shy. Bunnye was out there! She was an extrovert, and I was a little rural hick next to her. She had all of the polish of Cleveland. On one side, on her mother's side, were doctors and lawyers, and so she came from a much higher rung of society—Black society. She

was just wonderful. We decided we wanted to room together, so we were able to leave our single rooms and move into a double room together.

I have to tell you, I have never had as much fun as I had my freshman year. Bunnye was fearless. She told me, "I hear there's a club in town, the Celebrity Club, and they play jazz. They have a jam session on Sunday afternoon. So after Mass, we're going to go over to the Celebrity Club." Now, I'm sixteen, she's seventeen (she turned eighteen that fall), and twenty-one was the legal drinking age. Somehow or other, she found somebody who had blank military ID cards, so we had these fake I.D.s. They wouldn't have fooled an idiot, right? (laughs) We had fake names, and on them I think I was twenty-two and she was twenty-six, or something like that. We used to go over to the Celebrity Club after Sunday Mass. Everybody in there knew we were kids. We would order rum and coke because that was the cheapest drink. It was forty-five cents, and it was sweet. We would sit and listen to jazz. Nobody ever bothered us. I think the guys knew we were kids and so we were kind of protected. Oh, we were such hot stuff in our minds!

But I was having such a good time that second semester I failed theology because I didn't go to class. It was taught by a Jesuit, and, surprisingly for a Jesuit, he handed out purple mimeographed sheets you had to memorize and parrot back his exact words and punctuation on tests— I don't do that well so I stopped going to class because it was boring. At which point my mother said, "You know, dear, I think you should come home and go to Saint Mary's."

Reti: So that's how you ended up at Saint Mary's.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yeah. So after this wonderful, fun freshman year, I came home. I lived at home and I went to Saint Mary's for the other three years.

Reti: So at Saint Mary's you studied Spanish, is that right?

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, Spanish. When I entered Marquette I wanting to be a Russian major. Don't ask me why. I had done four years of Latin in high school and I really liked languages. But Russian—it was the time. It was 1957, Sputnik and all of that. Also, when I was maybe eleven, I had discovered those Russian novelists and all of those wonderful characters, like Raskolnikov. I decided I wanted to major in Russian but, unfortunately, Marquette didn't teach Russian, so I took Spanish instead.

When I came to Saint Mary's, I continued with Spanish. I really liked it. I liked it more than anything else. I hadn't had philosophy before. There was one required philosophy course you had to take and that was symbolic logic. You took that in your freshman year. Since I hadn't been there for freshman year, I took it as a sophomore and I loved it! I'd loved algebra in high school, but struggled through geometry. I'm not good at just memorizing things, I have to understand them. With geometry, I didn't understand what was going on. I'd loved advanced algebra. Then with symbolic logic, all of a sudden I said, that's what geometry was all about.

Reti: The proofs.

Armstrong-Zwart: It was something that you could understand. At the same time, I took *Introduction to Ancient Greek Philosophy*. Well, I was awash. I didn't know my elbow from my ear. I can't remember the instructor's name—she was a lay teacher, a very proper spinster lady—but she invited me into her office one afternoon and served me tea. It was the first time I'd ever had Constant Comment tea. She said, "I don't understand. You are an A student in my symbolic logic class (she had me for both classes) but you're floundering in ancient philosophy." So we talked about it and talked it through, and a light bulb went off: Oh, that's what that's about. Without that conversation, I probably would have gotten a C or a D in the course. Now, was she a mentor? Sure, she was. That's spot mentoring. We can talk later about my views on mentoring.

Reti: Let's definitely do that. It's important.

Armstrong-Zwart: That was what was needed at that particular time. I never took another class from her. We didn't become friendly. She just was there and helped.

After that I continued taking Spanish, Spanish literature, and continued taking philosophy because it really interested me. In fact, years later I got a transcript, and I thought, boy, if I had been my academic advisor I sure would have said I had a really weird transcript. There are three semesters of chemistry, and that's because I got a D in my second semester of chemistry at Marquette and had to do it over again at Saint Mary's. No math. Nothing. That was it. One political science course, one *Intro to Sociology* course—I took both of those in a summer.

Everything else is literature and history and philosophy. (laughs) You wouldn't call it balanced, but it worked for me. I'm not sure that if I had tried to spread out more I would have necessarily developed better, intellectually. I don't know. I mean, whatever it was, those courses fit my personality.

Reti: Well, you had a passion for what you were learning, which was important.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. Fairly soon on, I realized that there were more courses I was interested in and wanted to take, but there was a sixteen-credit load limit. So I talked my way into eighteen credits, and then I talked my way into twenty-one credits, and then my senior year I was taking twenty-three credits. It was fabulous. I took medieval Spanish literature and medieval philosophy. I was taking a medieval history class and a medieval music class. I took medieval art, too. I wish they always grouped things like that. The interplay, having that multi-perspective on a particular time period—it was wonderful! It didn't feel like twenty-three credits. It just felt like a wonderful immersion in a period.

Reti: Interdisciplinary perspectives.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. It was happenstance. It was sort of, oh, I have to take medieval Spanish literature, and there's medieval music—oh, that sounds interesting. It was great. It was really great.

Reti: So, a lot of women I've talked to who went to college during that time have told me that the expectation was, well, you're just going to get married.

Armstrong-Zwart: That was not the expectation at Saint Mary's. Our president was Sister Mary Madeleva. I don't know if you've ever heard of her. She was a poet. She was well known, well published, and she knew *everybody*. The people who came to Saint Mary's to talk were phenomenal. The campus had Diego Rivera murals—she knew Diego Rivera. She knew everybody.

Senior year three-quarters of the class were engaged, sporting engagement rings, most of them from Notre Dame boys, and Sister Mary Madeleva called a Senior Convocation. I can remember her standing up there, her voice just quivering with outrage, [said in quivering voice] "We are educating women, not brood mares." I mean, she was bent out of shape that all of this effort had gone into educating these young women and they were getting married right afterwards? So no, that was not the expectation.

I didn't know anything about graduate school. I thought, well, you know maybe I'll go for a Master's. I knew I didn't want to be a nurse. I didn't want to teach K-12. I didn't want to be a nun. I'm trying to think of what else women did in those days.

Reti: That kind of sums it up.

Armstrong-Zwart: I didn't want to get married.

Reti: Teacher, nurse. Secretary.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yeah, or secretary. I didn't type that well. So I thought I'd go to graduate school and get an MA. The head of the Spanish department, the

modern languages department, was a nun named Sister Katherine Elaine. She had become a nun in her late forties and before that, during WW II she had been in the Office of Strategic Services, the precursor to the CIA. She'd been all over the world and had done all kinds of things. As a result, she knew a lot of people. Many of the OSS people ended up in universities.

Reti: Huh. That's really interesting.

Armstrong-Zwart: She knew the head of the Spanish program at Johns Hopkins, a man named Bruce Wardropper. She's the one who encouraged me to apply to graduate schools. I got accepted at Bryn Mawr and Johns Hopkins. I was also accepted at Tulane but they didn't know I was Black, so I don't think they would have been too happy in those years. There was one other—oh, Kansas, the University of Kansas. I knew I didn't want to go to Bryn Mawr because I didn't want to go to another girls' school. And I didn't want to go to Kansas, even though they offered a full boat, because I wanted to get out of the Midwest. Johns Hopkins—you know, Baltimore, Maryland—what did I know about Johns Hopkins? The only thing people knew about Johns Hopkins was the medical school. But she called Bruce Wardropper. This was the old boys' network

operating; this was the old boys' network as affirmative action. In fact, Frank [Zwart] found—you know, he's been doing the history of the campus—[3]

Reti: Mm-hmm.

Armstrong-Zwart: He found a statement by [Chancellor Dean] McHenry that the way that they would place their students in graduate school was the old way of picking up the phone because they knew somebody, and that was how it was done. So she picked up the phone and talked to Bruce Wardropper and told him, "I've got a really good student you ought to consider."

When I submitted my application, I had to include a photograph. The department accepted twenty new students every year. My year they admitted two women; I was one and Linda Eisen was the other. They had one female faculty member there, this grand Southern lady who always wore mules; she'd clop around in three-inch mules and double-knit suits. She was a Romance Philologist. On the Admissions Committee, she always kicked out the pretty girls. If you had a photograph and you looked real pretty, you weren't getting in. You weren't getting past Anna Granville Hatcher. Well, fortunately Linda and I looked pretty awful in our pictures. (laughs)

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[3] Frank Zwart is Julia Armstrong-Zwart's husband. Zwart is an alum of UCSC, became Campus Architect in 1988, and directed UCSC's Office of Physical Planning & Construction (PP&C) until his retirement in April 2010. Zwart has been delving into the UCSC archives at Special Collections, researching the architectural and physical planning history of the campus—Editor.

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: So we got in. But without Sister Katherine Elaine I never would have gone to Johns Hopkins. I probably would have gone to Kansas. It would have been okay. You know, the roads not taken; it would have taken me in a very different direction. I'll have to say this for Saint Mary's, and I've said it back to the college, I was able to hold my own with guys from the Ivy League. That was Saint Mary's. Sixteen years of Catholic girls schools stood me in good stead, stood me in very good stead.

But I do remember the summer after I graduated from college I said that I really needed to figure out what it is I believed. I was still a marginally practicing Catholic at that point, but I had severe reservations about a lot of things. I can remember that summer methodically saying, okay, what do I believe? What do I think? Separating out the stuff still in my mind that was rote, and deciding to believe and what to discard, coming to a sense of, okay, this is who I am, and this is what makes up my moral, idealistic and intellectual view of the world. I laugh now thinking that a nineteen-year old kid was going to figure it out all out.

Quito, Ecuador

Sister Katherine Elaine was also responsible for me spending the summer of 1960 in Quito, Ecuador. My mother couldn't afford the Study Abroad Program, but Sister said, "Well, you really do need to spend some time in a Spanish-speaking country. Let me see what I can do." She contacted this wild woman nun who was a friend of hers, Sister Margaret Mary Hoolihan. Sister Margaret Mary was doing

missionary work in Quito and knew a couple who were working there for Caritas, the Catholic charity. They had a big house, and different college students would come and stay for a while. So between them the two sisters arranged for me to stay with the McGees, and my mother, bless her heart, found the money to pay for my flight there and back. But everything else was covered—I didn't have to pay for food or anything. Sister Margaret Mary Hoolihan managed to get me a job teaching English as a Foreign Language at the USIS (United States Information Service) Center in Quito. I was also supposed to give a couple of lectures on "The Negro in the North American University." I got paid and I think I must have given some money to the McGees.

So there I was: I was eighteen, I got on a plane, and off I went to Quito, Ecuador.

Reti: And that wasn't so common, in those days, to jump on a plane and go anywhere.

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, yeah. My mother took me to the airport in Chicago, O'Hare. Then it was Chicago to Miami. I had to change planes in Miami, then Miami to someplace in Colombia. I had to change planes again in Colombia to [fly to] Quito. It was very exciting. Fortunately, I had had the experience as an eight-year old child of taking the train back and forth to Minnesota by myself, so I was a little more experienced than if I had never been away from home.

The first immediate experience I had in Quito was that, for the first time in my life, I felt *American* first, because that's how I was seen. Whereas before, I was always Negro first and female second, no, Catholic second, (laughs) and female

third. American—that's like the water the fish swim in, right? But that was my first experience of *being* an American. It was a good experience because for all of the other Americans in Quito, all of whom were White, it didn't make any difference, we were all Americans together. It was a good experience. It was a great experience.

Teaching was also interesting. I had done some undergraduate teaching at Saint Mary's. Sister Katherine Elaine was wonderful. She was always pushing me into doing things. So it wasn't the first time I'd been in a classroom, but it was the first time I had been in such a disorderly classroom. It was all ages. I had a seven-year old kid in the class up to somebody who was sixty-nine or something. And they cheated. (laughs) Really! I couldn't figure out—(laughs)—you're not supposed to do that. Finally one of the guys at the embassy said, "Look, what you're doing is—think of yourself as on a diplomatic mission. You're not a teacher, in the sense of being there to maintain the integrity of the class. You're really there as an American to help them learn English if they want to. If they want to cheat, it's not a big thing." Boy, for somebody coming out of Catholic school (laughs) that was really hard to swallow.

Reti: (laughs) I can imagine.

Armstrong-Zwart: For them, it wasn't cheating. I called it cheating but for them it wasn't cheating. It was more—"I don't know the answer to that, so you know, I look over—what's he got?"

It was a wonderful summer living with the McGees, John and Rosemary, who were two big-hearted people. Their hearts were so big. They had adopted a little girl, a cute little Ecuadorian girl whom they just *loved*. It was also the first time I'd ever been in a house where there was a servant. Their household help was a woman named Noami. One morning she was late coming, and when she arrived, her eyes were swollen. I asked her in Spanish, "What's up? Did something happen?" She didn't want to talk about it. I said, "Well, you've been crying." Well, it turned out one of her children had died during the night.

Reti: Oh, my God. (intake of breath)

Armstrong-Zwart: And she still came to work. I said to Rosemary, "Rosemary, did you know that Noami's daughter died?" Rosemary said, "No." And, of course, immediately the McGees offered, "We'll take you home. Do you need anything?"

I also had never encountered poverty before Quito. At Mass on Sunday in the Cathedral, people would go up to the rail to receive Communion, and after everybody else was back in their seats, then the Quechua Indian families would come up and kneel, and I remember my first sight of their feet because their feet were cracked and hardened by having always gone unshod. It was a shock. Also, it was the first time I ran into prejudice not aimed at Black people. Well, actually in Minnesota there was anti-American Indian prejudice. But the kind of dyed-in-the-wool-prejudice against Indians among the upper classes of Ecuadorians was amazing to me. There was one Indian man who had done very, very well, and

you would hear comments, "Yeah, but he's just an Indian." No matter how much he accomplished—well, that's just like here, for example: "He's driving a Cadillac and he's a doctor, but he's just a Black man in a Cadillac, and we're still going to stop him."

Reti: Yeah.

Armstrong-Zwart: But again, it was a wonderful experience for me. It broadened my horizons. I had a really good-looking boyfriend and a job offer to teach English, so I thought that maybe I'd stay there and teach for a year. I called my mother said, "Mama, I've got this wonderful job offer here," and she said, "Oh? For after you graduate?" "No, no, no," I said. "Next year. I'll drop out for a year and then come back and finish college." She said, "No, you won't." (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: I turned nineteen in Quito. She said, "No, you'll come back and you'll finish your senior year, and then if you want, you go back then. But no, you *will* come home." And of course, I went home. It was another path not taken.

Reti: She could see what that could lead to.

Armstrong-Zwart: Oh well, she was traditional. You didn't drop out of school. She'd had two kids drop out of school already. She wasn't having a third. One of us was going to finish, by God.

Reti: Right. So do you remember what you said about the Negro at the university?

Armstrong-Zwart: Yeah, I do. I remember the reaction to it. The Cultural Attaché from the embassy was in the audience. I gave the talk in Spanish. I talked about the history of separate but equal education; I said that there'd been a Supreme Court case which had opened things up, but there were still Black colleges that didn't get the resources that White colleges did; that there was still a small enrollment of Black students in White colleges; and there was a difference in the quality of education that was offered. I said that Negroes in America didn't have the freedom to go to whatever school they want to, and I used the word *libertad*. Well, the Cultural Attaché became unglued because *libertad*, I guess, had revolutionary significance for him. So he said, "Um, don't you mean *abilidad*?" And I said, "No, *libertad*." And he kept pushing at me, trying to get me to—

Reti: What was that second word again?

Armstrong-Zwart: *Ability*. Don't you just mean the ability to go anywhere, and I said, "No, it's liberty." He said, "You know, it's choice." "No, it's liberty." I kept saying, "It's the freedom to do it." This was the summer of 1960. So I guess for him it was just too much. I was supposed to give another talk in Guayaquil, which is to the south of Quito, on the coast, and the only place in Ecuador then that had a large Black population. They canceled it. I gave my one talk. I never gave another because, I guess, they didn't like what I said. I was no wild-eyed revolutionary, believe me. I just told it as I saw it.

Reti: (laughs) And they invited you to speak on this topic.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes.

Reti: Hmm. I wonder what they thought you were going to say.

Armstrong-Zwart: I was this good little Black girl child from a Catholic girls' college. I mean, I was going to do bluebirds and Uncle Remus? I don't know. I don't know. Who knows what they expected me to say? I wasn't a radical then. I just—I told the truth as I saw it.

Johns Hopkins University

Reti: Mm-hmm. So then when you got to Johns Hopkins, it strikes me that that was segregated, right? Baltimore, Maryland.

Armstrong-Zwart: That first year it was segregated. When I was admitted, I got partial support. They didn't give TAships to first-year students, so I had a fellowship for tuition. I had taken out an NDEA loan and I had arranged for a job in the library, actually, in cataloging, but I hadn't been given housing. So we found housing, and I remember, it was on Druid Hill, which was a Black section of Baltimore. My mother had driven me from South Bend, and we drove up to this rooming house. I looked at it and then I looked around and I said, "I can't stay here." It was depressing. I mean, it was an urban Southern Black neighborhood. It probably wasn't poverty-stricken. It may well have been the Southern equivalent of our neighborhood in Chicago, except it was shabbier, despairing-looking, and I couldn't imagine living there and going to Johns

Hopkins every day. The disparity was just too great, so I said, "If I can't find something else, Mama, I'll go home with you. I won't stay."

We went to campus, and I checked in at the department. The department head was a wonderful, wonderful man, in French literature, called Nathan Edelman. I ended up calling him "Pappy," and all of the kids picked it up. We called him "Pappy Edelman" because he was *so* fatherly. He said, "Where are you living?" I said, "I really don't have a place to live," and I explained about the rooming house. "Oh," he said, "We'll get you graduate student housing." He picked up the phone and he arranged graduate student housing. Great.

I moved in and the first week of classes were fine. I ran into Pappy Edelman, and he asked, "How are you doing in your classes and everything." I said, "They're fine, and I really like my job over in the library in Cataloging." He said, "You're working?" I said, "Well, yeah, I'm working because I need the money." He said, "Oh, we can't have that. Your first year is really critical, and we don't want you to waste your energies on that. I'll find you some money." And he found me some money so I didn't have to work my first year.

It was interesting being in class with men. I had not been in a classroom with males since Mickey Savage. Well, no, actually also at Marquette that one year, but those classes were so big, we were just student drones.

Reti: Right, not like graduate school where classes are small.

Armstrong-Zwart: There was also another advantage of going to a women's college. I am a strong advocate for them because in those days—it's probably different now—but in those days you really didn't have to worry about how this boy is going to think of you if you're smart. You could be smart. You could be a leader. You could be all that you could be, right, in a women's college? It always seemed tempered a bit in coed classes. I don't think that's true anymore. I would hope to God it's not true anymore. So there I was, and not only were they males, they were males from Princeton, Columbia—all of the Ivy League schools. They were all playing: "Who's got the biggest brain," in the seminars. We would sit in this elegant seminar room with a fireplace in the corner—Johns Hopkins was pretty spiffy in those days. We would sit at a seminar table, and Bruce Wardropper would drag in a red leather wing chair. He smoked a pipe, so he'd be like the Wizard of Oz [wreathed in smoke}. All of the boys were wagging their tails as fast as they could, you know: Look at me! Look at me! He'd ask a question and I'd know the answer. I'd have something to say, but I was too shy to say anything. The guys would be [makes fast explosive sounds] off and running, and then he would say, "What do you think, Miss Armstrong?" I'd answer, and he'd say, "Excellent, excellent." I had him for two courses that first semester; I had different professor for another Spanish lit course. I also took beginning French and a Latin class. You had to do another foreign language—a modern language—and one ancient language, in addition to your own language.

About halfway through the semester, Professor Wardropper asked, "Would you please come see me after class?" I thought, oh, gosh. You know, you're waiting

for the hook. The hook is going to come. He said, "You're doing really well, but," (he had a great English voice) [imitates British accent] "you've got to speak up more in class." He said, "You really should speak up more in class." So I learned to speak up more in class.

Reti: Were there any other women in your cohort?

Armstrong-Zwart: There was one other woman in Spanish who was two years ahead of me. That was *it*. My friend Linda was the other first-year woman student, but she was in French. There were more women in French, but in Spanish there were just the two of us.

It was great. It was like being dropped into an intellectual centrifuge. There was just so much going on, and the faculty were—I mean, they seemed like they were so much older but they actually weren't, looking back on it. They were maybe ten years older. Well, Pappy wasn't. We didn't distinguish between assistant, associate, and full. They were just all "professor"— and they didn't say "professor." It was "mister," not "doctor." Anybody could be a doctor or a professor. They were all "mister."

Reti: And they were all male?

Armstrong-Zwart: Except for Anna Granville Hatcher, who taught the yearlong, first-year required course in romance philology. Philology was a precursor to linguistics. I loved it. I really loved it. But she was one of these (laughs)—you

know, there are women who are gatekeepers. Once they get in, they keep the gate only partially open for other women. She just liked boys better than girls.

Reti: She's the one who rejected all the pretty girls for admission.

Armstrong-Zwart: Right. For the first exam, a bunch of us studied together: Linda, myself, and the man I eventually married, who was a first-year student in French but who changed to Italian. There were about five or six of us. We studied the same material, and our answers were pretty much within the same ballpark. The boys got A's; Linda and I got B and B minus. It was, basically, the same answer but she couldn't see talent in another woman. Fortunately, I haven't had a whole lot of experiences with women like that. My experience of women, whether they were older women or women of my own generation, has always been much more supportive. Sisterhood really has been my experience of women, but it's always good to have one bad experience to know that it can happen.

Reti: Yes. So I was trying to understand, before, when I was asking you about Baltimore being segregated, you said it was just the first year. I was a little confused.

Armstrong-Zwart: The Homewood campus was in an area of Baltimore that was really, very, very nice. The university had bought apartment buildings which previously had been private residences. It seemed that the immediate area surrounding the campus was populated by either graduate students or little old White ladies with Black maids, because that's who you'd see in the supermarket.

The local movie theater—the first time I went there with a friend, it was segregated: Blacks upstairs; Whites downstairs. So we didn't stay. This friend was an older second or third-year student in French, a Greek from a Sephardic Jewish family. Sam had a very excitable personality and was so upset when we were told the theater's policy, that I had to calm him down! So then my friends and I learned that if we were going somewhere, like a restaurant, we'd call and ask, "Do you serve Negroes?" and sometimes they'd say yes and sometimes they'd say no. That just limited the unpleasant encounters. We only went to places where there wouldn't be a problem.

Reti: You'd grown up in the North.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes.

Reti: So was this your first experience of segregation?

Armstrong-Zwart: No. When I was a little girl, my mother and I would go by train down to visit my Great Aunt Elia in Memphis. It was always an interesting experience because once the train got to the Mason-Dixon Line, Blacks had to get up and move to another car, and there was always the problem of my mother moving. When you got to the station, there were the cabs for Black people and the cabs for White people, and there was always a problem with my mother because she would go toward the Black cab, and they would say, "No, Ma-am, you're over here." She would always have to say, "No, I'm going over there." So I knew about it.

But once I was at my great aunt's house, you know, Southern Blacks had learned how to buttress themselves. They had their own society. They tried to limit their social interaction with Whites as much as was feasible so that they weren't constantly assaulted by the impacts of segregation. When they went out, there were the Colored and White drinking fountains and bathrooms and other segregated facilities, but they just tried not to go to places where they ran into it. I mean, in Memphis, if a Black woman wanted to buy a pair of shoes, she could not try those shoes on in a White store. She had to buy them, and once she bought them, she could not bring them back. You could not try on clothes in White department stores. I didn't know all of that, but, yeah, I had had some experience of it before. So it wasn't quite as traumatic for me as it was for Sam, who I thought was going to have a breakdown. I mean, he just had no idea, and he'd already lived there for a year or two. But I was the first Black student in the department. So they never—

Reti: You were the first Black student in that department?

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. So they had never had to deal with it. They just weren't aware of it.

But the second year it was as if segregation had never existed. It was the most amazing thing. Places that the year before didn't serve Blacks one year, did the next year.

Reti: So by now we're talking about—

Armstrong-Zwart: This was 1961. In 1961, things were segregated. In 1962, they weren't.

Reti: And that was because of the efforts of the civil rights movement.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. Well, something happened. I'm not quite sure what happened because those were really early days. I don't know what happened.

Reti: How aware were you of the civil rights movement and what was going on with the protests?

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, I'm ashamed to say not a whole lot. I was focused on graduate school.

Reti: That is pretty consuming.

Armstrong-Zwart: Really, really. I got married in '62. I got married my second year of graduate school, and then the next year we were in Italy. My sister went to the March on Washington in August of '63. That was the highlight of her life. It was one of the things she was most proud about, and I was having my first child at that time. I was aware of it, but then I was in Italy from '63 to '65. Certainly once I was back and at the University of Michigan, I was very, very aware of it.

Living in Italy

What I remember in Italy is lying in bed, breastfeeding one of my sons, listening to shortwave radio and hearing about how when they were looking for the three

missing civil rights workers, as they were digging up levees, they were finding all these other bodies. Then Italians would ask, "What's wrong with you people? Why are you like that?" Of course, now that Italy has Black people, both native-born and immigrants, they're finding that they [White Italians], too, can be racist. I shouldn't smile about it, but they couldn't understand how Americans could be like that, and I used to say, "That's because you're all Italians, but the way you Northerners treat the Southerners, it's about the same."

So in a way, I was out of the country for the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement and then once back, I remember the Detroit riots, but I didn't Freedom Ride. I didn't do any of that.

Reti: Tell me about your first husband.

Armstrong-Zwart: He was also named Frank (laughs) which is an incredibly confusing—

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: Incredibly confusing.

Reti: I'm sure.

