

FIGHTING THE WAVE OF CHANGE: CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND  
COEDUCATION AT MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN,  
1884 TO 1982

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## ABSTRACT

In the eighteenth century, educational opportunities for women existed largely in separate single-sex institutions especially in the South. In 1884, Mississippi established the first all-female public university in the country, the Industrial Institute and College (now Mississippi University for Women). Other states across the South, such as North Carolina and Georgia, soon created similar schools. By the 1970s, however, all of the single-sex public colleges for women had adopted coeducation except for Mississippi University for Women (MUW). In 1980, MUW found itself at the center of a legal battle over single-sex admission policies when Joe Hogan, a male nurse, sued the public institution. The case revealed a splintering between two distinct factions, traditionalists who wished to maintain the cultural status quo and social reformers who pushed for transformations. The splintering that occurred at MUW is a microcosm of the larger societal shift that occurred between ideological forces over the transformation from single-sex education to coeducation across the South.

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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my grandparents, Lawrence F. and Mona Schmidt, from whom I learned a devotion to the pursuit of knowledge and love of history.

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## **INTRODUCTION: DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S SINGLE-SEX EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH**

For generations, Americans believed it either impossible or simply unnecessary to educate women beyond their designated societal roles to serve in a domestic capacity. Following the Civil War, however, women struggled for the creation of separate educational havens where women were afforded the opportunity to receive an equal higher education. One example of such an institution was the Industrial Institute and College (now Mississippi University for Women) established in 1884, which has been seen by those associated with it as a source of great pride and triumph over social obstacles. Over the course of the twentieth century, however, societal changes across the South, influenced by racial desegregation, transformed the landscape of single-sex education and resulted in a clash of ideals between those who wished to sustain the status quo, or traditionalists, and those who desired social reformation, or reformers. The events that transpired at Mississippi University for Women (MUW) in 1982 when a man, Joe Hogan, sued the school over its single-sex admission policy are a microcosm of this larger societal struggle that occurred between ideological forces over the shift from single-sex education to coeducation throughout the American South. Mississippi University for Women continues to grapple with the long term effects of coeducation and the divisions it exposed.

The decision to sexually integrate MUW eventually decided the fate of other male single-sex public institutions such as The Citadel and the Virginia Military Institute. With the recent increase of coeducation and the decline of single-sex schools, scholars have only just begun to understand the impact this shift has had on higher education especially in the South where racial segregation has dominated scholarship concerning

Southern education. In order to understand the importance of this cultural shift towards coeducation and how MUW played a part, one must first examine the development of women's higher education in both America and the South.

### The History of Women's Education

For centuries, a woman's ability to learn was cause for serious debate. According to educator Eleanor Wolf Thompson there was no greater aspect of education discussed in the 1800s more than that of female education.<sup>1</sup> Not only was it a matter of whether a woman *should* receive a higher education, but also whether a woman *could* learn on the same intellectual level as a man. Prevailing notions assumed that women's brains were smaller and consequently weaker than the minds of men.<sup>2</sup> For example, an article in the *Saturday Review* in 1860 stated, "The great argument against the existence of this equality of intellect in women, is, that it does not exist. If that does not satisfy a female philosopher, we have no better to give."<sup>3</sup> The necessity of female education was questioned since a woman's "place" or sphere was in the home, tending to both her husband and children. Parents were more concerned with their daughter's ability to marry rather than ensuring their education. The idea that an educated girl would be unfit to fill her role as subservient wife caused great concern among families and furthered the continued denial of educational opportunities for women.<sup>4</sup>

Opponents of higher education for women also argued that education would lead to unhappy and neglected children. According to economics professor Mabel Newcomer,

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<sup>1</sup> Eleanor Wolf Thompson, *Education for Ladies, 1830-1860: Ideas on Education in Magazines for Women* (Morningside Heights: King's Crown Press, 1947), 32.

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from *The Saturday Review* in *Littell's Living Age*, vol. 64, no. 816, 21 Jan. 1860, 184.

<sup>4</sup> Solomon, 6.



an education was thought to “give [women] brain fever...and...their children would be sickly, if they were able to have children at all.”<sup>5</sup> Arguments against women’s education lasted well into the twentieth century. In 1904, psychologist and educator G. Stanley Hall’s (1844-1924) *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* asserted educated women would “become functionally castrated, unwilling to accept the limitations of married life and resentful when called upon to perform the functions peculiar to their sex.”<sup>6</sup>

Advocates of female formal education, however, counteracted such claims commonly utilizing religion as a rationale. In 1851, political philosopher Edward D. Mansfield said,

It is the idea of moral right, founded in the nature of the soul, and derived from the Bible which is the soul foundation of republican government, and the sole evidence that women have equal rights in the social system, and are equal partners in whatever benefits society might convey.

For Mansfield, that included a right to an education.<sup>7</sup> Women themselves disputed the notion of their gender’s mental inferiority. In her article “On the Equality of the Sexes” from the *Massachusetts Magazine*, writer Judith Sargent Murray (1751-1820) rejected “the biblical argument drawn from the fall of Eve by asserting that the first woman transgressed in search of knowledge, while Adam ‘was influenced by no other motive than a bare pusillanimous attachment to a woman!’”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Newcomer, 28.

<sup>6</sup> Solomon, 60.

<sup>7</sup> David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Schools* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 29.

<sup>8</sup> Tyack and Hansot, 33.

Supporters of women's education also countered the notion that an education would lead to neglected children. Instead, educated women would educate the entire family and in essence the nation's future generations and leaders. Abigail Adams encouraged her husband John Adams to make the new constitution "be distinguished for Learning and Virtue," and that "if we mean to have Heroes, Statesmen and Philosophers, we should have learned women."<sup>9</sup> Public school proponent Dr. Henry Barnard argued that if a girl received an education it would, "in the relations of mothers and teachers, do more to improve and bless society and determine the civilization of the next and all future generations."<sup>10</sup> In doing so, the proposition of female education seemed less threatening to contemporary ideals by preserving the notion of the woman's sphere. It eventually paved the way for the gradual acceptance and development of both single-sex and coeducational facilities.

Very few formal educational opportunities existed for women due to the structure of early education institutions. Prior to the American Revolution, academies across the Colonies were created solely to train male students for male dominated vocations. Colleges offered degrees in three major professions, the ministry, law, and education.<sup>11</sup> Historian David G. Sansing refers to colleges in colonial America as "[children] of the church" and "[nurseries] for ministers."<sup>12</sup> Harvard College, established in 1636, in Massachusetts was the first American university followed by William and Mary College in 1693 in Virginia and Yale University in 1701 in Connecticut. Between 1746 and 1776 seven other universities opened. All were male, religious, and offered a similar liberal

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<sup>9</sup> Solomon, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Tyack and Hansot, 31.

<sup>11</sup> Newcomer, 5.

<sup>12</sup> David G. Sansing, *Making Haste Slowly: The Troubled History of Higher Education in Mississippi* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1990), 3.

education of languages, mathematics, science, philosophy, and rhetoric. Only nine colleges existed in America by the American Revolution; the number had grown to almost 240 by 1850. Approximately half of those were in the South and seventeen were located in Mississippi.<sup>13</sup>

It is difficult to determine which school should be designated “the first woman’s college.” Without a formal national or even statewide educational system with set standards, many schools defined themselves however they wished, using terms such as college, seminary, or academy. Many female “colleges” lacked the evidence to support such claims due to young age of their students as well as the curriculum they offered.<sup>14</sup> For example, Georgia Female College (Wesleyan College) in Macon opened in 1839 and designated itself the first women’s college despite frequently admitting students as young as twelve.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the term college, many institutions labeled themselves “seminaries”. Three of the best known were Troy Seminary opened in 1821 in New York, Hartford Seminary started in 1832 in Connecticut, and Mount Holyoke Seminary established in 1837 in Massachusetts. All started by women, these Seminaries taught subjects ranging from fine arts, dancing, music, drawing, singing, to piano in addition to botany, geology, chemistry, physics, rhetoric, mathematics, American history, and geography. These schools too established very young enrollment ages with Troy admitting girls as young as twelve, Hartford fourteen, and Mount Holyoke sixteen.<sup>16</sup>

Of the educational opportunities available for women, many were often private finishing schools. Finishing schools were designed to ‘finish’ a young woman’s

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<sup>13</sup> Sansing, 19.

<sup>14</sup> *Challenged by Coeducation: Women’s Colleges Since the 1960s*. Edited by Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan L. Poulson (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Solomon, 24.

<sup>16</sup> Solomon, 22-23.

education while providing the dual advantages of teaching girls social rules and insulating young women from any negative outside influences. For example, National Park Seminary in Forrest Glen, Maryland, operated as a finishing school from 1894 to 1942. According to historian Thomas Woody, of the few private schools available for girls, only six were founded from 1790 to 1820. From 1820 to 1850, educators established 104 facilities. Just before the Civil War, an astonishing 96 institutions were established for educating women.<sup>17</sup> The majority of educational institutions were private schools, however, and education for the female masses remained largely unattainable.

The development of educational institutions differed in the South compared to the rest of the nation due to Southern concepts of womanhood. The South as a region developed a sense of Southern romanticism.<sup>18</sup> Elite southern women were symbolically placed on iconic pedestals and were taught to be “ladies.” According to Southern beliefs, a “lady” or a “Southern belle” should be genteel, economically reliant upon men, and vulnerable.<sup>19</sup> Historian Fred C. Hobson associated Southern ideals of womanhood with terms such as “delicate,” “dainty,” “pure,” and “brave.”<sup>20</sup> In 1925, Frances Pendleton Gaines referred to the Southern woman as “beautiful, graceful, accomplished in social charm, bewitching in coquetry, yet strangely steadfast in soul.”<sup>21</sup> Patriarchal society held that the genteel Southern woman should not work outside the home and that her education should be limited to endeavors that furthered her status as a Southern belle. As a

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<sup>17</sup> Thomas Woody's *A History of Women's Education in the United States* (New York: The Science Press, 1929), .2, 154.

<sup>18</sup> James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 45.

<sup>19</sup> Amy Thompson McCandless, *The Past in the Present: Women's Higher Education in the Twentieth Century American South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 12.

<sup>20</sup> Fred C. Hobson, *Tell About The South: The Southern Rage to Explain* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 143.

<sup>21</sup> Francis Pendleton Gaines, *The Southern Plantation: A Study in the Development and Accuracy of a Tradition* (Gloucester: Columbia University Press, 1962), 16.

result, women were limited to a classical education that included music, drawing, dancing, art, geography, history, rhetoric, literature, composition, and needlework.<sup>22</sup> Restrictive gender roles affected the life of Southern women in all areas including education.

A lack of resources also limited the Southern woman's educational opportunities. Few areas in the South possessed enough teachers or schools to meet the basic needs of educating the local population.<sup>23</sup> Across the South, plantation families either sent their children to Northern schools, patronized the few private schools in the South, or employed private tutors for the education of their children, including daughters.<sup>24</sup> To do so, however, was expensive with some schools such as Patapsco Female Institute (1839-1890) in Maryland charging \$170 per term.<sup>25</sup> The tendency of Southern children to attend Northern schools changed in the years preceding the Civil War as suspicions of Northern institutions rose over the divisive issue of slavery.<sup>26</sup> The strife resulted in fewer Southern families sending their children to the North for an education. Most families in the South, however, relied on the mothers to instruct their daughters at home.<sup>27</sup> According to historian Amy Thompson McCandless, "The majority of Southern women did not even have a finishing school education."<sup>28</sup> As a result, the antebellum South lagged behind the North in both educational standards and opportunities.

Prior to the Civil War, education of any kind was almost nonexistent for African Americans. In the slaveholding South, whites viewed the education of slaves as a route

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<sup>22</sup> Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 26, 37.

<sup>23</sup> McCandless, 19.

<sup>24</sup> Newcomer, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Solomon, 24.

<sup>26</sup> Solomon, 21.

<sup>27</sup> McCandless, 7.

<sup>28</sup> McCandless, 7.

to insurrection.<sup>29</sup> It was against the law in many antebellum states including Mississippi to educate slaves and the state provided no public institutions for the education of the state's small number of free African Americans.<sup>30</sup> For African Americans living in free states, educational opportunities existed, but on a limited basis. According to the writer Lynn Peril, only fifteen African Americans attended institutions of higher learning prior to 1840 and all fifteen of those were men. The first African American woman to graduate from college was Lucy Ann Stanton. Stanton graduated from Oberlin's literary course in 1850. Twelve years later, Mary Jane Patterson became the first African American woman to earn a bachelor's degree also from Oberlin College.<sup>31</sup>

Following the Civil War, the South attempted to adapt to industrial development while at the same time maintain distinct ideals regarding gender, race, politics, and class hierarchies.<sup>32</sup> A romanticized vision of an antebellum existence developed in the South after the Civil War, also known as the "Lost Cause". The Lost Cause was synonymous with mythic notions of the "Old South" and the "New South". The New South embodied the move toward industrialization while simultaneously restoring and perpetuating the ideals of the Old South, in particular notions of racial and sexual hierarchies. According to Historian James C. Cobb, "The cult of the Lost Cause fused the belief that the white South was destined to 'rise again' with...a mystique of prideful difference and defensiveness that became an integral element of postbellum southern white identity."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Lynn Peril, *College Girls: Bluestockings, Sex Kittens, and Coeds, Then and Now* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 40.

<sup>30</sup> Sansing, 23-24.

<sup>31</sup> Peril, 40.

<sup>32</sup> Cobb, 68.

<sup>33</sup> Cobb, 64.

C. Vann Woodward described this idealism as the “syrup of romanticism.”<sup>34</sup> Woodward pointed to the tendency of the Lost Cause phenomenon to “[emphasize] race and tradition and [disregard] issues of economics and self-interest.”<sup>35</sup> Tennessean Ethel Moore portrayed a picture of the “Old South” as “the sunny South, with its beautiful lands and its happy people, the South of chivalrous men and gentle women...the land of plenty and the home of heroes.”<sup>36</sup> The Old South ideology conjured not only images of heroic chivalrous gentleman and loyal childlike slaves, but it also maintained the ideological female image of a Southern belle.

In the midst of the creation of the Lost Cause mentality following the Civil War, a new form of women’s education took shape in the South, the industrial, normal, and liberal arts combination education. The economic devastation of the War forced most Southern women to work. The 1880s saw a rise of women working in Southern cities as dressmakers, milliners, and seamstresses. Since many women worked mainly prior to marrying, women under the age of twenty-four dominated jobs that could be done outside the home such as domestic service, mill operation, and school teaching.<sup>37</sup> Such work in turn demanded some type of education or training, but most women could not afford a private education. As a result, states across the South combined in a public institution both industrial and normal education while maintaining attention to the arts. Mississippi led the way in 1884 with the establishment of Industrial Institute and College (II & C), now Mississippi University for Women. The curriculum at II & C consisted of training

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<sup>34</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 158.

<sup>35</sup> Woodward, 51.

<sup>36</sup> Ethel Moore, “Reunion of Tennesseans: Address of Welcome by Miss Ethel Moore,” *Confederate Veterans* VI (October 1898), 482.

<sup>37</sup> Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of a New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 77.

in collegiate, normal, industrial, and music and fine arts education. Classes included telegraphy, stenography, bookkeeping, photography, and kindergarten instruction as well as painting and drawing.<sup>38</sup> Similar schools in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, and Texas soon followed the educational model found at II & C.<sup>39</sup>

One of the earliest scholars to examine the existence of single-sex public colleges for women was educator Milton Lee Orr. Orr chronicled the popularity and growth of state-supported schools for women in the South in his 1930 book *The State Supported Colleges for Women*. Orr's study highlighted the existence of several public female colleges in the South including State Normal and Industrial School (University of North Carolina Greensboro), Alabama Girl's Industrial School (University of Montevallo), and Industrial Institute and College (Mississippi University for Women).<sup>40</sup> Orr's book only recorded their development, curriculum, enrollment, resources, and function. Orr wrote that the purpose of his study was to "help...shape the future development of the existing state-supported colleges for women and...[to] be of some assistance to those states contemplating the establishment of similar institutions."<sup>41</sup> He did not, however, analyze the overall role or importance of these schools to the history of women's education.

As with women, the years following the Civil War witnessed an increase in educational opportunities for African Americans. Part of the mission of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, established in 1865, included backing those organizations and teachers who established school facilities for freed men and women.

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<sup>38</sup> Bridget Smith Pieschel and Stephen Robert Pieschel, *Loyal Daughters: One Hundred Years at Mississippi University for Women, 1884-1984* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1984), 8.

<sup>39</sup> Solomon, 46.

<sup>40</sup> Milton Lee Orr, *The State Supported Colleges for Women* (Nashville: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1930).

<sup>41</sup> Orr, 1.



By 1869, the number of freedmen enrolled and attending school reached 114, 522 people.<sup>42</sup> From their inception, however, African American schools differed from white schools in the South. While whites maintained separate facilities based on both race and gender, African American facilities adopted what was a growing trend in education across the country, coeducation.

### History of Coeducation

At the same time that women's education was on the rise in the 1800s, thus spurring the formation of single-sex schools for women, another type of educational experience was also taking root, coeducation. The establishment of coeducation began in the American West. As early as 1837, Oberlin College began admitting women (and African Americans) and the State University of Iowa (University of Iowa) became the first public coeducational institution of higher learning in 1865.<sup>43</sup> Leslie Miller-Bernal, a Sociology professor at Wells College, attributes the acceptance of coeducation in the West to "frontier conditions [that] often necessitated economizing through coeducation [and] gender roles were also more flexible and egalitarian..."<sup>44</sup> Other schools that educated both women and men included Antioch University in Yellow Springs, Ohio in 1852 and The University of Chicago in 1892, which were both founded as coeducational universities.<sup>45</sup>

The first coeducational schools, however, did not actually teach both males and females in the same classrooms. As was the case at Oberlin College, classes were often taught independently of each other based on gender and women were assigned to a

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<sup>42</sup> Henry Allen Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South: From 1619 to the Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 22-29.

<sup>43</sup> McCandless, 84.

<sup>44</sup> *Challenged by Coeducation*, 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Challenged by Coeducation*, 3.

separate female department. Chapel, campus organizations, and even commencement exercises were also often segregated by gender.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, schools placed restrictions on female enrollment. Such restrictions included admitting women exclusively to graduate programs, confining admission to upperclassmen, or strictly accepting local female residents of the town.<sup>47</sup> For example, Cornell University restricted female enrollment to just 25 percent.<sup>48</sup>

Previously single-sex schools soon found it more economically sound to admit women rather than create separate single-sex institutions. The first all-male state universities to open their schools to coeducation were Iowa (1855), Wisconsin (1867), Kansas, Indiana, Minnesota (1869), Missouri, Michigan, and California (1870).<sup>49</sup> The most prestigious male and female colleges, however, remained single-sex. For men, that included Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Columbia, Williams, Amherst, and Dartmouth. The elite female schools, on the other hand, were termed the “Seven Sisters” and consisted of Barnard College, Bryn Mawr College, Mount Holyoke College, Radcliffe College, Smith College, Vassar College, and Wellesley College.<sup>50</sup>

When faced with coeducation, some schools opted to establish a single-sex branch for female students, or coordinate colleges. Coordinate colleges were simply “sister” schools to the men’s institution.<sup>51</sup> In 1889, Columbia University established a female branch known as Barnard College.<sup>52</sup> Some other well-known examples were Radcliffe College, the coordinate of Harvard; Sophie Newcomb, the coordinate of Tulane; and

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<sup>46</sup> *Going Coed: Women’s Experiences in Formerly Men’s Colleges and Universities, 1950-2000*. Edited by Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan L. Poulson (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), 7.

<sup>47</sup> McCandless, 83.

<sup>48</sup> *Going Coed*, 8.

<sup>49</sup> Solomon, 53.

<sup>50</sup> *Going Coed*, 7.

<sup>51</sup> *Challenged by Coeducation*, 5.

<sup>52</sup> Solomon, 55.

Pembroke, Brown's coordinate.<sup>53</sup> A number of coeducational colleges actually reverted to coordinate colleges as a way to "[deal] with the 'threat' of women, whose attendance rates were increasing faster than men's and who were receiving disproportionate shares of academic awards."<sup>54</sup> For example, the University of Rochester founded the Women's College of Rochester in 1912 and Tufts University established Jackson College for Women in 1910.

