

50th Anniversary of Coeducation: The Oral History Project

Background.....

Over the years, only a small number of individuals have been interviewed or have written about their experiences of the early years of coeducation at Yale. Most women in the Classes of '71, '72, and '73 – Yale College's first undergraduate women - have not had the opportunity to contribute to the history of this remarkable period.

At the 50-year anniversary mark, “getting the history right” seems more important than ever. The Oral History Project, and the companion Written History Project, seek to do this by capturing the voices of a large and diverse group of women who came to Yale in 1969 and participated in this extraordinary transformation.

The collection of oral history interviews, minimally edited (e.g., to eliminate awkward intervals), will become part of an archive in the Manuscripts and Archives division of Sterling Memorial Library at Yale where it will be available to library users and researchers. Transcripts will be created to facilitate access and use. In addition, select portions of individual interviews may be used within the *50WomenAtYale150* website, where they will be publicly accessible and collections of excerpted interviews may be used at gatherings and events during the 2020 anniversary year and beyond. Although a longer film made from the video and audio interviews is not currently contemplated, there is a possibility that recordings might be used within such a project in the future.

Conducting the interview: some guiding principles to keep in mind:

- A chief goal of the 50th anniversary history projects is to educate the broader Yale community, as well as others, about coeducation and the era in which it occurred.
- The focus of the OHP is on “everywoman” rather than on those with recognizable names or banner accomplishments. We hope to capture a wide range of histories, as told by an array of women across the three classes.
- Interviewees should be encouraged to tell their own stories, about whatever they believe future generations should know about the history of coeducation.
- Interview questions should be as open-ended and unbiased as possible and should avoid constricting material to pre-determined areas of inquiry or tailoring histories to fit present-day narratives. If questions are focused on negatives - what was lacking, what didn't work, what was difficult - we will miss all the stories about the successes of those early years and the good things that happened, which are an important part of the history.
- The context of the world in 1969 is crucial to understanding these stories and Yale's efforts towards coeducation; 1969 was a very different world for women.

Interview basics.....

- Please make sure both the interviewee AND interviewer **print, sign and return the release form to Stephanie Reynolds Ramos at OPAC**. We will not be able to use the interview without these releases.
- For details on the technical aspects of recording and transmitting the finished interviews to the Office of Public Affairs and Communications, please consult the

accompanying document....but above all, remember that the recording device, (i.e., your phone) must be positioned CLOSE to the subject, at **6 -18 inches MAXIMUM distance**, in order to achieve good sound quality. And, of course, please speak loudly and clearly during the interview.

- The general timeframe for an interview is 45 minutes – although, if you prefer a shorter interview, you are welcome to create a briefer recording. However, we ask that you not go beyond a one hour interview.
- As “belt and suspenders” we suggest that the interviewee record on her phone as well – as back up in case something goes wrong with the interviewer’s phone. This way, the interview will be captured even if there is an unanticipated problem.
- We would love to have some still photos of the interviewee – either taken at the time of the interview or supplied by the interviewee from previous snapshots. In addition, photos of the interviewee from her time at Yale would be welcome. Insofar as possible, please provide the photo location, year, and names of any individuals in the photo. Photos can be sent to Stephanie Reynolds Ramos.
- Please transmit the recording to OPAC as soon after the interview as possible. Additional work will need to be done on the submissions – including transcribing the interview – and timely submissions will help us manage the workload. We ask that all recordings be submitted to OPAC **by April 30 at the latest**.
- If you have questions, please contact Stephanie at:
stephanie.reynoldsramos@yale.edu