Armstrong-Zwart: He was a Calabrese-American, Italian-American from the Bronx. (My mother said, "What is it with you and these Italians?") He'd gone to Columbia. His parents were immigrants, peasants from Calabria who'd come and worked hard, and their kids had gone to college. He came in as a French

student, majoring in French. He'd majored in French at Columbia, and then he discovered another side to being Italian and switched to Italian in graduate school. We came in the same year. I think one of the attractions, aside from just the physical attraction (he was very good looking), was that he was one of the few Catholics in the department. Isn't that a silly thing? There was an older student who was Catholic, and since the Papal Encyclical "Mater and Magistra" had just come out, Dick said, "There are five Catholic grad students in romance languages. Why don't we get together a little study group and talk about this new encyclical?" Okay, fine. So we did and that's how I got to know Frank better. We started hanging out together and nature kind of—(laughs)

Reti: (laughs) So you got married.

Armstrong-Zwart: And I got married. Also, you know, in those days when you finished college, you got married, even if you went to graduate school. Sooner or later, and more sooner than later, you got married. It was the next step. The interesting thing was that we couldn't get married in Maryland because of anti-miscegenation laws and we couldn't get married in Indiana because of anti-miscegenation laws. Frank had a fellowship and was studying in Cleveland that summer. My good friend from college, Bunnye, had married after freshman year in college and lived in Cleveland. I was godmother to her son. So we married in Cleveland.

Reti: Because Ohio didn't have anti-miscegenation laws.

Armstrong-Zwart: Ohio didn't have them.

Reti: Interesting. What was it like for you when you were dating in Baltimore and were seen together?

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, it was really interesting because Frank is Italian. He's Southern Italian. He has curly dark hair, and people just thought he was a light-skinned African American. In fact, when we first went to Cleveland, all of Bunnye's friends just assumed he was. I can remember one party and a guy leaning in and saying, "Man, you're lucky because you can pass." (laughs) So it wasn't an issue. It wasn't an issue at all. I mean, he could have been Libyan. He just had that Southern Italian look, except he had light eyes, has light eyes still. It's interesting because those light eyes have passed to our grandson, Domenic, who, when he was born, was blond and had blue eyes. When he was about a month old, my son asked, "Mom, when is he going to darken up?" I said, "Unless you put him out in the sun, I think this is about as dark as he's going to be." (laughs) So the blue eyes, obviously, were recessive. Our son has dark eyes and so does his wife.

Reti: So we're back at Johns Hopkins and you're getting your MA from there.

Armstrong-Zwart: Actually, I had finished all of the coursework for the PhD, then my husband got a Fulbright, so off we went to Italy. The first year in Italy he was doing research for his eventual dissertation, and I was taking care of a three-month old baby, Gian-Mario, and learning how to run a household in Florence, Italy, and learning Italian, because I didn't know Italian when I arrived. I spoke Spanish, and over the course of six months, the Spanish became a little

more Italianate, a little more Italianate, and then at the end, it became Italian. The unfortunate thing is that it wiped out most of my spoken Spanish, and now when I try to speak Spanish, I have to translate from Italian. I'm fluent in Italian and I'm not fluent in Spanish anymore.

Then when my son was four and a half months old, I was pregnant again. Good Catholics, we used rhythm, which is a way of having babies. (laughs) During our first year, my husband's thesis director, Charles Singleton, who was probably the most eminent American Dante scholar, came to Florence for the celebration of a Dante centennial. So, sitting in our living room, he gave Frank an oral exam. I mean, he basically checked out what he knew. Frank was completely unprepared for it, but that's the way it was done. Afterwards, when Charles Singleton had left—they had talked about four or five hours, Frank turned to me and said, "I think I just did my PhD prelim exam." And indeed, that's what it was.

A nice thing was that when Charles Singleton was there, his wife was also there, another wonderful Southern lady, named Eula, who at the time said something that I thought was very funny and couldn't imagine happening to me. She said, "You know," (she was a woman in her fifties), she said, [imitates Southern lady's accent] "This traffic is just so horrible. Trying to cross the street, you take your life in your hands. What I do is I wait until a pretty girl comes along, and she walks out on those stripes and traffic stops, and I scurry along behind her." (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: I thought that was pretty funny because then I was young and halfway decent looking. I could stop traffic. Now that I'm older, I understand Eula. I understand her entirely.

Reti: I love your imitation of her.

Armstrong-Zwart: She was very sweet. Because Frank was Charles Singleton's student, and this was a very, very important centennial, we got to go to all of these celebratory dinners with bigwigs. I mean, I met a man who was a *prince*. The prince title in Italy isn't like Prince Charles', but there are princes and counts, and similar titles. So here were all of these swells, and I'm this twenty-two year old Black kid from the Midwest, pregnant with her second child, chatting with the mayor of Ravenna. It was great. It was pretty heady stuff. It was fun. It was a marvelous experience. Those two years in Italy were really great.

And having a baby in Italy was certainly an interesting experience.

Reti: How?

Armstrong-Zwart: Well—(laughs) We had been referred to an Ob-Gyn who spoke English, which was a criterion. He was of a noble family, the Piccolomini family, which is a Sienese family that actually included a pope at one time, Aeneas Silvius. You learn all of this stuff. He was a very elegant, aristocratic, very nice man. I asked, "When it gets to the point where it's too bad, you'll give me something for the pain?" "Rest assured, Signora. No problem."

He arranged for me to be admitted into the national health section of a hospital, located in Careggi, a suburb of Florence. We were students; we didn't have much money. Everybody had said, "Oh, you have to go to a private hospital. If you go to a public hospital, it's terrible. It's terrible." Well, we didn't have the money for a private hospital, and a public hospital was fine. It was very different from an American hospital, however. I was glad I'd already had the experience of having a baby because otherwise I would have been frightened out of my mind. For admission, women were put into a room, and no men were allowed there. While they prepped you, they asked questions. Well, my Italian was okay for shopping and things like that, but it wasn't up to verbally filling out an admission form.

Frank was outside the door, and they would ask me a question in Italian and I would say, "Ask him." So they'd ask him in Italian; he'd ask me in English; I'd answer; and he'd translate into Italian. We kept going back and forth. There was only one real hiccup: In Italy there's the concept of *paese.* I thought that meant your country. "What's your *paese*?" I said, "Gli Stati-Uniti." The United States. "No, no, no. What's your *paese*?" I said, "Frank, they're asking me what my *paese* is. What's that?" He said, "Your *paese*? Where you live." I said in Italian, "Well, really here. We lived in Maryland when we were in graduate school, and then before that I lived in Indiana, and my husband lived in New York." They interrupted and asked, "Where were you born?" and I said, "In Chicago, Illinois." They asked, "Is that your *paese*?" I said, "No. I don't live there anymore." Finally, in exasperation, the nurse asked, "Where does your mother live?" I said, "In Indiana." She said, "That's your *paese*. Your *paese* is where your

mother lives." I said, "Okay." But as a result, they got it in their heads that I was an American Indian.

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: After my second son, Anthony, was born, I remained in the hospital. There were no call bells; if you wanted a nurse or a bedpan or anything, you'd have to bellow out, "Signorina!" I knew that in the States they got new mothers up and moving soon after birth, but this wasn't true in Italy. Well, I had to use the bathroom, and since it was down the hall, I got up. This was maybe six or seven hours after Anthony was born. I got up and slowly made my way down the hall. People were gawking, nurses, doctors, everybody, "Look at the Indian! She's walking."

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) It was hilarious.

Also, the food wasn't very good, so Frank used to smuggle in hot dogs and fruit salad and all kinds of things. After three days I said, "I can't take it. You have to get me out of here." In those days in Italy women stayed in the hospital, in bed, for a week to ten days. But I had a thirteen-month old baby at home. My mother had come out to stay with me and to take care of Gian-Mario. The hospital, on the second day, let him come in and see me, which wouldn't have been allowed in an American hospital. My mother told me, "You know, he's just moping. He

won't eat. He goes through the house looking for you." So I wanted to get home. But it was a great experience.

Reti: So when this was happening for you, you're having babies and your husband is getting his PhD.

Armstrong-Zwart: Mm-hmm.

Reti: Did you have any feelings of having lost something?

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, I tell you what I had was a fear that I'd be popping out a baby every year for the foreseeable future. At that time, (and still) the Catholic Church was anti-contraception, and like my mother, [I believed], "God did not want me to be unhappy." If I had a baby every year, *that* was a frightening prospect. I remember we were in Rome and I went to confession at the American church there, Santa Susanna. I was in the confessional and explained my circumstances to the priest. I said, "I can't have a baby every year. I'm only twenty-three years old." I said, "I'm thinking of going on the pill," which you couldn't get in Italy. You had to have somebody bring it in from Switzerland. This young priest was great. He said, "You know, there's a lot of discussion in the Church about things like that. I think you have to do what you believe you have to do." I probably would have done it even if he had said it was a mortal sin, but somehow having him say that just sort of—

Reti: Okay.

Armstrong-Zwart: When I was a kid I wanted six kids, but I didn't think I'd have them in six years. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs) Yeah. So then you came back to the U.S., after a couple of years.

Researcher in the Bilingualism Program, Foreign Language Innovative Curricula Study, University of Michigan

Armstrong-Zwart: We came back. He finished his dissertation and got a job at the University of Michigan. So when we came back, it was to Ann Arbor. I, again, was a stay-at-home mom with two babies, until at a faculty party, I was talking with someone who had just received funding from the Feds for a study of bilingualism. We were talking about the concept, and I really hadn't thought about bilingualism, but it was something I found very interesting.

As a result, I got an offer to be a Research Assistant on the Foreign Language Innovative Curriculum project, which entailed developing an elementary school curriculum modeled on a program that had been very successful in Dade County, Florida. Kids learned to read and write first in their native language and then gradually learned either English or Spanish as a second language. By third grade, for all of the children, half the day was taught in Spanish and half the day, in English. The test scores from the kids in the program showed that their IQ's increased. It was a really beneficial program.

The first Cuban immigrants in Florida were from the more educated, moneyed class, and we hadn't taken that fact into consideration. I'm not sure how big a

factor it was in the kids' performance, as such, but maybe if we had known about it we might have been better prepared for the reaction of the Mexican parents who had left the migrant stream, and whose kids were in rural elementary schools in Michigan. Those parents wanted their kids to assimilate as quickly as possible. We thought we'd have problems with the school system because we were from Ann Arbor and what we were proposing was pretty radical, and we did experience those problems. The situation for so many of those students was just dreadful. The schools were placing them in what was then called the "ungraded room," for kids who, for a variety reasons, whether developmental or learning disabilities, or not knowing English, couldn't keep up in the regular classroom. A lot of the Spanish-speaking kids were getting dumped into that holding tank. There was no program for teaching them English. A lot of these kids picked up English pretty quickly, because kids do pick up language very, very quickly, but they were often a couple of years behind their schoolmates in terms of knowledge. So we thought we had the solution.

There was a lot of pushback from the teachers. I remember one teacher saying, "Oh, these kids just need *love*. So I always make sure that I hug them at the beginning of the day and I hug them at the end of the day." You'd say [to yourself]: Don't say anything. Don't say anything! (laughs) Just smile and say, 'Well, yes. but there are other ways of helping them, too.'" We were pushing the schools, but then we found that there was minimal support from Spanish-speaking parents. So we couldn't go forward. We couldn't push the schools without the parents behind us.

The other thing that I did as part of the project was write abstracts. There was a sudden explosion of publications, articles and books, about bilingualism. I read them and then wrote abstracts or *precis*, which was a great way to educate myself about bilingualism in general.

Then there was a shakeup in the project, and my boss was pushed out. My boss was himself bilingual, American French Canadian, and he had grown up speaking both French and English. He was passionate about the project because he remembered his experience coming up through schools. I guess his passion was too much for the overall head of the project, so he was eased out. The person who followed him was difficult to work for, so I decided to quit. It's great when you're married, and there's another paycheck. You can do something like that.

It was at another party, later, that I met John Upshur, who was the Director of the English Language Institute. The institute was preparing to host an international conference on bilingualism. Jack was responsible for publishing the conference proceedings and he hired me as a Research Associate to help him with that. I did that for the next year.

By then my husband had decided that he wanted to leave U-Michigan. He looked around and found a job at the City University of New York, but the job would send us to Italy since he'd direct the program of study abroad in Bologna. We would be going back to Italy. He had a choice between that and UCLA.

Reti: Another road not taken.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, UCLA would have been very different, but the pull of Italy was strong, very strong. It meant that our kids, who at the time were almost five and four, would have the experience of learning Italian. It was interesting with the boys. Gian-Mario was three months old when we first went to Italy, and I had noticed that his babbling included sounds that another child of Fulbright students there, who only heard English, didn't keep. But Gian-Mario heard a lot of Italian, so he kept [rolls R] sounds. You could hear the difference in their babbling. I was aware of it, in retrospect, as a component of bilingualism because of my work at the English Language Institute.

When we left, Gian-Mario was two years old, and Anthony was one. Gian-Mario, to the extent that he spoke, spoke both Italian and English. He understood both languages and didn't confuse them. He was what is called a "balanced" bilingual. Anthony, at one year, wasn't saying much of anything. When we first arrived in Ann Arbor, Gian-Mario had asked a neighbor for *un bicchiere d'acqua* (a glass of water), and when she said, "What?" That was it; he turned Italian off. Not another word of Italian passed his lips. But when we were back in Bologna, the boys went to an Italian Montessori preschool, and within two months both of them were fluent in Italian. My belief is that they were hard-wired from infancy to be bilingual. Whereas there were two other American kids, again who were English-only, and in the course of the eight months they were in school never really managed the same fluency. I remember Anthony coming home and saying, "Mama! Mama, I learned how to say 'he did it' in Italian." I said, "How do you say it?" And he very dramatically pointed, "*lui*," which means "he." But

he intuited that pointing to somebody while saying "lui" was the same as saying "he did it." It was great.

Reti: Well, this might be a good place for us to stop for today.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes.

Reti: Today is July 9, 2013 and we've survived the Fourth of July.

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs)

Reti: This is Irene Reti and I'm here with Julia Armstrong-Zwart for our second interview in her oral history. We're at McHenry Library on the fourth floor. So Julia, today we're going to start by talking about your life in Bologna, Italy, after the University of Michigan.

Armstrong-Zwart: The decision to leave the University of Michigan was really for a couple of reasons. One, my husband wasn't happy in the department. It was a very traditional department with a lot of older colleagues who were very set in their ways, and he was not somebody who could easily adapt to those kinds of constraints. So he had been looking and had received offers from City University of New York and from UCLA. We spent a lot of time talking about which to choose, but the City University of New York offer involved our going to Bologna for a year, where he would direct a program of study abroad with the possibility of it extending to two years; it was just too attractive. The children were not quite five and four, and we thought it would be a great time for them to spend time in Italy.

Living in Bologna, Italy

The university insisted that the director be married, and we couldn't figure out why until we got there, and I realized that the wife was the unpaid dean of students. The City University of New York study abroad program was different from any other study abroad program I had been familiar with up to that point. Any student who was in academic good standing could study abroad. They would find the funds to send them. As a result, there were these wonderful students, from Brooklyn, the Bronx, all the boroughs, who were working-class kids, many the first in their family to go to college. They were city kids, city-smart kids, who'd never been out of New York before. They were provincial in the way that only New Yorkers can be provincial—

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: —at the same time they were city-savvy. But there were adjustment issues. Some of the things to worry about when directing a program of study abroad were drugs—that was sort of at the beginning of kids smoking dope—and the young women getting pregnant. Well, that was not an issue with these kids. These kids were focused and smart. They just didn't have those kinds of issues, but they would have issues. A small example: in Bologna, downtown, there is the *sotto passaggio*. It's an under-street passageway in the busiest part of the city. Well, they automatically assumed that you went down there to get the subway.

Reti: That would make sense.

Armstrong-Zwart: It was shock that there was no subway. The students lived in family homes or in *pensioni* –rooming houses. At home they were used to taking a shower a day. Well, water and electricity were very expensive in Italy, and we would have landladies calling, saying, "I don't understand. Are you Americans very dirty or very clean? Why do they need to take all of these showers?"

A lot of the students were music students, which meant they wanted to practice their violin, or their trumpet, or whatever, and that was also a problem. The great thing, though, was that they were enrolled in Italian schools. The ones in literature were enrolled in the University of Bologna and went to classes there, and the music students were enrolled at the Conservatory. It was an extraordinary experience for them, but every time they got homesick or something upset them, they would turn to me, substitute Mama. I had never had much experience with students outside of a classroom setting. I found that I really liked it. These were great kids, and the problems they were having were the problems that any young person might have the first time they were in a foreign country. I remembered what it was like for me during my summer in Quito, when I was their age, and how nice everyone was to me, and how helpful. So it was fun to be able to pass on what I had received to this group of young people.

I remember early one morning the doorbell rang, and it was one of the students. I guess now you'd say he was a hippie. He was tall, attenuated, bearded, vegetarian. He liked to get out and walk the hills, and the apartment we had was on the edge of the countryside. So there was Joe. He kept pointing to his throat,

pointing to his throat, and I said, "Come in." Finally, he was able to talk. He'd been out roaming the hills and munching on different pieces of vegetation. He had eaten something that had paralyzed his vocal cords, so he thought that he needed to come over so that we could do something if he really needed to go to the hospital. I thought, wow, this is great. Graduate school never prepared me for this, but I really liked it.

We were in Bologna for two years. The children became completely bilingual, and my Italian improved immensely. When the two years were up, we were pretty sure we didn't want to go back to New York City with two small kids. Frank received an offer from the University of Massachusetts. It had the advantage of being a good institution in a small town, but within easy driving distance of both Boston and New York.

Reti: So this was Amherst.

Armstrong-Zwart: This was Amherst, yes. And as it turned out, it was a wonderful location for the family, as well as for me, professionally. I think that if I hadn't had the experience of dealing with students on a range of issues that were not academic but that certainly had an impact on their academic life, I never would have been able to do the work that I ended up doing at the University of Massachusetts. All of my schooling and most of my first few jobs were pre-affirmative action, although I can say that I benefited from people acting affirmatively to help me, that kind of affirmative action.

Reti: Yes, as you talked about, with some of the nuns.

Armstrong-Zwart: We talked about that. But as a result of student affirmative action, the University of Massachusetts had recruited a Black students from the inner cities, from Roxbury and Dorchester in Boston and from Springfield, without regard for their preparation to complete university level academic work successfully.

Reti: So by this time we're talking about what year?

Armstrong-Zwart: This is 1970. One of the ways in which this problem manifested itself was in their difficulty completing the College of Arts and Sciences' mandatory two-year foreign language requirement. For students who had come from school districts in which the high schools provided an opportunity to take a foreign language, whether it was Latin, Greek, or a modern language, the two-year language requirement really wasn't that difficult, but most of the Black students were from inner city schools which simply didn't have those programs. So again, at a cocktail party, I was chatting about this issue with the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and he was intrigued by my being a Black woman who knew foreign languages. He asked, "How do you feel about developing a course that would help these kids learn foreign languages?" I was actually intrigued at the idea and gave it some thought, and then told him, "Yes, I'd be willing to do that."

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One of the assistant deans was going on leave, so the dean asked, "How would you feel about coming in and working in the dean's office?" I said, "Sure, why

not?" The university had an anti-nepotism rule that banned husbands and wives being full-time in the same department. Since I started out with an appointment in French and Italian, which was where my husband's appointment was, although I was working full time, mine was 11/12ths of an appointment. At that time I didn't think about it. It had some implications, eventually, in terms of benefits, but when you're twenty-nine years old, who thinks of retirement and benefits and stuff like that?

So I developed a course called *Teaching English as a Foreign Language to English Speakers*. My idea was that one of the problems students were having was that they didn't know grammar; they had no idea of the structure of language. A foreign language can be mystifying, especially if you're trying to learn it when you're a teenager, with all kinds of other hormonal and developmental things going on, and who wants to look like a fool in a classroom because you can't hack it. So I structured a course that unpacked English grammar. I used poetry, for example, "Jabberwocky," a wonderful poem for teaching English grammar, not teaching it so much as getting students to realize how much grammar they *have* internalized. Because they know the structure of "Jabberwocky," you can then break it down, and they realize that what you're doing is bringing out knowledge they already have.

Another was a section on body language. I had them observe each other, and they asked, "Can we observe you?" I said, "Well sure, why not?" They all had comments about how much I used my hands when speaking. I was just back from two years in Italy! I used my hands a lot.

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: Then there was a section on how you actually physically produce sounds: where your tongue needs to be in relation to your teeth and the rest of the inside of your mouth in order to produce a particular sound. Again, you break it down, demystify it. It was really confidence-building. It was saying, "You know more than you know. You've already learned one language. You can certainly learn another."

The funny thing about it was there were thirty students in the class, only four of whom were Black. The rest were White, and of the White students, most of them were one generation away from a different language, that is, their grandparents. They were second-generation born in America. I thought about that and the fact that we are a nation of immigrants and I remembered the experience in Michigan, where the Mexican parents wanted their kids to speak English. They didn't want them learning in Spanish. Within our culture there's a very strong push for immigrant families to lose the native language and become "American." Mostly what people keep are the foods and things like family celebrations, but the language goes very, very quickly. I always thought that was a shame.

Teaching these kids, I realized that learning a foreign language wasn't a problem only for Black students. For me, that was really important, because there was a tendency in the university at that time, and not just at the University of Massachusetts, I think it was true throughout the country, to believe that it was Black students or Puerto Rican students, Latino students, who entered with

academic deficiencies. When remedial programs were set up to address those deficiencies, almost every campus' experience was that once a Learning Center was established, the students of color could barely get in, due to the White students who had the same problems.

Basically, the problems these kids were experiencing were *student* problems, and if the university could develop a good solution to those problems, all students would benefit. For me, that was the larger lesson of affirmative action, whether you were talking about people of color, or whether you were talking about women coming in as students and employees. For example, all of the family leave policies started with maternity leave; now it's parental leave. Flexible schedules—all of these things that at first were targeted at women turned out to benefit men who needed them as well. So for me, the mindset of affirmative action somehow benefiting only the people who were the target was just wrong, and the more that I could talk about the universal benefits of the kinds of programs and actions which were taken in response to affirmative action, I thought, the better off we would be in terms of accepting and embracing affirmative action.

Affirmative Action at the University of Massachusetts in the Early 1970s

My first experience of affirmative action was at UMass. We had a Black chancellor. We had more Black faculty than I had ever seen anywhere—a Black mathematician, a psychologist—they were spread across the College of Arts and Sciences. The dean of public health was African American. So it was a school that

was much more diverse, say, than the University of Michigan had been. As a result, there was a campus culture more responsive to the concept of diversity. Plus, the Black faculty were very active in trying to change things.

The French and Italian department was urged by the dean of graduate studies to consider a more diverse student body at the graduate level. So the department found a Black graduate student. They went out and searched; I don't know exactly what they did. I don't know whether they got on the phone or whatever, but somehow they let it be known that they were looking for Black graduate students. There were at least two young women, there may have been more, who were under consideration. One was from an historically Black college in the South, and the other was a young woman from the University of Michigan, who had graduated in French in the romance languages department.

They took the young woman from the historically Black institution, even though her Graduate Record Examinations were not as good, because in their mind affirmative action was geared for people who were not able. If somebody was able, then they didn't need affirmative action. As a result, when this young woman came, her French was not up to the level of other graduate students, and she was put in undergraduate language classes. She lasted a year. Here was a young woman, who felt proud of having completed college and felt good about herself, and was then put in a situation where a mirror was held up to her that completely disputed all of these feelings she'd had before. And that, for me, was another lesson. You don't do that to people. You don't bring people in with an

expectation that they're going to fail, and then you set it up so that they fail. This was not conscious malice.

Reti: No. I'm sure it wasn't.

Armstrong-Zwart: No, it really wasn't. They were missionary do-gooders in this, and they did ill to this young woman. As a result of this incident, I became involved in a committee on campus called the Committee for the Collegiate Education of Black Students, comprising Black faculty and staff who had organized to help move the institution forward with affirmative action. We discussed what a school does to young people when they're brought into college for a year, fail, and are then dropped back into the circumstances they came from, only now labeled "failures." It caused us to push the institution to develop a Learning Center to develop more support for students once they were on campus because otherwise it's sink or swim.

Reti So kind of like the Bridge Program that we had here through EOP [Educational Opportunity Program] for many years.[4]

Armstrong-Zwart: Right, exactly. That was the kind of thing.

Reti: That was the kind of program they started to develop.

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[4] The UCSC Summer Bridge Program is discussed in detail in an oral history with Rosie Cabrera, forthcoming from the Regional History Project in 2014—Editor. UCSC still has a Bridge Program. See http://eop.ucsc.edu/content/bridgefaqs

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. Then we thought, you know, we shouldn't just restrict ourselves to Black students. There are Puerto Rican students; there are Latino students—we didn't use the term "Latino" then because then most of the Hispanic students were Puerto Ricans in the Northeast. We said, "Well, we're going to be responsible for reaching out to Puerto Rican students as well, and there should be more Puerto Rican faculty and staff." So we launched what turned out to be a very successful effort to get the university to broaden their affirmative action activities at all levels.

That's something that I am particularly happy to have been a part of, and for me, it is very much part of African American history. That is, we have always reached out to others. If we opened the door, we didn't shut it after we got in. We held it open and reached out to help other people come in. That's something that I hope we never lose as part of our culture in this country.

Reti: Hmm. That's very interesting to me. That's not something that I, honestly, am familiar with.

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, it is interesting that a group of people who have been shut out, and who survived and thrived in spite of it, retained that belief. I'm not romanticizing African Americans. We have our crumbs and bums just like anybody else, right? But it really is the way we desire to be. Maybe it's partly also the strong strand of Christianity among African Americans—

Reti: I was thinking about that.

Armstrong-Zwart: —where you reach out and you help, and the definition of "brother" is much larger than your ethnic group.

Reti: Exactly. So what were the relationships like between the Puerto Rican community on campus at Amherst and the Black or African American community?