Only a few universities in the South adopted coeducation prior to the 1930s. Some of the earliest Southern schools to attempt coeducation included Alabama Polytechnic Institute (Auburn University) and the University of Tennessee. Alabama Polytechnic Institute admitted three female students in 1892 and the University of Tennessee enrolled women by 1893.<sup>55</sup> The first women at Clemson College (Clemson University) were three female faculty members in 1918. However, the first official undergraduate female students were not admitted until 1955.<sup>56</sup> William and Mary was coeducational by 1918, the University of Virginia admitted women to graduate and professional programs in 1920, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute opened its doors to women in 1921 excluding military courses.<sup>57</sup> By the beginning of the twentieth century 66 percent of the nation's women's colleges were located in the South. In a related statistic, only a total of six southern white universities were coeducational.<sup>58</sup>

Coeducation, however, was standard for Southern African American women. Following the Civil War, the country began opening facilities for the education of the

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<sup>53</sup>*Challenged by Coeducation*, 5.

<sup>54</sup>*Challenged by Coeducation*, 5.

<sup>55</sup> McCandless, 99-100.

<sup>56</sup> McCandless, 89.

<sup>57</sup> McCandless, 93.

<sup>58</sup> McCandless, 84.

African American population. African American colleges were coeducational from the start because they simply did not have the resources to sustain multiple systems for the sexes. Also, there was little concern related to education corrupting or damaging the reputation of African American women. Rather, for African American women by the late 1800s, an education was viewed as an opportunity to better or “uplift” the entire race.<sup>59</sup>

In the South, however, ideological arguments still raged over the education of African Americans. Disputes were similar to those used against the education of white women, that education would leave women unable to fulfill their domestic obligations and “role” in society. The editor for the *New Orleans Times-Democrat* contended “The higher education of the Negro unfits him for the work that it is intended that he shall do, and cultivates ambitions that can never be realized.”<sup>60</sup> According to Historian Raymond Wolters, “Southerners intuitively recognized that no aristocracy—whether of caste or class—could maintain its privileges in the face of an egalitarian educational system.”<sup>61</sup> In spite of such opposition, Mississippi established one of the nation’s earliest state-supported colleges for African Americans when it founded Alcorn University [Alcorn State University] in 1871. Women were admitted unofficially in 1884 and officially by 1903.<sup>62</sup>

By the 1900s, the numbers of women across the nation attending educational facilities more than doubled. Between 1870 and 1900 female enrollment in institutions of higher learning went from eleven to eighty-five thousand. The percentage of female

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<sup>59</sup> Peril, 41.

<sup>60</sup> Raymond Wolters, *The New Negro on Campus: Black College Rebellions of the 1920s* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), 5.

<sup>61</sup> Wolters, 5.

<sup>62</sup> Sansing, 63.

students rose from 21 percent to at least 35 percent and much of the growth was in coeducational facilities.<sup>63</sup> In a related statistic, while around two in five women who were enrolled in institutions of higher education in 1870 attended coeducational facilities, ten years later the number increased to three in five.<sup>64</sup> Women were outnumbering men and their presence at coeducational facilities was on the rise.

Although the early 1900s saw an increase in women's education, the Great Depression dealt huge financial blows to many single-sex institutions. Many institutions, including Southern women's colleges, were on the verge of bankruptcy and mergers or temporary coeducation resulted. Also, many local college age men and women found it financially impossible to leave home to attend college. In South Carolina, Queens College and Chicora College for Women merged in 1930 creating Queens-Chicora College (now Queens University of Charlotte).<sup>65</sup> In 1932, the Woman's College (WC), now the University of North Carolina Greensboro, admitted men from the community on a limited basis. Dean Julius I. Foust granted admission to eighty men who lived at home and attended day classes at WC. Coeducation at WC ran efficiently until 1933 when the Board of Trustees voted to terminate the program because it went beyond the college's allocated purpose.<sup>66</sup> The first male to attend Florida State College for Women received his degree in 1934. He did so, however, by strictly attending summer sessions.<sup>67</sup>

The transition to coeducation was frequently vexed, whether it took place in 1890 or 1990. Women attempting to enter the single-sex male university experienced a range of reactions from social ostracism to physical violence. For example, at the University of

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<sup>63</sup> Solomon, 58.

<sup>64</sup> *Going Coed*, 5

<sup>65</sup> McCandless, 182.

<sup>66</sup> Allen W. Trelease, *Making North Carolina Literate* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2004), 135.

<sup>67</sup> McCandless, 97.

Virginia in the 1920s whenever a female student entered a classroom, male students would stomp their feet.<sup>68</sup> The first women to attend the University of North Carolina did so informally, yet were still forced by the administration to segregate themselves behind screens while in class so that male students could maintain concentration.<sup>69</sup> In 1996, Kim Messer and Jeanie Mentavlos, two out of the first four women to attend The Citadel alleged that while attending, they had their faces pushed against walls with rifles and their uniforms set on fire with nail polish remover. Men often responded to women infiltrating their single-sex institutions with cruelty and disdain. Such negative treatment, however, did not halt the move towards coeducation.

Women's higher education experienced new challenges in the 1940s and 50s. With the establishment of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, or GI Bill, returning World War II veterans were provided with, among other things, the federally funded opportunity to attend college or vocational training. Schools welcomed GI participants because of government subsidies. Even single-sex female colleges such as Vassar College, Finch College, and Sarah Lawrence College opened their institutions to returning veterans. By 1947, veterans encompassed 49 percent of the total college enrollment and 69 percent of college men. Conversely, percentages for female students declined from 47.3 percent in 1920 to 35.2 percent in 1958.<sup>70</sup> Single-sex female colleges also suffered during this time. By the late 1950s, the number of women attending female colleges dropped to 9.6 percent.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> McCandless, 94.

<sup>69</sup> McCandless, 89.

<sup>70</sup> Solomon, 189-191.

<sup>71</sup> Trelease, 281.

Colleges across the country from the 1950s to the 1970s experienced growth both physically and in enrollment as a result of a buoyant economy. The rise in enrollment was mainly due to the fact that the “baby boom” generation was entering higher education. The “baby boomers” were children born during the high-birth-rate years at the end of World War II. For example, from 1966-1972 Wells College experienced its highest enrollment numbers ever with more than six hundred students.<sup>72</sup> Nationally, there were only 3 million students in the early 1950s, but by 1968 there were almost 7 million.<sup>73</sup> As a result of the growth in enrollment, colleges were forced to expand their physical campuses to accommodate swelling populations. From 1952 to 1977 enrollment at Mississippi State College for Women (M.S.C.W.), now Mississippi University for Women, rose from 770 to 3,182 students, a 313 percent increase. During the same years, M.S.C.W. expanded from only 26 buildings to just over 60 buildings.<sup>74</sup>

During the 1960s and 70s, the nation experienced a tremendous cultural overhaul that ultimately influenced the landscape of higher education and simultaneously propelled coeducation to the national standard. The decades were climates of protest as the Civil Rights Movement and the Women’s Liberation Movement gained momentum, influenced by each other, during the years leading up to the *Mississippi University for Women v. Joe Hogan* case.<sup>75</sup> Both movements called for greater inclusion not only within society, but in education as well. According to Historian Leslie Miller-Bernal, “[the] cultural mood of the [1960s] called for closer ties between men and women, as well as between whites and blacks. Integration of all sorts seemed natural; single-sex institutions and organizations

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<sup>72</sup> *Challenged by Coeducation*, 7.

<sup>73</sup> *Going Coed*, 12.

<sup>74</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 139.

<sup>75</sup> Alice Echols, *Shaky Ground: The ‘60s and It’s Aftershocks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 79.

seemed old-fashioned or backward.”<sup>76</sup> At many institutions, students and faculty, influenced by national events, pushed for the universities to recruit more minorities and women.<sup>77</sup>

For African Americans of the early twentieth century, although educational opportunities grew, the structure in which they were allowed was established by the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision in 1896. The case revolved around Homer Plessy suing the East Louisiana Railway because they required he ride on a segregated railway car on account of his race. The decision against Plessy ultimately legalized a doctrine of “separate-but-equal” racial facilities including separate schools, separate hospitals, and even separate restrooms. It was not until 58 years later that this structure was challenged based on the reality that many such facilities were separate, but very unequal. In 1954, the Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* officially struck down the doctrine of “separate-but-equal.”<sup>78</sup> More laws followed, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program that received financial assistance from the federal government.<sup>79</sup>

The Women’s Liberation Movement burst onto the national scene with the protests at the 1968 Miss America Pageant. According to English professor Alice Echols, the women’s liberation movement was a “revolt against the ultra domesticity of that aberrant decade, the 1950s.”<sup>80</sup> It was the goal of the Movement to eradicate any vestiges

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<sup>76</sup> *Going Coed*, 11.

<sup>77</sup> *Challenged by Coeducation*, 8.

<sup>78</sup> Walter G. Stephan and Joe R. Feagin, *School Desegregation: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Plenum Press, 1980), 7-16.

<sup>79</sup> William A. Kaplin, *The Law of Higher Education: Legal Implications of Administrative Decision Making* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1978), 404.

<sup>80</sup> Echols, 78.



of societal patriarchy and capitalism.<sup>81</sup> There were numerous organizations formed with varying agendas, the most prominent being the National Organization for Women (NOW). NOW was organized in 1966 with the mission to push the government to enforce the sexual discrimination section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.<sup>82</sup> Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act did little for women in the education system because it did not include sex as one of the prohibitive criteria. By 1972, however, through the work of feminist organizations such as NOW and Women's Equity Action League, the law was amended and Title IX of the Higher Education Act was created that banned sex discrimination in all schools that received federal funding.<sup>83</sup> That same year, the 1972 Education Amendment established need-based Pell grants that encouraged universities to be accepting of lower-income students.<sup>84</sup> Such laws and the increased federal involvement revolutionized the face of higher education.

Economic factors also played a key role in the rise of coeducation in the late 1960s. Due to the rapid growth of the 1950s, competition over funding became more intense and high inflation caused the value of the available resources to depreciate.<sup>85</sup> Many institutions had borrowed money in order to fund their growth and now needed increased enrollment and funding in order to repay the loans. As a result, schools such as Yale University and Princeton University both in 1969 admitted their first female

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<sup>81</sup> Echols, 84.

<sup>82</sup> Echols, 82.

<sup>83</sup> Kathleen C. Berkeley, *The Women's Liberation Movement in America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 72-73.

<sup>84</sup> *Going Coed*, 13.

<sup>85</sup> *Going Coed*, 12.

students. By opening to the fastest growing enrollment demographic, women, colleges increased both enrollment and revenue.<sup>86</sup>

Due to the growth of coeducation at previously all-male universities, women's colleges soon found themselves competing for students with many of the newly coeducational schools. When faced with such competition, many women's schools opted to become coeducational as well. Examples include Sarah Lawrence College in 1966 and soon after Vassar College, Connecticut College and Elmira Colleges in 1969.<sup>87</sup> As a result, the 1960s was the beginning of a sharp thirty-year decrease in single-sex education. In 1971, there were 169 single-sex U.S. liberal arts colleges, but by 1986 sixty-eight of these institutions were coeducational.<sup>88</sup> In a related statistic, from 1960 to 1986 women's colleges declined from 233 to only 90.<sup>89</sup> By the 1980s, coeducation had officially gone from the exception to the rule in higher education in America.

Research on the formation of and trends in higher education in America started as early as the 1880s. Information on single-sex female schools was often relegated to minor chapters that focused primarily on the private schools in the North especially the "Seven Sister" schools. The vast majority of research done on education in the South focuses rather on segregation and its subsequent downfall. Within the last twenty years, however, serious research has been conducted on the impact of women's education including single-sex female institutions and their ultimate decline. While a few scholars such as Amy Thompson McCandless and Leslie Miller-Bernal have touched on Southern

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<sup>86</sup> *Challenged by Coeducation*, 8.

<sup>87</sup> *Challenged by Coeducation*, 8.

<sup>88</sup> *Going Coed*, 12-13.

<sup>89</sup> *Challenged by Coeducation*, 9.

female education in the twentieth century, none have understood the important impact of Mississippi University for Women to the legal decline of public single-sex institutions.

The earliest publications on American higher education were written between 1880 and 1900 and were by a mix of professional and non-professional, or self-taught, historians. Between 1887 and 1903, the United States Bureau of Education printed *Circulars of Information*, a three-volume survey on the history of education. The volume was written in connection with historians, most notably professional historian Herbert Baxter Adams (1850-1901) a graduate of Amherst College. The next major work completed was by another historian and novelist Edward Eggleston, *The Transit of Civilization from England to America in the Seventeenth Century* (1901). Eggleston, however, was a Methodist minister in addition to being a self-taught historian.<sup>90</sup> Although historians were the first to examine the history and impact of higher education, soon educators and the government were the leading writers on educational histories and studies.<sup>91</sup>

Between 1900 and 1930, the responsibility of educational history was left to either educators or the government. According to historian Frederick Rudolph, educators were interested in historical scholarship because “educational history became a source of inspiration and a guide to action.”<sup>92</sup> Examples include Joseph Lindsey Henderson’s *Admission to College by Certificate* (1912), Lester William Bartlett’s *State Control of Private Incorporated Institutions of Higher Education* (1926), and Jessie M. Pangburn’s

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<sup>90</sup> Edward Eggleston, *The Transit of Civilization from England to America in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1901), viii.

<sup>91</sup> Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1962), 497-499.

<sup>92</sup> Rudolph, 499.

*The Evolution of the American Teachers College* (1932).<sup>93</sup> Studies written by educational professionals focused more on finding a solution to an educational shortcoming rather than to an historical analysis.<sup>94</sup> Studies sponsored by the government also looked to serve an educational interest or problem. While *Circulars of Information* was the earliest, many soon followed including Bird Thomas Baldwin's *Present Status of the Honor System in Colleges and Universities* (1915), Jesse B. Sears' *Philanthropy in the History of American Higher Education* (1922), and Walton C. John's *Graduate Study in Universities and Colleges in the United States* (1935).<sup>95</sup> As a result of the shift from historian to educator and government, Rudolph observed that, "significant historical study languished."<sup>96</sup>

The year 1930 witnessed the return of professional historian to the scholarship of education with the publication of historian George P. Schmidt's *The Old Time College President*. Schmidt's study was conducted not only by a professional historian, but it also offered a contextual study in the subject matter of higher education.<sup>97</sup> Broader studies followed such as Albea Godbold's *The Church College of the Old South* (1944), Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger's *The Development of Academic Freedom in*

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<sup>93</sup> Joseph Lindsey Henderson, *Admission to College by Certificate* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1912). Lester William Bartlett, *State Control of Private Incorporated Institutions of Higher Education as Defined in Decisions of the United States Supreme Court: Laws of the States Governing the Incorporation of Institutions of Higher Education, and Charters of Selected Private Colleges and Universities* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1926). Jessie M. Pangburn, *The Evolution of the American Teachers College* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1932).

<sup>94</sup> Rudolph, 499-501.

<sup>95</sup> Bird Thomas Baldwin, *Present Status of the Honor System in Colleges and Universities* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1915). Jesse Brundage Sears, *Philanthropy in the History of American Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922). Walton C. John, *Graduate Study in Universities and Colleges in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1935).

<sup>96</sup> Rudolph, 499.

<sup>97</sup> George P. Schmidt, *The Old Time College President* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930).

*the United States* (1955), and Wilson Smith's *Professors and Public Ethics: Studies of Northern Moral Philosophers before the Civil War* (1956).<sup>98</sup>

Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, historical scholarship expanded to include various topics under the umbrella of social history. Historians called for greater inclusion of subjects based on criteria such as race, class, region, and gender. In 1962, Frederick Rudolph wrote *The American College and University: A History* in which he critiqued the status of historical writing on higher education up to 1962. By the 1970s, an explosion of social histories were written such as Mary F. and Oscar Handlin's *The American College and American Culture: Socialization as a Function of Higher Education* (1970), Marcia G. Synnott's *The Half-Opened Door: Discrimination and Admissions at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton* (first published in 1970), and Harold S. Wechsler's *The Qualified Student: A History of Selective College Admissions in America* (1977).<sup>99</sup>

The study of women's education history began in the 1920s. In 1929, Thomas Woody wrote the first study of women's higher education, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*. The next examination of single-sex female colleges was by Dr. Milton Lee Orr, an educator. Published by the George Peabody College for Teachers in 1930, *The State Supported Colleges for Women* chronicled the popularity and growth of state-supported industrial schools for women in the South. Orr's study

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<sup>98</sup> Albea Godbold, *The Church College of the Old South* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1944). Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955). Wilson Smith, *Professors and Public Ethics: Studies of Northern Moral Philosophers before the Civil War* (Ithaca: American Historical Association, 1956).

<sup>99</sup> Mary F. Handlin and Oscar Handlin, *The American College and American Culture: Socialization as a Function of Higher Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970). Marcia G. Synnott, *The Half-Opened Door Researching Admission Discrimination at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982). Harold S. Wechsler, *The Qualified Student: A History of Selective College Admissions in America* (New York: Wiley, 1977).

highlighted the existence of several public female colleges in the South including State Normal and Industrial School (University of North Carolina Greensboro), Alabama Girl's Industrial School (University of Montevallo), and Industrial Institute and College (Mississippi University for Women).<sup>100</sup> Orr's book only recorded their institutional histories and development, however, and he did not analyze the overall role or importance of these schools to the history of women's education. It wasn't until 1959 that another study of women's education was completed. Woody, Orr, and Newcomer all ultimately fall short of a true historical analysis of women's education in America and the South.

The late twentieth century experienced a renewed interest in scholarship addressing the subject of women's higher education. For example, Amy Thompson McCandless's *The Past in the Present: Women's Higher Education in the Twentieth-Century American South* highlights the contributions of single-sex female education in the South. McCandless contradicts the argument that Southern female education did not offer much to the overall history of education in America.

Scholars are only now examining the impact the shift from single-sex education to coeducation had on the organizations themselves. In 2006, sociologist Leslie Miller-Bernal and historian Susan L. Poulson together edited a collection of essays in their book *Challenged by Coeducation: Women's Colleges Since the 1960s*. Miller-Bernal and Poulson's case studies evaluate the adoption and consequences of coeducation at several previously all-female institutions. They chose schools that represented various types of women's colleges: private colleges, secular schools, Catholic institutions, coordinate colleges, vocational colleges, state schools, and African American institutions among

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<sup>100</sup> Orr, 1-35.

others. However, the only state institution studied in the book is Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. Miller-Bernal and Poulson point out that while a plethora of research exists on the beginnings of female higher education, virtually nothing has been written on the effects of coeducation on such schools.<sup>101</sup> In addition, no research on the shift from single-sex status to coeducation has been conducted on the very school that legally defined the parameters of sexual discrimination in public institutions.

Chapters one and two focus on both the history of MUW and the *Mississippi University for Women v. Joe Hogan* Supreme Court case. Chapter One shows how MUW's development was unique because of both its curriculum and its status as a public institution for women. The second chapter concentrates on Joe Hogan's suit and the subsequent Supreme Court decision. It is an examination of the legal battle and the educational and gender issues that arose as a result.

The third chapter is a cultural analysis of the events associated with the coeducation of MUW. It reveals the struggle between traditionalists and reformers and discovers who they were, what each side's thoughts were and why they felt that way. As a result, a picture emerges that reveals how the events at MUW were significant because they exposed how the societal shift that occurred in the South reached beyond racial changes to revolutionize sexual values.

Chapter Five follows the long-lasting effects of the Supreme Court case on MUW. It shows how the battle over coeducation at MUW did not end in the early 1980s. The struggle between traditionalists and reformers continued at the university because of subsequent lawsuits as well as the threat of closure or merging.

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<sup>101</sup> *Challenged by Coeducation*, ix.

The struggle for women's education resulted in the creation of single-sex institutions throughout the South. Larger cultural movements, however, reshaped and molded the landscape of education into one of coeducation. In the midst of these transitions, the first single-sex public school for women was established in Mississippi. By the 1980s, the necessity for such an institution was called into question and resulted in a controversy that revealed the larger societal struggle over the issue of cultural change. Scholars are only recently examining the causes and impacts of coeducation and what the long term importance of the transition signifies. For MUW, however, the struggle over the coeducation continues. In order to understand the current struggles the university faces and answer questions about its future, one must first examine its history and the path the university followed during its journey of more than a century.



## **CHAPTER ONE: THE LONG BLUE LINE AND THE HISTORY OF MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN**

In order to understand the cultural transition that occurred at MUW in the 1980s, one must first examine the institution's history. Established in 1884, the institution was revolutionary in both its concept and organization. By the 1980s, the university had undergone many transformations as a result of larger cultural influences such as the elimination of school uniforms and name alterations, but in 1982 the university faced a challenge to its very founding ideals.

In Mississippi, women themselves demanded and fought for educational opportunities on behalf of the female gender. Beginning in the 1850s, Sallie Eola Reneau campaigned for a public institution of higher learning for women in Mississippi that would rival the newly established all-male University of Mississippi. Reneau was an educator and graduate of Holly Springs Female Institute in Marshall County, Mississippi. She pushed for and received state approval for a female college on two occasions, once in 1856 and again in 1872. Despite nominal state support, however, the funds were never appropriated and in each instance the college failed to materialize. Reneau died in 1878 without having witnessed the establishment of a state supported college for women in Mississippi.<sup>1</sup> Soon after her death, however, other women adopted Reneau's cause.

After the Civil War, state supported public education entered a new phase of growth in the state of Mississippi. By 1870, a statewide public school system was created. The first African American land-grant college in America, Alcorn University (now Alcorn State University), was established the next year in Port Gibson. In 1878, the state founded Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College (Mississippi A&M and

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<sup>1</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 4.

now Mississippi State University) in Starkville. Soon, the call for a public institution for women resumed. Two women were most notably at the forefront of the cause: Annie Coleman Peyton and Olivia Augusta Valentine Hastings. Annie Coleman Peyton (1852-1898), a well educated woman from a wealthy family near Canton, MS, began a letter writing campaign to local newspapers under the pseudonym “A Mississippi Woman” where she argued her cause for the creation of a state women’s college.<sup>2</sup> Soon, Olivia A. Valentine Hastings (1842-1896) of Claiborne County partnered with Peyton to foster both public and political support for their cause. The wife of farmer and county treasurer John G. Hastings, Olivia possessed extensive experience working through local Grange organizations and advocated for the inclusion of an industrial aspect to any new women’s college.<sup>3</sup> Like Peyton, Hastings advocated female state-supported higher education by writing a series of articles on the subject. Her articles appeared in the *Jackson Clarion* (now *The Clarion-Ledger*) and she wrote under the name “Olive.”<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, both women worked on the organizing committee for the Industrial Institute and College (later Mississippi University for Women) and have dormitories named in their honor on campus, Peyton Hall and Hastings-Simmons Hall.<sup>5</sup>

The local Grange movement, a statewide organization of farmers, also known nationally as the Patrons of Husbandry, provided political support of, and campaigns for, state-supported higher education in Mississippi. After the Civil War, debt-ridden farmers sought membership in organizations such as the Grange as a political way to fight public policy and private enterprise. According to Edward Ayers, Southern Grange members

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<sup>2</sup> Orr, 37.

<sup>3</sup> 1880 United States Federal Census.

<sup>4</sup> Susie V. Powell, *Works Progress Administration: Source Material for Mississippi History, Lowndes County*. V 44 Pt. 2 (Jackson: Works Progress Administration Historical Research Project, 1939), 56.

<sup>5</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 5-9.

“placed [their] emphases on creating agricultural colleges, on attracting immigrants and industries to the South, on crop diversification, and on creating a richer home life for farm families.”<sup>6</sup> The Master of the National Grange, Captain Put Darden, wrote to Peyton pledging the Grange’s support and determination to see such an institution through to fruition. In 1881, Darden wrote “The Grange would not cease to advocate the cause until such an institution was established.”<sup>7</sup> The Grange previously pushed for the establishment of Mississippi A&M, and despite the existence of five state-supported colleges, they soon complained, along with school officials, of a lack of teacher training for whites in the state. Their criticism was not without merit. In the 1880s, Mississippi was the only state lacking an establishment to train its white teachers.<sup>8</sup> Also, the state superintendent of education in 1884 “cited the lack of well-trained and competent teachers as the number-one problem of public education in Mississippi.”<sup>9</sup> Lawmakers and citizens alike recognized that with the high number of women financially required to work following the Civil War, that there was an educational demand left unfulfilled. During the debate in the state legislature in 1884, House Representative, Wiley N. Nash from Oktibbeha County, recognized the need for a women’s college when he said,

These women realized that without an education, one is poorly equipped for the greatest battle of all—the battle of life. The poor girls had been completely debarred from securing an education up to this time because of the high cost of attending private institutions...existing in the state.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ayers, 215.

<sup>7</sup> Orr, 37.

<sup>8</sup> Sansing, 69.

<sup>9</sup> Sansing, 69.

<sup>10</sup> Orr, 39.

On March 12, 1884, the Martin Bill, named for Mississippi Senator John McCalip Martin, became law, establishing the Industrial Institute and College for the Education of White Girls of the State of Mississippi in the Arts and Sciences (Industrial Institute and College or II & C). In the Senate, the bill passed by only one vote and in the House it passed by two.<sup>11</sup> The state appropriated \$40,000 for II & C's first two years of operation and established a board of nine trustees along with an organizing committee.<sup>12</sup>

Once support for a women's college emerged, legislators decided to place the institution in the city of Columbus. Communities often fought diligently to convince legislatures and college founders to select their city for the establishment of a school. The creation of a college in a city was a distinguishing feature as well as an economic benefit.<sup>13</sup> Columbus citizens sought this advantage. The city of Columbus, the county seat of Lowndes County, was incorporated in 1821 and prided itself on its dedication to education. The first public school in Mississippi, Franklin Academy, which still exists as an elementary school, was founded in Columbus' first year of incorporation. Also, on May 15, 1847 the Columbus Female Institute opened as a private institute of higher learning for women.<sup>14</sup> By 1887, Columbus had expanded to over 6,500 people. It thrived due to its location along the Tombigbee and Luxapalila Rivers, its bustling cotton industry, and an abundance of transportation facilities including the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, Georgia Pacific Railway, and later the Columbus and Greenville Railway. As part of the bid for the new women's college, the city of Columbus offered several

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<sup>11</sup> Orr, 39.

<sup>12</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Mabel Newcomer. *A Century of Higher Education for American Women*. (Washington DC: Zenger Publishing Company, 1959), 23.

<sup>14</sup> Samuel H. Kaye. *A Survey of Biographical Information of the Seventy-Five Trustees who served on the Board of the Columbus Female Institute*. (Columbus, MS 1986), 1.

economic incentives such as the facilities at the Columbus Female Institute and city bonds totaling \$50,000 for any necessary improvements.<sup>15</sup> As a result, Columbus was chosen as the city to receive the new educational project.

The organizing committee created a revolutionary and innovative curriculum at II & C. Prior to the Civil War, the curriculum of colleges was typically a “residential, liberal arts college.”<sup>16</sup> Historian David G. Sansing in his book *Making Haste Slowly* refers to such antebellum colleges as “old-time colleges.”<sup>17</sup> Curriculum at female colleges in Mississippi was typically classical, but also included courses deemed suitable for female students.<sup>18</sup> After the Civil War, Mississippians acknowledged the need for a technical and industrial education for citizens in order to recover economically. II & C was unique in its curriculum from its inception, as a public women’s college combining liberal, industrial, and normal training. II & C’s charter states the complex mission of the new women’s college.

The objective of the school was providing an “education in the arts and sciences, in normal school systems, in kindergarten instruction, in telegraphy, in stenography, and photography; also in drawing, painting, designing, and engraving in their industrial applications; also in fancy, practical, and general needlework; also in bookkeeping, and such other practical industries as may, from time to time, be suggested to the trustees by experience or tend to promote the general objective of the institution, to wit, fitting girls for the practical industries of the age.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Sansing, 19.

<sup>17</sup> Sansing, 19.

<sup>18</sup> Sansing, 24.

<sup>19</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 8.



Figure 1. *Industrial Institute and College, General View Dormitories and Chapel, c. 1901* (Image from Billups-Garth Photograph Collection, folder LH 174, at Billups-Garth Archives, Columbus-Lowndes Public Library, Columbus, MS).

The curriculum was structured in four departments: collegiate, normal, industrial, and music and fine arts. The collegiate department was a four-year liberal arts degree. The normal division included two years of training for prospective teachers. Two years were also required of the industrial course, which allowed girls to focus on some type of vocational training. The final department, music and fine arts, mandated a tuition fee and required no set degree time limit. A charge was instituted for the final program because music and art were seen as a personal extravagance rather than a societal necessity.<sup>20</sup> The combination of the various colleges within one system drew women from a variety of social standings. Many girls, however, were not educationally equipped to enter college due to the poor quality of many common schools. In 1890, Mississippi possessed only

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<sup>20</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 16.

eleven public high schools in the entire state.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, II & C required an entrance exam to test each girl's level of knowledge and created a preparatory school allowing students to take extra courses in preparation for continuance into college level courses.<sup>22</sup> Over 340 students enrolled in II & C's first year.<sup>23</sup>

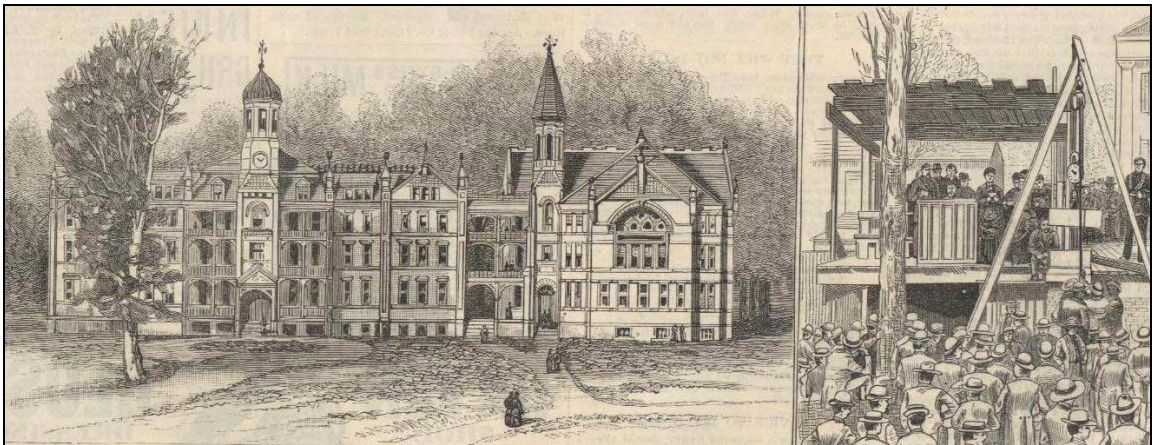


Figure 2. Industrial Institute and College (left) and laying of the cornerstone of Orr Chapel (right), 1885. (Image from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, no. 1,554 vol. LX, 4 July 1885, 325).

News magazines across the country reported on the institute's founding and called for similar schools in other states. An article in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* from New York City said,

In this Institute and College [Industrial Institute and College], Mississippi has set an example which we hope to see followed by other States, until our girls everywhere can gain such an education as will fit them for the practical and profitable employment of life.<sup>24</sup>

Various states did in fact follow Mississippi's model shortly after II & C's establishment.

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<sup>21</sup> Orr, 41.

<sup>22</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 16.

<sup>23</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 12.

<sup>24</sup> "Industrial Institute and College for Girls, at Columbus, Miss.," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 60 (1554) (July 4, 1885): 325.

Schools based on I & C's multi-faceted curriculum in a single-sex female environment quickly appeared throughout the South. The colleges were Georgia State College for Women (Georgia College and State University) in 1889, Winthrop Normal and Industrial College of South Carolina (Winthrop University) and State Normal and Industrial School (University of North Carolina Greensboro) both in 1891, Alabama Girls' Industrial School (University of Montevallo) in 1896, Texas Industrial Institute and College for the Education of White Girls of the State of Texas in the Arts and Sciences (Texas Women's University) 1901, Florida State College for Women (Florida State University) in 1905, and Oklahoma Industrial Institute and College for Girls (University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma) in 1909.<sup>25</sup> The selected schools were all state-supported, independent, region specific, and single-sex.

Many had direct connections to individuals at I & C such as Georgia State College for Women (GSCW). The concept for GSCW was inspired directly on the existence and arrangement of I.I. & C. Governor William Yates Atkinson along with his wife Susie Cobb Milton Atkinson pushed for the establishment of the college as not only a normal and liberal arts school, but an industrial college as well. Mrs. Atkinson pointed to the organizational and academic connection between the two establishments in an interview for Lottie Moring Curl's master's thesis "The History of the Georgia State College for Women" in 1931. Mrs. Atkinson said, "My interest in an industrial school came from my knowledge of the Mississippi Industrial School [I. I. & C.], which my

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<sup>25</sup> Orr, 82, 106, 155; Lottie Moring Curl. "The History of the Georgia State College for Women" (M. A. thesis, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1931), 21-25; Mary Frances Tipton, *Years Rich and Fruitful: University of Montevallo 1896-1996* (Montevallo: The University of Montevallo, 1996), 13; Alfred Hugh Adams, "A History of Public Higher Education in Florida: 1821-1961" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1962), 146; and Stanley W. Hoig, "A History of the Development of Institutions of Higher Education in Oklahoma" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Oklahoma, 1971), 123.



niece had attended.”<sup>26</sup> All of these institutions were unique because according to Melton Orr “they existed as separate institutions and not as adjuncts or departments of other types of colleges....”<sup>27</sup> By 1982, however, none of these institutions founded on the curriculum and structure of II & C remained single-sex schools.

In addition to inspiring similar institutions across The South, II & C flourished. The first President of II & C was Dr. Richard Watson Jones (1885-1888), but under President Dr. Andrew Armstrong Kincannon (1898-1907) II & C grew rapidly. The college physically expanded with new buildings such as Poindexter Hall (currently the Music Department), Tom Franklin Hospital (now vacant), Industrial Hall (1902-1950), and the Science Hall (1906-1957) among many other renovations and additions. Kincannon also pushed for academic growth with new programs such as the Biology Department. Enrollment soon soared to just under one thousand.<sup>28</sup>

The first Alumnae Association was formed a few years after II & C’s opening in 1889. Fannie Camp Dugger was the first Alumnae President and by 1925 an official Alumnae Secretary Office was created.<sup>29</sup> The school colors were navy blue and white and students wore blue uniforms until the 1940s. In addition, alumnae were known as members of the “Long Blue Line” based on the school and uniform color navy blue. From 1907 to 1920, II & C experienced a period of tremendous development under the presidency of Governor Henry Lewis Whitfield. Academic conditions were altered by a limiting of the foreign language requirement, institution of physical education for the entire student body, and an enlargement of the domestic science courses into the

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<sup>26</sup> Curl, 4.

<sup>27</sup> Orr, 7.

<sup>28</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 47, 53.

<sup>29</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 81.

Department of Industrial Science. In 1914, the college eliminated the preparatory school. The institution's first name alteration occurred in 1920. The main opposition to the name was that "Industrial Institute" sounded antiquated and students complained of teasing by visitors who claimed II & C "sounded like the name of a reform school."<sup>30</sup> On February 12, the Industrial Institute and College for the Education of White Girls of the State of Mississippi in the Arts and Sciences became Mississippi State College for Women (MSCW).

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, political and monetary problems affecting Mississippi's educational system shaped MSCW. Governor Theodore Gilmore Bilbo, 1916-1920 and 1928-1932, enacted sweeping changes throughout the state's higher education system. He unsuccessfully advocated for the relocation of the University of Mississippi to Jackson from Oxford. Bilbo eliminated employees of four of the major universities and colleges throughout Mississippi, thus affecting the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss), The Agricultural and Mechanical College (Mississippi A&M), MSCW, and the Teachers College at Hattiesburg (the University of Southern Mississippi). At MSCW, he cut a total of fourteen faculty and staff members. The results were devastating. The Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools withdrew accreditation from three Mississippi colleges, Ole Miss, Mississippi A&M, and MSCW. MSCW had only gained its accreditation ten years earlier in 1921.<sup>31</sup> As a result of the removal, enrollment plummeted. In the ten years prior to 1930, enrollment increased by over 500 students. It took only two years, however, for numbers to plunge

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<sup>30</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 67.

<sup>31</sup> Orr, 44.

by over 350. From 1930 to 1932, enrollment dropped from 1,300 to 949.<sup>32</sup> MSCW entered a serious decline during Governor Bilbo's second term in office.

MSCW also suffered because Mississippi was in financial ruin as a result of the Great Depression. The money that was appropriated for MSCW by the legislature did not arrive. Teachers did not receive monetary salaries, but rather certificates or "warrants" good for up to ninety cents on the dollar. Despite such conditions, positive changes occurred at MSCW. A college band was organized, a nursery school was established in 1930, and the administration upgraded the academic point requirements to correspond with requirements at other colleges.<sup>33</sup> By 1932, leadership at both the university level and state level changed. President Robert E. Lee Sutherland (1930-1932) was not reelected as MSCW president and Sennet Connor replaced Governor Bilbo as governor of Mississippi.

The next twenty years at MSCW saw both academic and cultural changes. In December 1932, the college regained its accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. In 1940, the American Association of Universities also recognized the institution. In addition, a four-year art curriculum along with a distinct Department of Psychology and Department of Journalism were created. Social restrictions on students were also amended. Students voted to end the requirement of a school uniform due to war shortages that caused material to be expensive.<sup>34</sup> By 1948, students were allowed to maintain cars on campus.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 88-92.

<sup>33</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 94-95.

<sup>34</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 96-107.

<sup>35</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 107.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, MSCW underwent another academic and enrollment boom as part of the larger growth in universities across the nation. Five new degree programs were established along with fifty-five new courses that focused mainly on the liberal arts and business. According to Sansing, such bold moves to add courses “not traditionally associated with women’s colleges” represented MSCW’s “[invasion of] the sphere of [man].”<sup>36</sup> By 1955, enrollment at MSCW had increased to 1,020. Seven new dormitories were built to accommodate the growing enrollment as well as to replace deteriorating older dormitories, Keirn Hall, Taylor Hall, Goen Hall, Frazer Hall, Kincannon Hall, the Magnolia, and Jones Hall. By 1960 enrollment was once again up, reaching 1,603 students.<sup>37</sup> MUW began to accept African American women in 1966, thus racially integrating the University. In 1971, the School of Nursing was created offering two- and four-year degrees. Three years later the School of Nursing was accredited by the National League for Nursing.<sup>38</sup> In 1974, MSCW altered its name to Mississippi University for Women (MUW) obtaining university standing. MUW experienced many years of both academic and physical growth beginning in the 1950s and lasting into the late 1970s.

By 1977, however, MUW entered into another period of academic and social change. Dr. James Walter Strobel began his first year as President of MUW that same year and the university tightened its academic standards. Nationally, many universities in the 1970s stopped requiring an ACT standardized test score for admission. MUW, however, reinstated the enrollment requirement in 1981 with a minimum score of fifteen. In 1977 enrollment had reached 3,182, but it dropped by as much as 33 percent as a result

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<sup>36</sup> Sansing, 136.

<sup>37</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 115-117.

<sup>38</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 125.

of both budget cuts and stricter standards.<sup>39</sup> By 1981, the University enrolled only 1,850.<sup>40</sup> MUW was required to eliminate a number of its graduate programs such as English, history, speech, and business in order to eradicate duplication of programs throughout the state.

By the 1980s, MUW was the last single sex female public University not only in The South, but the nation as well. The earliest public university exclusively for women to shift to coeducation was Florida State University in 1947. Others soon followed including The University of Montevallo in 1956, University of North Carolina Greensboro in 1963, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma in 1965, Georgia College and State University in 1967, and Winthrop University and Texas Women's University both in 1972.<sup>41</sup> All experienced similar economic hardship as well as resistance by students and administrators to male enrollment. Ultimately, however, all other female public universities instituted coeducation by the 1970s.