Armstrong-Zwart: Initially they were very good. Around the time I was leaving, there was a competitive feeling was developing, that there was this piece of pie labeled "minority" and we want more. Instead of what I think Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was so skilled at promoting: "No, we want a bigger piece of the pie. We don't have to fight over this small slice." But that was beginning to develop on the campus, and I thought it was really unfortunate.

But on the whole—I mean, we weren't at each other's throats or anything like that.

Reti: Yeah. And kind of comparing, because we are going to move into [talking about] UCSC in a little while, what kinds of institutional structures were there for implementing affirmative action at UMass at that time?

Armstrong-Zwart: You know— Faculty pushing? (laughs) Committees pushing. A Black chancellor. Those were the two main things: there was a critical mass of Black faculty and you had a Black chancellor, and that was like a pincer. But in terms of institutions, UMass was like most colleges and universities. It mainly operated on good will, but the institution was set up in a very traditional way.

I don't know if you had a chance to read Dick Wasserstrom's [article]?[5]

Reti: Yes.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, and the idea that if you don't do anything, the way things are, the way institutions are set up, will continue the White privilege which they have been set up to sustain and maintain.

Reti: It's systemized oppression.

Armstrong-Zwart: Right, and I don't think people thought that way at the beginning. They just thought that if you opened the doors, then things would change. We really weren't aware of the bedrock foundation on which White privilege is based in this country. A Learning Center was set up and there were staff hired through the CCEBS program.

Reti: I'm sorry. What is that?

Armstrong-Zwart: That's like EOP. So they were there. There was a building called New Africa House. It was a community center for Black students on campus, and there was a barber down in the basement. That's one of the things

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[5] Richard Wasserstrom, "Preferential Treatment, Color-Blindness, and the Evils of Racism and Racial Discrimination," Presidential Address delivered before the Sixty-First Annual Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association in San Francisco, California, March 27, 1987. Armstrong-Zwart shared this article with the interviewer during the background research phase of this project.

that people didn't think about. When you're in this small, predominantly White community in New England: where does a Black student get his or her hair cut? I really appreciated the barbershop because my boys could get their hair cut there. There was a Jamaican restaurant that served goat curry and other food more familiar to those students of Caribbean descent. There was also a fabulous gospel choir of students and staff that started under the aegis of a Black faculty member in Music. It was really very, very good.

There were two Black faculty members in music, one who had been there a long time, Fred Tillis, a professor, and Horace Mitchell, an assistant professor. They had connections in the world of jazz, and they were able to attract Max Roach and Archie Shepp to the campus. The music department would not offer these two jazz icons faculty appointments in music, so two world-class jazz musicians came in and were appointed as part of the African American studies program.

Reti: Wait, I'm confused. The music department wouldn't offer faculty appointments?

Armstrong-Zwart: No, they didn't recognize jazz—

Reti: Oh, in jazz, I see.

Armstrong-Zwart: —as a legitimate area for a music department to be involved in. But because we had an African American studies department, which was housed in New Africa House, Archie Shepp and Max Roach taught at the university for many years.

Again, you get a critical mass, and it's almost like a chemical reaction. You start it, and it's a chain reaction. I guess I thought because it seemed so easy, that at any university it would be like that. I didn't realize the unique features of UMass which made it happen.

Minority Women Administrators of New England

Reti: I think you mentioned to me when we were talking before we actually started interviewing, a few weeks ago, about the Black administrators of New England group that you were part of.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, that was sometime during the eleven years I was at UMass. It was after 1971, because we had already started the first Women's Center on campus. It was really interesting, the way in which the Black civil rights movement gave impetus to a new phase of the women's movement, that gave it "legs," in a way. I mean, it had been there, but it had been somewhat dormant since the vote was granted to women. At that time I was, at age twenty-nine, one of the most senior minority administrators on campus and the most senior woman administrator in the College of Arts & Science administration.

Reti: At twenty-nine!

Armstrong-Zwart: And one of the youngest. The women were getting restive, let's put it that way. So a group of us started meeting and decided, "This is ridiculous. There should be at least an associate vice chancellor who's female, so that in the central administration there is some voice different from the all the

male voices. New Africa House works very, very well, and there really needs to be a similar place where women can get together to discuss issues and to be together. Sisterhood is powerful."

Reti: So were you seeing yourself as part of the feminist movement at that point?

Armstrong-Zwart: Oh, absolutely! Absolutely. A senior woman at another institution, a member of the New England Minority Women Administrators group that we had pulled together, once said, "You know what is interesting. Up through undergraduate, I was aware of barriers in place because of my race. Once I graduated from undergraduate, from then on in my career, through graduate school and subsequent jobs, the barriers were there because I was female." I think that that probably is an experience a lot of women of color have. You've got two barriers to leap over.

So some women on campus started meeting informally and decided that we needed a space. We leaned on the administration for two things. There were faculty women and staff women involved in this effort, [and] we pushed for an associate vice chancellorship. Somebody had left, and we said, "You really need to hire a woman." You could tell that they were going to hire a woman because I was put on the search committee. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: It was pretty clear that they wanted to hire a woman. The other demand was a women's center. We wanted a place, some space where

women could meet. To their credit, the administration came up with a location. I think part of the reason they gave in was that the then-academic vice chancellor's wife was a senior faculty woman and she was very outspoken. I always had the feeling that his wife helped a lot in moving this forward.

So it was successful. We did hire a woman associate vice chancellor. The second lesson I learned is that it's hard for one person to make a difference. I mean, you can make a difference but it's really hard to be the girl with your finger in the dike.

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: Actually, trying to put a hole in the dike. (laughs) The Women's Center, though, was very successful. I was the first convener of a women's conference on campus, just to talk and address what our experiences were, what the barriers were, what would help us? One of the things that came out of it was a recommendation for job sharing, and in fact, the first directors of the Women's Center were two women who shared the job. We argued in support of the idea and said, "You know, you're getting two Little Red Hens. You're going to get more than a single person. You're going to get two dedicated people who will probably give you, each, three-quarters of a job. It's not necessarily fair, but that's what's going to happen." And that's what we got. We got two women for whom the flexible hours were really important since they had small children at home, but they went above and beyond to get the center off the ground and to get things started.

That was about the time that there were more women's conferences being held throughout the country. One was held at Yale for women from the schools in the Northeastern area.

Reti: And are we talking about both faculty and students?

Armstrong-Zwart: We're talking faculty and senior administrative staff. It was held at Yale, and some UMass women attended. It was interesting. Those early meetings of women were so interesting because, unlike professional conferences where everybody has their game face on and is looking *professional*, these early women's meetings were very different. You had the feeling that everybody you met, every woman you met, was reaching out to you as you reached out to her. It was a mutual attempt to find connections that was very different from finding intellectual or professional connections.

But at lunchtime on the second day, a group of us had realized that there were maybe ten or twelve women of color there: Asian, Latina, and African American. I use African American and Black indistinguishably because I'm of the older generation. We defused the word "Black," which used to be an epithet, and made it a good, positive, strong description, so I use both. At lunch we had ended up sitting at a table together. I said, "You know, we really do need to break off and talk about some of the issues we have as women of color, because it's different." So we went to the conference organizers and said, "We'd like to have a breakout session this afternoon for us to talk about some things." I think, as I told you, there was great consternation because here we were at a conference

where the whole vibe was—we are together, we are powerful—and then you have this splinter group separating out. But there really was a need for us to talk about the unique circumstances of being women of color, for example, about the growing tension between the women's movement and the traditional civil rights movement, which we were feeling.

Fairly early on, the feeling was that the women's movement was primarily a White woman's movement. That's not true. That wasn't true. There were a lot of women of color who were involved right from the beginning and remained involved and still are an integral part of the women's movement. I think it may have been more the reaction of men of color, who saw the women's movement, conceivably, as pulling resources away from what had been our struggle up to that point. Here we were, women of color, with our bodies in both camps, and we wanted to talk about that, about how you deal with it, about how you work with men so they don't feel threatened by this, although it became clear as affirmative action developed and matured that White females really benefited greatly from affirmative action, more so than women of color did. In fact, one of our former faculty members, Akasha Hull, wrote *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies.* That was really what it was like.

So we set up the New England Minority Women Administrators group. There was a surprising number of minority women in administrative positions. They were mostly in Student Affairs, but some of us were in Academic Affairs, across all of these schools and colleges in New England. We would get together on a

regular basis, once quarterly, to talk about what was going on, what was happening. Then we started holding more formal conferences, with women presenting papers, and it became much more professional. It was wonderful. It was wonderfully sustaining, and it didn't pull any woman of color away from also being a feminist. In fact, I think it reinforced our feminism by allowing us to give voice to both—our commitment to our ethnicity as well as to our gender.

Reti: Do you know if there were other regions of the country with similar organizations?

Armstrong-Zwart: I don't know. I never ran into another group. There may well have been.

Reti: Does the group still exist?

Armstrong-Zwart: I don't know. It existed for about ten years after I came to California, but I lost touch.

Reti: So it started, when, in the mid-1970s?

Armstrong-Zwart: It was the early 1970s.

Reti: Well, that's really, really great.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yeah. And it may well be that if it disappeared, it went out of existence because traditional associations opened up more. There was no need for a separate organization.

Assistant Academic Dean, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Reti: Yes. So let's talk about some of the other activities you were involved with at UMass. You were assistant academic dean and you were the first female minority dean on campus, you said, at age twenty-nine.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. (laughs) It was a great experience for me because, as I mentioned, I'd been shy in graduate school and had become a little less shy. The experience in Bologna, having been the de facto dean of students, helped me become even less shy. Then, because I was the only minority administrator in Arts and Sciences, I got put on a lot of committees. I remember one committee met, starting at 4:00PM, and it would run maybe until 6:00PM, maybe 6:30PM. The other committee members were all men. I went to a couple of meetings and finally said, "You know, when this breaks up at 6:30 you go home, and your wife has dinner there, and you sit down and have dinner. There's no dinner on the table until I get home. We're going to have to change the time that this meets so that I get out of here by 5:00 so I can go home and take care of my family." It was like, oh! It had never occurred to them. So we started meeting at 3:00PM so I could get out by 5:00PM. I can remember sitting there through the first two meetings, you know, and my heart was beating. They're older, they're all male, and they're all White. But I thought if I don't say anything, nothing is going to change, and this wasn't working for me. You know, I got home and my kids were ravenous, and there was a grumpy husband who didn't cook.

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: I thought, okay, it's like being a *kamikaze*. There are certain things you have to do, and that's my image: you go *kamikaze*. You speak up and what I have found is that it's okay to speak up. On the larger scale of things, it was small; in my life, it was a pretty big thing. But if you speak up, people sort of say, oh, okay. Or, if there's pushback, at least you've opened the discussion. If you remain silent, nothing changes. So that was yet another barrier of shyness overcome. My son would probably say: "Yeah, and you haven't shut up since." (laughs) But it was an evolution, learning how to be effective in that environment, the academic environment, in different roles.

Reti: Yes, for sure. Who was picking up the kids from school?

Armstrong-Zwart: We lived within walking distance of school. Amherst was a small town, so they could walk home, and my husband and I were able to arrange our schedules so that one of us was always there when they got home.

Reti: So you were going through the kind of classic marriage of the 1970s, trying to renegotiate or discuss these roles.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, but at home I was a wife of the 1950s.

Reti: Mm.

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, my mother worked and she did everything. So I was just modeling my behavior after hers. That's what she did, so I did everything. Though I have to say, as my job got more and more involved, I finally said to my husband, "I can't do it all. You're going to have to do some of it." By that time

the boys were nine and ten, so his way of "doing some of it" was to organize the boys into doing things. (laughs) As it turned out, it was great preparation for the boys, and it did help. We hired a student worker who cleaned the house. It never had occurred to me that somebody could come and clean my house. My forebears cleaned houses. My great-grandmother was first a washerwoman and then a cook. We were the ones who did the cleaning. We didn't hire people to clean. But it did two things. First of all, it meant I had a cleaner house, and secondly, before when I would clean the house, the first person who came in and left a muddy footprint, I would come down on them like the Furies because I had spent all that time cleaning. Well, if somebody else cleans the house, you want it to stay clean but it's not like *you* just spent all of that time. So it made me easier to live with, and it also relieved a lot of stress.

Reti: Sure.

Armstrong-Zwart: It was very typical of women of that time. We had one foot in the fifties and one foot in the seventies, and that's a big span.

Reti: My own mom went through that, so I well remember what that was like.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yeah.

Reti: So now, let's see—[looking at Armstrong-Zwart's CV], you were working as a lecturer. That was teaching the English course.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, that course was offered through French and Italian, and then I was also asked to teach Spanish. So I was also a lecturer in Spanish and

Portuguese as well, and I taught first year of Spanish. I always said I enjoyed teaching, because in my role as assistant dean, I was part of the College of Arts and Sciences Information and Advising Center. We were responsible for the administration of all of the college requirements, and students who were undeclared majors depended on us for all of their academic advising. We handled summer academic orientation, plus students who were in academic difficulty or who had been suspended. In fact, at the end of every semester we went through all of the records of students who were in academic difficulty, to make the decision as to whether they should be suspended or dismissed. After a while, you began to get a pathological sense of the institution because what you were seeing was everything that didn't work. So teaching, I always felt, was a way of having a non-pathological interaction with the institution. Plus, it also helped me understand students when they came in with difficulties.

What I found, I would say more than 50 percent of the time, was that when students had academic difficulties, that was the tip of the iceberg. There were other things going on. With first-year students, a lot of times there were students who hadn't been ready, or who hadn't wanted, to come to college, but whose parents had insisted, and so [in a sense] they didn't go to college. I mean, they were physically present, but they needed time away to finish developing and maturing. Other times, students who were in academic difficulty were working as well.

I mean, some of the kids were working thirty, thirty-five hours a week and trying to carry a sixteen-credit load. There were just impossible circumstances. For

other students, there were family issues at home. You name it. The range of problems that came up was remarkably illuminating for me. There were times when I would sit in my office and say, sixteen years of Catholic girls' school really didn't prepare me to deal with this. (laughs) The student who came in who said it was hard for her to find a place to study after the library closed because she couldn't go back to her room while her roommate and her boyfriend were there.

Reti: Oh, yeah. Right, that didn't happen in Catholic girls school, no.

Armstrong-Zwart: No. Males weren't allowed above the first floor at Saint Mary's, and I was living at home. In the lounge where you could entertain your boyfriend, your date, whatever, we used to say the rule was three feet had to be on the floor. (laughs)

Reti: Oh, yes. I've heard that one. You had to leave the door open.

Armstrong-Zwart: So there were issues. There was a big change between the time I went to college in the late fifties and what was going on in the late sixties, early seventies. When we came back from Italy in 1970, everything had changed. You had had the student strikes. You had had Berkeley. You had the Free Speech Movement. Dope was a presence. I'd never had a student who thought I was a great person offer me a joint before, and that was not that atypical in the early seventies. So it was coming back to an entirely new world. I learned how to function effectively as an academic administrator in this new world environment, dealing with young people who were dealing with that same

environment, as well as all of the normal developmental issues that people in their late teens have. It was a great time for all of us to learn a lot.

I also learned that the issues that I could see most clearly in students were probably issues that I had that I also needed to take a look at. So it was very educational for me, personally, as well. It was, for example, my first contact with gay and lesbian students. Through setting up the Women's Center I had come in contact with women who were out lesbians, and I always found it interesting. I realized that I had a romantic view of lesbian relationships; I thought women would just be loving to each other and all of that.

Reti: (laughs) You and a lot of people.

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) I had that bubble burst, as some of my friends talked about their relationships. But I hadn't had that much to do with gay men. Now this is from the perspective of somebody who's straight, but it seemed to me that it was less painful for lesbian students than for gay male students, and that may not be true. But the gay male students who would come to see me were having problems in classes with faculty; they had problems in the dorms; and they had problems with their family. I never had a lesbian student come and talk about those issues. Now it just may be that they didn't come and talk about those issues, so I just don't know. But again, for me, I learned about different kinds of discrimination, which is always good. If you're part of a group that is discriminated against, it is always enlightening to learn you're not the only one. There are a whole lot of other people who are dealing with discrimination, and

you'd better check yourself out to make sure, find out where you are on these issues as well.

Changing Roles for Women in the 1970s

For me, the eleven years at UMass were really great years. I loved the job. I was very happy in it. It was a good circumstance for my kids, but my marriage was unraveling. When two people marry when they're young, like in graduate school, they're at what I call the: "I love lasagna." "You do? I love it, *too*! We're soulmates!" stage. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: And this is the basis for a lifelong relationship. Well, what happens is that life happens, and you grow up and if you're lucky, you grow together, grow up together. If you're unfortunate, you grow up and you grow apart, and that's what happened to us. I think I first became aware of this distance when the first round of my husband's tenure review in his department was negative. He started talking about, "We have to move. I think maybe I'd like to go back to New York City. I have faculty mentors at Columbia." For the first time I thought, I don't want to move. I have a life here that I really like. I have a job that I really enjoy. People respect me as myself and I don't want to lose this. The dean of the college called me in to talk about the fact that there'd been a negative tenure decision at the department. He said, "Well, what will you do?"

Reti: He called you in because your husband had a negative tenure decision.

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, it was more casual than that. Like, "What are you planning to do?" I said, "Gee. I don't know. I guess if the tenure decision is negative, we'll move." I wasn't going to tell him that I had all these [doubts]. Fortunately at the college level, the college committee that reviewed him was positive and so the dean was positive. That was a relief. It was a bullet dodged, because I don't think I would have been willing to move.

But then a few years later, things just came apart, you know, and we decided to separate. I stayed in the family home with the boys, who were teenagers by this time. It is difficult to be a single mother of two teenage boys. What I noticed was that when your sons are young, Mama is the fount of all wisdom and everything. But then when puberty hits, Mama doesn't know the things that *men* know. So you go from being the fount of all wisdom to being the fount of irrelevance in a lot of things. (laughs) You get through that stage, but it's hard when you're doing that as a single parent.

Now we're at about 1980. I had been doing this job for ten years, and there really wasn't a prospect of advancement. I suppose I could have moved into the central administration, but I wasn't sure that that's what I wanted to do. After the marriage broke up, I thought well, maybe I should go back and finish my PhD, or go to law school, or get a PhD in an entirely new field, like linguistics. I took a graduate linguistics course and really liked it. But then I thought, you are thirty-nine years old, you have been a professional administrator for at least ten years. You're good at it. I don't think you need any more certification.

So I said, I'm not going to do the paper chase. I also recognized that I have the mindset of an administrator, not an academic. I really enjoyed doing the things that administrators do. It allowed me to be analytical. It allowed me to be compassionate. It allowed me to organize things. It spoke to a lot of parts of me that I didn't even realize were there. It all came together in this administrative job. So I thought, I need to look around and see if there's a job that would fit. I would read the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and the *New York Sunday Times* Careers in Education. I had received a call from Kenyon College, asking me to consider applying for their dean of students position, but I didn't want dean of students. I really liked being part of the academic side.

Reti: Rather than the Student Affairs side of the house.

Armstrong-Zwart: Rather than Student Affairs. Partially, because that's where my head was, but also because it seemed to me that in terms of making a change, a difference in the institution, it was easier to do it from the academic side of the house than from the student affairs side. I have always bemoaned the disconnect between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. I once thought of a university as a dysfunctional family, with the faculty as the powerful fathers; the Student Affairs people are the mothers; the undergraduates are the little children and the graduate students are the older siblings.

Reti: I think that's an apt analogy.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, it has always disturbed me. But I figured, okay, I want to be where I can possibly have some impact on the institution. I was happy being

an assistant academic dean, but I was ready to move on. Being married with a family in a small New England town is one thing: being single is something else again. And it wasn't that I was necessarily looking to get married again, but you know, I mean—(laughs)

Reti: (laughs) You weren't going into the convent, put it that way.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yeah. I had solved that question when I was fifteen. I was looking in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and I saw this ad for Special Assistant to the Chancellor in Matters of Informal Grievance and Affirmative Action. There was a long position description. I read it and thought, gee, it really fit my background in a lot of ways. I thought that it was so detailed that it was a "wired "search. They had an internal person whose resume fit this exactly. I wasn't going to bother, so I didn't apply. A couple of months later I saw "search reopened." I said, Gee, it must not be wired, so I applied.

Before we move on to UCSC, I really need to mention someone. You've asked me about mentors, and I've said I didn't have formal mentors, but that along the way people have given me a boost. There was someone who helped me, whose name I don't even remember now, when I was first at UMass. One day I ran into this guy who was the assistant to the department head of Biology, who had been at UMass for years. I ran into him because we were walking in the same direction, diagonally across the quad. He started talking about the campus and the personalities of the people, the structures and how you get things done, the people to whom to turn if you really wanted something done, and it wasn't

always the person in the big office. In the course of a fifteen-minute walk, he gave me an introduction to how to function efficiently as an administrator at UMass Amherst. It was one of those freely given gifts that I could never really repay to him; it's one of those things that you pay forward. I just wanted to acknowledge him, even if I can't remember his name, because it was so important to me.

Reti: He was your angel at that moment.

Armstrong-Zwart: He really was. I don't think I ever had any interaction with him after that. We just happened to meet, happened to connect, happened to walk together. It *is* like an angel. He came and gave me this gift and then flew off. Yeah.

So I did apply [for the job at UCSC]. At that time both boys were living with their father. They had decided that Mom's rules were too stringent, and Dad's rules might be a little easier to live with. I told them that I was applying for a job in California and if I got it, if I got the offer, I didn't know if I would take it or not, but I wanted them to know and for them to think about it. My older son was in his senior year of high school, and my younger son was in his junior year of high school.

Applying for the Position at the University of California, Santa Cruz

I really think I applied more out of curiosity. I had never gone through a formal job process, applying for a job, with an interview and all of that. I really wanted

to see what it felt like, what I could do. I talked to some friends. I mean, who knew what the University of California at Santa Cruz was? I knew UCLA. I knew Berkeley. I knew Riverside. Those were the three that I knew. I remember when I was in graduate school and the new campuses were starting up, the view of the Hopkins faculty was: you can't take a job in California because life is so easy there you can't get any serious work done. That was the idea. It was Lotus Land.

Reti: Oh, like we are all sitting on the beach.

Armstrong-Zwart: That's right exactly. It was Lotus Land, which says more about them than it does about California. But as a result, I didn't know much about universities in California at all. So I talked to some friends, and someone had been on an external review committee for a department here. She told me some things, such as her impression of the chancellor and what she thought the place was like, and that was helpful. Then I had gotten the catalog to look at the areas which I'm most familiar with, to see what the courses were like, what was going on.

When I was invited for an interview, I hopped on a plane one January day, from Hartford, in the middle of a snowstorm, and I landed in San Jose. The sun was shining and it was 68 degrees. The campus contact had said, "Rent a car and drive down to the campus." Well, nobody told me about [the treacherous nature of] Highway 17. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs) Oh, God!

Armstrong-Zwart: Nobody told me about Highway 17. I thought I must be lost, (laughs) but no, the map says this is where we are going. I remember when I got to Scotts Valley, the road turned into a highway and I thought, whew!

Then driving up to the campus, it looked like no campus I had *ever* seen before. I was staying at the faculty apartment in Merrill College. I got in early evening. I think I must have eaten somewhere on the road. In the morning when I got up, well, they had said, "You can go to the dining commons where students are, just go in there for breakfast." I walked in and there was what looked like a vat of peanut butter and a vat of granola." (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: I thought, well, you know, this is different.

Reti: Granola. That's perfect.

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) It was really very different from UMass. The campus was really very different. It was beautiful, but it felt like a resort, not a university campus. Walking over to McHenry [Library], I was absolutely entranced at the idea of the Chancellor's Office being in a library. That just seemed to me to be such a statement of the administration's connection to the academic institution, to the totality of the institution. Then I found out how it happened. But anyway, that was my read—

Reti: That's an interesting perspective. I never thought of it that way.

Armstrong-Zwart: And it was open. You could look into it. At UMass Amherst, Whitmore Hall was the administration building, and we called it Fort Whitmore. It had what looked like ramps going up but you really expected a gate to come down. It had limited access, let's put it that way, so it could be defended. Whereas this was just so open. The library, for me, is the heart of the institution. I'm not just saying that because you work in the library and we're sitting in the library! (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: But for me it is; the library really is the heart of an institution, the repository of the heart of the institution. So I was charmed. I went through two and a half days of interviews, with every possible group of people that you could imagine. I learned a lot about the institution in the course of their questions. It felt a little bit like running the gauntlet, but it was a wonderful introduction to the institution because every group that I met with was passionate about something.

The only interview that I thought was difficult was the one with Chancellor Sinsheimer. I worried that this wasn't a position he was committed to, that it had been forced on him by different groups on the campus. So I thought, well, I don't know, and I went home. As I was driving off campus, the sun was shining. There was the bay. It was by that time 69, 70 degrees. I thought, you know, if they make me an offer I may just seriously have to consider it.

Then I returned home, flew into ice and snow, drove back to Amherst. And the more I thought about it, I thought that it would be an interesting job to be the campus's first ombudsman. That was something that was just starting in universities and colleges then, and I had done some reading about it. And to be able to advise the chancellor about affirmative action, that was really very attractive. But I still thought, I just don't know if the chancellor is committed to this position.

So when Robert Sinsheimer called me to offer me the job, it was another *kamikaze* moment. I said, "I have to be frank with you. The job is very interesting but I'm not sure that you're committed to this position. I think maybe it was forced on you by the campus." We talked for forty-five minutes and what I realized, and was subsequently borne out, is that Bob Sinsheimer was a very reserved, almost shy man.

Reti: Yes.

Armstrong-Zwart: And in initial interactions often it was difficult to form a connection. But in this phone conversation, the real Bob Sinsheimer came through and he reassured me, very convincingly, that no, this was something that he wanted. I said, "Let me think about it a little." and then I called back and said, "I'll take it."

Reti: So to your knowledge, there wasn't a group on campus that had advocated for this position?

Armstrong-Zwart: Oh, I assume there must have been. Positions like this don't pop out of chancellors' heads. Usually it bubbles up from below. But I didn't get a sense of what group it might have been. I was surprised because I thought I might have done so through the interview process, but I didn't get a sense of that. Or if it was there, it was too subtle for me to have picked up.

I called him back and said, "Yes, I'd like the job." Before I accepted the job, I talked with both of my sons. I said, "I want you both to come with me." My younger son, Anthony, said, "Yeah, I want to," and my older son, Gian-Mario, said no, because he was graduating would be going to UMass. That was hard for me. Also, he didn't want to leave his dad alone. I could understand that, too.

Coming to Santa Cruz

So we packed up the house and my younger son and I got on a plane and flew to San Jose, and I drove Highway 17 again (laughs). Fortunately, it was before my son had his driver's license because otherwise I'm sure he would have been a back seat driver *par excellence*.

I moved here a month before I actually started work. I came on July 1 and I started work August 4th, 1981. I figured to get him enrolled in school and to get everything settled. The first time we went downtown, my son and I, as we walked down from where we were living on Nobel Drive , the first thing we saw was a double-decker VW bus painted with flowers and everything. My son looked at me. We kept walking and saw the Rainbow Lady in front of the Cooper House. But what really got him was an elderly gentleman on a bicycle, who had

a propeller beanie on his head, with plastic windmills strapped to his knees, and windmills on his bike, and as he was tootling along, everything was twirling. My son turned to me and said, "Mom, where have you brought me?" (laughs)

Reti: The 1960s were not over in Santa Cruz in 1981.

Armstrong-Zwart: That's exactly it! Right. I was charmed. What can I say? I was just charmed by it all. In Amherst there were still strands of the sixties, but it was a small New England town. Whereas Santa Cruz seemed like a place where it was all hanging out, and I found that attractive, in spite of being sort of uptight and conservative myself. I was delighted. My son, I don't think he was ever completely taken with Santa Cruz as a place.

Reti: Was it hard for him, I'm making an assumption here, but I would assume he was one of few African American kids going to high school here.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, it was harder for him because there were expectations. He was expected to hang exclusively with the African American kids, but he identified as biracial, something people didn't do in those days. He identified as Black and Italian. Those have always been his two identities. He didn't think of himself as half White and half Black; he was half Black and half Italian. It was more cultural identity than racial, in both instances. But he was a kid who adjusted and adapted. He's a very charming person. He managed to find friends, but he decided that he didn't want to stay in school, so he tested out and that made him happy. He got a job and his first car; he was happy as a clam. He

didn't want to go to college, which was hard to accept. It was very hard to accept.

Reti: What about for you, coming to a town that did not have a large African American population?

Armstrong-Zwart: Except for my childhood in Chicago, I had never lived in a predominantly African American environment, so it wasn't that different.

It didn't solve the issue of being a single woman. A complication, too, was coming to the campus in the roles that I had; I wasn't going to start dating anybody on campus.

Reti: (sighs) Yeah.

Working with Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer

Armstrong-Zwart: I loved working with Bob Sinsheimer, I have to tell you. His moral courage and his integrity as an administrator were phenomenal. He was, from my perspective, a wonderful chancellor. He always was an independent thinker, but he would listen to you, take what you said into consideration, and then he would tell you what he was going to do and why. I really appreciated the honesty and the openness of that interaction. I think, for him, he had to get used to having a female assistant who was forthright. I didn't get in his face, exactly, but I sort of did (laughs) in that my approach to him was, yes, he was my boss, he was the chancellor, but we were equal human beings. I'm not sure that he was used to interacting with women that way. I don't know. But I remember

the first couple of memos I drafted for him, he sent back with corrections. And I thought, huh, this is a biologist and he's correcting me? I said, I *will* submit a draft to him which he will not change a word of. It took me three months, and I felt that it was three months of our working through our relationship, getting to know each other, getting to trust each other, and settling into the relationship which we had for the rest of the time that we worked together.

He was somebody who never blamed anybody else. He took responsibility for his decisions, and if they were unpopular decisions he would stand up for them. I mean, he was willing to meet with any group, anytime, to talk. He would talk about why he had decided what he had decided. He would hear what they would have to say. He would engage in conversation. The Chancellor's Office was occupied several times during the first few years, and he would always come out and talk to the students. He would say, "There are people here working. You can't disturb them. But I'll come out and I'll talk to you. Then I'll have to go back." He was very rational and—it was a different time. It was a very different time. The student protests were not as angry as I think they became in more recent years. Students, for example, would hand the chief of police a list of the students who were going to be arrested (laughs).

Reti: Now they're wearing masks and—

Armstrong-Zwart: Yeah, it was just a very different time. When the students occupied the foyer of the library over divestment: the Regents divesting themselves of stock in South Africa, the chancellor said he wasn't going to call

the police out; he wasn't going to have them forcibly removed. So they stayed there for it seemed like forever.

Reti: I remember that.

Armstrong-Zwart: You remember that?

Reti: I was a student then.

Armstrong-Zwart: You were a student then. Were you out there in the foyer?

Reti: I was for a little while, just for a few hours.

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) I don't know how he felt to students, but working with him was, for me, wonderful. He didn't quite know what an ombudsman was and I didn't quite know what an ombudsman was. When I came to campus, I went around to meet all of the provosts, the deans, the department chairs, in my role as ombudsman. I thought that was a really good way of introducing myself in a positive way rather than coming in as—"I'm Ms. Affirmative Action and I'm here to knock you upside the head to make you do right."

How to Change the Institution

So my introduction to the campus, first, was as ombudsman. Affirmative action was much more gradual. There was an affirmative action office with a director of affirmative action, Karen Sweetland, who reported to me. She was responsible for developing the affirmative action plan and working operationally with affirmative action. I really was more looking at policies. For me, it was

considering how to change the institution, how to move the institution, how to change the culture of the institution, in order to foster affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. I've always believed that if you have policies that you enforce, over time people's behavior changes. I've never believed that you wait for people's behavior to change and then you develop policies. I don't mean policies as a stick, although they're the ultimate—they're the stick in hiding.

Also when I came, there was money for affirmative action. We had funding that we could use for postdoc fellowships for recent PhDs who were women or minorities, for them to get a postdoc which we would fund. Peggy Delaney was one of our funded postdocs. There was money for doing junior faculty development. There were resources available.

Reti: Where did this money come from?

Armstrong-Zwart: It came from the Office of the President. There was an assistant vice president of affirmative action in the Office of the President, and there was a whole affirmative action apparatus at the Office of the President as well. After talking to the chancellor, the decision was made to focus on faculty affirmative action first, feeling that if faculty attitudes can be changed, based on my experience at UMass, the institution will change. The capacity for change in the institution is much greater if you have the faculty behind it.

It was very fortunate that at that time Dick Wasserstrom chaired the [Academic] Senate Affirmative Action Committee. He was, has been, is still, such a staunch

supporter of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity, and he was a well-respected, senior faculty member. It couldn't have been a better circumstance for trying to do something in the area of faculty affirmative action.

Reti: So in 1981, the faculty was quite White and male.

Armstrong-Zwart: There were twenty-three women on the tenure track and twenty-three faculty of color. That includes women of color and foreign faculty, any non-White faculty member, and women of color, of course, were double counted (laughs) so there weren't even as many as that.

Reti: It makes it sound like there were more than there really were.

Armstrong-Zwart: There were probably around thirty-five, all told, which isn't a lot. But you had Dick Wasserstrom there, and you also had the fact that the campus was young. The faculty were in two groups when they were first hired. The campus hired the senior eminences in their fields, who were attracted to the idea of this new institution, and if they weren't attracted to the reality of the campus, they left. And then you had a big gulf and all of these newly minted PhDs who had come up through the time of the troubles, the Sixties, so they had a mindset which was less traditional. What you didn't have was that middle stratum of associate and full professors who usually are the ones who maintain traditional values and structures of the institution. Also, although the college reorganization had taken place, the departmental structure was very weak; [there were still] the boards of studies. In my experience, the academic department is the basic, fundamental building block of a traditional university,

the political building block, and because there was a weak board structure, you didn't have the entrenched political bulwark of traditional academic departments. That also helped. Things were more fluid here, politically.

Reti: Very interesting.

Armstrong-Zwart: This is, again, from my perspective.

Reti: So that actually allowed for this culture shift that you were trying to bring about.

Armstrong-Zwart: Exactly. There just weren't as many windmills to tilt against. It was just more fluid and flexible; it felt more fluid and flexible. There was also an egalitarianism on this campus. The role of staff was valued in a way that more traditional campuses just hadn't seen. More faculty seemed to be involved in committee structures and devoted to the maintenance and development of the institution.

There just was a different feel to UCSC. At [the University of] Michigan I was always in awe of the institution. I was intrigued by UMass, and, to a certain extent, developed my administrative chops there. But I have to say, I fell in love with UCSC. There was something about the idealism, the egalitarianism. There was just something. For me, it just—it fit. It really did fit. It felt that things were possible here.

Reti: I think that's a good place to stop for today.

Special Assistant to the Chancellor in Matters of Informal Grievance and Affirmative Action

Reti: So today is Tuesday, July 16th 2013 on this foggy, drippy day in the redwoods at McHenry Library. This is Irene Reti. I'm here with Julia Armstrong-Zwart for our third oral history. Welcome, Julia.

Armstrong-Zwart: Thank you.

Reti: So today we're going to specifically focus on affirmative action, but I wanted to start with talking about the position which you came here to take, which was ombudsman.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. The title was Special Assistant to the Chancellor in Matters of Informal Grievance and Affirmative Action. I think it was the longest title of anyone on campus. The "Informal Grievance" was the ombudsman part. The campus had never had an ombudsman. I had never been an ombudsman, but it was a concept which was beginning to take root in universities. The feeling was that there should be a way for a single individual to turn to someone in the institution who could look into something and be what's called a fair witness. Because otherwise, when you have a single individual bringing a grievance, it's the individual against a monolithic institution which has all of these unconsciously, or sometimes consciously, built-in safeguards against change, self-protective mechanisms. It's very, very difficult for an individual to take on the monolith and prevail. What the Ombudsman's Office provided was a way of hearing an individual's grievance or complaint without going through any

formal mechanism, doing an investigation. reaching a preliminary conclusion as to the facts of the matte, and then, if the grievance was well founded, making a recommendation to an administrative officer for remedy.

Reti: So a formal grievance—can you explain to me what the difference would be?

Armstrong-Zwart: A formal grievance would be a written complaint which would go through a formal procedure was there, depending on your status: faculty, staff, or student. If you were a unionized staff member, it would be a particular procedure; for an unrepresented staff employee, another process covered by the personnel policies. For faculty, it would be the Committee on Privilege and Tenure. There was a student grievance procedure which I wasn't terribly familiar with, that has changed over time, but has always involved a written complaint. In all instances a formal complaint went into the system and out would come a decision, but sometimes the grievant really didn't know what had happened in the process. There was no continuing personal contact.

Sometimes the grievances that an individual might have really don't fit the formal process. For example, one of the first complaints that I had was from a staff member who felt that she was being disrespected by a faculty member. She was confused about the definition of sexual harassment. She had conflated it with gender harassment and sex discrimination. She just knew that she felt disrespected as a woman. Actually, it was a fairly simple grievance to resolve, in that the faculty member was *completely* unaware of how his behavior was

experienced by staff women. Having someone bring it to his attention in a gentle way worked. I didn't ride in with my lance, getting ready to skewer him, but just talking to him about the behaviors the person had complained about was effective. Also it served to let the faculty member know that somebody was watching; there was no possibility of his retaliating against the staff member for having raised these issues, even had he wanted to. The relationship between them actually ameliorated after that. I think an ombudsman can do that. A formal grievance procedure cannot, because what happens in a formal grievance procedure is that the person accused immediately goes into a tight, defensive posture and, to a certain extent, the institution marshals its forces to defend that manager or supervisor. I found that the ombudsman office was a very effective way of resolving things at a low level, where you actually could have an impact on people's behavior without triggering the defensiveness.

Reti: Great. Thank you.

Armstrong-Zwart: There was an organization of university ombudsmen which met annually. A lot of the ombudsmen had started out as campus ministers, which I thought was interesting. I was one of the few people who came from a semi-academic background. It was useful to get together and talk about different issues and different problems.

Reti: Was this UC-wide?

Armstrong-Zwart: It was national. There was a very active, regional California group. I think the schools and colleges and universities in California were in the

forefront of establishing ombudsmen's offices, so in some ways we were path-breakers.

Reti: Why do you think that is?

Armstrong-Zwart: I don't know. It may have something to do with the nature of California culture, or the times, and a lot of things like that.

I was in that position for eighteen months, at the same time getting to know the structure and policies of the campus. Early on, Chancellor Sinsheimer and I discussed which end of this large issue to tackle, and we agreed that looking at the faculty was probably a very good way to start. First of all, it's a smaller group.

Faculty Affirmative Action

Reti: When you're speaking of "the large issue," are you speaking about affirmative action?

Armstrong-Zwart: I'm now speaking of affirmative action. The faculty was a smaller group than a larger group of staff employees, plus with a much tighter administrative structure. Also, to the extent that we could have an impact on faculty culture, we would be having an impact on campus culture. So I spent a great deal of time, initially, going around meeting with department chairs, meeting with deans, getting to know them, talking about various issues, without coming in with the stick of "there are goals you're not meeting," but to kind of scope out, to get a sense of where people were, what their attitudes were because

that helps a lot. If you know where somebody is coming from, you can figure out a more effective approach.

At the same time I began to work with the Senate Committee on Affirmative Action which, I think I said before, was chaired by Richard Wasserstrom, who was chair of philosophy and somebody who was a strong proponent of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. I had been meeting with the senate committee, discussing possible ways to establish a program which would be, first of all, not alien to an academic culture, and at the same time, be effective. I believe it was Dick Wasserstrom who came up with the idea of the Target of Opportunity program.

There has always existed the practice in universities and colleges that if a very eminent academic becomes available or demonstrates some interest in coming to your institution, a position is found for that person, and that's called a Target of Opportunity. It's a nice military term. (laughs) It's sort of inappropriate for this setting. We said, "Well, that exists already. How can we piggyback affirmative action on it?" We knew that, according to equal opportunity law, you're not supposed to get on the phone and call people. You're supposed to put the ad out and everything but the fact is, inevitably, when a department is recruiting for a faculty position, they know which graduate programs are best in their field and there is a tendency to get on the phone and ask, "Do you have anyone coming up who would be a good candidate?" Now, if that person applies for the job, I'm not sure the extent to which that person's candidacy is possibly wired. I don't think that's the case because you get people from several programs applying for the

same job. It's just a way of ensuring that you have the best possible applicant pool for your position.

Reti: So it's a form of outreach.

Armstrong-Zwart: It's a form of outreach. That's right. It is a form of outreach, and it's not a forbidden form of outreach. It's only forbidden if the only way you advertise a job is through the old boys network. So we said, okay, the old boys network is really effective. What if we have positions held centrally and which departments can compete for, which are only for the best-qualified woman or minority candidate that they could find? The departments would be expected to use the old boys network, that is, get on the phone and instead of saying, "Who's the best guy you have?" say, "Who's the best woman or minority you have?"

It was twofold—one, they would identify people. What was happening was that many well-qualified women and, especially, minority PhD candidates weren't even going on the market. They were getting scooped up before they even finished their PhDs. They just weren't in the pool. So this was a way to find out who's out there. Secondly, it connected department chairs with different networks. We had departments sending representatives to the meetings of Black sociologists, for example, or of Latino scientists. That was a kind of outreach that they hadn't specifically done before.

It turned out to be the single most effective affirmative action effort that we could have undertaken. In a relatively short period of time, it transformed the faculty. Not only were we able to hire outstanding candidates, both at the junior and

senior levels, but it changed mindsets. The feeling before was that there's nobody out there who's qualified. We do these open recruitments, and there's nobody out there. All of a sudden, well, yeah, there are people out there and they're really good people. It was so successful that it was adopted by the rest of the University [of California].

Proposition 209: Dismantling Affirmative Action within the University of California

For the whole of the University [of California], I think it was the most successful [faculty] affirmative action program. It continued until the Regents [reversed their position on affirmative action], in the face of Proposition 209, in a preemptive way fueled by Ward Connerly, a Black Regent who, it seemed, came in with the express purpose of dismantling affirmative action within the university and who, unfortunately, was able to martial enough support within the Regents to have the Regents do away with the Target of Opportunity program.

Reti: And that was in 1995, I think.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. And Proposition 209, the state initiative, was passed in the next election. I attended that Regents' meeting, and the chancellors, by and large, spoke up against doing away with the affirmative action policies and programs within the university. Chuck Young, who was the chancellor of UCLA at that time, gave one of the most eloquent speeches about the positive effect of affirmative action. He said that it made UCLA a better institution, academically,

in every respect. That was a powerful statement. A Black doctor from UCSF, Michael Drake, who subsequently became chancellor about fifteen years later at UC Irvine, also stood up to speak about what affirmative action had meant in his life, both as a student and as a beginning professional. He was an eloquent spokesperson for the value of affirmative action to an individual and the difference that it made in his life. He never would have been a doctor and a professor had there not been affirmative action.

It didn't make any difference. I think the Regents had already decided what they were going to do, and they did it. This campus, fortunately, had a momentum which had been built up, so we continued to hire women and minorities in fields and departments where they were underrepresented. It's almost as if the initial success of the Target of Opportunity program set up a positive feedback. The departments changed because some departments for the first time had a woman or a minority on its faculty, and that changed the dynamics within the department, for example, at department meetings. It was gradual, but it really took place within a relatively short period of time. If you figure we started the Target of Opportunity program maybe in 1982 or '83 and in '95 it was chopped off, that was a relatively short period of time, but it really did transform the campus.

Change in Position: Assistant Vice Chancellor for Faculty Relations

The other transformation of the campus was a result of my discussion with Chancellor Sinsheimer after about eighteen months of doing the two jobs. I felt

that there was an inherent conflict of interest in the two positions, that the more I got involved in affirmative action, the more, potentially, it could compromise my role as the fair witness. I was becoming uncomfortable. There hadn't been a conflict up to that point but there might be sometime in the future. Coincidentally, at the same time, John Isbister, who had been acting as the faculty assistant to the Academic Vice Chancellor John Marcum, was going back to the faculty, and that position became available. Chancellor Sinsheimer, Vice Chancellor Marcum, and I discussed my filling that position, which was to administer the academic personnel process. I was interested in taking on the role because, again, the academic personnel process was something established within the university, but it was a process which could be modified to include affirmative action and equal employment opportunity without radically changing the process. Both Chancellor Sinsheimer and Vice Chancellor Marcum were very interested in having that happen. The deans, as well, were very interested in making those changes.

So what we ended up doing, when I took over that role as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Faculty Relations, was to look at the academic personnel process and identify those decision points throughout the process where the process could be reviewed and the decisions made to that point, scrutinized. The person carrying out that review could say: "Yes, you made a good faith effort. Yes, the pool is diverse enough." Or, "No, you need to go out and reopen the search." The first reviewer would be the chair, and then, before the department could invite people for interviews, the dean had would have to sign off on it. At that

point the dean could say, "No, I've looked at your pool. It's not diverse enough. I've looked at what you've done, your efforts. They're not adequate. You need to go back and do it again." At the point of appointment, where the academic vice chancellor looks at the file, we have had instances where the vice chancellor has stopped the search and refused to approve an appointment because he or she didn't feel that the search process had done everything that it could. It's a rare occasion that a search has been stopped—I remember two or three instances—but the possibility that it could happen, the fact that everyone knew that somebody was scrutinizing what was going on, kept departments honest. Also, the fact that this campus, probably more than anyplace I've been before, has an informal communication network (laughs) that's very, very, very effective—

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: So that if something funky was going on in a search, I would hear about it. I could hear about it from a faculty member. I could hear about it from a board assistant. Somehow the word would travel and I would be alerted to look at what was going on in that particular recruitment. It was very effective. Maybe it's because we're a small institution. At a larger institution, it's much more difficult, I think, to have that kind of procedure. But again, by wrapping affirmative action and EEO within the academic personnel process, it wasn't a separate, after the fact, alien, outside process. It really became part and parcel of how we administered academic personnel policy on this campus. And again, I think that kept it going, kept affirmative action and the kinds of hiring that we had been doing going, even after Proposition 209 and the Regental policy shift.

I think that TOP and the modification of the academic personnel process were the two most significant things the campus did that made such a difference. It could not have been done without the chancellor, vice chancellor, the senate, the deans, the chairs, and the faculty. The willingness to change was extraordinary. For a long time this campus, I don't know if it's still true, had the most diverse faculty by percentages. We had the largest percentage of women and the largest percentage of minority faculty. I would go to Systemwide meetings and I would have people ask me, "How did you do it?" I'd talk about what we did, and they'd say: "Well, we could never do that at"—fill in the blank. Their campus cultures were not as permeable.

UC Santa Cruz: A More Fluid Campus Culture

Reti: And this gets back to what we were talking about at the very end of the last interview, about the fluidity of UCSC in terms of its structures and culture.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yeah, and, as I said, I think because of the hires made initially, of very senior people and very junior people, that the junior faculty, as they developed their careers here, had a different mindset than some of their older colleagues.

Then there was something about this campus anyway. I don't know whether it was the college system, the fact that faculty positions were split, half in a college and half in the board of studies.

Reti: This ended at reorganization [in 1979].

Armstrong-Zwart: yes, but before reorganization. Maybe, as I think I said, since the academic department is the foundational, political unit of any university, and this campus started with a weak departmental structure, in fact didn't even call them departments, the looser structure remained even after reorganization. There still remained boards of studies for a long time before they finally became departments, but I think the original mindset was very different than at more traditional universities.

Reti: Hmm. So it seems to me that what you're talking about is a kind of giving of institutional power to affirmative action, so that it's not just an add-on.

Armstrong-Zwart: Right. And a willingness on the part of different levels of administration to accept responsibility for affirmative action, instead of having it all reside in the affirmative action officer, which is what had been the case previously. There had been affirmative action officers on campus who had been more or less effective, but they were outside of any structure.

Reti: That's very interesting, because certainly Chancellor Sinsheimer is sometimes a rather controversial figure in campus history, for example, in his

denial of tenure to Nancy Shaw, who became Nancy Stoller later.[6] So it's good to hear these kinds of perspectives on his goals.

More on Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer

Armstrong-Zwart: As I think I said before, he was extremely intelligent. I admired his intelligence greatly. He had a great deal of integrity and an enormous amount of moral courage. He also relied on his own decision-making, his own thinking, so that in any personnel action he reviewed everything and then independently came to a conclusion. He was willing to stand by that conclusion. For the most part that worked well, but there were areas, of course, which he was not as familiar with as he was, certainly, with the lab sciences. It's hard to use the word "bias," but I think that maybe there were blinders that he wasn't even aware of which came into play in certain cases.

But I have to say that after the decision in the Nancy Shaw case was reversed, he didn't hold a grudge. It was done. He thought he had been right. There was disagreement, and then you just, you move on. That was also an important

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[6] Nancy Shaw came to the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1973 in community studies. She was denied tenure by Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer in 1983 on the grounds that her work in medical sociology was not scholarly. She received tenure in 1987 after having filed a gender discrimination suit against the University. She was one of the first openly lesbian professors at UCSC and her experiences are documented as part of Regional History's Out in the Redwoods oral history project at http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/oir.exhibit/nancy_stoller. Stoller worked and published under her married name, Nancy Shaw, for many years before reclaiming Stoller in the 1990s. Along with her work on AIDS, Stoller's research has focused on women, prisoners, and health care.

lesson for me. I don't know whether it's my personality, or the fact that I was youngest of four, or that I'm female, or what, but [I had] the tendency to kind of ruminate over things. Oh, this happened. Why didn't I do something different, or why did they do this? After watching Bob's response in the Stoller case, I learned how to say: Okay, it's over. You move on. And that, I think, was helpful to me as an administrator. I did not have almost twenty years of nothing but leaping from mountain of success to mountain of success.

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: There were times when—talk about being in the valley of despair—there were things that I couldn't accomplish as ombudsman; there were things that didn't work out in affirmative action. But you pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and just keep on going forward. That was something that I learned from Chancellor Sinsheimer.

The other thing with Chancellor Sinsheimer was that he was controversial because of how he came in. I think he was sent to change the campus. He was sent to bring the campus structure more in line with the University of California. That was what he was asked to do and that is what he did. At the same time, I saw him at Regents meetings, and I knew from being privy to his correspondence, that he was a fierce fighter for resources for this campus. The way in which resources were allocated—the weighted student ratio—meant that although the state gave money to the University [of California] unweighted, so that graduate students and undergraduate students were all treated the same in

terms of state allocation per student, what happened at the Office of the President was that the resources were sent out on a weighted student ratio, so that the more graduate students a campus had, the more money it got. The more undergraduates a campus had, the less it received, comparatively. Chancellor Sinsheimer fought that for years. He said: "We are generating more resources than we are receiving back from the Office of the President." Eventually the Office of the President did away with the weighted student ratio, but what they did was freeze in place the allocation formula based on the weighted student ratio. So that we never really did make up for what Chancellor Sinsheimer rightly believed we should have been receiving in resources. But he really fought for the campus.

I also noticed when I would go to the Regents meetings—Bob Sinsheimer was a quiet man, almost shy, very reserved—but what I noticed at the Regents meetings was that the other chancellors, like Mike Heyman from UC Berkeley or Chuck Young from UCLA, would go over and consult with Bob. And I thought, the other chancellors really respect him and his opinion. I'm not sure that the campus ever realized that he was well respected among his peers.