Mississippi University for Women was established as a revolutionary concept in female education that influenced the growth of similar institutions across The South. Throughout its existence, the University has been affected by both internal and external transformations such as budget cuts, academic alterations, and court battles. In 1982, however, MUW, the last single-sex female public university, became embroiled in legal struggle against Joe Hogan, over its single-sex policy. Ultimately, the Supreme Court case *Mississippi University for Women v. Joe Hogan* determined not only the university's coeducational status, but also the school's place in a shifting Southern society.

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<sup>39</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 152.

<sup>40</sup> "Sagging Enrollment at MUW Could Be Bolstered by Decision," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 2 July 1982.

<sup>41</sup> Adams, 217; Trelease, 282; Hoig, 301.

## **CHAPTER TWO: MUW GOES TO WASHINGTON, MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN V. JOE HOGAN**

On September 17, 1979, Joe N. Hogan applied for admission into the nursing program at Mississippi University for Women (MUW). Despite meeting all admission requirements, Hogan's application was rejected one week later. The notification letter, sent by the MUW Office of Admissions, stated its decision was based upon the university's enrollment policy restricting admission to women only and they hoped he "would understand [their] position."<sup>1</sup> What resulted, however, was a landmark decision about sexual discrimination in accordance with the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution that ultimately exposed cultural battles over the transformation from single-sex education to coeducation.

Joe Hogan was 25 years old, married to Donna Hogan, and living in Columbus, Mississippi when he applied to MUW. He worked as a surgical supervisor at the Golden Triangle Regional Medical Center (now Baptist Memorial Hospital). He possessed a Practical Nurse Certificate from the Golden Triangle Vocational Technical Center and an Associates of Applied Science degree from Itawamba Junior College in Fulton, Mississippi. Hogan wished to continue his education with a Bachelors of Science degree in Nursing from MUW.<sup>2</sup> At the time of Hogan's application, MUW allowed males to audit courses offered at night, but did not permit them to receive academic credit.

Hogan was not the first male to apply for admission to the single-sex institution. In 1971, Charles O. Perkins applied to the then Mississippi State College for Women (MSCW) after completing several courses at Mississippi State University (MSU). MSU,

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Alinder to Joe Hogan. 19 September 1979, Papers of Wilbur O. Colom, University of Mississippi Law School Library, Oxford, Mississippi.

<sup>2</sup> "Application for Admission or Readmission to Mississippi University for Women," 17 September 1979, Papers of Wilbur O. Colom, University of Mississippi Law School Library, Oxford, Mississippi.

however, did not offer a degree in Perkins' major, art. Perkins, 22 years old, cited the excellence of MSCW's art program along with financial concerns as his reasons for applying to the university in his hometown. According to *The Commercial Dispatch*, MSCW President Charles P. Hogarth presented the matter before Mississippi's Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL). The IHL Board discussed three different options: reject the application and go to court; admit Perkins for courses and even perhaps credit, but no degree; or open MUW up for coeducation. On May 21<sup>st</sup>, the IHL Board decided to reject Perkins application and uphold MUW's status as a single-sex female university.<sup>3</sup> There is no indication that Perkins ever contested the IHL Board's decision. It was not until Hogan filed a suit less than ten years later against the school regarding the Nursing degree that the case took hold within the legal system.

In 1979, the School of Nursing at MUW was eight years old. Created in 1971, the School of Nursing initially offered a two-year associates degree and in its first year over 120 students enrolled. By 1974, the school had implemented a four-year baccalaureate program. The administration sought to fill a need for programs in north Mississippi that offered a Bachelors of Science in Nursing degree.<sup>4</sup> At the time of Hogan's suit, two other Mississippi universities also possessed nursing programs that offered a four-year B.S. degree. The first was at the University of Southern Mississippi, located 178 miles from Columbus and the second was the University of Mississippi in Jackson, located 147 miles away.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "Will MSCW Turn Coed?," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 20 May 1971. "College Board Decides MSCW Is for Girls," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 21 May 1971.

<sup>4</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 125.

<sup>5</sup> *Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan*, 458 U.S. 718 (1982)

As a result of his rejection from MUW, Hogan contacted the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and hired local attorney Wilbur Colom of Colom & Mitchell along with Wayne Drinkwater of Lake, Tindall, Hunger and Thackston of Greenville, Mississippi. On June 19, 1980, Hogan filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District in Aberdeen disputing the admission policies at MUW. Hogan and Colom contended that by denying Hogan entrance into the public university based solely on his sex, MUW violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment effectively nullifies all state legislation and state action of every kind, which “shall abridge the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States, [or which denies] to any of person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”<sup>6</sup> Title IX Amendment of the Higher Education Act, adopted in 1972, states, No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.<sup>7</sup> Hogan not only requested that he be admitted to MUW, but also that he should receive compensatory damages of \$25,000 along with any attorney fees and court costs.<sup>8</sup>

Hogan’s suit named as defendants the Mississippi University for Women; the Members of the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (Board of Trustees), Verner S. Holmes, Bobby L. Chain, R. C. Cook, Robert W. Harrison, Charles C. Jacobs, Jr., John R. Lovelace, Travis E. Parker, Neal Denton

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<sup>6</sup> Joan Biskupic and Elder Witt, *The Supreme Court and Individual Rights*, third ed. (Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarter Inc., 1997), 325.

<sup>7</sup> Kaplin, 408.

<sup>8</sup> James W. Strobel to Mississippi University for Women Alumna, 13 October 1980, Papers of Wilbur O. Colom, University of Mississippi Law Library, Oxford, Mississippi.



Rodgers, Jr., Betty B. Shemwell, W. M. Shoemaker, Miriam Simmons, Boswell Stevens and Betty A. Williams; James W. Strobel, MUW President; and James B. Alinder, Director of MUW Admissions. By 1982, when the Supreme Court heard the case, there were several new members of the Board of Trustees including Thomas D. Bourdeaux, Bryce Griffis, William M. Jones, George T. Watson, and James E. Woods.<sup>9</sup> Attorneys for the state included Hunter M. Gholson of Gholson, Hicks, and Nichols; Bill Allain, Attorney General of Mississippi; and Ed Davis Noble, Jr., Assistant Attorney General.<sup>10</sup>

The state relied on two main points for justification of its single-sex admission policy. First, the state argued that by maintaining MUW's current female only policy, the University upheld an arrangement in support of affirmative action. In other words, through its existence as an educational facility for women, the school contributed to providing educated women in the workforce. Also, the presence of males would negatively affect the education of the University's female students. Secondly, the state considered the University beyond the scope of such litigation because Section 1681 (a)(5) of Title IX, exempts institutions that have historically maintained a single-sex policy from any sexual discrimination regulations.<sup>11</sup> Also, in 1974, the State of Mississippi Legislature confirmed the original intent of the university to operate exclusively for women. In an article in the MUW newsletter *Alumnae News*, the school defended its stance to alumnae by stating that the university was in full compliance with Title IX, men

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<sup>9</sup> "Minutes of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning," September 18, 1980, 1.

<sup>10</sup> Sherri Monteith, "Columbus Man Trying to Pierce Veil of MUW," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 20 June 1980.

<sup>11</sup> Kaplin, 409.

had never been regularly enrolled students, and MUW did not receive federal funding specifically for the School of Nursing.<sup>12</sup>

The District Court, with Judge Lyonel Thomas Senter, Jr. presiding, ruled in favor of the state on December 23, 1980. Judge Senter felt that Hogan failed to prove his rights were violated and “demanded Hogan’s lawyer’s produce a ‘genuine issue of material fact for trial’.”<sup>13</sup> In effect, Judge Senter thought Hogan did not show any factual evidence to support his claims. Hogan appealed the decision in January and was granted an expedited appeal allowing the hearing of his case sooner than would have otherwise been possible. On June 5, 1981 the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans overturned the lower court’s ruling, asserting the state did not show that MUW’s admissions policy “was substantially related to important governmental objectives.”<sup>14</sup> The appeals court stated they conflicted with the Constitution, especially the Fourteenth Amendment. Essentially, MUW violated this law when denying certain citizens admission based upon sex because of its status as a public institution and its receipt of both state and federal funding. Upon hearing of the Court of Appeals decision, Hogan said, “That’s great...the ruling I think is going to let me go to school. It wasn’t all in vain. It’s worth it.”<sup>15</sup>

Attorney General Allain requested both a review of the court’s ruling by a three-judge panel along with a stay of mandate, which would allow MUW to continue operating as a single-sex institution while appealing the decision. Both requests were denied. Soon after the appeals court decision, Hogan sought and received an injunctive

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<sup>12</sup> “Suit Filed Against MUW,” *Alumnae News: Bulletin of Mississippi University for Women*, Spring 1981, 6-7.

<sup>13</sup> Suzanne Monk, “First Male Enrolls for MUW Credit,” *The Spectator*, 3 September 1981.

<sup>14</sup> Linda Greenhouse, “Dispute in Westchester on Deaf Child Accepted,” *The New York Times*, 3 November 1981.

<sup>15</sup> Bo Couchman, “Hogan Wins Battle: Single-Sex School is Illegal Says Fed Court,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 7 July 1981.

order from the U.S. District Court allowing him to enroll while the case proceeded to the United States Supreme Court. The District Court instructed MUW to admit Hogan and on August 25, 1981 the first male in the history of the institution enrolled for credit. He attended his first classes in speech, English, algebra, and chemistry two days later.<sup>16</sup> By October 30 Hogan withdrew from school citing a heavy course load in addition to a full-time job. Hogan said, “I didn’t realize that coming to school would be as difficult as it was.”<sup>17</sup> He re-enrolled for the spring semester on January 18 restricting his course load simply to speech and Western Civilization. Hogan only completed one full semester of classes.

The state appealed the appellate court’s ruling and on November 2 the United States Supreme Court agreed to hear the case. Supreme Court Justices in 1982 included Justice Harry Andrew Blackmun, Justice William Joseph Brennan, Jr., Chief Justice Warren Earl Burger, Justice Thurgood Marshall, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, Justice Lewis Franklin Powell, Jr., Justice William H. Rehnquist, Justice John Paul Stevens, and Justice Byron Raymond White. Oral arguments were heard on March 22, 1982 before the Supreme Court, both sides having 30 minutes to present their case. Attorney Wilbur Colom argued on behalf of the plaintiff, Hogan, and Attorney Hunter M. Gholson argued on behalf of the defendant, the state. The burden of proof rested on the state.

Both the plaintiff and the defendant received written support in the forms of *amicus curiae*, or a *friend-of-the-court brief*. According to the Black’s Law Dictionary, a friend-of-the-court brief allows

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<sup>16</sup> George Hazard, “Joe Hogan Wins Three-Year Fight,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 1 July 1982.

<sup>17</sup> Gene Monteith, “Lone Male Back in Women’s University,” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 19 January 1982.

A person with strong interest in or views on the subject matter of an action, but not a party to the action, [to] petition the court for permission to file a brief, ostensibly on behalf of a party but actually to suggest a rationale consistent with its own views.<sup>18</sup>

Amicus curiae briefs are typically filed in appeals concerning civil rights cases.

The Supreme Court accepted a friend-of-the-court brief in support of Hogan from the National Organization of Women Legal Defense and Education Fund (now called Legal Momentum), the National Women's Law Center, Women's Legal Defense Fund, and the Women's Equity Action League. The court also received a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of MUW from the MUW Alumnae Association. The briefs differed in their analysis of the case. In the amicus curiae brief for Hogan, all four organizations indicated that the issue in question focused solely on Hogan's admittance into the School of Nursing, an overwhelmingly female profession, and did not involve the entire school as an entity. The brief in support of Hogan states the purpose of the organizations as "[serving] to illuminate the issue before the court by narrowing the focus presented by the parties and placing the issues in the context in which they have arisen: the admissions policy of a professional school of nursing."<sup>19</sup>

The Mississippi University of Women Alumnae Association, however, viewed the issue differently and believed the decision affected the entire university. The language in the Alumnae Association's brief refers to the case and its possible negative affects on the school as a whole. The brief indicates that the Alumnae Association's mission was to "preserve and promote the purposes of [MUW] as an institution devoted

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<sup>18</sup> Henry Campbell Black, *Black's Law Dictionary*, Sixth Edition (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Co., 1990), 82.

<sup>19</sup> Amici Curiae Brief. 1981 U.S. Briefs 406, Lexis 1763, p. 1

to the exclusive higher education of women” and by allowing one male to enter the school of nursing would ultimately “[weaken] the very reason for the existence of the Institution for if it is not Mississippi University for Women, it is by obvious definition a university without *raison d’être* [or reason to exist].”<sup>20</sup>

Attorney Gholson argued in front of the Supreme Court first. Immediately, he stated that MUW was not a finishing school, attempting to dispel any preconceived stereotypes against the all-female school. Instead, he referred to the founding of the school as “progressive” and insisted that a demand for such an institution still existed. Gholson touted the advantages and leadership roles that the school instilled by remaining single-sex. Justice Marshall, however, questioned Gholson’s reasoning since men were already auditing courses at MUW. Marshall laughed at the notion saying, “They’re there! How can you have an all female school with men?”<sup>21</sup> Gholson explained that such numbers were low and typically consisted of night classes. Justice Sandra Day O’Connor questioned the gender discrimination by comparing it to racial discrimination. O’Connor asked,

Mr. Gholson, you have referred to the demand for a single-sex institution as being its justification. Would you make the same argument if there were a demand for an all-white publicly funded education?<sup>22</sup>

Gholson responded in the negative and contended such a decision had already been decided over thirty years prior in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Attorney Wilbur O. Colom followed and disputed the arguments made by Gholson. Colom challenged the idea that MUW was a tool for affirmative action when

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<sup>20</sup> Amicus Curiae Brief. 1981 U.S. Briefs 406. Lexis 2119, p. 1, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Oral Arguments. *Mississippi University for Women v. Joe Hogan*, 458 U.S. 718 (1982).

<sup>22</sup> Oral Arguments. *Mississippi University for Women v. Joe Hogan*, 458 U.S. 718 (1982).

the Nursing profession was dominantly female. He also pointed to the list of predominantly male presidents and Deans in MUW's history. In the end, Colom argued that since the burden of proof rested on the state and they had failed to prove the validity of maintaining MUW as a single-sex female institution then the Supreme Court should rule in Hogan's favor. The fate of MUW's status rested in oral arguments that totaled fifty-two minutes in length.<sup>23</sup>

On July 1, the Supreme Court handed down a decision known as *Mississippi University for Women v. Joe Hogan* which upheld the Court of Appeals decision. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the Court's first female Judge, wrote the majority opinion with Justices Brennan, White, Marshall, and Stevens joining. Justices Burger, Blackmun, Powell, and Rehnquist filed dissenting opinions. In O'Connor's opinion, she stated Hogan's exclusion from MUW's School of Nursing "tends to perpetuate the stereotyped view of nursing as an exclusively woman's job."<sup>24</sup> Justice Powell disagreed. He understood the decision to be a handicap to educational equality rather than an enforcement of it. Justice Powell said,

[The Court] prohibits the States from providing women with an opportunity to choose the type of university they prefer. And yet it is these women whom the Court regards as the 'victims' of an illegal, stereotyped perception of the role of women in our society. The Court reasons this way in a case in which...the only complainant is a man...His claim, it should be recalled, is not that he is being denied a substantive educational opportunity, or even the right to attend an all-

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<sup>23</sup> Oral Arguments. *Mississippi University for Women v. Joe Hogan*, 458 U.S. 718 (1982).

<sup>24</sup> *Mississippi University for Women v. Joe Hogan*, 458 U.S. 718, 729 (1982) (O'Connor, J., opinion).

male or coeducational college. It is only that the colleges open to him are located at inconvenient distances.<sup>25</sup>

The state argued that Section 1681 (a)(5) of Title IX authorized MUW's policy of single-sex education, but the Court rejected the argument stating, "Although we give deference to congressional decisions and classifications, neither Congress nor a State can validate a law that denies the rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment."<sup>26</sup> The 1982 decision left only two other state-supported single-sex schools of higher education, Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in Lexington, Virginia and the Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina.<sup>27</sup>

Immediate responses to the Supreme Court ruling by both the defendant and the plaintiff varied. On one side, President Strobel said, "[MUW] would make the admissions changes as quickly as possible, but would continue its central mission of providing excellence in educational opportunities for women."<sup>28</sup> Colom's reaction, however, was more jubilant. Colom said, "Everybody in the firm [Colom & Mitchell] went wild. This is a young law firm...we've gotten a lot of national press today."<sup>29</sup> Hogan responded by saying, "It's finally over. I simply wanted to get an education."<sup>30</sup>

Questions existed, however, as to the Supreme Court's exact decision regarding male enrollment at MUW. The Supreme Court offered no clear resolution concerning whether male enrollment was limited to the Nursing program or if the entire University should open to males. Immediately after the Supreme Court ruling, many alumni wished

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<sup>25</sup> *Mississippi University for Women v. Joe Hogan*, 458 U.S. 718, 742 (1982) (Powell, J., dissenting).

<sup>26</sup> *Mississippi University for Women et al. v. Joe Hogan*, 458 U.S. 718, 732 (1982) (O'Connor, J., opinion).

<sup>27</sup> McCandless, 108-109.

<sup>28</sup> "School Officials Say Ruling Won't Alter Goal to Aid Women," *The New York Times*, 2 July 1982.

<sup>29</sup> Fred Anklam, Jr. "High Court Rules MUW Must Let Males Enroll," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 2 July 1982.

<sup>30</sup> Wanda Cantrell, "Hogan: He Never Intended to Be An Antagonist To Tradition," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 2 July 1982.

to continue fighting the decision by using the undefined parameters to push for limited enrollment. Kay Cobb, president of the MUW Alumnae Association [now the Alumni Association], said, "It should be noted that it (the ruling) is strictly limited to admission to the nursing school. It does not change admission policies for the remainder of the university."<sup>31</sup> Colom, however, responded that the decision did in fact affect the entire school. Colom said, "[MUW] has no separate school of nursing, half of the credits are from the general school."<sup>32</sup> Just one week after the Supreme Court's decision, the first two males enrolled in the Nursing School for the second term of summer school. These men were Donald J. Steighner, one of Hogan's attorneys, and Edward Pleasants, Jr., a former Air Force sergeant.<sup>33</sup> Steighner did not intend to pursue a nursing degree, but rather applied to obtain pre-med courses. MUW, however, initially restricted enrollment strictly to the Nursing Department. Therefore, Steighner altered his application accordingly. In a 1982 letter to Colom, Steighner said, "I do not like being placed in the position of having to...place incorrect information on my application form."<sup>34</sup> Due to the indistinguishable requirements in the Supreme Court decision, MUW denied enrollment to men attempting to apply for any department beyond the School of Nursing.

The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, however, declared on July 15, 1982 that MUW would no longer operate as a single-sex institution, but would open its doors to males in all departments and at all degree levels. The Board stated, "In...light of the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court...MUW will immediately

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<sup>31</sup> "MUW alumnae still hope to preserve all-female tradition," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 6 July 1982.

<sup>32</sup> Fred Anklam, Jr. "High Court Rules MUW Must Let Males Enroll," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 2 July 1982.

<sup>33</sup> George Hazard, "Two Men Enroll in Summer School," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 7 July 1982.

<sup>34</sup> Donald J. Steighner to Wilbur Colom, 13 July 1982, Papers of Wilbur O. Colom, University of Mississippi Law Library, Oxford, Mississippi.



enroll qualified students in the university regardless of sex.”<sup>35</sup> The decision was based on fear of future litigation and economics. In a statement to the Board of Trustees, Attorney General Noble said, “While the present decision permits [a] restrictive admission policy, such a posture would only be short-lived and lead to needless and costly litigation in the future.”<sup>36</sup> Board president Robert Harrison concurred with Noble saying, “We need to spend our money as wisely and as effectively as possible...[there were] people waiting in the wings waiting to file them (lawsuits).”<sup>37</sup> The Board stipulated, however, that MUW maintain its mission to focus on the educational advancement and support of women.<sup>38</sup> One hundred and thirty-one men enrolled in the 1982 fall semester. The next spring, the male headcount had risen to 244 and to over 300 by the next year. By 1983, *The Daily Corinthian* (Corinth, Mississippi) reported Hogan had moved to Iowa, but could no longer be reached.<sup>39</sup>

In 1979, Joe Hogan sued Mississippi University for Women for its single-sex policy. Four years later, the United States Supreme Court heard his case. The Court ruled against MUW indicating that Hogan was sexually discriminated against based on the Fourteenth Amendment. The *MUW v. Joe Hogan* case represents a breakdown in Southern ideas of separation that extended not only to the sexes, but also to the races as well. The decision over whether to desegregate MUW resulted in a firestorm over ideals and created a fractioning into two to distinct groups, traditionalists and reformers. This

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<sup>35</sup> “Qualified Men May Enroll,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 15 July 1982.