He came back, maybe two or three years after he had retired, to give a talk and he was given a standing ovation. I think it must have been about the third year of Robert Stevens' administration. I think people at that point realized what Bob had done for UCSC. At the time our student enrollment had dropped, and we were dependent on the redirection program—people who wanted to go Berkeley and couldn't get in, they'd ship down here for two years and then they could go

to Berkeley. We were not on life support, but we were in a very shaky position. Bob came in and really did shelter the campus, in part because of his relationship with President Saxon—they had a very good relationship—and the fact that he was respected, and the fact that he was willing to make some difficult, unpopular decisions. He wasn't always right. He wasn't always right. I don't know whether he would acknowledge that or not, but like all of us, he made mistakes. We all make bad decisions sometimes. But on the whole, he worked for the benefit of this campus, and I don't just say that because he hired me. I really respected him and became very fond of him as a person.

Reti: Great, thank you. So once you got the faculty to come through the TOP program, what kinds of programs did you implement to help with the retention of faculty of color, because I know that that has been a huge issue for this campus.

Retention of Faculty of Color

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, again, one of the things that came out of affirmative action was the Junior Faculty Development Workshop. We used to go off campus for a day and a half, overnight, with the assistant professors, some senior faculty, senate leaders, and deans, to discuss the academic personnel process, to demystify it. What was a mid-career appraisal? What were the kinds of things you need to have in order to have a successful one? What was the tenure process? All of those kinds of things were discussed. Plus, the hope was that personal friendships would develop between some of the assistant professors

and the senior faculty, not necessarily in their boards of study, but outside. I am a great believer in mentoring. I am not a great believer in the standard mentoring setup, where a powerful person sees a more junior person and usually—and I'm going to say "he" because that's the model that I'm thinking of—he recognizes something in this young person, often another male, that reminds him of himself. So he then singles this young man out to shepherd him along in his career. I have seen it happen numerous times in graduate school, where a senior professor takes a shine to a particularly bright, young graduate student and shepherds him through, usually to his first job and maybe even after that.

Now the difficulty comes in separating from your mentor, the point at which you want to take the training wheels off the bike. Sometimes it's very difficult to do that. So I was always leery of that process. It wasn't that available to women. Since most of the faculty in graduate departments were male, there was always the slightly dicey issue of, really, what was that mentorship relationship? You know, the possibility of the mentorship relationship becoming sexual harassment, even if it might have helped you along. So I was always very leery of that.

Mutual Mentorship

I became aware, as I got more involved in the women's movement and women's activities, of the concept of how we mentor each other. Every individual has a set of skills and abilities that we have and that we can share with other people, which help them along the way. My grandmother had a saying that I probably

heard all of my life, which is—and she was talking about what it meant to be Black in America—she said, "You know, when you cross over the bridge, you don't just keep going forward. You go back and you add a plank to that bridge to make it stronger so the next person can come over more easily." That's what I think mutual mentoring does. You are adding a plank to the bridge that you came over to make it stronger for the people who come behind you. I think the way that women interact with each other makes mutual mentoring very possible. And it is a real antidote to the concept of the "Mean Heathers," you know, mean girl stuff. Often that is the image, you know, that women are supposed to be at each other's throats. That has not been my experience. My experience has been women helping each other, by and large.

The other thing is disinterested mentorship. That's where you pass on to somebody—they could be younger, they could be at the same stage as you—a gift that you have been given by somebody else. You give it to them without any thought of reciprocity. You may never have a relationship with that person. It's like my walk across campus one day with a colleague, where he spent a half an hour telling me how the University of Massachusetts at Amherst worked. Those kinds of gifts you just give somebody. They may just be one time, one meeting, something that's critical, but that makes a difference in their lives. I guess it's paying forward. You get something and then you pay it forward. For me, those models of mentorship are much more effective and less constrictive on the person who is receiving the mentoring.

Reti: Thank you. That's beautiful. I love that.

Women in Management Retreat

There were a couple of more formal mentoring programs on campus, such as the Women in Management Retreat.

Armstrong-Zwart: The Women in Management Retreat was something that Vice Chancellor of Student Services, Bruce Moore, funded. There were more women managers in Student Services than in any other area. Part of the lack of boundaries on the campus meant, for example, a greater degree of casualness. When I came, I was surprised to see women wearing Levis at work. UMass was much more formal and conservative. I had a couple of interactions with groups of women, and they said: "We feel we're not being taken seriously." And I said: "Well, you might want to think about dressing a little more professionally. You don't have to dress up, just less casually."

Some of the women had gone to talk to Bruce. They were feeling that there weren't development opportunities within Student Affairs, and Bruce, to his credit, allocated some money. He hired an outside consultant, a trainer, who did three sessions for women in management. I chuckle, because at the first meeting, all of the women were dressed professionally, not a pair of Levis in sight. (laughs) It gave an opportunity for women to speak out about their interests, where they felt blocked, what were the career development needs which they felt were not being met by the institution. This institution could be providing opportunities for professional growth and development.

That online conference of women and careers, "Choices," the videotape I reviewed at Special Collections—almost all of the women in the discussion group on campus were from Student Affairs.[7] There were a couple of women from outside of Student Affairs, but it was heavily women from Student Affairs.

The Women in Management Network, I'm not sure how long it lasted, and I'm not sure, looking back, how effective it was, but I do believe that it helped the women managers who took part in those activities, if nothing else, to clarify for themselves what skills they had, what skills they wanted to acquire, and what were some of their career goals. It probably enabled them to be more active in their career development, rather than passive recipients. As I say, I don't know how long it lasted.

Equity for Women Staff at UC Santa Cruz

There was also an annual retreat for women in clerical positions, which started before I came. It was a two-day retreat off campus, where there were various activities. Karen Sweetland, who was the affirmative action director, was responsible for handling that. I know that for the women who participated it was

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[7] See "Choices: Minority Women's Perspectives on Equity Issues" a videorecording in the UCSC Library Special Collections Department. Satellite videoconference held on 1 March 1990 which linked twenty sites across the United States and originated from the Triton College Media Center, River Grove, Illinois. Includes the three-part teleconference, taped off-air from satellite link, followed by a locally filmed discussion by teleconference participants at the University of California, Santa Cruz, moderated by Assistant Chancellor Julia Armstrong.

wonderful on a personal basis. It reinforced that informal communication network, and it gave a sense of their importance to the institutional structure. There were workshops on new skills development, but there were also workshops which were more personal development and not career. And they also had a lot of fun.

Reti: Was this the Women at Work Retreat?

Armstrong-Zwart: This is the Women at Work Retreat.

Reti: I didn't realize it went back that far. I attended it several times.

Armstrong-Zwart: Is it still going on?

Reti: No, I don't think it is still going on now but it went on until very, very recently.

Armstrong-Zwart: It was the one thing that we did for women in clerical positions. And Lord knows that this institution runs on the work, primarily, of these women in clerical positions. My experience has been that women in clerical positions at universities usually bring so much more, in terms of their education and their skills, than, say in the typical work world outside the university, and we profit from all of those skills. We have women in clerical positions who have bachelors [degrees]; some have masters. We use all of those additional talents. I'm not sure that universities are conscious that they use those talents, or that the women are compensated for them, other than psychically, that is, they get a great deal of approval. People think they're great. But certainly our classification

system does not run on that appreciation. We classify the position, not the person in it.

Reti: Yes, that was one of the things I wanted to ask you about, the difference between equity issues for staff and faculty on this campus, both in terms of staff of color and staff women—and those who are both.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, well, the University is in the process of changing their whole staff personnel system, I understand. They're going to something called Peoplesoft, and they're moving away from the payroll personnel system, which is a post World War II civil service model, where you classify positions. They're rigidly classified, and the person is in that position, and unless that position changes, that's the position that they're in. For example, the university has no overt promotion policy for staff, but yet, some people seem to be making their way up *some* kind of career ladder that isn't available to everybody.

It's one of the things that I found frustrating. Talking about areas where I felt that I really wasn't able to accomplish much, one was in the whole area of staff [advancement]. It was, and it is, the payroll personnel system, the classification system. The way in which it was administered on this campus by Staff Personnel was extremely rigid. Even though there were all kinds of supposed monitoring for fairness and equal employment opportunity, it really never worked, which is one of the reasons that the Affirmative Action Office and Staff Personnel were always kind of at loggerheads. Then when you threw in Labor Relations, which had the mindset that their role was to protect the manager, you had built-in

chaos. I was made responsible for all of those areas and tried to effect changes. Some changes I was able to make, but the whole staff area, that's the area in which as I look back, I say my presence here did not change, substantially, what went on.

I don't know if there've been changes since. I would hope so, but there's a rigidity in the staff policies that doesn't exist in the faculty area. For one thing, staff aren't empowered in the way that faculty are empowered. They don't participate in the same way in the creation of the policies under which they have to work, in the same way that faculty are. And then union organization just made progress more difficult. In general, I'm a union supporter; my stepfather was a member of the UAW and worked on the Studebaker assembly line in South Bend, Indiana. But UC unions codified oppositional attitudes and have made it even more difficult for things to change.

I think that diversifying the staff, actually having affirmative action work for the staff, is probably the largest issue, I would say, facing the campus. It's much larger than for the faculty. How do we reach out? We live in a county that has a heavy Latino population. We don't have appropriate representation among all of the different staff classifications. Because we don't have a formal promotion policy, the perception is, has been, that certain people get singled out, and their way is made smooth, while others don't have access to that smooth path. There's a feeling of inherent unfairness about how the Staff Personnel Policies are implemented on the campus, and that may be true throughout the system. I don't think it's unique to the Santa Cruz campus, this feeling that somehow it's

harder to be successful in the staff area than in the faculty area. The way in which the interpretation of equal employment opportunity—there have to be open recruitments—has meant that the idea of having internal recruitments somehow was discouraged. If you look at BAS [Business and Administrative Services], some of the lower classifications in BAS very diverse. If we had development programs there, we could move people up. The same goes for Student Affairs. Student Affairs has a very diverse workforce, but there's that glass wall. It is rare that somebody from Student Affairs gets hired into an academic unit in any capacity. There's a bit more interaction between Student Affairs and Business and Administrative Services.

But still, we have this pool of women and people of color on campus, and we're going outside. Now, I know that one of the reasons we do external recruitments is we don't want to set up the old boys network. Internal recruitments can be wired recruitments. But I think the campus should think about how to develop an objective, defensible, non-wired process for looking at our internal workforce and figuring out ways to take advantage of the diversity that exists there, to move people up via personal career development. If staff develop new skills, either they can apply them to their jobs, and reclassification becomes easier, or they're able to transfer those skills to another position in the university. Because such a process is something that can be perverted without close scrutiny, the process would need to be monitored very closely until there's a change in the campus culture, and it's self-sustaining. That hasn't happened.

Part of the problem, initially, is that there once was money for affirmative action, independent money. The Office of the President had an assistant vice president for affirmative action and he controlled funds that he then allocated to the campuses, and that helped fuel what we did with faculty affirmative action, no question about it.

Reti: The TOP recruitments—

Armstrong-Zwart Well, no, those were campus resources which were reallocated for that program. But at that time, there were just more resources available. I think I mentioned the money for postdocs [earlier in the interview]. We allocated one to Peggy Delaney. Fairly soon after that, however, the money disappeared, and I'm not sure we ever granted one to anybody else. We may have done it with one other person. Peggy Delaney's whole career has been here. The loyalty that those kinds of actions develop in a faculty member is very extraordinary. The faculty member feels really valued and welcomed at an institution.

As I said, the money dried up. After the Regents' action and the resultant change in policy, that was it. There was no money available for those kinds of activities on the staff side, and, actually, there never *was* money available for staff affirmative action in the same amount available for faculty affirmative action. Maybe it was impossible. The staff are so numerous, how do you allocate? And the fact is that the academic side is always going to have a higher priority in terms of resource allocation, no matter what the resources are being allocated for. But several things happened at the same time: the drying up of money, the

difficulty of handling staff issues which are so diffuse, the rigidity of the payroll personnel system, the rigidity of the way it was administered on the campus. All of these things combined, I think, to make it difficult, not impossible, but difficult to cause the same kinds of changes that the campus was able to effect among the faculty.

Reti: Another issue which I think probably affects both faculty and staff, and I don't know if this is something that you were involved with, is the lower pay scale for UCSC employees than other places in the [UC] system.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. That was something that, again, different chancellors and different vice chancellors of administration tried to get changed. The fact is that the cost of living in Santa Cruz is more like the cost of living in Los Angeles and Berkeley, not Riverside or Davis, but we were lumped with those campuses, sort of the cow pasture places, rural. Well, this is not a rural area. It's a beautiful area, but the cost is not rural.

Reti: Right, just because we have cows on campus, doesn't mean that it's rural. (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: Exactly. (laughs) I don't think the campus has ever been able to argue effectively that our pay scale is lower than it should be. That's true also with faculty, and it's something that the campus has struggled with. But the problem is, where do you get the money? It's a resource-driven issue. With the faculty, there was a campus pay equity study looking at the salaries of women faculty. This was happening just about the time I left, so I don't know what the

outcome was, what kinds of adjustments were made, or where inequities were found. I don't think there's ever been a pay equity study on the staff side, as far as I know.

Reti: I don't think so.

Armstrong-Zwart: But if you're going to lift up a rock, you'd better be prepared to deal with what you find under the rock. I don't know if that's part of the campus mindset, but maybe I'm wrong and there has been one. It's been twelve years since I left and maybe there's been something. I don't know if there have been efforts to address inequities in pay.

Survey of Faculty Who Left UCSC

In terms of retention of faculty of color and women faculty, there's only so much a campus can do. I did a survey after [I left] as a consultant, a survey of faculty who had left, to find out why they had left. There were various reasons, but it was surprising that the ones that we thought were key weren't. For example we thought childcare was a big issue and it wasn't. The cost of housing was a big issue, the fact that some faculty, especially assistant professors, couldn't afford to buy a house.

Spousal or partner employment was also a big issue.[8] Again, there are two issues with spousal or partner employment. One is the issue of availability of faculty positions. We don't have a lot of spare faculty positions lying around. The other

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[8] The following addendum was provided in writing by Julia Armstrong-Zwart during the editing of this oral history:

The issue of spousal/partner employment began to come to a head on campus, as more and more of the new faculty arrived with spouses or partners who were as interested as they were in their own professional careers. As a small campus, UCSC didn't offer the range of staff employment opportunities as, say, UC Berkeley or UCLA, and the campus' support of open recruitment of faculty, as well as the limited number of open FTEs available, restricted our ability to hire a partner or spouse. In some instances, where there was an ongoing recruitment for which the second member of a couple could apply, he or she was encouraged to do so. In other, very few, cases, where the couple was in the same discipline, a department might open a recruitment planned for a later date so that the trailing partner or spouse could apply. There was no guarantee that the person would be selected unless he or she was the best qualified. These recruitments were closely scrutinized to ensure that they were indeed "open."

In the late 1990s UCSC convened a meeting of interested Northern California colleges and universities to discuss the shared problem of spousal/partner employment. A letter, cosigned by Chancellor Greenwood and EVC Simpson, was sent to the presidents and academic vice presidents of institutions in Monterey, Santa Cruz, and Santa Clara counties, as well as to UC Berkeley and UC Davis, asking that a representative be sent to a meeting to be held in San Jose.

That first meeting of 15 to 20 schools, chaired by AHR Director Barbara Brogan and me, followed by other meetings over the course of a year, led to the formation of the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC), which had the stated mission of supporting the efforts of each of its member institutions to recruit and retain outstanding faculty, administrators, and staff through the sharing of information and resources. Member institutions of HERC funded the development of a searchable database into which all members could enter the active faculty and staff recruitments at each institution.

The program was housed at UCSC, and a director, Nancy Abersold, was hired on a halftime basis to oversee the development and rollout of the database; her position was later increased to fulltime with campus funds to enable her to head the Dual Career Services Office at UCSC. When Chancellor Greenwood moved to the Office of the President, she moved HERC and its Director to UCOP as well. HERC is the original model for similar consortia formed in other states, which now are linked nationally. http://www.hercjobs.org/

Once again UCSC initiated a program with far-reaching consequences. The campus established a Dual Career Service function within Academic Human Resources in 1999 in response to a recommendation from a joint Senate-Administration Committee convened by EVC Simpson to identify the need for spousal employment and recommend ways to address the issue. Director Abersold met with spouses and partners of newly hired faculty and senior administrators to assist in their efforts to secure employment, either on- or off-campus. As far as I know, that assistance is still offered by a staff member in the Academic Personnel Office—Julia Armstrong-Zwart.

becomes a question of equity, of equal employment opportunity. One of the ways the campus had dealt with it in the past, was that if there was a couple in the same field and one was hired, if the department faculty felt that there was a need for another person in that field and there was a position available, or if the dean could be convinced to allocate one, the department would do another open recruitment, the outcome of which they had to be able to defend. Often the partner was selected in a clean search, because we looked at those searches very, very closely. But again, it was resource-driven. There isn't always a spare position.

When I came to campus, there was one position that was split between a husband and wife in an area in which they had been able to get outside research funds. But over time outside funding dried up, and it's never been possible to justify making those two positions whole. It's caused a lot of rancor, I know, with the two faculty members, and difficulties within the department. They were casualties of something that wasn't thought through, long-term.

One of the big causes [of faculty leaving] was internecine warfare in the departments. Departments that had lots of struggles and internal fighting lost faculty, especially assistant professors, because they could get chewed up in that process. I was surprised, however, at how many faculty said they would have liked to have stayed if they could have bought a house, or if their partner could have found a job. So it wasn't leaving the institution because there was something wrong with it. It was really they felt they had to go.

Reti: So there wasn't talk of a climate of racism, or anything like that coming up?

Armstrong-Zwart: No, the faculty of color felt that their service obligations were heavier, and they did not get recognized for them. In some instances [they felt] dinged because the amount of time they spent serving on committees or working with students, the kinds of things that they did because there were so few faculty of color, *did* take time away from their research and scholarship, and no allowance was made for that. When it came time for mid-career appraisal or tenure, they were expected to look just like the faculty members who didn't have those service obligations.

Women were put on committees a lot, but as far as I'm aware, and I'm thinking of this survey, women faculty didn't feel that they were spending as much time with students as faculty of color did, although it's been my observation that women faculty do spend more time with students than male faculty often do. It's true also for doctors in HMO's. Women doctors see fewer patients because they spend more time with each patient, and since payment is on the basis of capitation, how many heads you see—

Reti: (laughs) Capitation! I've never heard that word before.

Armstrong-Zwart: Not *decapitation*, capitation. (laughs) So in an HMO, women often make less salary because they're seeing fewer patients. Those kinds of salary inequities can happen. The interesting thing in the faculty survey was that some of the faculty of color who left came back.

UCSC as a Faculty Incubator

The other thing is you can't keep everybody. What this campus is particularly skilled at is recognizing potential in newly minted PhDs. We have been so successful in recruiting at the assistant professors rank. The women assistant professors and the assistant professors of color—they've just been stellar, and that makes us a "trout pond." We get these little sprats; we feed them and we take care of them; and then our sister campuses in UC and our competitors say, "Whoo, that's a nice lookin' fish!" They come and scoop them up. Sometimes we're able to come in with competitive offers, but sometimes we can't. We don't, again, have the resources. If Princeton comes calling— We try; we do the best you can, but we're not going to be able to keep everyone.

So maybe we play a significant role, if we can continue this practice, because we're willing to take the risk that these larger institutions won't take. If we're willing to really say, okay, we do this but we're going to do it even more and even better. We're going to be always out there looking for who's emerging, who has the potential. Who are the women graduate students who are coming out who have potential; who are the graduate students of color? The campus needs to become more proactive. Gene Cota-Robles left UCSC to go up to the Office of

the President;[9] he established UC-wide graduate student fellowships and postdocs for women and minorities in fields in which they are underrepresented. We should be mining that group. Because UC is turning out stellar people for other institutions. We should be very aggressive in reaching out to recruit those people and to keep them within the UC system. Maybe it's an important role that a place like Santa Cruz can play. We shouldn't cease looking for senior women and senior faculty of color, but maybe we should capitalize on what we do really well. We should, to the extent possible, also pay attention to climate issues to make this an environment that is most welcoming and most sustaining for all of our faculty. I really believe if you make it a better place for women faculty or a better place for faculty of color, it's going to be a better place for faculty, period. So we ought to pay attention to climate. We should pay attention to departments that are troubled, that have troubled relationships, because maybe women faculty or faculty of color are the canaries in the mine, but nobody is healthy in those circumstances, and we ought to be more mindful about that.

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[9] Eugene Cota-Robles died September 12, 2012. He was well known as a microbiologist, as a leader in higher education, and for his efforts on behalf of minority students and faculty, including at UCSC. He arrived at UCSC in 1973 as vice chancellor of academic administration, director of affirmative action, and professor of biology. He served under four chancellors as academic vice chancellor at UCSC between 1973 and 1979, years of transition on the campus. During his tenure he emphasized affirmative action at UCSC, especially in academic areas, as well as many other endeavors. After leaving UCSC, he went on to serve as special assistant for academic affairs at the UC Office of the President, to coordinate UC's affirmative action policies and programs for faculty development and for graduate and professional students. He was also a founding member of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), which is still based in Santa Cruz today.

The same thing is true on the staff side. Again, with their numbers it's harder, but we should be looking at climate; we should be finding out what's going on more than we do. This is something that vice chancellors and unit heads should be doing. Again, every person who holds an administrative position should understand that he or she is expected to manage their human resources as effectively as they manage their financial resources, and that they will be held accountable for the successful management of their human resources, which includes outreach to recruit as diverse a workforce as possible and the development of staff that you have—all of those of things that make for a healthy institution.

But again, it has to come through the administrative structure in order to be effective. People do what's expected of them, I mean, pretty much. We know that students, kids in elementary school, if the teacher says you can learn, a lot of those kids, they meet those expectations. If you have a teacher that says, "You're stupid," they don't always learn. My brother-in-law, for a while, taught up in Humboldt County. He was teaching fifth grade and he was concerned about his students. He talked to the principal about his concerns, and the principal said: "You can't expect too much of them. They come from nothing. They're going to go to nothing." That's when he left teaching. But people will do pretty much what's expected of them.

If managers throughout the entire structure know what's expected of them, and it really *is* expected of them, I think there would be a sea change within the institution. This is Pollyanna speaking, probably, but I saw it work on the

academic side. It can be improved. It's not perfect on the academic side, but if we could get something like that on the staff side, I think everybody would benefit. A fully trained staff person costs the institution between twenty thousand and thirty thousand dollars; it's what they figure [it costs] when you bring somebody in and you train them in the job, and then that person walks out the door. It's a loss of resources. If we started thinking of people as resources—I know people don't like the term "human resources." People don't like being referred to as a resource, and I can understand that, but we *are* resources. We are sources of value to the institution.

Reti: And we're human. Sometimes that part gets left out.

Armstrong-Zwart: And we're human! That's right. On the academic side, I think the university, without violating [Proposition] 209 or Regental policy, could demand much more. I think the president of the institution could ask that each chancellor develop an action plan for affirmative action for faculty, or maybe for staff, but let's say just for diversification of faculty.

I've objected, by the way, to the substitution of "diversity" for "affirmative action" or "equal employment opportunity," because affirmative action and equal employment opportunity actually have legal underpinnings. Diversity doesn't. It doesn't mean that you shouldn't focus on diversity, because that's a broader concept, but it's not a substitute for affirmative action or equal employment opportunity. To the extent that we have substituted diversity for

those two legally based concepts, we've lost the two legally based concepts. They've become blanded out. I think there's room for all three concepts.

But if the chancellors were expected to say how they are going to hire more women, more faculty of color; if the deans were expected to come up with a divisional plan for that; if each department was expected to come up with a plan—I'm not talking about an affirmative action plan with goals. I'm talking about concrete actions.

For example, if a department is a discipline where there are few women and people of color entering the graduate programs, what are they going to do to reach out to undergraduate women and minorities to increase the pool? If there aren't minority undergraduates, what are you going to be doing? Are you going to reach out to high schools? Everybody has to do something. It's almost like a system of tithing. Nobody gets to sit it out. Everybody does something. That can be applied, also, on the staff side. You have to be actively engaged in the *practice* of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity and you have to do it in a way that is going to be most productive, given the circumstances of your particular area.

I don't think that that's a pie in the sky plan. It takes commitment. It takes an incredible commitment on the part of everybody, and it may take some reallocation of resources at a time where we're resource-starved. If you change things enough, you may get the engine going. I don't know if the will exists to reallocate resources, but I really do believe that until you have that kind of global

effort, things are just kind of stumbling along. If you change things enough, you may have the engine going forward. I'm concerned, for example, that as faculty of color retire or leave, they're not being replaced. I don't know. This is subjective. I'm not sure that they're being replaced, which means that over time the campus may go back to looking like what we used to look like as far as faculty of color are concerned.

Reti: Well, what I see is that we have to take it group by group. Right now we're [Regional History] engaged in a small oral history series on the Chicano/Latino faculty and staff at UCSC.[10] And in that area, certainly what I've been hearing from faculty—there are some people who are close to retirement, but there is generally growth. Now, when you take American Indian faculty and African American faculty—we're down to one African American woman tenured faculty member on this campus.

Armstrong-Zwart: Right.

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[10] The Regional History Project is currently in process on a modest series of oral history interviews with Chicano/Latino faculty and staff at UCSC. The first oral history in the series is Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Professor Pedro Castillo: Historian, Chicano Leader, Mentor* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013) *a*nd is available at http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/castillo. See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Crossing Borders, Crossing Worlds: An Oral History of UC Santa Cruz Professor Olga Nájera-Ramirez* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014) http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/n%C3%A1jera-ram%C3%ADrez and Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *A Lifetime Commitment to Giving Voice: An Oral History of Elba R. Sánchez* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014) http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/sanchez. Interviews with Rosie Cabrera and Patricia Zavella will be published later in 2014—Editor.

Reti: Which is definitely going backwards. That's partially because of retirement and some people not being replaced. So that's something I wanted to ask you about, because sometimes there's this kind of amorphous sense of "faculty of color," without looking at particular groups.

Encouraging Graduate Students of Color to Become Faculty Members

Armstrong-Zwart: Oh, you do have to look at particular groups. You do. And it shouldn't be seen as competition, that is, if we're growing in Latino faculty, then those are the resources and then you don't have the resources for growth in American Indian or African American faculty. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and I have always agreed on this—we're not going argue over this little piece of pie. We want a bigger piece of pie for everybody. We might want a larger piece of pie.

Reti: A bigger pie. (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: More pie! That's what we want. We want more pie. No, that is a concern. I know it's a concern, certainly, for Black faculty who've retired. For example, I've met with groups of minority students over the years, and they've always said, "We want more faculty, faculty who look like us," which is legitimate. That was a legitimate concern, and when I asked, "How many of you are planning on going to graduate school?" Hands would go up. But, however, when I asked, "And how many of you are planning to become faculty members?" No hands went up.

Reti: Really?

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, come on. A lot of these students were graduating with what, fifty thousand dollars of debt?

Reti: Well, yeah.

Armstrong-Zwart: They were thinking law school, medical school, MBA, if they were thinking of further study. They were thinking of what was going to pay a salary that allowed them to get out from under. For years—I'm telling you all of my failures here—for years I advocated, both within the UC and also in national organizations, that we should go back to a program which was established when the Russians sent Sputnik up. They shocked us and, as a result, Congress passed the NDEA, the National Defense Education Act. All of a sudden there was money allocated to education as a matter of national defense. There were funds made available. I had an NDEA loan when I was an undergraduate. With the NDEA loan, if you went into teaching at a public K-12 school, for each year of teaching a certain amount was forgiven in your loan. I thought we needed something like that nationally, only extending it to public college-level teaching. That's one way of encouraging people to go on. Frank [Zwart] and I have a nephew who just graduated from UCSC as a linguistics major. If ever there was a baby academic, our nephew is one, but he thinks he needs to go out and find a job.

Reti: Sure.

Armstrong-Zwart: We have nothing in place to encourage people who are incipient academics to go on, and this is particularly true with minority students, or students of limited means, something which would catch more than just students of color or women, something that truly is an incentive, that says: This work is valued and because it's valued, we're going to help you get there. I can't imagine what it would have been like if I had graduated from undergraduate school owing fifty thousand dollars, or whatever the equivalent was then. I just can't imagine having that kind of debt as a twenty-one or twenty-two year old. It seems obscene to me that we are lumbering our children with this kind of burden.

Reti: Absolutely. (sighs)

Armstrong-Zwart: So.

Reti: So let's go back in time quite a bit because I want to make sure we look at the whole trajectory of how we got here today. So you had a very positive relationship with Chancellor Sinsheimer in implementing these innovative kinds of programs that institutionalized affirmative action.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes.

Chancellor Robert Stevens

Reti: And then Chancellor Sinsheimer left in 1987 and then we got Robert Stevens. So tell me about working under his administration.

Armstrong-Zwart: Robert Stevens was someone whom I liked personally. He was fun to be around, but I think that he was temperamentally unsuited to be a chancellor at a public university. All of his prior experience had been at private institutions. He had been a provost for two years at Tulane University, but for only for two years, before he became president then of Haverford [College]. In some ways being at Tulane as provost was more like being a chancellor in the UC system than being president of Haverford was. So something didn't fit. He didn't ever talk about it, but I thought that something about him and that position didn't mesh.

I think the difficulty here was he wasn't prepared to deal with the kind of empowered faculty we have within the University of California, which is somewhat unique. The faculty senate has delegated powers, which certainly isn't true at private schools, and that are unique in higher education.

He also had the misfortune to have a couple of crises arise—the Asian Food Affair, for example—that he could have handled better and differently. And then, due to a remark that he made in his address at his inaugural dinner, he managed to infuriate a senior faculty member. Instead of defusing a situation by pouring oil on troubled waters, he poured fire on oil, and it just blew up, and for the rest of his time here he was embattled with the faculty leadership of the campus.

From a personal perspective, I did not have the same working relationship with Chancellor Stevens that I had with Chancellor Sinsheimer, for a couple of

reasons. One is that I was used to a chancellor who if he made a decision, owned it. Fairly early on in Chancellor Stevens' tenure we had a meeting with the senate leadership, in which they were questioning a decision that he had made, and he said, "Oh, Julia made that decision," which was not true, was absolutely untrue. I was gobsmacked. That eroded any trust that I might have developed with him.

The other is that he, from my perspective, seemed needy on a personal level. He didn't like being alone. He needed the people who worked with him to be present. For example, Chancellor Sinsheimer always left the office at 5 o'clock. He went back to University House and he worked, but he left the office, which gave permission to everybody who worked with him to leave. That changed under Robert Stevens. As long as he was working, even if he was working at night or if he was working on weekends, he expected you to come in. And that doesn't work if you have a family. Plus, for me it crosses boundaries. I always tried to keep my personal life and my professional life separate. I didn't want to be one of those persons whose life was defined by their work. In fact, I always thought that that was a strength we women had, that we didn't have to do that.

So that was two issues. And then the battles with the faculty that just seemed unnecessary. He wasn't all wrong in the positions that he took, but you have got either to make accommodations, or to be so forthright and own your decisions that people will respect them, even if they don't agree with you. There's no middle area for that.

His first academic vice chancellor was an interim academic vice chancellor, Ronnie Gruhn, a faculty member in politics, who had been chair of politics and had been an acting dean of Social Sciences, and who had become a very close friend of mine.[11] In fact, we swore an oath at the time she was appointed that we would remain friends in spite of anything that happened in the time that she was acting vice chancellor, and we did. It was difficult for an acting vice chancellor with a chancellor who seemed to keep stepping on land mines on campus.

Ronnie stepped down after two years, and Michael Tanner was hired. Michael Tanner, again, I think probably like Chancellor Sinsheimer, had his supporters and his detractors, but like Chancellor Sinsheimer, he was extremely intelligent; he had a great deal of integrity and a great deal of moral courage. He added a stability to Chancellor Stevens' administration that was needed, especially as we were going through a period of big budget cuts.

Reti: Oh, right. The early nineties.

Armstrong-Zwart: That's right. I mean, really severe budget cuts. Michael Tanner established a transparent budget allocation process in which all the principal officers—that's the deans, the chairs, the whole administration—everybody knew what resources came in, and there was discussion of what the

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[11] See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Professor Isebill "Ronnie" Gruhn: Recollections of UCSC, 1969-2013* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available in full text at http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/gruhn

campus priorities were and how we were going to allocate cuts. Everybody knew what everybody else got. There was no under-the-table dealing. The process was completely transparent. You might not like some of the decisions because your ox got gored, but you knew that—

Reti: (laughs) I love your expressions.

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) —but you knew that the money was allocated, for example, to protect the academic enterprise. That was the highest priority. It was to protect teaching in the classrooms. Michael Tanner, in his capacity as academic and then executive vice chancellor, really gave a stability that I think enabled Chancellor Stevens to last for an additional two years.

But things with the faculty were just getting out of hand. That third or fourth year Chancellor Stevens had appointed—well, his first year here he had changed my title to assistant chancellor, which didn't change my duties any, but instead of assistant to the chancellor, I was assistant chancellor. Fine. I was grateful for that. His third year, he appointed a faculty member, Gary Lease, who had been dean of humanities, as his associate chancellor, and Gary, again, like Michael Tanner, was somebody who was very knowledgeable, a good administrator and somebody who, like Michael Tanner, was committed to the institution. And that added more stability.

But midway through Chancellor Stevens' fourth year, things were just getting worse and worse with the faculty. Gary Lease and I and Stephanie Hauk, whose title I don't remember but she was in the lead person University Relations,

travelled up to UCOP. Actually, Chancellor Stevens had arranged for us to meet with David Gardner. I think at that point he wanted out. The three of us met with David Gardner. Gary and I—Stephanie didn't say much—but Gary and I, both of whom were equally garrulous, were pretty honest about what the situation was.

I remember David Gardner got angry. He didn't want to hear it. He had appointed Chancellor Stevens. He was a man who didn't normally swear, but at point he said, "Dammit, I can shut that campus down. I can park it." In effect, saying, you better go back and shake people up. Gary and I said, "That's not going to solve the problem." Basically, things had come to a point where Chancellor Stevens really was ineffective. He couldn't function anymore.

Reti: This, of course, was a repeat of history, when Chancellor Christensen resigned before you came.[12] So I'm sure that the Office of the President was not thrilled with this development.

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[12] UC Santa Cruz's second chancellor, Mark N. Christensen, served the campus from July 1974 to January 1976. He was forty-five, and had served as vice chancellor at Berkeley before accepting this position at UCSC. A professor of geology and geophysics, Christensen had received UC Berkeley's Distinguished Teaching Award in 1962. Christensen arrived at UCSC during a tumultuous point in the campus's history. Internally, the campus was fracturing along faultlines between the colleges and the boards of studies (now called departments), as UCSC experienced the political and economic pressures of trying to establish a decentralized, innovative campus within the traditional University of California. Christensen's tenure as chancellor rather tragically ended in controversy after only eighteen months. Although most of the faculty liked Christensen as a person, they lost confidence in his ability to govern the campus. This situation partly earned UCSC a reputation for being "ungovernable." See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Daniel*

Armstrong-Zwart: Right. It's very hard for them. David Gardner had a problem because Chancellor Stevens ran into difficulties, and Barbara Uehling at [UC] Santa Barbara ran into difficulties. He was not batting even five hundred with the chancellors he had appointed. They were bad matches for their campus, which said that he and the Regents didn't understand the campuses.

So we came back. Chancellor Stevens didn't ask us what we had talked about. I think he pretty much knew. I think Stephanie must have given him a report. I mean, we didn't say anything we wouldn't have said to him. He knew it, too. At the end of that year he stepped down and became a special assistant to the president for an additional year and then went back to England and became master of Pembroke College at Oxford, which probably was a better fit for him. It was all very unfortunate, because when there are battles between the faculty and the chancellor, it leaves scars that take a long time to heal.

Chancellor Karl Pister

With Karl Pister though, you couldn't have had a better doctor to come in to heal the wounds. First of all, his demeanor was that of an elder statesman. He was

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H. McFadden: The Chancellor Mark Christensen Era at UC Santa Cruz, 1974-1976 (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2012) available online at http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/mcfadden. For more on the Christensen resignation see Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Irene Reti, Editor UC Santa Cruz in the Mid-1970s: A Time of Transition, Volume I: An Oral History with John Marcum, Sigfried Puknat, Robert Adams, John Ellis, and Paul Niebanck. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014) http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/ucsctimetransition See also the forthcoming oral history with George Von der Muhll about this time period.

calm. He was outgoing. He was firm. You name what you need to calm troubled waters, and up would pop Karl Pister's picture. I know that when he came here he didn't quite know what he was getting into. You always hear about the Santa Cruz campus. It had the reputation for being the place that killed chancellors, first Christensen—(laughs)

Reti: "The ungovernable campus."

Armstrong-Zwart: Ungovernable! Ungovernable! Ungovernable! That was such a bad rap. The campus wasn't ungovernable. It just took somebody who was straight up to govern it, to work with the faculty. The faculty, more than any place I've ever been, were integral to the running of this institution. They gave service. The faculty were engaged in ways that I'd never seen faculty engaged before, in terms of the running of the institution, and that's a good thing, a healthy thing, for an institution. But it means that you can't have an imperial chancellor; we expect our chancellors to be engaged constructively with the campus, especially the faculty. If there's any wobble in that engagement, then the wobble gets worse and worse, and the campus spins out of control. And in saying that, I hope it doesn't come across as a negative assessment of Robert Stevens as a person, or as an academic, or anything like that. As I say, I really quite liked him. He was fun. He was more fun, actually, than Robert Sinsheimer. But it just was a bad fit.

Reti: Sure. And this happens.

Armstrong-Zwart: It was a bad fit. Karl Pister was a good fit.

Reti: I know from Karl Pister's oral history that he was quite, at least in terms of how he described it, he was quite supportive of affirmative action.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, he was.

Reti: He stuck his neck out over it.

Armstrong-Zwart: He had been very instrumental, as dean of engineering [at UC Berkeley] in attracting more minority students into engineering. Up until the time he came to the campus, his primary focus had been on students, on bringing undergraduates in, but he was definitely a strong supporter of affirmative action and willing to continue the campus' efforts. He never fought any of the things that were already in place and was supportive of everything the campus had done up to that point with affirmative action.

Reti: Because he was the chancellor when the Regents made that decision.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. And he really objected to it. He thought it was a serious mistake the Regents were making. [If] Proposition 209 [passed, it would force] the Regents to make that [decision], but to do it *before* 209 had passed he felt conveyed a message that the university shouldn't be conveying.

Reti: Okay, let's stop for today.

More on the Stevens Years at UCSC

Reti: So today is August 13, 2013 and this is Irene Reti. I'm here with Julia Armstrong-Zwart for our fourth interview. Continuing with the whole topic of

affirmative action, but particularly in relation to the different administrations you've worked under, last time we were talking about Chancellor Robert Stevens and the period of time you worked with him. And you wanted to [say more] about Michael Tanner, who was—

Armstrong-Zwart: —who was the academic vice chancellor after Ronnie Gruhn, who had been appointed as acting academic vice chancellor and really had no interest in the permanent job. So for the first two years of Robert Stevens' administration she was the acting academic vice chancellor and then she stepped down. After a campuswide search (it was not going to be an external search), Michael Tanner was appointed.

Several things happened early on Robert Stevens' tenure that caused campus tensions. One thing was an offhand comment Robert made in his inaugural address that offended John Ellis, who was the graduate dean and a very senior member of the literature department. It just escalated out of control. John Ellis took umbrage and wrote a long letter to Chancellor Stevens, expressing how outraged he was by the comment. I drafted a fairly brief note of apology for the chancellor to send to John, basically saying that it was not meant, the intention wasn't, to offend him and that it was, perhaps, a failed attempt at humor. Robert didn't want to send that. He answered John's multi-page letter with a multi-page letter of his own, and the war was on. John Ellis was a longtime, very powerful faculty member. He was active, not just as graduate dean, but also in senate matters. He was a bad enemy to have made, especially within the first few months of your tenure.

And then the second year, 1988—the Asian Food Affair blew up. It started mildly enough, with a decision made by Peggy Musgrave, who was the provost of Crown College. The college had planned for the fall College Night to serve a Filipino menu, in the interest of introducing students to a variety, a multiplicity, of ethnic cuisines. As it turned out, College Night fell on Pearl Harbor Day. I don't know who raised it as a concern, but Peggy made the decision that perhaps it wouldn't be politic to serve Asian food on Pearl Harbor Day. Victor Kimura, who was the bursar at Merrill, was offended. Then the provost of Merrill, John Isbister, got involved. Both he and Peggy were faculty members in economics. I don't know if that played into it at all.

It was a small mistake which mushroomed into a giant contretemps. It was like a spark in dry tinder which became a forest fire that burned acres and acres of goodwill on campus, and everybody involved in it came away feeling dissatisfied with the resolution. Peggy Musgrave felt that she was sort of keelhauled over something that was an innocent mistake. John Isbister and the people at Merrill felt that the chancellor hadn't been harsh enough on Crown College. Part of this is, I think, was a longer-standing tension between Crown as the college of the scientists and Merrill as the Third World college. So there was a history of tense relations even before I came to campus. It went from: the Philippines were our allies in World War II so therefore it was particularly egregious to have excluded their food, to: even if they hadn't have been, if it had been Japanese food—really? I mean, so what?

But then it became an issue of showing the lack of understanding and the hostility of this campus environment for people of color. That's quickly what it became. One Saturday morning I led a two-hour workshop for students. There were Merrill students there; there were Crown students there. The Merrill students overwhelmingly were students of color, although there were some White students. The Crown students were mostly White students, a lot of White male students. It was an interesting discussion because there was honest communication, with a White student saying that he thought it was unfair that because of student affirmative action, students of color got spaces in the University of California that otherwise would have gone to White students whose academic records were better. I started to respond to that, and a young Chicano student said, "No, let me respond to that." He said, "Throughout high school, I worked between twenty and thirty-five hours a week because my family needed the money. The school that I went to had no AP courses." He laid out what his life had been as a high school student and said: "Those factors didn't mean that I didn't have the ability to go to the University of California, but if you only looked at the criteria that fit White suburban high schools, I would never have gotten in." It was a moment of understanding. I could see that the White students there had never thought about things from that angle. I thought this was a good thing that came out of a very, very painful, unnecessarily antagonistic incident.

In fact, one time Frank [Zwart], my husband and I were walking through Crown at night (I'm sure Frank didn't mention this in his oral history) and there was a

fountain, a big fountain that's in the shape of a bowl, and at that time it wasn't working. So he looked at it and said, "We ought to cook up a lot of rice and just put it in there with lots of chopsticks."

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: Then having had that notion, we sort of looked at each other, smiled and went on our way. A friend's father once said to me that academic arguments are always so vicious because the stakes are so low. I don't think the stakes, ultimately, in the Asian food affair were low at all. I think that it was a teachable moment which we were able to take advantage of in some minimal way, but it was a wasted opportunity to have had a much broader-based discussion on campus of how there could be such different reactions to the same small decision.

Reti: And this is all taking place in the broader context of the backlash against affirmative action that's going on in the late 1980s.

Armstrong-Zwart: Exactly. It just resonated differently. It's like the killing of Trayvon Martin.[13] African Americans and people of color responded emotionally

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[13] "The fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman took place on the night of February 26, 2012, in Sanford, Florida. Martin was a 17-year-old African American high school student. George Zimmerman, a 28-year-old mixed-race Hispanic, was the neighborhood watch coordinator for the gated community where Martin was temporarily staying and where the shooting took place. Following an earlier call from Zimmerman, police arrived within two

very differently than a lot of White folks did because they understood that they or their children could have been Trayvon Martin. I think that was also true for the Asian Food Affair. I know for Victor Kimura, whose parents were interned, I believe, it was yet another official sort of saying: You're alien. This isn't your place.

Making UCSC a Welcoming Environment for Women and People of Color

One of the questions that you had wanted to talk about was, how do you make a UCSC a welcoming environment? The first thing is I think that people have to be aware of how they respond to difference, to people who are different from them. You really have to make yourself conscious of it. You can't automatically assume that because you are left-wing that means that all of your interactions with people of color are going to be cool. And you can't automatically assume that if somebody's politics are right-wing that their interactions with people of color are going to be bad. It's simplistic.

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minutes of a gunshot during an altercation in which Zimmerman fatally shot Martin, who did not have any weapons. Zimmerman was taken into custody, treated for head injuries, then questioned for five hours. The police chief said that Zimmerman was released because there was no evidence to refute Zimmerman's claim of having acted in self-defense, and that under Florida's Stand Your Ground statute, the police were prohibited by law from making an arrest. The police chief also said that Zimmerman had had a right to defend himself with lethal force. As news of the case spread, thousands of protestors across the country called for Zimmerman's arrest and a full investigation. Six weeks after the shooting, Zimmerman was charged with murder by a special prosecutor appointed by Governor Rick Scott. On July 13, 2013, a jury acquitted him of second-degree murder and of manslaughter charges." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shooting_of_Trayvon_Martin

I once went to a workshop put on by the Office of President - Student Affairs. There was a workshop leader—all I can remember is her nickname because that's what she went by—it was Papoosa, which in Spanish is "papoose." She was half Chicano-Mexican-and half American Indian, thus the nickname. The exercise she had us do was to acknowledge that everybody inside has preconceptions, stereotypes about other groups of people. So the exercise was to write down an instance where we were the victims of stereotyping.

Then we had to write down an instance when *we* assigned a stereotype and *we* victimized somebody on that basis. Well, it took much longer for that. When she asked for people to stand up and talk about when they were the victim, people popped up like toadstools. Everybody had that. Then when she talked about when we were the instigators of prejudice, when we were acting on it, silence, nobody. I had remembered something that had happened when I was in second or third grade in Catholic school on the south side of Chicago. All the students were African American. Mid-year, a new student came. As it turned out, she was from Puerto Rico. She was an African Puerto Rican and she didn't speak English. We couldn't believe that she didn't speak English. I can remember a group of us going [mimics gibberish] "blah-blah-blah" to her because that's what we heard from her. That was very hurtful to that child, dropped into this alien country. We weren't doing it to be mean. It was because she was different, and we didn't understand that difference.

I tried to get that workshop on campus; I thought that would really be important because too often in workshops we're pointing fingers. People of color are

saying, "You White guys are racist, and the White folks are saying, 'Yeah, but you're so overly sensitive.'" Once you start throwing those labels around, it's the end of communication. I thought she was very effective. I was never able to locate her, to bring her on campus, but that workshop changed my thinking about a lot of things.

It changed my thinking about how one way to make the campus a welcoming environment would be to really understand that people who are different from you want to keep their difference. Women don't want to stop being women; people of color don't want to hang their ethnicity at the gates in order to come in. We don't want to be honorary White males. We want access to the richness, the resources that the university provides, and we're willing to compete in a fair way.

We, as women, we, as people of color, shouldn't automatically assume that we don't belong here. There's a real sense among students of color that the hook, the hook is going to come and they're going to be gone. We're here because this is our place. We're here because this where we belong. The people here who are from the dominant culture need to understand that we are here because it is our place, too. We haven't been invited into their home—you know, that sense of who's the owner and who's the guest or interloper. Those are concepts that need to be eradicated. I think the campus has gone a long way towards achieving that, but there's still a feeling of being here on sufferance.

Reti: Mm-hmm. That you're supposed to feel grateful because you were invited in.

Armstrong-Zwart: You were invited in and you need to be respectful because you're in somebody else's house. You don't start rearranging the furniture in somebody else's house. You do it in your own house. And certainly that's what we were doing. All of a sudden the influx of women and minorities occurred, and we came in and started saying, "We don't like that wallpaper. We're going to put new drapes up. That's an uncomfortable couch. We're not going to sit on that couch." I imagine that for many White males it was exactly as if somebody had come into their house and started doing that.

Others said, "You're right. It's an ugly couch. It's an uncomfortable couch. Let's throw it out and get something that we both can sit on." So it's the willingness of everybody to work together to create a house that is comfortable for us all.

Reti: Yes. Thank you.

Now, you were talking about holding this meeting during the so-called Asian Food Affair with students. How often did your side of the house—you were dealing with faculty affirmative action, supervising that whole part of the university, and then there are the EOP folks over here. The Asian Food Affair was an instance where you were interacting with students. But how often did that happen?

Armstrong-Zwart: That was rare. I think it was because the chancellor had been drawn into it because of the two feuding provosts. Had it just been at the level of students, Merrill students and Crown students, it would have stayed within Student Affairs, and as I said, for Student Affairs there was that wall. Student Affairs was Student Affairs; that's not a good situation but that's a description of what it was. It was because the chancellor was drawn in that then I was drawn in as well.

Reti: I see.

Armstrong-Zwart: The thing is one has a certain amount of energy. There were a certain number of hours in the day, and it was a question of focusing on what I thought and the chancellors thought would make the biggest change in the campus. The thought was, if we can change the faculty, we change the campus culture. That's not entirely true because there's a whole student culture; there's a whole staff culture. These were our blinkers because there's a tendency to think of the faculty as the heart of the campus, of the institution; that if they change, then the institution changes.

Challenges with Staff Affirmative Action

I think we changed that part of the campus, a very important part of the campus, and I think that that change in the faculty actually bled out into the rest of the University of California in a way that if we had focused on staff wouldn't have happened, or even on students, wouldn't have happened. Because faculty culture

permeates the entire system, and the Office of the President pays attention to faculty in a way that they don't to staff and students.

That being said, in retrospect, looking back, the focus on faculty affirmative action, while it was important, left two other important areas to the vice chancellors who were in charge of those areas. Now Karl Pister—and I'm jumping ahead and I don't want to do that—but Karl Pister cared a lot about student affirmative action and student diversity. His coming really shone a light on that area in a way that hadn't been true before.

Looking back, should we have done things differently? (sighs) Maybe. There was more money for faculty affirmative action than there was for staff. There was money for student affirmative action but that was primarily in financial aid and in setting up offices like the Educational Opportunity Program. It wasn't the kind of loose bucks that there was for faculty affirmative action in the beginning. So you were able to do creative things that you couldn't do in the student area, certainly, since you were more constrained, and there was very little money allocated for staff affirmative action.

Executive Vice Chancellor Michael Tanner

Reti: Okay, I want to make sure that we talk a little bit more about Michael Tanner. You were starting to say how important his leadership was.

Armstrong-Zwart: In the middle of the fallout from the Asian Food Affair and the continuing and spreading ripples from Robert Stevens' and John Ellis's head

butting, Ronnie Gruhn stepped down and Michael Tanner came on. Michael was, for the campus, the steady hand on the tiller at a time when the chancellor was really embroiled in things that ate away at his chancellorship.—In some ways it was like being nibbled to death by ducks. A lot of those issues were distractions for Robert Stevens, but they were distractions which he couldn't detach himself from. Bob Sinsheimer probably had as many kinds of things going on, but he had that ability to detach himself and focus on what was important, from his perspective. Michael Tanner shared that. He was able to do that. His way of approaching issues of administration was inclusive. He was the first vice chancellor who professionalized the deans. He brought the deans to understand that they were not just representatives of the faculty, but that they were also administrators, and their role was pivotal between the central administration and the faculty.

Reti: Interesting.

Armstrong-Zwart: It was under Michael Tanner that we started a Department Chair Development Program, where we brought department chairs from across the academic divisions together. It would start out with a dinner with the chancellor and the vice chancellor, and then we would break down into workshops and talk about managerial and administrative problems—managing staff, fairness, issues of recruitment of faculty and staff—a whole range of managerial issues that the board chairs, as opposed to department chairs, didn't think about. Their roles were becoming more complex as we entered the nineties and the budget cuts.