<sup>36</sup> Frances Ayers to Gloria Atkinson, 19 July 1982, in subject file Joe Hogan, Special Collections, J.C. Fant Memorial Library, Columbus, Mississippi.

<sup>37</sup> Coleman Warner, “College panel votes to open MUW to males,” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 15 July 1982.

<sup>38</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 153.

<sup>39</sup> “On the Eve of its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, MUW Assesses the Change in its Single-Sex Status,” *The Daily Corinthian*, 8 November 1983.

bifurcation characterizes the larger societal shift that occurred throughout the South over the twentieth century.

### **CHAPTER THREE: TRADITIONALISTS VERSUS REFORMERS AND COEDUCATION AT MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN**

This chapter explores the division that occurred at MUW as a result of the case brought by Joe Hogan. It identifies and evaluates the rift that occurred over the struggle to integrate MUW and how the splintering ultimately revealed the emergence of two distinct opposing sides, traditionalists and reformers. The events at MUW were neither singular nor isolated. Rather, they paralleled the division that occurred at other single-sex female public schools across the South. As traditionalists struggled to maintain the status quo and existing customs, reformers utilized the legal system in order to dispute and ultimately alter the educational landscape of the South. The events surrounding MUW are examples of the larger shift throughout the South in the twentieth century from single-sex education to coeducation.

Once Joe Hogan brought legal action against MUW for its single-sex admission policy a division occurred between two opposing groups, termed for the purposes of this study, traditionalists and reformers. While neither side identified themselves using such terminology during the debate, the titles are appropriately designated given the nature of each side's arguments. A traditionalist is an individual or group who adheres to the beliefs and practices of a tradition. At MUW, that meant those who wished to maintain the single-sex female status of the university were traditionalists. A reformer, also called progressive, is an individual or group that supports or pushes for reform. For reformers involved with the *Joe Hogan v. MUW* case, change meant the institution of coeducation at the university. Simply, traditionalists saw change as damaging and negative while reformers envisioned change as constructive and positive. Traditionalists saw only loss in change while reformers viewed change as a gain.

An individual or group's attachment to or involvement with the university influenced their response to the case. The traditional side was constituted of individuals and groups who had a close association with, or emotional ties to, the university. For example, students, faculty, staff, alumnae, and some members of the community sided with the university. Their reasons were based on their loyalty to the single-sex status of the university as well as economic in nature. Supporters of the university realized the case threatened not only their enrollment status, but their very existence. If the university adopted coeducation, the necessity of a another coeducational four year university in the state that existed only 25 miles from a larger coeducational one seemed economically unsound. In other words, the university would lose its unique niche among the other state institutions and possibly be closed as a result.

Reformers, however, consisted of those who either had no personal attachment to the university or those who had an economic interest in changing the university's single-sex status. Reformers included members of the community, civil rights organizations, and top local officials. For example, one Columbus school teacher, Mary Heath, admitted that her indifference to males attending MUW lay in her objectivity due to a lack of "emotional ties" to the university.<sup>1</sup> For civil rights organizations and advocacy groups it was a public relations opportunity and an occasion to further their cause. Women's organizations such as National Organization of Women's Legal Defense Fund, National Women's Law Center, and Women's Equity Action League viewed the Hogan case as an opportunity to further the cause of equal rights.

Members of the community as well as local and state officials saw an opportunity to resolve the university's declining enrollment and thus revive the economic viability of

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<sup>1</sup> Coleman Warner, "Shotgun wedding saddens many," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 16 July 1982.

the school. Officials recognized the economic advantage the school provided and hoped that an increased enrollment, either female or male, would help sustain or even boost the local economy. Each year the university contributed over \$17 million in revenue back into the community.<sup>2</sup> The university was in the middle of strict budget restrictions as a result of declining enrollment. By the Fall of 1981, enrollment reached barely over 1,800 students down from over 3,000 in the mid 1970s.<sup>3</sup> By enrolling men, officials saw a way to boost enrollment and save the school from closure. Institute of Higher Learning Board President Robert W. Harrison said, “Certainly by opening the enrollment up to the other sex you could expand the possibility of increasing the student body...[so] there is some good in everything.”<sup>4</sup>

Three major themes emerged in the arguments utilized by both traditionalists and reformers over the MUW coeducation trial. Themes centered on the historical significance and traditions of the university, societal gender inequalities, and the utilization of the legal system. The first argument utilized by traditionalists was based on the historical importance and traditions of the university. MUW was seen as a benchmark in women’s public education and traditionalists saw no need for change. Terms such as “first,” “unique,” “heritage,” and “historical” were used when describing MUW. Every article or letter written in defense of MUW’s single-sex status mentioned the history of the university as the first state-supported educational institutions solely for women. The school’s history was also in the forefront because it was on the verge of its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary planned for 1984. Student Mary Noble Massey said, “It would...[be]

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<sup>2</sup> Harvey Rice, “MUW business community hurt by slipping enrollment,” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 6 Feb. 1983, 12A.

<sup>3</sup> “Sagging Enrollment at MUW could be Bolstered by Decision,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 2 July 1982, 3A.

<sup>4</sup>“Sagging Enrollment at MUW could be Bolstered by Decision”

nice to say that we remained a single-sex university for 100 years.”<sup>5</sup> There were also a multitude of unique traditions that many feared were in danger of disappearing upon coeducation. Traditions included over ten social organizations known as “social clubs” dating back to 1914 that have names such as “Blacklists,” “Jesters,” and “Troubadours.” Similar in nature to sororities, these organizations are not national and exist only on the campus of MUW.<sup>6</sup>

It was not just a historical issue for traditionalists, but an emotional one as well. Words such as “pride,” “outstanding,” “camaraderie,” “joy,” and “special” were used when describing people’s feelings about MUW. Supporters realized this emotional connection and readily admitted to it. Susan Nemeth, student body president of MUW in 1982, described the connection as a “deep emotional attachment to our school.” Nemeth said,

[Students] think of the ‘W’ not only as a place to learn or as a place filled with traditions, but as our special friend. You can ask a 1922 graduate or a 1982 graduate, and they...will agree whole-heartedly—the ‘W’ gave them four of their happiest years.<sup>7</sup>

Alice Jackson, 1975 alum and staff writer for *The Sun-Herald* (Biloxi, Mississippi), also pointed to the emotional reasons behind opposing coeducation at MUW. Jackson described the events as “an extremely emotional issue” and wrote, “You become extremely defensive about things...simply because you don’t want certain things to

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<sup>5</sup> “One the Eve of Its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, MUW Assesses the Change in its Single-Sex Status,” *The Daily Corinthian*, 8 November 1983.

<sup>6</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 78, 107, 134.

<sup>7</sup> Susan Nemeth, “MUW is Misunderstood,” *The Commercial Appeal*, 18 July 1982.

change.”<sup>8</sup> Jackson described fellow students as “sisters—[who] became more self-assured as they became more involved in campus politics or endeavors they may never have had the courage to attempt if they had...[been] dealing with male counterparts.”<sup>9</sup> Ann Eason Brent, 1952 MUW alum, commented, “It was a great atmosphere with just the girls and I think it should be that way forever.”<sup>10</sup> The small size of the University along with unique traditions created both a distinct sense of community among students, administration, and alums.

Traditionalists feared the change coeducation would bring for the University. Traditionalists believed that if the University lost its single-sex status and traditions then the entire University would be next. An article by Guy Reel in *The Commercial Appeal* struck at the heart of traditionalists fears. Reel wrote, “If tradition is the cement which holds MUW together, then a changing society could be the force that pulls it apart.”<sup>11</sup> Carolyn Smith, president of the MUW Alumnae Association in 1983, said, “[Alumnae have a] horrible fear of losing the whole institution.”<sup>12</sup> Student Government Association (SGA) president Melissa Brauer recognized that the massive resistance to coeducation was due in part to a fear of change. Brauer said, “When you see a change around you, you cling to something that’s the same and you want to hold onto something that seems familiar.”<sup>13</sup> Whatever reasoning a traditionalist offered, they were adamant against the coeducation of MUW and willing to do whatever necessary to maintain its historical identity. Several months prior to the Supreme Court decision Sherri Jackson, news editor

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<sup>8</sup> Alice Jackson, “A reluctant farewell to ‘The W’ of yesteryear,” *The Sun-Herald*, 27 March 1982, C3.

<sup>9</sup> Alice Jackson, “A reluctant farewell to ‘The W’ of yesteryear”

<sup>10</sup> Grace Aaron, “Students React to First Male Classmate” *The Spectator*, 3 September 1981.

<sup>11</sup> Guy Reel, “The Single-Sex Tradition,” *The Commercial Appeal*, 9 May 1982, G1.

<sup>12</sup> Fred Anklam Jr., “MUW grads plead for female-only admissions policy,” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 2 February 1983, A1.

<sup>13</sup> “One the Eve of Its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, MUW Assesses the Change in its Single-Sex Status,” *The Daily Corinthian*, 8 November 1983.

for *The Spectator*, stated, “Whatever the outcome of the case, Mississippi has valiantly battled for MUW’s status quo.”<sup>14</sup>

MUW was not alone in its use of its institutional history and traditions as a deterrent to coeducation. Single-sex male universities across the South made a similar argument when faced with female coeducation. According to McCandless, arguments against coeducation at all-male universities employed similar terminology such as the distraction of men from their studies, the lowering of standards and ruining of university traditions, and the corruption of females by the masculine nature of campus life. One professor at the University of Virginia worried that allowing women to attend single-sex male institutions would cause women to become “familiar, boisterous, bold in manners,...rudely aggressive and ambitiously competitive with men.”<sup>15</sup> Students agreed and called for the school’s violent destruction in the face of coeducation. A Virginia student argued that coeducation would “turn the lure and lilt of the Lawn into the love-making atmosphere of the mid-Western campus and [I] would rather see the University burned to the ground first.”<sup>16</sup> Most all-male schools, however, eventually admitted women into their institutions.

Even the upheaval of the Civil Rights movement left some African Americans mourning the loss of their historically segregated institutions. Desegregation often resulted in the closure or reduction of African American schools and consolidation with white schools. Institutions such as Williston High School in Wilmington, North Carolina excelled academically and were sources of community pride. At the decision to close the high school and downgrade it to an elementary school in 1968, African Americans were

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<sup>14</sup> Sherri Jackson, “Decision...” *The Spectator*, 25 March 1982.

<sup>15</sup> McCandless, 93.

<sup>16</sup> McCandless, 94.



outraged and employed terms such as “community” and “culture” when describing their school. In an interview in 2003, Linda A. Pearce, 1963 graduate of Williston High School, reflected on the closing of the African American high school and the sense of loss it inflicted on the community. Pearce said,

The closing of Williston was devastating in our community. We had a three-point life, church, home and school. When that school which was concentrated became deluded, we lost a good deal of our culture and we were sent to, as I often say, a foreign land where we didn't speak the language. Our culture was different and they did not want us there. So it was a terrible thing that happened.<sup>17</sup>

Although such arguments did not deter the eventual coeducation or loss of the schools, traditionalists at MUW attempted to argue the same reasons against coeducation out of a fear of a similar sense of loss.

Traditionalists also argued societal inequalities still existed and MUW was a tool in combating continued gender discrimination. They believed the all-female learning environment benefited women and ultimately worked towards accomplishing the goal of equality. One hundred years after the founding of the University, there were those who still questioned the role of the female gender in society. In 1973, sociologist Steven Goldberg challenged the notion that women were hindered by society's assigned sex roles by instead viewing the roles as an empowering force beyond the restrictions already placed on females by biology. In his book *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*, Goldberg said,

If society did not teach young girls that beating boys at competitions was unfeminine (behavior inappropriate for a woman), if it did not socialize them

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<sup>17</sup> Transcript of interview of Linda A. Pearce, Louise Fulton Outler, and William Crummy by Joyce Johnson and Sue Cody on 27 March 2003 located at the Special Collections at the University of North Carolina Wilmington Randall Library.

away from the political and economic areas in which aggression leads to attainment, these girls would grow into adulthood with self-images based not on succeeding in areas for which biology has left them better prepared than men, but on competitions that most women could not win. If women did not develop feminine qualities as girls (assuming that such qualities do not spring automatically from female biology) they then would be forced to deal with the world in the aggressive terms of men. They would lose every source of power their feminine abilities now give them and they would gain nothing.<sup>18</sup>

Such an argument represents the debate over gender roles that still raged in the 1970s even in academia just prior to the Mississippi case. Alumnae of The W cited statistics on the inequality of men and women published by the Department of Labor in 1982, which showed “women earned 64.7 percent as men in the same job.”<sup>19</sup>

Other single-sex female institutions also feared the loss of leadership roles for their students upon the threat of coeducation. Similar fears existed at the Women’s College of the University of North Carolina [now University of North Carolina Greensboro] prior to its coeducation in 1964. According to Trelease, “[opponents of coeducation] feared that most of the student leadership positions would fall to men...[and] women would gradually be eliminated from the faculty, except as low-level instructors”<sup>20</sup> Also, more male oriented sports would be demanded. Once coeducation occurred many fears were soon realized. Men began to dominate the leadership positions and “in the twenty-five years beginning in 1970, all but five of the annual SGA [Student

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<sup>18</sup> Steven Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1973), 109.

<sup>19</sup> William J. Eaton, “Unequal pay—but equal work,” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 7 March 1982.

<sup>20</sup> Trelease, 283.

Government Association] presidents were men....”<sup>21</sup> Such events at once single-sex schools supported traditionalists concerns over similar events occurring at MUW upon coeducation.

Traditionalists also recognized, however, they had to battle against negative perceptions of the school as old Southern aristocracy. The public perceived the school as a perpetuation and extension of a ‘Gone with the Wind’ mentality. Alumnae disputed the idea that the purpose of MUW was to “protect” females. In a letter to *The Spectator* they said, “We wish to emphasize that we were not ‘sheltered’ from males. The very fact that we chose to attend a single-sex schools shows that our primary interest...was in an education.”<sup>22</sup> President Strobel said, “I think a lot of people [believe] we [are] a finishing school for young Southern ladies. I think they [have] an image of magnolias and hoop skirts....”<sup>23</sup> Dr. Strobel disagreed with this assessment and said, “Dwelling upon social regulations of the past draws attention [away] from a much more significant reputation enjoyed by this University, i.e., the strength of its academic programs.” Dr. Strobel disputed such images by citing academic accomplishments. Dr. Strobel pointed to evidence such as for the “eighth time in eleven years MUW outscored students from seven other state universities on the National Teacher Exam” and MUW’s reinstatement of the American College Test (ACT) entrance exam score at 15.<sup>24</sup> When Dr. Strobel became president of MUW in 1978, MUW was admitting girls with ACT scores as low as nine.<sup>25</sup> In the early 1970s, some colleges dropped the use of a minimum ACT score

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<sup>21</sup> Trelease, 369.

<sup>22</sup> “Alumnae Respond to Criticism of ‘W’ Policies,” *The Spectator*, 22 January 1981.

<sup>23</sup> William Thomas, “Gimme A W: Fight, fight, fight, say the academically elite in a battle they hope will not be to the finish,” *Mid-South Magazine* in *The Commercial Appeal*, 6 April 1986.

<sup>24</sup> James Strobel, “To the Alumnae,” *MUW Bio-Notes* vol. II no. I (February 1982): 2.

<sup>25</sup> Guy Reel, “The Single-Sex Tradition,” *The Commercial Appeal*, 9 May 1982, G1.

and instead instituted remedial programs or gave conditional admission status to students with minimal test scores.<sup>26</sup> MUW initially followed suit, but reinstated the admission score in the late 1970s. By 1986, this resulted in an average freshman ACT score at MUW of 20.4 compared to an average of 15.5 in the state and 18.6 in the nation.<sup>27</sup>

The final major objection that concerned traditionalists was that coeducation would be legally sanctioned. The South typically believed in minimal federal government interference and a heavy reliance on state governments or state sovereignty.<sup>28</sup> For much of the twentieth century, the South was involved in a bitter struggle over the Civil Rights Movement and the federal government's eventual intervention in the racial issue. After the desegregation of the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) Commentator Earl Lively, Jr. called the federal government's intervention an "invasion of Mississippi" and that such an action was "nothing less than the opening scenes of the police state...[and the] result has been the destruction of state and individual rights...."<sup>29</sup> African Americans who applied to or who were admitted to Southern schools as a result of such litigation were not allowed to forget by whites that they were there under the forced order of the court. For example, at the Women's University in North Carolina admission director Mildred Newton persistently referred to African American applicants as "Supreme Court Models".<sup>30</sup>

Similar arguments were made over the federal government's involvement over the gender question at MUW. Student Kathy Powell said, "It isn't the natural course of

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<sup>26</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 147.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas, 8.

<sup>28</sup> Cobb, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Earl Lively, Jr. *The Invasion of Mississippi* (Belmont, MI: American Opinion, 1963), v.

<sup>30</sup> Trelease, 280.

things...his coming here was a forced issue....”<sup>31</sup> After the *MUW v. Joe Hogan* Supreme Court decision, Alumnae Association President Carolyn Ritter spoke before the Board of Trustees of the State of Institutions of Higher Learning. Ritter voiced her disappointment in the legally forced coeducation of MUW. Ritter said, “We were extremely disappointed that the court deemed it necessary to alter the original mission of the school by liberalizing its traditional entrance requirements.”<sup>32</sup> Local business owner Kimble Crossley said, “They (Supreme Court justices) have been making the laws instead of interpreting them. It’s just another case of them usurping the powers of state government.”<sup>33</sup> The decision was even referred to as a “shot-gun wedding” by newspapers. In an article by Coleman Warner titled “Shotgun Wedding Saddens Many” Warner summed up the coeducation of MUW by comparing it to a forced marriage. Warner said, “[Columbus’] favorite daughter is getting married, but she’ll tell you without a flinch she doesn’t love the groom.”<sup>34</sup> Even some men disliked the idea of the government’s interjection into the school’s policies. When *Commercial Dispatch* staff writer Judy Bryan interviewed a variety of individuals on their opinions towards the MUW decision, Wilbur Hamlin, a local, disagreed with the Supreme Court’s decision. Hamlin said, “I don’t think a federal judge is capable of running the state of Mississippi, so we should leave it the way it is.”<sup>35</sup> By using phrases such as “the court deemed it necessary” and “liberalizing its traditional entrance requirements” Ritter exposed the

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<sup>31</sup> Grace Aaron, “Students React to First Male Classmate” *The Spectator*, 3 September 1981.

<sup>32</sup> Frances Ayers to Gloria Atkinson, 19 July 1982, in subject file Joe Hogan, Special Collections, J.C. Fant Memorial Library, Columbus, Mississippi.

<sup>33</sup> Coleman Warner, “Shotgun wedding saddens many.”

<sup>34</sup> Coleman Warner, “Shotgun wedding saddens many.”

<sup>35</sup> Judy Bryan, “What Do You Think?” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 22 July 1982, 3A.

dissatisfaction traditionalists felt over the court's involvement as well as the societal differences that still existed in the South.