That was really the period when we were getting draconian budget cuts which the campus had to absorb. The initial reaction from the academic side of the house was, "Well, you're not going to cut anything of ours. Take it out of students and administration." Michael Tanner set up a budget process that was absolutely transparent. In the past nobody quite knew what the total budget was. You didn't know what anybody else got. You assumed they got more than you. It was this kind of suspicion that really set up tensions among senior administrators—vice chancellors, deans, department chairs. Michael set up a process to cut through that. He said, "This is the money that we have. This is how much we are going to have to cut from that budget. Here's how that money is allocated presently." Everybody's stuff was on the table. "And," he said, "we have to develop a values system for how we allocate cuts, and it's not a knee jerk system. We have to look at what our priorities are. And we will agree. We will come to consensus about that."

So the deans, the vice chancellors, all of us who functioned as principal officers, would sit around a big table and talk. Then we'd go back and talk to department and unit heads, to get everybody involved in the discussion, with information coming up and going back out.

What came up was an agreement that, rather than have an across the board cut—I can't remember what the cut was— the different areas were asked to come up with scenarios: if we have to take a 10 percent cut, this is how we would take it; 5 percent; 2 percent, down. Everybody put that out. We all made our presentations and then a discussion took place of what were the campus' priorities. We said the

academic mission—teaching students—was at the core and we had to protect that. Then the next level was the research and scholarship mission of the institution. Those were the two core missions of the institution. So the smallest percentage of cut—there would be some cut—but the smallest percentage would be in those two areas. Then the cuts went out from there. There was a funny point, though, when the faculty realized that some of the staff cuts were going to impinge on department staff, then it was like, "Well, wait a second. They're part of the academic mission." (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: But it was a rational, agreed-upon way of allocating cuts. BAS, Business and Administrative Services, took the biggest cut. Student Services took some cut. It was graduated. It was a great system.

Barriers to Staff Affirmative Action

When the money came back, however, and the campus was reallocating resources, we didn't go back and remedy the cuts that taken place on the administrative side. They were never, ever completely restored. There's a tendency when money comes back again—well, your priority still is the academic mission of the institution. I think (and I think staff would agree) that the workload of staff over the years has increased to a point where I know that some staff feel that they're not able to do their jobs in the way that they would like to, simply because there's so much that they now they have to handle.

Where you would have had two people doing something; then you had one and a half; and now you have one.

Reti: Yes.

Armstrong-Zwart: "Don't work harder, work smarter." That's baloney. There's an irreducible amount of workload and only so many hours that you have available. If you have to get to everything, you may not get to everything as thoroughly as you would have in the past. The staff here, by and large, are some of the most committed workers I have ever met. They care about the institution as much, and maybe in some cases more, than the faculty, certainly more than a lot of students do. They're here longer in many cases. If you think of the campus as a world and you think of Atlas holding the world on his shoulder, the staff really carry the campus in a fundamental, basic way. I'm not sure that the campus appreciates that as much as we should.

Reti: Mm-hm. And certainly during that time period that we're discussing the campus also grew tremendously. So the workload has increased for everybody.

Armstrong-Zwart: That's right. There were more students; there were more faculty and fewer resources. Everybody had to do more with less.

Reti: How did this affect your side of the house?

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, all of the money that we had had in the eighties for things like paying for postdocs , such as the one we had funded for Peggy Delaney, and money for development programs, such as the Junior Faculty

Workshop—that all ended. We couldn't afford those efforts anymore. The funding dried up, and it was never restored. So we had to make do with what we had.

Money was a great lubricant for making change happen. It could unstick gears. If we'd had more money, perhaps, on the staff side, we might have been able to get things moving more effectively there. But we just didn't have the money, the resources, to incentivize—that's a word I don't think I've ever used before—(laughs)—to incentivize managers to change. There was no benefit other than psychic rewards. So, yeah, it did have a real impact on our ability to move flexibly. Fortunately, by that time on the faculty side, things had changed enough and the new procedures for recruitment and for the academic personnel process had been internalized. So that was up and running. Looking at staff affirmative action, there were several things that blocked its effectiveness. The lack of money was a big thing.

The other, I think I said, was there were just so many different managers and supervisors whom you would have to bring in line. To make changes on the staff side, the institution would really have had to have been willing to come down hard on the side of compliance. And by that I mean—and I did push for this—that every supervisor, as part of their performance review, would be reviewed on their contribution to achieving diversity, the diversity of their staff—what they were doing to help the institution. And it would go right up the line, including the chancellor, looking at the vice chancellors.

I couldn't get it through. There was too much institutional resistance for that. But I think that would have made a difference. I think that's the only way. People do what they are expected to do and what they're rewarded for. And we jump through all kinds of hoops for our little merit raises. They're pretty little. (laughs) They got smaller and smaller over time. But by and large, staff do what their supervisors indicate to them is important. Supervisors do what their managers say is important and what their compensation is based on. In some ways, if you could change that on the staff side, that would be rigorous. It would mean that some managers and supervisors who've been golden boys and girls wouldn't look so golden anymore. And people whose efforts have made them very useful to more senior administrators because they get the job done, the job they're doing would be sort of off point, in that it wouldn't be helping achieve diversity. In some ways, I'm really talking about a more profound shift than even for the faculty.

Reti: Yes, I can see that.

Armstrong-Zwart: It would mean that the campus would have to change the reward system dramatically. That's the only way that I can see that we could achieve real staff diversity. Now, given that, there still have been individual managers and supervisors who are committed to diversity and who've hired a diverse staff.

Another issue on the staff side is that we don't live in a city where we have this wonderful richness of all kinds of people with all kinds of professional and skill

levels, very diverse, like UCSF and even Berkeley. UCSF and UCLA have a richer pool to draw from, and we don't, here in Santa Cruz County, and we're not going to be able to attract staff from out of the county because it's so expensive to live here.

There are a lot of things that militate against our having as diverse a staff as we should have. As I think I mentioned before, it's one of the reasons why I thought we should look at the staff that we have, the staff of color that we have, or women who are in untraditional roles, and we should develop them to move them up. Again, that takes money, and resources have not been available, especially after the Regents policy basically killed affirmative action, and then 209 just cut everything off at the knees, in terms of resources. It didn't stop people's efforts. People of good will still were doing the right thing. The campus had changed its views and the way it did business, and that continued. That didn't change. But it froze us. We were all of a sudden a fly in amber and we were as developed as that fly was. The possibility for radical change lessened. It didn't disappear. It lessened. I still think that if the chancellor and the vice chancellors were willing to include contribution to diversity and affirmative action as part of everybody's job performance, supervisorial and managerial job performance, it would make a difference. It would change things. People would do outreach more effectively.

Chairing the Committee on Americans with Disabilities

Reti: That makes sense to me. And then you were also involved with the first Committee on Americans with Disabilities.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, I chaired the ADA committee. It was the first committee I chaired that included community members. We reached out to communities of people with disabilities in Santa Cruz. We had one member who was deaf; we learned about supplying an interpreter. We had a member who was blind, and we learned about how hard it is to get around the campus. It was a learning experience for all of us. Representatives from all of the administrative divisions were there. It was: Okay this is a new law, what does that mean? How do we implement it for the campus? It was a great learning experience for me and, I think, for everybody who sat on the committee because it caused us to look at our physical environment very differently than we ever had before.

The other thing that I realized was, I remember saying this early on at one of the first meetings, all of us here are heading toward living eventually with disabilities as we age. So it's not—we're doing this for "them." Let's understand there's self-interest in this as well. To the extent that any environment, public environment, is responsive to people who have to live with disabilities, then it's going to benefit us ultimately.

It was part of my idea that anything you do for a specific population, you're doing for the larger population, whether it's curb cuts, or something else. For example, with curb cuts, all of a sudden it was easier for bicyclists to get around.

We didn't even think in of that. The policies we put in for maternity leave became parental leave, and so fathers actually got a benefit from it. All of these things, including the changes that had to be made to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, were good changes for the institution. We became much more aware of learning disabilities with students, for example, and it became easier for students to self-identify, to come forward and acknowledge that they might need extra time for an exam. The more we lower barriers for the institution, the better institution it is. I think that the ADA was important legislation, having that kind of impact on the campus. I'm sure that probably there would be members of that particular community who would say there are still ways in which the campus can change.

Somebody who was just Joan of Arc for this was Susan Willits. She was a warrior for making the changes that would make this a place that was easier for people with disabilities to manage. Her contribution was just extraordinary, extraordinary. I want to acknowledge that. I think she was doing this part time and she became passionate.

Reti: It was part of her bigger job.

Armstrong-Zwart: She became passionate about it, and her efforts helped change the campus.

Developing a Faculty Database

Reti: That's great. So let's see—You were mentioning Nancy Degnan—

Armstrong-Zwart: Nancy Degnan was a senior analyst in the Academic Human Resources office. One of the problems at a university, in terms of affirmative action, is tracking data, having access to data. The payroll personnel system the University of California uses, and I understand that's changing, is basically a post-World War II civil service system that established pay grades based on classifications. It was in no way a human resources management system.

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: And as a result, the data that you could get from that system was extremely limited. You could probably get enough for the *Affirmative Action Plan*, but you really couldn't track what was happening. Nancy Degnan had no background in systems. What she had was a really good analytical mind and great intellectual curiosity and a willingness to try things. So she developed the faculty database now is used by all of the divisions, from which you could pull all kinds of information from about recruitments, about different personnel actions, things that we never could track and data that we never had access to before, because, again, of this one person, and because of the willingness of Barbara Brogan, who was the director of Academic Human Resources, her willingness to allocate resources and Nancy's time to this project. Again, it was transformative. These stories of individual staff people who, because of an interest and on their own initiative, have made such profound changes and contributions to the campus. Nancy certainly is one of those who did.

Reti: People think that they can't make a difference in an institution but that's obviously not the case.

Armstrong-Zwart: Right. It takes the individual and then it takes a supervisor willing to let the individual fly free.

Reti: You can't just do it on your own without institutional support.

Armstrong-Zwart: Exactly, otherwise you're Quixote with windmills. But if all of those things are present in the environment, then yes.

Reti: Okay. We discussed a little bit about childcare before and the fact that it really wasn't a major factor in the departure of some younger faculty of color.

Survey of Faculty Who Have Left UCSC: Part II

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, I was asked—this was after I had left, after I had retired—by the affirmative action director, Patti Hiramoto, if I would be willing to do a survey of faculty who had left the campus in the previous five years. I said yes, because I would be interested in finding out why, too. The Senate Affirmative Action Committee, in conjunction with the Affirmative Action Office, developed a questionnaire, and we talked about the best way to proceed. Again, pulling from Nancy Degnan's database, we knew that it was a small number of faculty who had left. In the previous five years, something like thirty-three had left. This was a small enough group that I thought that the most effective thing to do was to send a letter, announcing that we were doing the survey, giving my contact information, and asking faculty who would be willing

to participate in the survey to let me know, and then to do telephone interviews, because you get much more information in a telephone interview. Well, as it turns out, seventeen of the thirty-three or thirty-four faculty wanted to participate. It's a small number, so you can't extrapolate great, great things out of such a small number.

So I did telephone interviews with those seventeen faculty, and it was interesting. As I said, it was a range of assistant and associate professors, and maybe one or two full professors. Spousal employment was a big issue. People come in pairs now, and they're usually both in the same field and they both want careers. It used to be that the husband got the job and if the wife also had a PhD, he'd go to the flagship institution and she would go to the state college if she were lucky, or a community college. That was just the way it was. The husband's job determined their movements.

Well, that changed, and what we found is more and more we had women being the leading—

Reti: Wow!

Armstrong-Zwart: *That's* when spousal employment became a big issue, when we were hiring more women as our first choices, and they came with trailing partners, either husbands or partners. Then, all of a sudden it became a much more salient issue than it had ever been before. That's another contribution that—

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: Accommodating women brought to the institution, one which I think we're still grappling with. So yeah, that was one of the big issues.

The cost of living here was another, especially for assistant professors. The senior faculty who had been here for a long time came when houses cost normal house prices. By the time the assistant professors came, a little house cost mansion prices. There wasn't enough on-campus faculty housing; and there was a long waiting list. It was just difficult. As one person said, he never saw it changing. It was never going to change. His salary was never going to allow him to buy a house in Santa Cruz. So people made decisions on the basis of what's best for their families.

Another issue, especially for assistant professors, was departments that had a lot of infighting, which drove them out because they were getting chewed up in the squabbles.

Childcare did not surface with any of the seventeen as a concern or an issue. I don't know had the other seventeen participated, if it had been the whole cohort, maybe childcare would have come up; I don't know. But it just didn't seem to be as big a concern as I think all of us had thought. That's why it was one of the questions, because we thought that was going to be a big issue. But it wasn't. I know it's a concern. I would imagine it's also a big concern for staff.

Reti: I think so.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, their salaries are lower. I can remember one time, this was years and years and years ago, when faculty were talking about how low faculty salaries were, and compared to some of the other campuses we did have lower salaries. But I can remember saying, "You do realize that more than 50 percent of the staff make considerably less than an entering assistant professor. They live in this community and their expenses are the same—electricity, food, housing. These things, they don't change. Everybody has to pay for these things. They have to get around. They have to pay for gas. All of those things." It was like, whoa, a light bulb went on.

So I would imagine childcare is a bigger issue for staff, although it seems to have surfaced more among the faculty, maybe because the faculty are more vocal about it. Perhaps as we hire more women childcare will arise more forcibly as an issue. When we hire female junior faculty, assistant professors, we're hiring women who are usually in their prime childbearing years. Then there's the seven-year run-up to tenure. Childbearing and childcare are really very critical and salient issues, I think, for that particular demographic, and again, faculty have voice. They can voice concerns which may be seen as too diffuse among staff.

But I'm sure that if, for example, the campus ever were to overcome issues of liability, it's hard to imagine how the campus would find the resources to build, a childcare center sufficient to meet the needs of our employees, unless some donor were to say, "I am going to give you not just the money for the building, but I'm also going to give you an endowment so that you'll have ongoing

resources for maintenance." That would be the only way. In fact, I think there are actually fewer childcare resources on campus than when I came.

Reti: Yes, there have been some recent cuts.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. Plus there used to be that [childcare center in the] Stone House, and that's been closed for years.

Reti: Yes.

Armstrong-Zwart: There was only the one in Family Student Housing and there have been cuts there. So probably the situation is worse now.

Reti: I think so.

Sexual Harassment Policy at UC Santa Cruz

Reti: So today is August 20, 2013. This is Irene Reti and I'm here with Julia Armstrong-Zwart for our fifth interview. Today we're going to focus on the evolution of sexual harassment policy, the emergence of that issue into the campus's consciousness and culture and how we've dealt with it over the past few decades. Let's start by talking about what kind of climate you encountered when you arrived here in 1981.

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, probably the last year, year and a half I was at the University of Massachusetts, the issue of sexual harassment emerged as a public issue. I assumed it was part of women finding a public voice as a result of the latest iteration of the women's movement. It's something that women always

knew existed and may have talked about to each other *sub rosa*, but we never put it out there in the public square. So it was a hot button issue, nationally, when I came to UCSC.

I found at UCSC that the campus was actually doing something about it in an institutional way; that there was a committee, chaired by Helene Moglen, which had been set up to hear complaints of sexual harassment. My first interaction with the committee came in my role as ombudsman. A male faculty member, who was a board of studies chair, had had a complaint of gender harassment filed with the Sexual Harassment Committee. He came to me, as the ombudsman, greatly upset since he felt that he had not been guilty of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment was defined a form of sex discrimination, discrimination on the basis of sex, in that but for a person's sex, they would not be the recipient of the unwanted sexual attention. I think that what happened in the early days was a flawed syllogism: if sexual harassment is sex discrimination, then any form of sex discrimination is sexual harassment. Gender harassment was conflated with sexual harassment. My first interaction with the committee was tense, due to that conflation of concepts. Because the committee was formed out of women's desire to address this issue seriously and not have it hidden away anymore, I think there was a revolutionary zeal attached to their actions. The difficulty arose as legal cases emerged, and there was a clearer understanding of the legal ramifications of sexual harassment. There was a growing concern on the part of the [UC] General Counsel's office that the way in

which the campuses responded to complaints of sexual harassment had to conform to rules of due process.

Reti: Sure.

Armstrong-Zwart: At the same time, if we look at the materials that came out on an annual basis from the Sexual Harassment Committee, there was a concern that people weren't coming forward with complaints. I think the two issues together led to the belief that we had to codify sexual harassment policy in a way that conformed more to issues of due process, at the same time allowing for the institution to address complaints of sexual harassment in an appropriate way.

There had been a couple of cases [where] complaints which had gone to the committee had gained some public notoriety. Chancellor Sinsheimer had, in one instance, rejected the recommendation of the committee for the disciplining of a male faculty member. That decision became a real hot button issue on campus, with the chancellor holding a series of meetings with some very outraged women who felt that he didn't take the topic seriously. He did take the topic seriously. He simply didn't want to trammel anyone's rights, neither the accused's nor the complainant's. The need for a more disciplined approach to the issue of sexual harassment and how to handle complaints became apparent.

A committee was established to develop a sexual harassment policy which would spell out exactly how complaints would be handled, whether the complainant was a student, or staff member, or faculty member. I think there was a feeling on the part of some women faculty that this wasn't a serious

attempt, that it was a way to somehow bury complaints rather than address them. I can understand that concern because sexual harassment had existed in universities as long as universities were in existence, but initially it was seen as a women's issue. Again, once it was named, it became a larger issue. There are men who are sexually harassed as well, although I don't ever remember dealing with a complaint from a man while I was involved in the process. But again, you address an issue for a specific demographic on the campus and you find that there's a much wider application, that the solution serves everybody's needs.

So the new process was established, with a new committee hearing complaints. It seemed to be functioning all right. Complaints were coming forward. As ombudsman, I had received a couple of informal complaints from students who didn't want to file a formal complaint. Mostly what they wanted was to let a male faculty with whom they had had a consensual relationship, from their perspective, know how they felt. From my perspective, the power disparity was such that it was not a consensual relationship, but the young women just wanted to let the faculty member know the damage that the relationship had done to them in terms of their self-confidence, the fact that they had thought that the faculty member was interested in them because of their intelligence and finding out that, no, they were just a link in a chain. But they didn't want to lodge a formal complaint. They didn't want the faculty member disciplined. They just wanted to find a voice for their—not so much outrage—but really a way to express the pain and the hurt that the relationship had caused. I dealt with a couple of those as ombudsman.

Reti: So you would then have a meeting with the faculty member involved?

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, it depended on what the student wanted. In one case, the student wanted to write a letter, so we worked together on the letter, and I went with her and stayed in the background when she delivered the letter to the faculty member. It was very effective. The faculty member cleaned up his act.

I think part of the problem at UCSC was due to one of the things that struck me when I first came to the campus, that certain boundaries which seemed to exist in other, older institutions didn't seem to exist here. There was a degree of fraternization between faculty and staff, faculty and faculty, and faculty and students that just seemed to be part of the campus culture, and that I had never witnessed before. It was a shock for me. I had run into a couple of instances of sexual harassment at UMass, but the prevailing campus culture there was that it really wasn't okay. They didn't deal with it in an institutional way, but within the campus culture, it was not all right. Whereas here the line not to be crossed with students didn't seem to be as well defined, and I think that some of the male faculty just thought sexual relationships with students were one of the perks of the job.

It was an even greater challenge, I think, for this campus to understand the concept of sexual harassment and the fact that it was not just against university policy, but it also was a violation of federal law, and that both the institution and the faculty member—whether it was a faculty member or a supervisor or whoever—were actually liable in a legal way. It took a while to educate the

campus. The work that was done by the first Committee on Sexual Harassment, chaired by Helene Moglen, did the campus an amazing service by raising the issue, talking about it, naming it, explaining what it was.

Then the next iteration of a codified policy and procedures was something the campus really needed. In fact, we were the first campus within the UC system, I believe, to have set up that structure, and a lot of our fellow campuses modeled their procedures after us. We felt that we were in the vanguard, and then we got a complaint to the Office of Civil Rights from a group of female students.

Reti: Right. So before we get to that, because that was about ten years later.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes.

Reti: The establishment of the Title IX officer position.

Armstrong-Zwart: That came out of that OCR investigation.

Reti: Oh, excuse me. I thought that was earlier.

Armstrong-Zwart: And I don't know which came first, the establishment of the Title IX office or the development of the Senate policy on romantic relationships.[14]

Let me continue with that policy, since it is dealing with faculty-student relations. I'm not sure if it came out of the Commission on the Status of Women on campus. I'm foggy on that, but I do remember two faculty members came to see me, Wendy Mink and Bob Meister, who were serving on the committee and both were both faculty in politics. They believed that the sexual harassment policy only dealt with unwelcome sexual attention. They were concerned about seemingly consensual relationships between a faculty member and a student in his/her class. I can remember Bob Meister saying to me with great earnestness (and I'm going to paraphrase because I don't think that the word he used is appropriate in this document), "We get to screw with their minds. We have to leave their bodies alone." I thought that captured it. Because of the faculty-student relationship, the student is so vulnerable in so many ways, emotionally, intellectually. There's almost the same transference that goes on between a therapist and a patient. The faculty member simply has to be made aware of the

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[14] "Two new sections added to Academic Personnel Policy 015 (Faculty Code of Conduct (Code) Part II.A) make it a violation of the Code for a faculty member to engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with a student for whom he or she has academic responsibility or should expect to have such responsibility. The amendment was adopted by the UC Privilege & Tenure Committee and endorsed unanimously by the Academic Council during winter 2003. In the spring of 2003 the amendment was adopted by the UC Board of Regents and approved by the President." http://www2.ucsc.edu/title9-sh/relations.htm

power that he or she has in relation to a student, and therefore, students cannot really fully and freely consent.

This was particularly important because of graduate students, who had *so* much on the line. For a graduate student, in either instance, whether she willingly entered into the relationship or rebuffed an advance, her whole career was at risk. There was no way to level that playing field. So I think that the Resolution on Romantic Relationships was something that needed to be spelled out and discussed. To the Senate's credit, it passed that resolution. I'm not sure if that would have happened on any other campus within the University of California at that time.

Reti: Was there much opposition? What was the nature of the debate around that resolution, or was there debate?

Armstrong-Zwart: I was kind of hard to stand up and defend a faculty member's right to have unlimited sexual access to his students. (laughs) Right? So while there was some faculty pushback, the interesting thing was that the faculty members who spoke out against the resolution were the ones who, as far as I or anybody else who had been involved in sexual harassment complaints knew, had never, ever done anything. The faculty members we knew about sat there absolutely mum.

There wasn't much pushback, or maybe my memory is glossing over it; but there just wasn't as much opposition as there might have been at a different campus. There were some concerns about the institution acting as Big Brother and

inserting itself into relationships between two adults, but, as I've said, nobody stood up and said, "I've got a God-given right to as many students as I can nail." You know? I'm sorry, that's sort of crude.

So the resolution passed, and, again, it became part of the shaping of our campus culture. It didn't stop sexual harassment; I think what really had the most profound impact on that was the establishment of the Title IX Office. Under the revised *Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures*, subsequent to the Moglen committee, various sexual harassment officers were appointed who could receive and investigate complaints from students or faculty or staff. It was a diffuse process. Several individuals served as sexual harassment officers, and as a result, there wasn't a single repository of knowledge. There was no annual report. We thought we had done a pretty good job and we had. We didn't realize the flaws in the process until the student complaint was lodged with the Office of Civil Rights.[15]

I'm not going to talk about the allegations in the complaint and OCR's investigation and findings, but it was a long process of negotiation with the Office of Civil Rights. Their investigator came and investigated. I dealt with her a

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[15] See Letter to Karl Pister, Chancellor, University of California, Santa Cruz, from John E. Palomino, Regional Civil Rights Director, Region IX, San Francisco, Office for Civil Rights, United States Department of Education, concerning sexual discrimination at the University of California, Santa Cruz]. Available in the Special Collections Department at the UCSC Library.

lot, and Campus Counsel David Birnbaum was also part of some of the discussions. We met on campus; we met in San Francisco. I think what was hardest for me to get over was the feeling that we were doing our best, that we were at least trying. UCSC wasn't ignoring the occurrence of sexual harassment, and emotionally, I was thinking, you know, we're not getting credit for at least trying. I came to realize that good intentions didn't mitigate the flaws in our policy and procedures. What we worked out with the Office of Civil Rights is the current policy and procedures for handling complaints—the *Sex Offense and Sexual Harassment Policy*. The campus hadn't had a sex offense policy. Complaints of rape were handled by the Rape Prevention and Education Program.

Reti: With Gillian Greensite.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, with Gillian Greensite. As we worked through a more far-reaching policy which encompassed sexual offense, as well as sexual harassment, I know that there was a feeling on Gillian's part that we were encroaching on her territory. For people who feel strongly about issues, it's hard to accept change, and I say that of myself as well.

Title IX Sexual Harassment Officer Rita Walker

We worked through a policy and part of that was the establishment of the Title IX Office. Rita Walker, who had been serving as a sexual harassment officer—she worked in the Police Department, but she had also been performing that role-was hired after a search as the first, and as it turns out, only Title IX officer that

the campus has had. We couldn't have made a better choice. I used to tell her, "You're like Joe Friday. It's sort of 'Dragnet.' Just the facts, ma'am. Just the facts." She is so skilled in her ability to focus on the facts. She can hear the complaint, interview the accused, and stay focused on the facts, and that is, given her commitment to the issues and her passion for justice in this area, a real accomplishment. To manage to care passionately about something and still be objective as you investigate a complaint, it's a skill that—I guess it can be learned—but I think with Rita it's inbred. It's part of who she is and how she functions.