By the 1980s, many schools around the country were experiencing similar litigation as a host of legal mandates shifted power and brought into question the existence of district schools for categories of individuals. Laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964; outlawing discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which forbid sex discrimination; Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which banned discrimination against the handicapped; and the Age Discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs Act of 1975, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of age.<sup>36</sup> An article in the Editorial Projects for Education's (now Editorial Projects in Education, Inc.) newsletter *EPE: 15 Minute Report* concluded,

After centuries of benign neglect by the courts, colleges and universities now find themselves confronting a legion of federal, state, and local laws, which affect virtually all of their operations, and a growing body of court decisions, which redefine their powers and their place in society.<sup>37</sup>

Even Wilbur Colom, Hogan's attorney, expressed hesitation over legally sanctioned orders. Colom proposed that the university take the initiative on coeducation rather than being forced to do so by the federal courts. Colom said, "Let's not have a federal judge once again give us an order."<sup>38</sup> The cultural upheaval and government

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<sup>36</sup> "The Campus and the Courts: Judicial rulings are changing our colleges in important ways." *EPE: 15 Minute Report*, XVI, no. 4 (December 1979): 2.

<sup>37</sup> *EPE: 15 Minute Report*, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Wanda Cantrell, "Colom Won't Be Representing Plaintiffs Against MUW," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 9 July 1982, 3.

participation in racial desegregation throughout The South was still very recent and only heightened tensions by traditionalists over similar involvement and change at MUW.

On the opposing side of the debate regarding Southern cultural transformation were the “reformers”. Reformers questioned the appropriateness of maintaining the Southern ideas about gender divisions. They disputed traditionalists’ commitment to history and tradition as arguments against change. Instead, reformers used history to highlight the struggle women waged for equality to argue in favor of coeducation. Reformers viewed the change as unavoidable and any attempts to resist it as futile. Wilbur O. Colom even referred to this change as “inevitable” and any effort to oppose it as “fighting the wave of change.”<sup>39</sup>

In contrast to viewing the school’s history as a positive attribute, coeducation advocates portrayed MUW as a relic of past Southern ideals. Reformers used negative and even derogatory terms when referring to the university to publicly portray the University as a representation of those nineteenth century romantic Southern ideas. The University was seen as a “finishing school for nice, young Mississippi ladies....”<sup>40</sup> Terms such as “sacred cow,” “out-of-date,” “antiquated,” “fortress,” and “old” were used to describe the mission of MUW. One article in the *Commercial Dispatch* referred to Hogan’s lawsuit as a way to “[pierce] the veil”<sup>41</sup> of the university’s longstanding single-sex admission policy. In *The Reflector*, the student newspaper at Mississippi State University, writer Wayne Weidie wrote, “The so-called ‘mission’ of a school like

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<sup>39</sup> Wilbur O. Colom. Interview by Mona K. Vance, 11 May 2007, transcript, Appendix A.

<sup>40</sup> Wayne Weidie, “MUW Sacred Cow Pasture Remains Green,” *The Reflector*, 2 November 1981, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Sherri Monteith, “Columbus Man Trying to Pierce Veil of MUW,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 20 June 1980.

MUW...cannot be justified in the 1980s.”<sup>42</sup> Reformers such as WCBI (Columbus) Radio Announcer Landis Rogers countered traditionalist’s arguments in support of tradition by arguing that change was inevitable. Rogers said, “Sentiment and tradition to the contrary notwithstanding, however, the time has come for all Mississippians to take a long, pragmatic look at MUW’s future.”<sup>43</sup> Even members of civil rights organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) employed terminology that portrayed MUW in a negative manner. Margaret Mackenzie, Executive Director of Mississippi’s chapter of the ACLU, was quoted as referring to MUW as “anachronistic.”<sup>44</sup>

Reformers viewed MUW as antiquated and protective and pointed to the various rules imposed on the female students at MUW throughout its history. At MUW, blue uniforms were required until 1945 when students voted against their continuance.<sup>45</sup> With the demise of uniforms, women were provided with alternative clothing options deemed suitable by the college. By 1951, it was mandatory that students dress "modestly, appropriately, and in good taste," which did not include "slacks, shorts, overalls, blue jeans, levis, midriff...sunback dresses" or socks.<sup>46</sup> Also, the 1951 student handbook at MUW refers to a "Social Adviser." All social activities received prior approval from the Social Advisor except if students wished to "shop, go to the movies and to the drug stores after the movies...eat in approved eating places...[and] ride with parents...."<sup>47</sup> There were also requirements on particular individuals for whom students were allowed to associate.

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<sup>42</sup> Wayne Weidie, “MUW Sacred Cow Pasture Remains Green,” *The Reflector*, 2 November 1981, 3.

<sup>43</sup> Landis Rogers, “Local Radio Announcer Supports Changing Name” *W Alumnae News Bulletin* vol. XCIX no. II (1987): 8.

<sup>44</sup> Sherri Monteith, “Columbus Man Trying to Pierce Veil of MUW,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 20 June 1980.

<sup>45</sup> Pieschel and Pieschel, 105.

<sup>46</sup> *Mississippi State College for Women Student Handbook 1951-1952* (Columbus, Mississippi: Mississippi State College for Women Student Association), 15.

<sup>47</sup> *Handbook 1951-1952*, 9.



Freshman girls were not permitted to "date men whose residence [was] is in Columbus or within five miles of Columbus who [were] not enrolled in college."<sup>48</sup>

By 1971, the Student Handbook warned the female student that she "must, at all times, conduct herself in the manner befitting a lady."<sup>49</sup> The Social Advisor remained in charge of monitoring permission for student's social occasions. Women were still required to dress "modestly, appropriately, and in good taste."<sup>50</sup> Besides street clothes and formal dress, pants suits were included in the handbook as satisfactory.<sup>51</sup> While there were still regulations pertaining to dating, there were no longer specific regulations against any class of students from dating a particular type of man.

Mississippi University for Women, however, maintained similar rules that existed at other coed universities across the South. In decades past, universities acted *in loco parentis* for female students meaning administrators operated as the watchful parent while at school and away from home. Historian David G. Sansing refers to it as "Genteel Tradition" where college administrators worked to protect the souls of their students as well as their minds.<sup>52</sup> At Auburn University, coed since 1892, strict rules were maintained with women students as late as 1964. Females students were required to "make their beds daily by 10:00 a.m., had to observe curfews and quiet hours...[and] were provided a list of 'What to Wear When.' Blue jeans were not allowed 'at any time,' [and] dresses or skirts were required for class...."<sup>53</sup> The requirements went beyond clothing. The rules and regulations were vehemently adhered to or the consequences

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<sup>48</sup> *Handbook 1951-1952*, 11.

<sup>49</sup> Susan Pitts and Lib Widegren, ed., *Mississippi State College for Women 1970-1971 Student Handbook* (Columbus, Mississippi: Mississippi State College for Women Student Association), 37.

<sup>50</sup> Pitts and Widegren, 33.

<sup>51</sup> Pitts and Widegren, 33.

<sup>52</sup> Sansing, 29.

<sup>53</sup> McCandless, 223.

were swift. In 1964, a female student at African American Howard University was expelled when she spent one night outside her dormitory.<sup>54</sup>

By the 1960s, however, students desired change and, in the words of McCandless, “wanted to be treated as adults, not little girls: to study where and what they pleased, to come and go when they wished, and to eat and wear what they wanted.”<sup>55</sup> Colleges responded by minimizing *in loco parentis* and allowed students more freedom. MUW responded accordingly and by the 1979-1980 Student Handbook stated, “Conduct and actions will be measured by adult standards, and students must understand that they assume full responsibility for the consequences of their actions.”<sup>56</sup>

Reformers not only questioned the social regulations at MUW, but also drew comparisons between Joe Hogan’s fight for admission and the fight women led for enrollment to all male institutions. In a letter that first appeared in the *McComb Enterprise-Journal*, but which was reprinted in *The Spectator*, Betty Brumfield drew a direct correlation between the fights by both male and female schools. Brumfield said, “All-male schools put up the same cry years ago, when females dared to make application, but the cries were for naught—the females were finally admitted.”<sup>57</sup> Brumfield also went on to ridicule the argument by traditionalists that females thrived academically in an all-female environment. Brumfield said,

If a male is thrown into their midst, they become intimidated and either cannot excel or they revert to the outdated idea that they must not do better than a male

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<sup>54</sup> McCandless, 223.

<sup>55</sup> McCandless, 213.

<sup>56</sup> *Mississippi University for Women Student Handbook 1979-1980* (Columbus, Mississippi: Mississippi University for Women Student Government Association), 2.

<sup>57</sup> Betty Brumfield, “Writer Views ‘W’s Policy as Unrealistic,” *The Spectator*, 22 January 1981, 3.

during the marriageable years or they may be old maids for the rest of their lives.  
Oh, horror of horrors!<sup>58</sup>

In Jackson's newspaper *The Clarion-Ledger* letters from individuals after the Supreme Court decision also echoed a similar sentiment. Warren H. Koon of Natchez wrote:

It is poetic justice...that men may now attend Mississippi University for Women. Opposite barriers fell long ago. Women have pushed for places in previously all-male suns for years. It's rather silly that MUW wants to remain exclusively for women. Those who would propose a long court battle over the right of the university for remain for women only are whistling in the graveyard.<sup>59</sup>

The arguments by and for women to fight for gender equality were utilized by reformers to oppose and even ridicule male gender discrimination at MUW.

Although traditionalists and reformers disagreed ideologically, they both used identical methods and avenues in expressing their arguments. Reformers were the most resourceful at utilizing local and national papers. Cartoonist Jimmy Johnson, creator of the comic strip *Arlo and Janis*, drew two cartoons depicting MUW's response to the Joe Hogan case. The first cartoon appeared in *The Spectator* two weeks after Hogan enrolled and portrays a male nurse being chastised by an ugly elderly woman holding keys with 'MUW' printed on her dress. The older woman shoves a ruler up the man's nose while protecting four gasping young southern belles and shouts "An education, indeed—We know what you men want!"

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<sup>58</sup> Betty Brumfield, "Writer Views 'W's Policy as Unrealistic."

<sup>59</sup> Warren H. Koon, "Poetic Justice in MUW decision," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 23 July 1982, 4B.

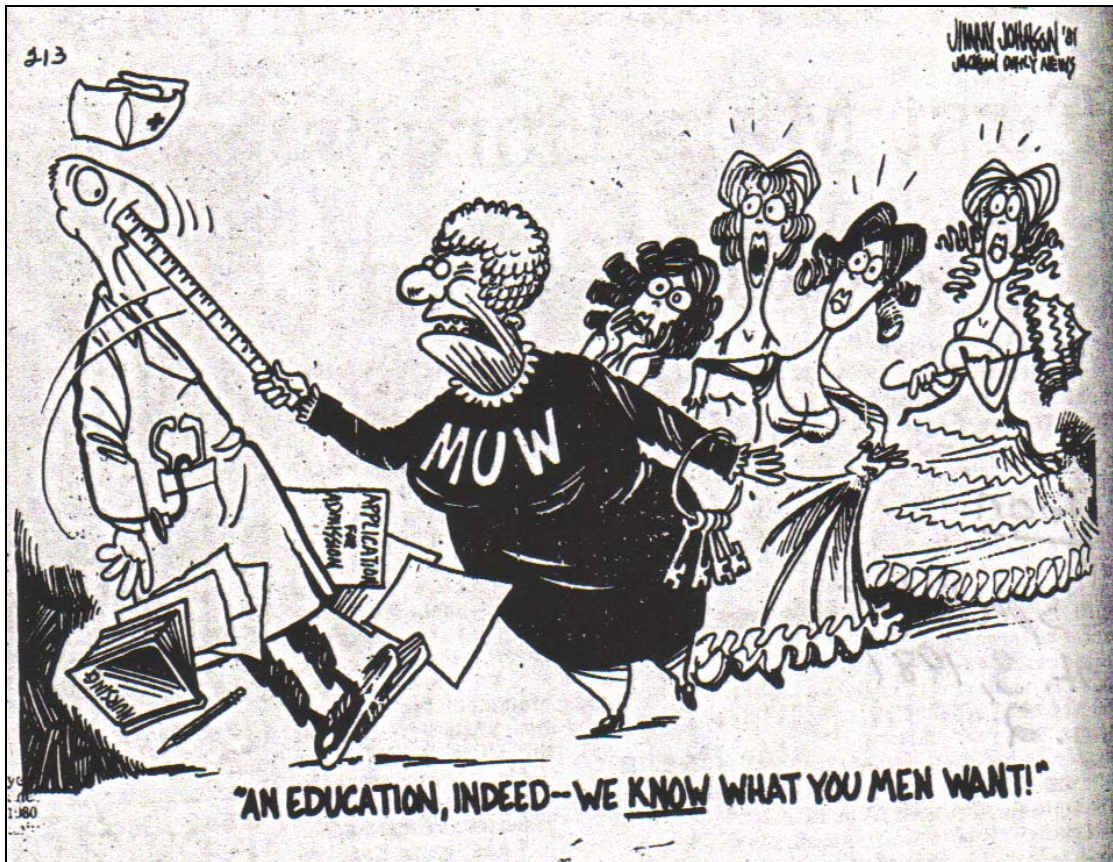


Figure 3. Illustration by Jimmy Johnson from *The Spectator*, 3 September 1981.  
(Courtesy of *The Clarion-Ledger*)

Its portrayal represents how MUW was publicly viewed as a “protector” of “Southern belles” or Southern customs. The girls being “protected” are all wearing antebellum dresses while one carries a parasol symbolizing the protection of southern ideas of womanhood. Johnson directly attacked the University as upholding antiquated notions of Southern womanhood.

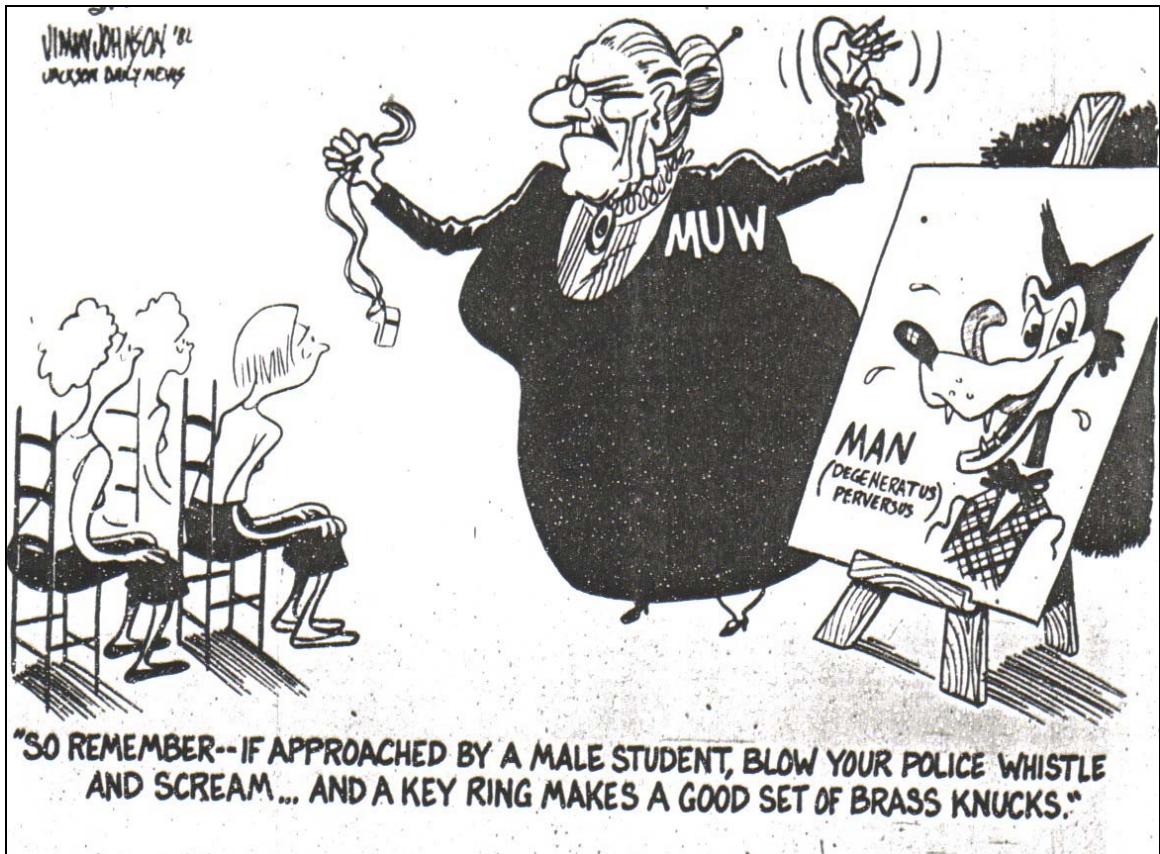


Figure 4. Illustration by Jimmy Johnson from *The Clarion-Ledger*, 18 July 1982. (Courtesy of *The Clarion-Ledger*)

Johnson's second cartoon appeared in *The Clarion-Ledger* out of Jackson, Mississippi immediately after the Supreme Court decision. It shows a similar older woman with "MUW" printed on her dress waving keys and a whistle instructing a group of females in front of a drawing. The drawing depicts a wolf licking his lips with the label "Man (Degeheratus Perversos)". The older woman warns the girls saying, "So remember—if approached by a male student, blow your police whistle and scream...and a key ring makes a good set of brass knuckles." The second cartoon contains similar images and messages as the first. The instructor, or MUW, is represented as antiquated by being depicted as an old woman schoolmarm. She is wearing a lace-collared shirt with a cameo and her hair pulled back in a bun kept in place with a straight hairpin. In both images, the older woman is carrying a set of keys on a circular key ring. The images represent the

idea that MUW is a protector or a guard against negative influences and the guardian of female purity. Such strong images sent the message that MUW was overprotective, silly, and a relic of the past.

The cartoons and representations show how statewide and even local media covered the events unfolding at MUW. Statewide media outlets offered a dual complexity of both reverence and mockery towards MUW. In one editorial in *The Clarion-Ledger* Executive Editor Charles Overby combined both. Overby said, “Mississippi University for Women is still remembered by many Mississippians for its rich traditions as MSCW. Its tradition is one that university officials, alumni and students can be proud of.”<sup>60</sup> In the next sentence, however, Overby pokes fun at the University’s new coeducational status by calling it “Mississippi University for Mostly Women.”<sup>61</sup> Even the Columbus newspaper, *The Commercial Dispatch*, carried articles containing phrases such as “piercing the veil of [MUW]”<sup>62</sup> and “MUW Claims Male Not Hurt...”<sup>63</sup> By using terms such as ‘piercing,’ ‘veil,’ and ‘claims’ the two articles portray a sense of secrecy and negativity in addition to self-deception. Both the local and statewide media created a sense of downgrading the events from a serious issue over gender discrimination to one of entertainment. It was entertainment because the public no longer perceived a need to argue over a woman’s ability or right to a higher education with men. It represents the cultural shift over course of the twentieth century in the South’s views on the female sex away from the genteel lady in need of pedestal worshipping.

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<sup>60</sup> Charles Overby, “MUW should look to larger mission,” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 6 July 1982, 2B.

<sup>61</sup> Charles Overby, “MUW should look to larger mission.”

<sup>62</sup> Sherri Monteith, “Columbus Man Trying to Pierce Veil of MUW,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 20 June 1980.

<sup>63</sup> Sherri Monteith, “MUW Claims Male Not Hurt by Being Denied Entry to School,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 10 July 1980, 3.

While reformers used the media to criticize and ridicule the University, traditionalists vilified and mocked Joe Hogan. Hogan was called an “antagonist to tradition.”<sup>64</sup> Hogan was a physical representation of the larger social change occurring at the University. Nancy Collins, a sophomore, discussed Hogan’s registration on August 24, 1981, and responded,

When I first heard he was trying to get in, I didn’t think he would. [Hogan] couldn’t even register for classes by himself. All of the freshman went through by themselves, but he had to have his lawyer (Wilbur Colom) with him.<sup>65</sup>

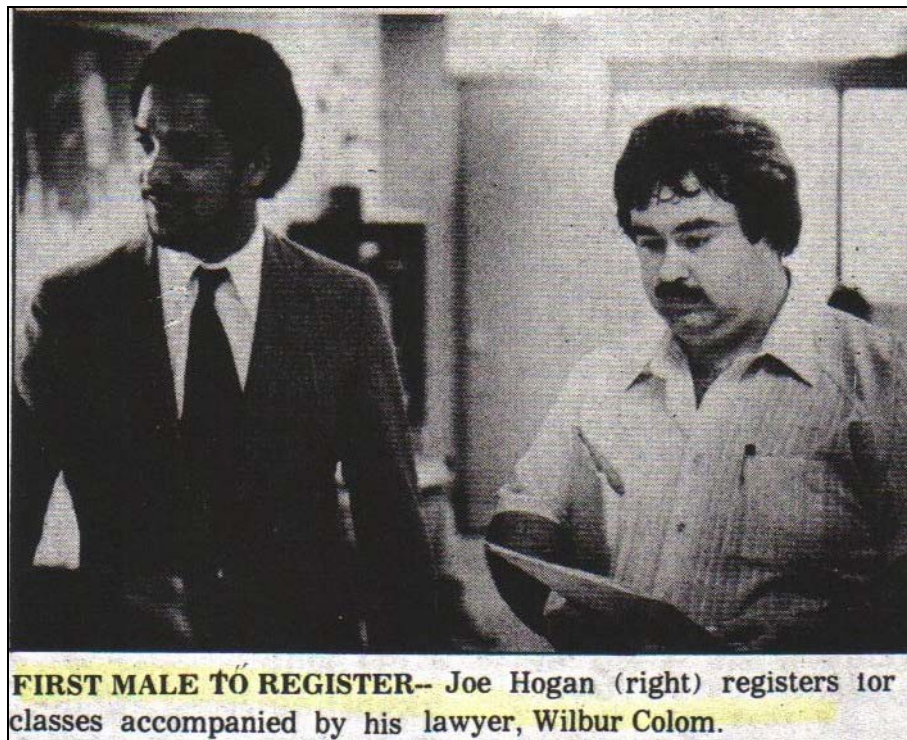


Figure 5. Image “First Male to Register” from *The Spectator*, 3 September 1981.

Terri Sasser also scorned Joe Hogan’s fight to enroll at MUW. She said, “Will Joe Hogan really wear a dress while doing his nursing bit?”<sup>66</sup> Also, an MUW song titled

<sup>64</sup> Wanda Cantrell, “Hogan: He Never Intended To Be An Antagonist To Tradition,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 2 July 1982, 3A.

<sup>65</sup> Grace Aaron. “Students React to First Male Classmate” *The Spectator*, 3 September 1981.

<sup>66</sup>Terri Sasser, “Hogan...” *The Spectator*, 3 September 1981, 3.

“Old Maid’s Prep” had the words changed by students due to the Hogan case. The original lyrics are “Oh, I’m from M.S.C, oh pity me/There’s not a boy in the vicinity/And every night at 9 they lock the door/I don’t know what the heck I ever came here for.” In 1981, however, the altered lyrics became “Oh, I’m from M.S.C. oh, pity me/There’s only Joe in the vicinity/And every day in class he’s such a bore/I don’t know what the heck he ever came here for.”<sup>67</sup> Such negative verbal tactics were similar to those used by reformers against the school.

A difference existed between local media coverage and the national press. An article in *The Spectator* a month after Hogan’s registration reported he was adjusting well. In the article titled “MUW ‘Minority’ Nurse Feels Accepted” Hogan said, “[I am] being treated just like I’m a regular old student.”<sup>68</sup> That “minority” is in quotes hints to the sarcasm and continued resentment students felt toward Hogan. The article portrays, however, a positive atmosphere and project an overall positive image of the events.

National accounts, however, reveal a different experience. They reveal that Hogan encountered not only verbal retaliation, but physical ostracism as well. In April 1982, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* carried an article title “Male liberation, Mississippi-style” discussing Hogan’s transition into student life at the all-girl’s university. Staff writer Julia Cass wrote, “When Hogan arrived for the 8 a.m. class [Speech 101], he sat in the middle row. When the women came in, they left the two rows on either side of him vacant. And when he went over to the student center [Hogarth Student Center] after class for a cup of coffee, no one talked to him.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Reginald Stuart, “Mississippi College Enrolls First Man,” *The New York Times*, 30 August 1981.

<sup>68</sup> Sherrie Jackson, “MUW ‘Minority’ Nurse Feels Accepted,” *The Spectator*, 3 September 1981.

<sup>69</sup> Julia Cass, “Male Liberation, Mississippi-style,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 April 1982.





Figure 6. Image of Joe Hogan in class from *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 April 1982.

The newspaper described the scene in the photograph as “Seated apart from the other students is Hogan, first male at Mississippi University for Women”. The two distinctly opposite accounts of Hogan’s experience while attending MUW, *The Spectator* versus the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, are examples of how both sources had an agenda, whether intentional or not, while covering the events. *The Spectator* wanted to positively depict not only students, but the school as well. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, however, described a contentious representation of Hogan’s time at The W. The fact that the story even made *The Philadelphia Inquirer* shows that the paper sought out a story that would exemplify controversy.

Almost all news outlets whether local or national covering the coeducation of MUW, compared the situation to that of the other major event occurring in education throughout the South over much of the twentieth century, racial desegregation. *The Commercial Appeal* of Memphis argued,

Legal arguments aside, there is a moral issue involved in the Hogan case. It is every bit as wrong today for MUW to keep male students out of its classrooms as

it was for the school in years past to stand in the way of the enrollment of black students. Sexually segregated public schools like racially segregated schools, simply have no place in today's society.<sup>70</sup>

In the Supreme Court Brief for Respondent dated January 29, 1982 Colom also compared the case to the larger national move towards racial integration. Colom said, "The assertion that women should be isolated in a single-sex environment because they are unable to compete with men is reminiscent of a similar argument concerning racially segregated education."<sup>71</sup>

Members of the African American community, however, retaliated against the comparison of racial equality to that of gender equality. African Americans viewed the struggle against racial discrimination as more important than that of gender discrimination especially at MUW. Wilbur O. Colom recognized and acknowledged the backlash he received relating to the suit from within the African American community. In an interview on May 11, 2007 discussing the case Colom said,

A lot of blacks felt I was devoting energy on an issue where race was really much more important than sexual discrimination....among blacks they would say to me things like...there are a lot of other important things you could do, you need to be suing some of these companies that are discriminating and...what's going on with the public school system...they're firing the black teachers, they're doing this, they're doing that. You know, you need to focus on those things....<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> "Lowering the Sex Barrier," *The Commercial Appeal*, 26 January 1982, 4A.

<sup>71</sup> Brief for Respondent. 1981 U.S. Briefs 406, Lexis 1762, 34.

<sup>72</sup> Wilbur O. Colom. Interview by Mona K. Vance, 11 May 2007, transcript, Appendix A.

Colom interpreted this reaction as “victim selfishness” because African Americans disliked the comparison of their fight as similar to that of women’s.<sup>73</sup> African Americans simply did not see the discrimination that they experienced as equal to that white women or men.

Others sympathized with Hogan’s situation as similar to that of the African American’s. Integration came to MUW less than fifteen years prior to the case and many African American students understood the feeling “different”. Demetria Johnson, an MUW African American student said, “I was the only black in my biology class and I was afraid to ask questions...I can sympathize with [Hogan].”<sup>74</sup> Other African American students felt detached from the MUW “traditions” that many traditionalists were fighting against Hogan to maintain. Student Francine Summers said, “We [African Americans] don’t have any attachment to the school’s traditions, like the white girls do.”<sup>75</sup> While the media concentrated on drawing comparisons between racial and gender integration, African Americans did not like the association and argued that the case was detrimental to pursuing the larger problem of racial discrimination.

Similarities are also evident between the adoption of coeducation at MUW and the other former single-sex female public institutions across the South. Many of the schools protested coeducation on either a large or small scale largely in a verbal and nonviolent nature. For example, at The Women’s College (University of North Carolina at Greensboro) students “formed Pink and Blue factions, alternately painting the McIver statue and decorating the campus in those colors” in opposition to coeducation when it

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<sup>73</sup> Wilbur O. Colom. Interview by Mona K. Vance, Appendix A.

<sup>74</sup> Julia Cass, “Male Liberation, Mississippi-style.”

<sup>75</sup> Julia Cass, “Male Liberation, Mississippi-style.”

was adopted in July of 1963.<sup>76</sup> Members of the administration were angry and pointed to the lack of public and state support. Gordon Blackwell, president of The Women's College from 1957 to 1960, said the change to coeducation had more to do with the college being considered the least important in the system and that "[the college] was usually sucking on the hind tit' at appropriations time."<sup>77</sup> The University of Montevallo's transitioned to coeducation in 1956 with less resistance. President Franz Edward Lund met with the faculty on October 13, 1955 over the enrollment situation and after discussing possible options the decision was made to accept coeducation. Although few protests emerged as a result of the decision, everyone left the meeting "in a hushed silence."<sup>78</sup> The silence indicates a sense of loss and is in a small way a form of protest against the end to the school's all female status.

The events that occurred at MUW over coeducation were also unique in two major ways when compared to the transition to coeducation for the other former single-sex female public colleges across the South. First, MUW rejected coeducation on a greater level than any of the others. Secondly, the school utilized the legal system to fight it. No other all-female institution challenged coeducation all the way to the United States Supreme Court. The major reason behind the difference in massive resistance involved location. All of the other seven schools operated in a location distinct and far enough away from other state educational institutions to remain viable. The other state schools that opened their admissions to men were not faced with the possibility of closure as a result. MUW's location of less than 25 miles from Mississippi State University made being closed a real possibility. Immediately following the Supreme Court case,

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<sup>76</sup> Trelease, 283.

<sup>77</sup> Trelease, 284.

<sup>78</sup> Griffith, 119.

questions arose over the necessity to maintain two similar institutions so close together. In response to the decision, Senator Ellis Bodron said, “If the ‘W’ cannot continue as a single sex school, then I question the wisdom of its continuing at all.”<sup>79</sup> For the next twenty years, the school struggled to quell such notions and numerous threats of both merger and closure.

The firestorm that resulted over the coeducation of MUW revealed the division throughout the South over changing cultural ideals. It pitted two opposing sides against one another: traditionalists versus reformers. Central themes emerged on both sides that included disagreements over the importance of the school’s history, the existence of continued gender inequalities, and whether such a decision should be made with government involvement. Similar themes and arguments existed over other cultural shifts such as race that occurred throughout the South in the twentieth century. The issues and arguments did not end with the Supreme Courts decision to rule against the single-sex policy at MUW. Rather, it permanently altered the course of the university.

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<sup>79</sup> Carolyn Smithson Ritter to the Alumnae of Mississippi University for Women, 26 January 1983, in subject file Mississippi University for Women 1982-1984, Mississippi University for Women Office of Alumni Relations, Columbus, Mississippi.

## CHAPTER FOUR: LONG LASTING EFFECTS

The Supreme Court case in 1982 did not bridge the gap between traditionalists and reformers over the coeducation of MUW. Instead, MUW lost its niche as the only female university in the state, thus leaving the school vulnerable to debates over its name and very existence. Over the following twenty years, the MUW struggled against changes that threatened to ultimately close the school's doors. Traditionalists battled reformers as MUW fought to balance coeducation with tradition and redefine its place in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Immediately following the Supreme Court ruling, administrators at MUW began to prepare the University for existence as a coeducational facility. The first adjustment included the creation of a male dormitory. Initially, prior to the designation of an actual dorm, male students were assigned to apartments one block from the university. In 1982, that encompassed a total of three men. By 1984, however, Peyton Hall (now Peyton Academic Hall); named for Annie C. Peyton, major supporter of the founding of II&C and history teacher at the school; became the first dormitory exclusively for male students. Previously a female freshman dorm, now a total of twelve men lived in Peyton Hall, a building built for a capacity of around one hundred residents. Female students were not supportive of this accommodation. Many complained that “[men] shouldn’t be allowed to have private rooms unless they pay the full fee for one.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, however, men were required to pay for private rooms. The accommodations were less than satisfactory for many of Peyton’s first male residents. While female students received maid service, the men did not. In addition, Peyton was supplied with a ping-pong table, yet no paddles or balls. “They told us we had to furnish those ourselves,” said Danny

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<sup>1</sup> Linda Gunter, “Peyton Dorm opens its doors to males,” *The Spectator*, 2 February 1984.

Swanson, a Peyton resident.<sup>2</sup> The first male residents of Peyton were not traditional college students. Many were over the age of 22 and were simply attempting to continue their education to receive supplemental degrees.

In 1983, enrollment went up more than twenty percent for the first time in several years. Male enrollment, however, amounted to 284 out of 1,992 of the total student body. Projections pointed toward continued growth both in overall and male enrollment. Advertisements in *The Spectator* reflected the newly altered male status of MUW. Cartoon announcements promoting bible study at the First Baptist Church now included a female and a male conversing, with the male wearing a sweater with “The W” printed on the front.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 7. Illustration by Joe McKeever  
(*The Spectator*, 13 October 1983).

<sup>2</sup> Linda Gunter, “Peyton Dorm opens its doors to males,” *The Spectator*, 2 February 1984.

<sup>3</sup> Joe McKeever, *The Spectator*, 13 October 1983.

The cartoon represents an attempt by female students, the administration, and institutionally connected organizations such as the First Baptist Church to adapt to and accommodate the new male students into student life at MUW.

Reactions to male enrollment the first few years after the Supreme Court decision remained indecisive. In a questionnaire about increased enrollment in 1983, one student replied, "I think it's a direct result of letting guys in and I don't mind looking at them a bit."<sup>4</sup> The student asked to remain anonymous. By stating her opinion yet remaining anonymous, she shows the mood on campus was still hostile and disjointed to such a large extent that students feared speaking publicly in favor of MUW's new coeducational status. One male student responded to the same question by thinking in terms of future male enrollment. Robert Edwards said, "I think it will bring more males to the school...and it will make a favorable opportunity for the male students to get involved in campus activities."<sup>5</sup>

A number of students, however, were still angry over the Supreme Court decision to integrate males into MUW. Some blamed Hogan for the negative attention the legal case brought to the University. Student Tina Stockdale said, "I resent that Joe Hogan did it in such an insensitive way."<sup>6</sup> Other female students protested the presence of males by refusing them entrance into their already established clubs and traditions. According to Janice Stockman, MUW alum of 1967, "Men have to make their own way. It's going to be up to them to establish their own traditions."<sup>7</sup> Despite the negative reception by some of the female student body, the growth of male enrollment was steady. In 1982, males

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<sup>4</sup> "Knock-knock: what about increased enrollment?," *The Spectator*, 15 September 1983.

<sup>5</sup> "Knock-knock: what about increased enrollment?"

<sup>6</sup> "Joe Hogan: The impact still spreading," *The Spectator*, 2 February 1984.

<sup>7</sup> "Joe Hogan: The impact still spreading."



comprised only 7 percent of the MUW student population. By 1983, that figure had grown to 13 percent, and in 1985 it was 16 percent.<sup>8</sup>

The first groups of males at MUW were proactive students. The first males to hold offices in the Student Government Association were Paul Hampton, elected sophomore class election commissioner, and Abraham Shelton chosen as a senator for the Division of Fine and Performing Arts along with being named a freshman election commissioner. It would be another six years before a male would be elected to president of any student organization. In 1990, David Ivey became the first male Student Government Association (SGA) president of MUW.<sup>9</sup> Two students, Vint Ferguson and Stephen Wilson, were the first males to join the University's Modeling Squad.<sup>10</sup> The university even adopted a mascot similar to other coed universities. In August 1983, Ody Owl became the official mascot of MUW. The mascot was named for Emma Ody Pohl, the Physical Education department head from 1907 to 1955.<sup>11</sup> Also, in May of 1984 the first class of male students graduated with bachelor's degrees from MUW. They included James W. Bailey II, Frank Henry Edmondson Jr., Johnny Mendez, Stephen Ratliff, Gary Bruce Strohming, Mickey Devon Aldridge, and William F. Elam.<sup>12</sup>

Battles over the university's name raged immediately following the Supreme Court decision. Since the name of the university included "for Women" arguments arose over whether to drop the feminine connotation or to change the entire name altogether to reflect the new male presence at the university. Various options were suggested

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<sup>8</sup> Roland Wilkerson, "Unique MUW rituals cherished, but dowager outlook is missing," *The Commercial Appeal*, 10 March 1985.

<sup>9</sup> "MUW Elects First Male SGA President," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 29 March 1990.

<sup>10</sup> "One the Eve of Its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, MUW Assesses the Change in its Single-Sex Status," *The Daily Corinthian*, 8 November 1983.

<sup>11</sup> Margaret Nagle, "New Mascot gives a Hoot for W," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 23 Sept. 1983.

<sup>12</sup> Leigh Hogan, "MUW graduates include men; speaker tells them all to 'shine'," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 13 May, 1984, 3B.

including Mississippi University at Columbus, Eudora Welty University, Mississippi University for Women and Men, Mississippi University for People (MUP), Unisex University of Mississippi (UUM), Hastings University (after Olivia A. Valentine Hastings), and Reneau University (for Sallie Eola Reneau).<sup>13</sup> Men such as J. Hickel feared the public perception of going to a school with “for Women” in the name. Hickel said, “In order for MUW to stay in tune with the times, they are going to have to go through a lot of changes. I don’t think I would want my resume to read I had earned a degree from Mississippi University for Women.”<sup>14</sup> Many alumnae even seemed resolved that the name was going to change as a result of the ruling. Lillian Clemmons, a 1947 MSCW graduate, said, “Eventually they will have to change The W’s name because of the outcome of the Supreme Court’s decision... We have to be realistic about the situation and try not to be so sentimental.”<sup>15</sup>

By 1987, the question still remained over whether the university should institute a new name. MUW student Amy Hiester said, “People stumble over the name and never get past it.”<sup>16</sup> As editor of *The Spectator*, Hiester supported a name change in order to “shift our focus from the past to the future.”<sup>17</sup> Male students supported the possibility of a more inclusive and representative name for the institution. Frank Galinsky said, “If they want us to go here, they need to make it more a part of us...it’s kind of embarrassing

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<sup>13</sup> Bill Minor, “Watch Out for Cultural Shock,” *Enterprise Journal* (McComb), 8 July 1982. Hayes Johnson, “Two-thirds of voters say don’t mess with name of ‘W,’” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 4 October 1987. Frank Roberts, “Why Not Rename MUW Reneau University?” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 3 October 1988.

<sup>14</sup> Judy Bryan, “What do you think?” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 22 July 1982, 3A.

<sup>15</sup> Judy Bryan, “What do you think?”

<sup>16</sup> Hayes Johnson, “Students, alumni discuss possible new name for ‘The W,’” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 27 September 1987.

<sup>17</sup> Hayes Johnson, “Students, alumni discuss possible new name for ‘The W.’”

when you say you went to a school at a university for women.”<sup>18</sup> The Columbus City Council even wrote a letter to the Mississippi state Legislature and the College Board in support of a name change at Mississippi University for Women.<sup>19</sup> Councilmen said that members of the local community were pushing for the university to alter its name to include Columbus. There were many, however, who welcomed a change. One anonymous individual who wrote into *The Commercial Dispatch* offered a vivid take on the name of the university and said

Let’s face facts: MUW is slowly hemorrhaging to death. Due to past overbuilding, poor management and continuing weak enrollment levels, the taxpayers of our state are burdened with a faltering, backward-looking, second-rate educational institution in which one of every three buildings stands idle and useless. What’s more, the mindset of MUW’s small body of alumnae continues to live in the sweet, magnolia-scented dream world of the past instead of recognizing the harsh but logistical realities of the present. The time has come to be merciful. Let’s put a bullet in MUW’s head and put this proud but slowly dying institution out of its misery once and for all.<sup>20</sup>

Others, however, voiced their opposition to changing MUW’s name. Citing the name’s historical importance and its mission of educating women, many asked, “What name can possibly encompass this original purpose and MEN?”<sup>21</sup> Many alumni were angry at the gradual transformation the university was undergoing due to the Joe Hogan

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<sup>18</sup> Hayes Johnson, “Students, alumni discuss possible new name for ‘The W,’” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 27 September 1987.

<sup>19</sup> “City Supports New Name for MUW,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, n.d.

<sup>20</sup> Jennifer Allen, “Readers: MUW Needs A Name Change,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 24 June 1988.