I can remember an Academic Senate meeting when one faculty member, in particular, opposed the establishment of the Title IX office. He was very vocal about it. He kept calling the office the "sex police." "We've got the sex police on campus." In the senate, if you're not a senate member, you can't speak at the meeting. In fact, every time somebody wanted me to say something, they would have to have a vote because this same faculty member always objected to my speaking since I wasn't a member of the senate. And so, I figured, as he went on and on about the "sex police," that somebody would say, "Well, let's hear from Julia." But actually a female faculty member stood up and said, "I resent this." It was Leta Miller in Music. She said, "What you're doing is wrong. To call it the office the 'sex police' is pejorative." Leta wasn't somebody who spoke up in the Senate a lot, but this time she spoke up and spiked his guns, and that was the end of the pushback on the establishment of the Title IX Office.

The Title IX office has served the campus so well. You would think that if it served the campus well then the volume of complaints should be diminishing. But the fact is that each year we accept a new class of students and hire new faculty and staff, and they bring with them their experiences and expectations. It takes a while for them to learn what is and is not acceptable according to campus policy. So it's an ongoing education process. The fact that there are complaints that continue to come forward says to me that the office is a success. If there were no complaints, I'd be worried, because it would mean that there's a lot of subterranean stuff going on.

Keeping the Body Politic Healthy

Basically, what the Title IX Office does is lance boils so that they don't fester. It's a way of keeping the body politic healthy by dealing with these issues, which if left unaddressed, would over time sicken the institution in really significant ways.

I don't know if there's more to say about it. I think that the campus, with the revised policy and the hiring of Rita Walker, took a giant step forward on this issue. When I hear about other college campuses that are where we were back then, twenty, twenty-five, almost thirty years ago, and they're still not where we are now, I think—well, it was a painful process, but we really did move the campus forward with those changes in policy over time and the establishment of that office. I think it has kept the campus healthy.

Reti: I interviewed Helene Moglen, whose oral history was released recently.[16] And one of the things that came up in that interview was the early roots of Santa Cruz in 1960s sexual liberation. Particularly at some of the colleges, like Kresge College, that culture was strong and might account for why that shift was so necessary. You came in right at the point when that shift was taking place and you helped make it happen.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, that's true. The campus was established in the sixties [amid] everything that was going on in the sixties. Everybody was feeling sexually liberated, right? I mean, women were supposed to be as sexually liberated as men. (pauses) It seemed to work better for men than for eighteen-year old women.

Reti: (laughs) Right.

Armstrong-Zwart: I always thought that—and this was before coming to UCSC—women students, eighteen-year old students, when they've left home for the first time, come to campus and here's a male faculty member. Unconsciously, they may see him as a father figure, and the faculty member sees that psychological transference and thinks, "Oh, she really likes me. I'm hot." But

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[16] See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Helene Moglen and the Vicissitudes of a Feminist Administrator* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available at http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/helene-moglen.

what it really is, I think, is a developmental step for young women, to move from Daddy, to a father figure, and then liberation, to an appropriate relationship with males. And when that gets confused it really can hurt the young woman.

Reti: Right.

Armstrong-Zwart: The other thing I've noticed is that sexual harassment is almost like a predator-prey relationship. The men who were the most persistent, longtime sexual harassers of students often seemed to target young women who had a history of abuse, whether it was sexual abuse or physical abuse. That's why I say predator-prey, a recognition of a kind of vulnerability that made it possible for them to approach the young women. It wasn't a hundred percent, but often that was the case, which made it even worse, and the power differential even greater.

Reti: Absolutely.

Armstrong-Zwart: It was the eagle going after—no, let's not say eagles. Eagles are noble. It was sort of the skunk going after the wounded bird.

Reti: I can see that. And also, in terms of the culture of the campus, or even the ideals that the campus was founded upon—one of them was this very close faculty-student relationship. It seems that in some ways the underworld side of that ideal was the potential for sexual harassment.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. And part of it may also have been the fact that so many of the original hires were either very senior faculty or very junior, newly minted

PhDs, which meant that some of the junior faculty were only a year or two away from graduate school, so that the age disparity wasn't as great as it might have been. That's not an excuse, and I'm not even sure it's a valid explanation. But given everything that was happening at the time, and the campus culture and the fact that you did have large numbers of relatively young faculty members, that may have been a contributing factor as well.

Reti: Mm-hmm. And then, of course, we also had one of the strongest feminist movements [on a UC campus]. Feminist community, women's studies. I know another thing that has come up [in the oral history with Helene Moglen] were the confrontations—I don't know if this happened before you came or while you were here—the confrontations that some grad students were organizing with faculty members who had sexually harassed them, public confrontations.

Armstrong-Zwart: That was before I came. That was certainly one of the weapons in the arsenal of feminists in the early days of dealing with sexual harassment. That confrontation was sort of public shaming. I think it served a short-term service, in that it may have outed a sexual harasser; however, it gave the alleged harasser no rights to defend himself. It might have served as a disincentive for other sexual harassers, but what it also did was make male faculty who were not harassers feel that they could be accused and judged and shamed without any due process. So it really, in the long term, I think did a disservice to the institution's ability to deal with complaints of sexual harassment. Men felt vulnerable in a way which previously only women had felt. And I have to say that there's a feminist in me that chuckles at that, but

ultimately you couldn't go forward with that. It was useful at its time, but its utility was fairly short term.

UCSC's Contributions to the University of California Policy on Sexual Harassment

Reti: Yes. Rita Walker told me that you were involved in getting sexual harassment into the faculty code on the systemwide level, and that was in the early eighties.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. There was a Systemwide Committee on Sexual Harassment, and I did serve on it. Serving on Systemwide committees was one of the ways we were able to take what we had accomplished on this campus and inject it into the system. It was interesting. It was very different dealing with faculty from other campuses. While we might have had a very permissive culture, we also had a very permeable culture, that is, one which was amenable to change. The cultures at the more established campuses were not that amenable to change. It was really the Office of the President and the Office of General Counsel who took what we had developed on this campus and, via this committee. sort of shoehorned it into the other campuses. The dissemination of our sexual harassment policy was an example, again, just like the Target of Opportunity program, of the little old Santa Cruz campus actually having a profound impact on the entire University of California in ways that were beneficial to the entire institution.

Reti: I think that's very important to document. I'm glad that we're doing that.

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, that's true. As the youngest child of four in our family, I felt that UCSC was also one of the youngest, not *the* youngest, but we were definitely the little brother or the little sister campus, and it was a good feeling that we actually had a voice in the family, in family discussions, because we had been seen by Berkeley, for a while, as draining resources that should have gone to Berkeley. We had the Berkeley Redirect Program, and students were choosing to stay here rather than redirect to Berkeley. We were the younger sibling who didn't quite measure up to its older brother. So for UCSC to be able to join a Systemwide committee and have that kind of impact was a good feeling. It was good for the campus ,too, to know that.[17]

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[17] The following addendum was provided by Julia Armstrong-Zwart during the editing of this oral history: In the fall of 1995 I was asked by Wayne Kennedy, Senior Vice President for Business and Finance in the UC Office of the President, upon the departure of Carol Schwartz, to serve as acting assistant vice president for benefits. I had served on the UC Retirement System Advisory Board the previous year, and VP Kennedy felt I would be conversant with the main issues and concerns of the office. My UCSC experience in dealing with the Academic Senate and faculty also weighed heavily, I believe, in his selection of me to head the Benefits Office on an interim basis. However, given the range of my responsibilities at UCSC and the fact that it was Chancellor Pister's final year in office, I could only agree to take the position at UCOP on a halftime basis, spending two and a half days at each location each week. This was agreeable to VP Kennedy so I began the halftime job at UCOP at the beginning of December 1995 and continued in the role until the end of June 1996, when the newly arrived Chancellor, MRC Greenwood, asked me to resume my responsibilities at UCSC full time.
I was happy to comply with her request since I had no interest in applying for the permanent position. Although the seven months I spent at the Office of the President were very useful for me, personally, adding greatly to my understanding of how the university functioned at that level, and for the campus, to the extent that the relationships I formed with executives and staff in UCOP facilitated subsequent campus interactions with OP, especially in the area of Human Resources, I found the workings of UCOP too far removed from the academic heart of the University. UCOP could have been the corporate office of any complex organization. I found the academic side of things to be completely overshadowed by the business affairs of the university, especially as they related to The Regents and Sacramento. I was grateful to have had the

Reti: Yes. Great.

Valerie Simmons, Director of Affirmative Action

So one more person I wanted to make sure you to ask you about, as a colleague, is Valerie Simmons.

Armstrong-Zwart: Absolutely. She was a faculty member, an assistant professor, who had resigned her position as a faculty member sometime before we hired her as director of affirmative action. The Affirmative Action Office had sort of limped along previously under various directors, some effective, some spectacularly ineffective, one who, when he left, big parts of the campus threw a celebratory party. Some affirmative action officers felt that they had a "heavy badge": that's the cop on the beat who's going to use the nightstick a lot. Others felt that you went along to get along. There was a wide range. Valerie was a very effective director.

Previously, getting an Affirmative Action Plan written, which is the one thing that the campus *had* to do as a federal contractor, was like pulling eyeteeth. It was really difficult to get done. Valerie came on board and made the difficult seem easy. The Affirmative Action Plan just came out smoothly. She also set up

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opportunity to view things from the perspective of UCOP, but vastly relieved to return to UCSC, where my engagement with UC's academic mission felt more vital.—Julia Armstrong-Zwart

staff training programs. She made what had seemed to be an insurmountable task look easy. It was due to her background as a psychologist, in industrial psychology, and also to her personality and diligence. She looked at the job as an important job which needed to be done, and then she went about doing it.

Once Karl Pister had asked me to assume responsibility for a larger area, I don't know if I mentioned that one of the first things that I did was establish an HR management team. We met on a regular basis, the directors of the different offices, to work through difficult issues and to get areas which previously had been oppositional to speak to each other and collaborate. Some of the biggest opposition, I think, had been between Affirmative Action and Labor Relations, with Staff HR sort of being the second [area of tension]. It was interesting to watch those relationships develop. I have to give credit to Valerie Simmons in Affirmative Action, Willeen McQuitta, as Director of Staff HR, and Linda Listman, as Director of Labor Relations.

Those were three very different views of the institution and of employment. Trying to hammer out at least an understanding was a difficult task, and I admired the willingness of these three women to work together. We didn't always achieve comity; there were still areas of tension and pull, but a willingness to keep at it week after week, discussing issues of common concern and trying to arrive at an agreed approach, was crucial. And I do think that the fact that all of the directors were women helped. It also meant that there were more emotional ups and downs. This sounds so sexist, I know, but women relate to each other on a personal as well as positional basis. Men also relate on a

personal level, but they're much more aware of the positional relationship, whereas, it's really important to women to have a good, personal working relationship. So there were probably more personal tensions I had to respond to, but there wasn't that sort of chest-beating positional status thing. It seemed to me to be a more worthwhile investment of my energy, to deal with the personal little wildfires that would spring up, than to deal with a lot of status—I'm more important than you—kind of things.

I enjoyed very much working with that HR management team. It was instructive to me as a supervisor. It was really my first extensive supervisory experience. It was a learning experience for me as well. I thought all of us struggled together to work things through. I valued that from the women so much.

Chancellor MRC Greenwood

Reti: Great. Tell me about working with Chancellor Greenwood.[18]

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, I had never had had a female boss before. For a brief period, when Ronnie Gruhn was acting academic vice chancellor, she was one of my supervisors, along with the chancellor, but since we were friends, it was always contextualized by our personal friendship. So I had never really worked

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[18] See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *From Complex Organisms to a Complex Organization: An Oral History with UCSC Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood, 1996-2004* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014) http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/greenwood

for a female boss, and I had been looking forward to it because my experience, as I've mentioned, in working with women was very different than working with men.

I liked MRC. I thought that she was very bright. She was very charming. We got along. But in some ways the kind of support that she needed from her immediate staff was very different than the support Karl Pister and Robert Sinsheimer needed. In fact, it was more like Robert Stevens. Someone described it as similar to the court of Queen Elizabeth I, where there were gentlemen courtiers and ladies in waiting. There was a need on the part of both Robert Stevens and MRC Greenwood for personal service from their staff, and what I'm really good at is professional service. My interactions with previous chancellors had mainly been professional. I mean, they were friendly, but my professional services were what was useful to them.

I think I've discussed this. I felt that one of the reasons I was in my position was to provide the chancellor with the best information, analysis, and advice I could provide, and because of my areas of responsibility, that meant that there were problems to discuss. There were things that weren't going right. There were labor issues. There were little brush fires. And I felt that it was my responsibility to keep the chancellor apprised of these kinds of emerging issues.

I can't say what MRC thought, but it became clear over time that she didn't particularly welcome that kind of input from me. Fortunately, at that time Michael Tanner was the executive vice chancellor, so I ended up working very,

very closely with Michael. My professional relationship with MRC just became more and more attenuated. With other chancellors, I would meet anywhere from two to three times a week; with MRC, over time, I would have no one-on-one meetings; I would meet [with her] as part of administrative groups, and that was it. That was her comfort level, and I didn't particularly always want to bring problems to somebody who didn't seem to want to hear them and who probably felt that they should have been handled at a lower level. There were vice chancellors, and, I don't want to put words in her mouth, but I think that her view was that the vice chancellors should handle operational issues, and her role was more outward-looking, dealing with the Office of the President and the legislators in Sacramento. And here I was, bringing her what she may have viewed as operational issues she wasn't interested in dealing with. That was fine as long as there was someone who was willing to pay attention to them, and who felt that what I could contribute was useful.

Leaving UC Santa Cruz

When John Simpson was hired as executive vice chancellor, he and I would meet, but again, it was almost as is he was of the same mindset as MRC, that is, that somehow these issues should be handled elsewhere. I think, and this is just my feeling over time, that I wasn't particularly useful to either of them. It began to feel to me that my primary utility to them was as a sort of ethnic window dressing. Here I was, the nominal Black woman, but that there was no understanding of, or appreciation for, what I was doing.

What brought this perception into bright focus was the decision that MRC and John made to remove Staff Human Resources from my area of responsibility and to give it to Vice Chancellor of Business and Administrative Services Tom Vani, who had no experience in that area, to compensate for removing CATS from his areas of responsibility.

Reti: This is IT [Information Technology].

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes, IT They transferred the whole IT area and set it up as a freestanding entity under Larry Merkeley's authority. I had the feeling that they were moving blocks around on an organizational chart, and as they were taking something away from this vice chancellor, they had to give him something to make up for that loss. So, well, let's just move Staff HR and fill that vacant box on the org chart reporting to the VC-BAS. What that decision clearly communicated to me was that the chancellor and executive vice chancellor really and truly didn't value my contributions, so, I resigned.

Reti: I see. Yes. So this is a dramatic change from the early years, when Sinsheimer was welcoming and institutionalizing the role, the position that you came here to fill, recognizing that that needed to be supported at the highest levels in order for it to be successful.

Armstrong-Zwart: I think maybe it's because the campus did change. The campus which they came to was a very different institution, and the campus culture was very different. It may well be that for them the role that I played wasn't very salient, or even necessary. I mean, it's a matter of perspective.

So my career at UCSC ended sooner than it would have otherwise, and you know, I had to go through some stuff to get through it.

Reti: Sure.

Armstrong-Zwart: But I let it go. I had to let it go. My mother had moved to Santa Cruz several years previously and was living in Scotts Valley in an assisted living facility after she developed dementia, and the dementia was getting worse. The first year after my resignation was the last year of her life, and I got to spend as much time as I needed with her, so that when she died I didn't feel that there were things left undone and things that I should have said. So that made my resignation a good thing in a timely, balanced, way.

Final Reflections: Serendipity and Balance

I guess, in looking back on my personal and my professional life, there has always been what seems to be a balance. I've given talks on this topic over the years to groups of women. With the advent of feminism, all of these books came out, such as, you know, *Games Your Mother Never Taught You*, *Dress for Success*, all of those books. Women were supposed to have a five-year career plan laid out. We were supposed to be a female man is really what it seemed to me they were saying. And that isn't what I thought the revolution was about. I thought it was about choice, allowing us to be women fully in both our personal and our professional lives.

I gave talks to women about the virtues and value of serendipity. I would use my own life and my career as examples. When I was in graduate school at Johns Hopkins, I never thought I would end up in administration. That was definitely considered the "dark side." Each opportunity that came to me, the different positions, it was all serendipity. It was meeting people, getting interested in things, testing myself, finding out that I could do things that I didn't know I could do, overcoming shyness. I was shy growing up, very, *very* shy. Overcoming that shyness and learning that I could interact easily with people; I could read papers at conferences; I could give talks and people actually listened; all were important milestones. All things that I never, ever thought I would be able to do.

The other thing was that being married and having small children, right from the beginning of my career, always meant that, for me, I had to have that balance. I couldn't devote myself 100 percent all the time to both. For a while, especially when all of the literature came out about how to be successful as a professional woman, I felt that I was cheating on both ends. Then I stopped and thought, well, actually, no, it's not that. I felt I was in a better position than my male colleagues, who appeared to have total ego investment in their jobs, their positions, and their status. I had whatever ego gratification that might come out of doing a job well, but then I also had the gratification of being a mother and a wife, having a family and being engaged in that. I came to realize the complementarity of the two. I could have a really rotten day at work, I mean, where there was nothing but trouble, trouble, trouble, and I could go home and make a really great meal that

my kids and my husband liked. Conversely, at difficult times in my life, work, the structure of work, has been a salvation.

During the difficult days of the breakdown of my marriage and subsequent divorce, work was an organizing factor for me. When my older son, Gian-Mario, committed suicide in January 1983, I would have fallen apart without my job. I took a week off to go back to Massachusetts for his funeral, but then when I came back, I went back to work immediately. People were really surprised by that. It wasn't that I was fleeing grief, but grief is something that you can't feel 24:7 and survive. For me, the time that I spent at work was a breathing spell from this overwhelming grief and a way of working through it to come out on the other side, where the grief remains always; it becomes a part of your life, but it's not crippling anymore. Work helped me with that. As a result, I've always talked to groups, particularly groups of women, about not having it all. Don't think you're going to be a 100 percent at work and a 100 percent at home. But you can achieve a balance that allows you to get as much satisfaction as you can from each. And that, to me, was important.

The lessons that I've learned at home, being a wife and a mother, have influenced me as a professional administrator, and the lessons that I've learned as an administrator have influenced me in my personal life. I mean, for example, I never realized—and maybe this is a function of my Catholic girlhood and education—how important it was to me to be right.

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: One of the hard lessons that I learned—and that was after I came to UCSC—is sometimes being right, my need to be right, got in the way of my being effective. The first time I had to negotiate a settlement involving a faculty member, I had been indignant that we were negotiating. But the practicalities were that in order to achieve the departure of a tenured faculty member, there had to be some kind of settlement agreement involving money. I moved from indignation and outrage to practicality and pragmatism. It didn't make it absolutely right that we were doing this but in terms of the institution and the health of that particular department, it was really the right thing and the most effective thing to do.

The other thing was learning, as I worked more in a supervisory relationship with people, that it's not important to be credited with something that's successful. The really important thing is that something gets done. The first time I was introduced to that concept [was at] the summer institute I attended at the University of Michigan in 1974. I interviewed President Robin Fleming as part of an assignment, and he described how he got things done on the campus. He said that he initiated very little, but that he worked with people spread across the campus who would then generate proposals and ideas which would come up to him for approval. At first I thought that was extremely manipulative, but then I realized that it was really clever of him because he didn't need credit for doing these things. Nobody does anything all by themselves. Maybe some scientific geniuses do it by themselves. We don't even give birth to a child by ourselves. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) There's no parthenogenesis, right? So that really was a lesson, that to work effectively with people, you have to empower them, and the way you empower people is by engaging them and getting them to realize the importance of their contribution to this group, this team effort, and that you value that contribution. You really don't to take credit. Everybody needs some level of acceptance and appreciation for what they do and to know that it's valued, but you don't need to be seen as [sings triumphantly] "Ta-Da! Here I am to save the day!", the person who is Wonder Woman or Mighty Mouse. I found over time that that kind of mentality often leads to creating problems just so you can solve them, or you let things brew until they become critical and then you rush in to save them. Whereas the other way, you identify issues and you work with people to find an acceptable solution; the pot doesn't have to boil over. You can get things done in a collaborative fashion, which helps both in a professional and a personal domain.

I look back on the career I've had and I have to say that there are many more high points than low points. I've had the opportunity to work in a variety of roles within really stellar institutions. I've come away feeling that in small but significant ways I made a difference. Working with others, of course but that my efforts made a difference, and perhaps the areas I was involved in were better off for my involvement, which I think isn't a bad epitaph for a career. At least I didn't leave a mess.

Reti: So speaking of marriage and family, you now are married to Frank Zwart.

Armstrong-Zwart: That's right.

Reti: Do you want to talk a little bit about that?

Armstrong-Zwart: It's really interesting. Frank is almost nine years younger than I am. What a jolt for somebody who was always the youngest! It's interesting. We were introduced by Stella and Chuck Kahrs. They were my neighbors. Stella is my other very close friend from Santa Cruz. She had known Frank as a student here. One time they had a couple of extra tickets for an A.C.T. [American Conservatory Theater] performance and so they asked me if I'd like to come along, and they also asked Frank. They were not matchmaking. They absolutely were not matchmaking. Frank was dating somebody else. I was dating somebody else. But what happened is that over time we just became really, really good friends, and we found we were spending more and more time together. The people we were dating had withered away, and we were spending all of our free time together as friends. When you have a really close friendship, you're very reluctant to possibly risk it by changing the nature of the relationship, so we sort of tiptoed around for a long time.

The other thing was that I wasn't sure I ever wanted to get married again. There were a lot of things in my first marriage that were really good, not the least of which are my two children, and my experience living in Italy. Also, my first husband, who I met in graduate school, had first been a good friend, so I knew that friendship was going to be my way into any other relationship. But Frank

Zwart and I had such a good friendship that—what if this doesn't work out? Then we're not going to be friends anymore.

Well, so seventeen years—actually twenty-five years later— (laughs)

Reti: (laughs) Oh, you *did* wait a long time.

Armstrong-Zwart: We've been married seventeen years and involved for twenty-five years. It was serendipity again, wasn't it? I mean, I wasn't sure I'd ever get married again. I certainly didn't think I'd marry somebody who was younger than I was. But stranger things have been known to happen. (laughs)

The one issue that we were always both so careful about was making sure that there was never a conflict of interest at work. I always recused myself from anything that had, even tangentially, to do with Frank's area. The only time that there possibly was a very distant conflict of interest was when I chaired the search committee for the vice chancellor of business and administrative services, who would be Frank's boss, but not a direct report. I talked to Michael Tanner about it, and he said, "Look, that's so distant." So the joke between Frank and me was I was going to give him a really bad boss, so he'd better be nice to me. (laughs)

No, sharing the university has been interesting as well. One of the things that we had to make a decision about was not having the university become the total topic of conversation, because it's easy to do.

Reti: (laughs) Yes, I've been there.

Armstrong-Zwart: (laughs) Right? Yeah, it is.

Reti: And then you have no division between your professional and personal life, if you're doing that at home all of the time.

Armstrong-Zwart: That's right. So without coming to some sort of formal agreement, it was like, okay, the first hour at home you can vent and then after that it's on to other things.

It's been a really supportive friendship as well as marriage. It's been a great relationship. And again, it's the serendipity of second chances.

Reti: That's beautiful. And tell me about Armstrong Consulting Services.

Armstrong-Zwart: I resigned April 1, which was (laughs) strange, but it was not symbolic. It just turned out to be best in terms of my last pay period. I turned sixty the following June and retired then. Because I knew people in the system, I would get phone calls, asking me to carry out different investigations. I sort of turned into the Lone Investigator. I investigated whistleblower retaliation complaints at the Office of the President and some race discrimination complaints at other campuses. I did a couple of complaint investigations at UCSC as well. I was doing this work as a contract employee, but early on I had to take out liability insurance. It was required by Regental policy. I had to have a name under which to take out business insurance, so I became Armstrong HR Consulting Services. I would do maybe two or three, at most, contracts a year.

Then, as everybody I knew on the campuses and in OP retired or left, work dried up, so I haven't done anything since 2008 or 2009. I'm finally retired, and it's nice now because Frank is retired, too, and we're able to travel and spend more time with our grandchildren. It's pretty nice to be relatively young and relatively healthy and active and to do the things that you never had the time to do when you were working. It's been a good retirement. I recommend it to everybody. All you have to do is get old enough. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs) And keep your health, so you can enjoy it.

Armstrong-Zwart: And keep your health, yeah.

My advice is that you really have to be able to detach from things; you have to be able to experience what you experience and then move on. The worst thing that you can do in your personal or professional life is to wallow in whatever it is that doesn't go right. For me, wallowing doesn't work. You can't change the past. You can only live through the present and try to do the best you can. My father-in-law once said something that really struck me. He said, "Every morning I wake up and I make the daily determination to be the best person I can be." I think that's not a bad motto for living, every day to wake up and just try to be the best person you can be. So that's what I do.

Reti: Well, I want to thank you so much, Julia, for doing this oral history with me. I've learned a lot from you personally and I think we've documented some very important history of the campus.

Armstrong-Zwart: Well, thank you so much for asking me. I didn't ever think that I would be doing an oral history. But it's been good for me, as well, to go back and to do a summation of things, and also to realize that I've forgotten a lot. I've always prided myself on having this great memory, but forty years of stuff.

Reti: Well, that may be part of not wallowing in it. You move on by letting it go.

Armstrong-Zwart: That's true. (laughs) And when you let go, it really goes.

Reti: But you do remember a lot and there's a lot that we've discussed.

Armstrong-Zwart: Yes. Well, you've been good at priming the pump.

Reti: Thank you.

Armstrong-Zwart: And looking at different documents has helped, too. Well, thank you. It's been an enjoyable experience.

Reti: Thank you very much.

About the Interviewer and Editor:

Irene Reti directs the Regional History Project at the UC Santa Cruz Library, where she has worked as an editor and oral historian since 1989. She holds a BA in Environmental Studies and a Master's in History from UCSC and is also a small press publisher, writer, and photographer.