<sup>21</sup> Beth Stowers, “Thinks Emma Ody Pohl ‘spinning in her grave,’” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 4 October 1987.

case. They saw any changes as attacks that would eventually lead to the closing or merging of the school. MUW 1980 alum Beth Stowers said,

In 1982, the ACLU backed Joe Hogan all the way to nursing school. So began a decline. The W went co-ed and lost a part of her uniqueness. Now there is a male student saying he is embarrassed to say he goes to the W. Why is he there? Now someone wants to change the name to make these ingrates feel better! I AM INCENSED...Let's rally and save our name. We have lost enough in the last six years.<sup>22</sup>

Traditionalists in favor of maintaining Mississippi University for Women resented changing the school's name for a minority of its population who chose to go to a school knowing prior its name and mission. Bridget Pieschel, both MUW 1979 alum and English instructor, wrote a reproachful letter to MUW's Alumnae Association officers in response to the president of the organization, Maggie Parker's, comments in *The Clarion-Ledger* in favor of a name change. In it, she pointed out "[men] choose to go [to MUW] and could choose to go to M.S.U twenty minutes away if they seriously resented the M.U.W. name."<sup>23</sup>

Another major factor in the decision process besides maintaining the university's history was economics. The university's administration feared losing alumni financial donations and support. Pieschel refers to this fear in her letter to the MUW Alumnae Association. According to Pieschel, 70.9 percent of MUW's Foundation budget came from alumnae assistance. She referred to specific examples of MUW alumnae in her

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<sup>22</sup> Beth Stowers, "Thinks Emma Ody Pohl 'spinning in her grave'."

<sup>23</sup> Bridget Pieschel to Maggie Parker, Elizabeth Gwin, Judy McLarty, Patsy McDaniel, Helen Perry Hopkins, and Jean Stringer Ellis, October 2, 1987, in subject file Name Change, Mississippi University for Women Museum, Columbus, Mississippi.

family, including herself, who would refuse to donate any longer should the name of the university change. Pieschel said, “I personally will not give another dollar to a school which no longer carries the respected identity it once had.”<sup>24</sup>

*The Clarion-Ledger* newspaper in Jackson conducted a survey where readers were asked to vote with a mail-in ballot. Two-thirds of 112 ballots responded negatively to the prospect of a name change. The newspaper received responses such as “Don’t mess with my ‘W’” and “Hell, no!”<sup>25</sup> The faculty held a meeting with the faculty council to discuss the need for a name change on October 18. In a unanimous decision, the faculty voted that the name should remain intact until further evidence was provided that the school’s enrollment issues were linked to the name of the university. Faculty council president Dr. Jo Spearman said, “If you change and take out ‘for Women’, you can never go back. The mission of the university comes first. The mission is what guides the university. You don’t look at the name change first.”<sup>26</sup>

The following year U.S. District Judge Glen Davidson dismissed the first case filed against MUW specifically targeting its name and mission. Filed by Wilbur Colom on behalf of Darrell Glenn and David Turner, the suit called to “stop the university from returning to its historic mission of emphasizing women’s education...order a gender-neutral name for the university...[and] require it to recruit male students as strongly as it recruits females.”<sup>27</sup> Davidson ruled, however, that since the students who filed the lawsuit were both enrolled in the university that they lacked constitutional standing to

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<sup>24</sup> Bridget Pieschel to Maggie Parker, Elizabeth Gwin, Judy McLarty, Patsy McDaniel, Helen Perry Hopkins, and Jean Stringer Ellis, October 2, 1987, in subject file Name Change, Mississippi University for Women Museum, Columbus, Mississippi.

<sup>25</sup> Hayes Johnson, “Two-thirds of voters say don’t mess with name of ‘W’,” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 4 October 1987.

<sup>26</sup> Megan Pratt, “MUW Faculty Council Votes For Caution in Name Change,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 18 October 1987.

<sup>27</sup> “Lawsuit for males seeks new name, mission for MUW,” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 4 January 1990.

dispute MUW's policies.<sup>28</sup> By 1988, the school witnessed its third vote in four years by the IHL Board over two words, "for Women". Each vote, in 1985, 1986, and again in 1988, the Board ultimately decided to maintain the school's mission and name.<sup>29</sup>

During the Glenn and Turner case, there was also discussion of returning MUW to its previous name and status as a state college rather than a university. Dr. Ray Cleere, Mississippi's commissioner of Higher Education, proposed the university restore the name Mississippi State College for Women and become closely aligned with MSU. Students at MUW conducted an informal telephone poll of other students, faculty, and staff. The results showed that out of 50 polled, 42 opposed Cleere's proposal while 4 favored it and 4 were undecided.<sup>30</sup> Others were dismayed at the idea of returning to college status. They praised all of the accomplishments that the university experienced under university standing. Accomplishments such as "a greater percentage of nursing graduate program students and graduating athletes, and has the highest ACT admission requirements...."<sup>31</sup> One student wrote, "MUW needs to capture a place in the future, not recapture the past...MUW must not spend its energies trying to recapture the past, glorious as it might have been."<sup>32</sup> Within three weeks, Cleere retracted the idea citing 'little interest' and that many felt it was 'inappropriate'.<sup>33</sup>

Only three years after admitting the first male student at Mississippi University for Women, the university was faced with the possibility of a merger with Mississippi State University (MSU). In response to a report prepared by Dr. Jack Foster; managing

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<sup>28</sup> "Lawsuit for males seeks new name, mission for MUW."

<sup>29</sup> "MUW's Fate Under Scrutiny 3<sup>rd</sup> Time in 3 Years," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 20 October 1988.

<sup>30</sup> Janette Ballman, "Critics, supporters speak out on Cleere's MUW proposal," *The Spectator*, 22 September 1988, 1.

<sup>31</sup> Deidra Jackson, "Why keep spelling out negatives?," *The Spectator*, 22 September 1988, 2.

<sup>32</sup> "Seeking a Beacon," *The Spectator*, 22 September 1988, 2.

<sup>33</sup> John Mott Coffey, "Ray Cleere Backpeddles MSCW Plan," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 4 October 1988.

partner of the national consulting firm State Research Associates of Lexington, KY; the State Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning (College Board) announced a proposal to merge Mississippi University for Women with Mississippi State University.<sup>34</sup> The Foster Report recommended several considerations for the future of MUW. Included options were closure, merger, privatization, forced cost reductions, or program transfers. Many argued in favor of the merger due to the close proximity of the two schools. Also, the state was faced with major financial strains and a merger was seen as providing a more cost effective system. In 1985, Mississippi operated eight fully functioning individual universities across the state. The College Board experienced pressure from state lawmakers as well as Governor Bill Allain to produce an alternative to operating so many individual schools that often duplicated similar programs. Therefore, schools such as MUW and Mississippi Valley State University in Itta Bena, Mississippi were considered for consolidation with nearby universities.

The first idea consisted of completely merging MUW with MSU by 1986, creating an estimated savings of over \$500,000 annually. Another option was to place MUW's administration under MSU's president James McComas and students from programs such as education, home economics, and fine arts the option of being awarded degrees from either university. This plan would have taken affect almost immediately on July 1, 1985. Finally, the last option considered by the College Board was to eliminate any graduate programs offered by both MUW and MSU. The thirteen member College

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<sup>34</sup> "Foster Report Suggests Three Alternatives for University," *Alumnae News: Bulletin of Mississippi University for Women*, vol. 97 No. 3, Dec. 1984-Jan. 1985, 8.

Board met in Jackson on March 20-21 to decide the fate of many small universities across the state, including MUW.<sup>35</sup>

In response to the College Board's proposal, students, faculty, staff, and alumni at MUW fought against any plans to end the university's existence as a separate institution. President Strobel maintained

Due to MUW...raising admission standards, toughening curricula,...coupled with...small campus atmosphere and the university's emphasis on education for young women, makes the coed college an important educational alternative the state can ill afford to close or merge.<sup>36</sup>

In his defense of the university's continued existence, Strobel pointed out that while the university was now coeducational its mission was still the education of women; therefore the school retained a unique identity. In a public relations campaign opposing the merging of MUW, the university sent out over 20,000 information packets to supporters and alumnae in order to advocate support of the school.<sup>37</sup> Betty Boyles Stone, President of the MUW Alumni Association of Lowndes County Chapter, published pleas and arguments against discussions of merging in various newspapers including *The Clarion-Ledger*. Stone argued, "Surely, MUW's hundred-year history of contributions to Columbus and Lowndes County, to the state and to the nation overbalances any slight, short-term savings."<sup>38</sup> By pointing to MUW's "hundred-year history" Stone in essence is referring to the university's identity as an all female institution. Strobel also informed McComas that MUW was not interested in merging with MSU. McComas

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<sup>35</sup> Andy Kanengiser, "Board discusses merger plan for MSU, MUW," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 10 March 1985.

<sup>36</sup> Roland Wilkerson, "MUW arms to fight closing," *The Commercial Appeal*. 6 February 1985.

<sup>37</sup> Roland Wilkerson, "MUW arms to fight closing," *The Commercial Appeal*. 6 February 1985.

<sup>38</sup> Betty Boyles Stone, "Report 'not in line with goals of MUW'," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 10 March 1985.



acknowledged that MUW “officials clearly were ‘opposed to any new administrative arrangements between our two universities.’”<sup>39</sup>

Staff, faculty, and alumnae at the university also combined forces to help the school financially. MUW received a five percent reduction in state appropriations for the 1985-86 academic calendar, thus bringing the total to \$7.76 million, a drop in over \$470,000 from the previous year. In May, the staff donated \$16,000 to MUW to help ease the financial difficulties of the school. The money went into scholarships for students and operating expenses. The faculty raised over \$10,500 in donations while alumnae pledged \$100,000 a year over five years for scholarship use. Also, President Strobel rejected a ten percent or \$6,030 pay raise since faculty and staff members of the University would not be receiving any pay increases.<sup>40</sup>

Even the local community stepped in to quash any possibility of the university’s closer or merging. The community feared the economic loss it would sustain if the school were to downsize or ultimately close. At the College Board’s meeting on March 20-21, a group of MUW supporters attended. The group was composed of concerned citizens as well as university leaders. Citizens from the local and surrounding communities pledged to provide any necessary funds to help keep the school separate from MSU. Boosters included Columbus lawyers, bankers, representatives from the Columbus Air Force Base, and business executives along with the mayors of Tupelo, Amory, Aberdeen and West Point.<sup>41</sup> The funds included \$500,000 in community funds for three years. Columbus Mayor James Trotter read a statement saying, “Columbus and Lowndes County pledges

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<sup>39</sup> “MSU president: MUW doesn’t want to merge,” *The Daily Herald*, 15 March 1985.

<sup>40</sup> Andy Kanengiser, “MUW staff members donate \$16,000 to ease crunch,” *Jackson Daily News*, 1 May 1985.

<sup>41</sup> George Hazard, “College Board Ponders: Supporters Urging Three Vote,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 20 March 1985.

its total support—financial and otherwise—to maintaining The W as a free-standing institution.”<sup>42</sup> While a large show of support existed for the maintenance of the university as a separate school, a lack of the same support had existed when the school faced coeducation. Such support was based on financial gain rather than any commitment to the gendered identity of the university. The community saw only advantages to the school becoming coeducational and only when the university faced consolidation did citizens fear the economic loss such a decision would create.

On March 21, the College Board upheld MUW’s existence as a freestanding university. The College Board voted instead for the proposal that MUW phase out several of its graduate programs and work with MSU to eliminate any duplication of graduate programs. As a result, MUW cut its graduate programs in education and home economics. The decision was due not only to the support and efforts on behalf of MUW, but also to the state Attorney General, Ed Pittman, announcing the College Board of Higher Education held no constitutional authority to alter MUW’s structure.<sup>43</sup>

In 1992, the possibility of closing or merging MUW resurfaced. In response to the U. S. Supreme Court’s ruling on June 26, 1992 that Mississippi’s State College Board of Higher Education fully comply with the 1975 class action lawsuit on behalf of Jake Ayers Sr. compelling the desegregation of Mississippi’s institutions of higher learning, the closing of MUW reemerged.<sup>44</sup> The main reasons provided sounded similar to ones used in 1986, economics, academics, and race. Once again, the university, alums, and the surrounding community were outraged at the idea of closing or merging MUW with

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<sup>42</sup> George Hazard, “College Board Ponders: Supporters Urging Three Vote.”

<sup>43</sup> Lynn Watkins, “College Board forced to spare Valley, MUW,” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 21 March 1985.

<sup>44</sup> Marc Kuykendall, “To Prevent School from Being Closed: Anticipates Closing will be Part of Plan,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 18 October 1992.

MSU. Articles in *The Commercial Dispatch* disputed lawmakers and the state board's claims to all three reasons given in support of MUW's closure. Closing MUW would not save any money, many claimed, because it only received 2.3 percent of the state's higher education budget. Academically, the university possessed Mississippi's highest entering ACT scores and was "one of the top 30 universities in the Southeast in the number of women undergraduates who went on to receive doctorates between 1979 and 1988."<sup>45</sup> Lastly, MUW saw a 34 percent increase in African American enrollment since 1986 thus giving MUW "the second-highest percentage of black enrollment among the state's five historically white schools: 18.6 percent."<sup>46</sup> Mississippi State Senator Doug Anderson recognized the public's aversion to closing any universities throughout Mississippi in response to the College Boards plans by announcing, "There is not enough support to carry [closures] out."<sup>47</sup>

In 1990, Wilbur Colom once again sued MUW on the basis of male discrimination. Colom filed a class-action lawsuit stating MUW discriminated in its name, mission, and recruiting practices favoring females over males. The lawsuit, on behalf of Keith Washington and Phyllis Pleasant, the mother of Edward Pleasant, claimed that the two men did not apply to MUW because of its female emphasis and name. In one proposed consent decree by Colom, he called for the following:

The diploma, scholastic transcript, catalog and other formal documents of MUW shall have languages such as 'admitting men since 1982' or 'and men since 1982' or 'and now men'...to indicate the school is coeducational displayed directly above, below, beside or near MUW's name. MUW will employ a male recruiter

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<sup>45</sup> "MUW: Keep it Open, Funded," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 16 October 1992.

<sup>46</sup> "MUW: Keep it Open, Funded."

<sup>47</sup> "MUW Backers Prepare for Long Battle Against Closing," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 11 October 1992.

for the office of admissions...[and] will develop and use a brochure designed specifically for use in the recruitment of male students. The main sign in front of Columbus Hall...will be altered to reflect that MUW is coeducational. MUW will agree that, based on gender, people...will not be intentionally excluded or discouraged from participating in official university-sponsored rituals.<sup>48</sup>

Many reacted differently to the new lawsuit. MUW Alumnae Association president Ricki Garrett expressed frustration. Garrett said, “We are hoping it can be settled soon so we can get on with the business of educating students.”<sup>49</sup> A settlement was reached by September 1991. As part of the first major changes in accordance with the settlement MUW adopted a new public relations tagline and became Mississippi University for Women and Smart Men Too. While the official name did not change, all marketing materials including brochures and T-shirts included the new motto. Student, Christopher Ricks, enjoyed the new slogan. He said, “I think [it’s] neat.”<sup>50</sup> Garrett also supported the new tagline. She said, “It is one that appeals to everybody—(alumni), students and prospective students.”<sup>51</sup> Also, graduating students in 1992 were issued diplomas with the new tag line “admitting men since 1982”. One male student reacted indifferently to the change. John Cothran said, “Personally I don’t think it was needed...the people who would not hire somebody from The W will still not hire them with ‘admitting men since

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<sup>48</sup> “State College Board Seeks Settlement of MUW’s Federal Discrimination Suit,” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 24 September 1991.

<sup>49</sup> “State College Board Seeks Settlement of MUW’s Federal Discrimination Suit.”

<sup>50</sup> Andy Kanengiser, “University’s putting it in writing: MUW—and M,” *The Clarion-Ledger*, 28 October 1991.

<sup>51</sup> Andy Kanengiser, “University’s putting it in writing: MUW—and M.”

1982' on the degree"<sup>52</sup> Although MUW incorporated a new tagline, the university was still typically known simply as Mississippi University for Women.

On the twentieth anniversary of the landmark *MUW v. Joe Hogan* decision, many reassessed the impact on the university. In an article in *The Commercial Dispatch* on June 30, 2002 Hogan's lawyer, Colom, reiterated the legal significance of the suit not only on the school, but on the country as well. Colom said, "If you look at the legal scholarship, this case was the first on what constituted unlawful sex discrimination."<sup>53</sup> The effects of the *MUW v. Hogan* case reached beyond the gates of the university's campus. The case heavily influenced the decisions to open the last two remaining single-sex universities in the country, The Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina, and Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in Lexington, Virginia. Both experienced similar lawsuits as MUW beginning in the early 1990s. In 1990, in response to a letter written by the U.S. Justice Department claiming VMI was in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Virginia Attorney General filed a lawsuit on behalf of VMI claiming their all male admission policy was in fact legal and acceptable. Upon the threat of coeducation at VMI, administrators proposed a similar and equal program called the Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership (VWIL) that would operate at Mary Baldwin College, a private women's college only 30 miles from VMI. The school was blasted in the media for creating what critics felt was a similar situation to racial segregation.<sup>54</sup> A *New York Times* editorial declared "Separate-but-equal is a doctrine long discredited for

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<sup>52</sup> Susan May Stachowski, "MUW Diplomas Now Reflect School's Coeducational Status," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 25 May 1992.

<sup>53</sup> John Mott Coffey, "Forever Changed," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 30 June 2002.

<sup>54</sup> McCandless, 109-110.

addressing racial inequality. There should be the same presumption against using it when the discrimination is against women.”<sup>55</sup>

Simultaneously, The Citadel experienced challenges to its single-sex male status as well. In December 1992, a high school student, Shannon Faulkner, applied for admission to The Citadel while leaving references to her gender blank. She was accepted. Once the university realized her gender, her application was rescinded and Faulkner sued claiming her Fourteenth Amendment rights were violated. Unlike VMI or MUW, The Citadel was supported by a state law called the Concurrent Resolution 4170 passed in May of 1993 in South Carolina. The Resolution established “a policy of diversity in education which include[d] single-sex institutions where there [was] sufficient demand to support the same.”<sup>56</sup> Attorneys for The Citadel utilized Concurrent Resolution 4170 to defend against coeducation at the school. On August 12, 1995, however, The Citadel was ordered by the court to admit Faulkner. She withdrew one week later. The case continued, however, with a new plaintiff, Nancy Mellette.<sup>57</sup>

Both cases were resolved in 1996 when the Supreme Court ruled on the issue of coeducation at VMI. The Court ruled that the “United States maintains that the Constitution’s equal protection guarantee precludes Virginia from reserving exclusively to men the unique educational opportunities VMI affords.”<sup>58</sup> The decision even cited MUW in the Courts opinion stating,

In *Mississippi Univ. for Women v. Hogan* (1982), a case actually involving a single-sex admissions policy in higher education, the Court held that the exclusion

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<sup>55</sup> “V.M.I.’s Unacceptable Remedy,” *The New York Times*, 1 October 1993.

<sup>56</sup> *Shannon Richey Faulkner et al. v. James E. Jones, Jr., et al.*, Civil Action No. 2: 93-488-2, U.S. Court of the District of South Carolina Charleston Division, 22 July 1994, 16-17.

<sup>57</sup> McCandless, 110-113.

<sup>58</sup> *United States v. Virginia et al.*, 518 U.S. 515, 26 June 1996, 519.

of men from a nursing program violated the Equal Protection Clause. This holding did place Virginia on notice that VMI's men-only admissions policy was open to serious question. [Also,]...the Commonwealth and VMI were not quick enough to react to the "further developments" in this Court's evolving jurisprudence ... That is to say, the concurrence believes that after our decision in *Hogan* (which held a program of the Mississippi University for Women to be unconstitutional - without any reliance on the fact that there was no corresponding Mississippi all-men's program), the Commonwealth should have known that what this Court expected of it was . . . yes!, the creation of a state all-women's program. Any lawyer who gave that advice to the Commonwealth ought to have been either disbarred or committed. (The proof of that pudding is today's 6-Justice majority opinion.)<sup>59</sup>

In 1982, the decision against MUW was split 5 to 4, but over ten years later, the split was 7 to 1 against VMI.<sup>60</sup> VMI was declared coeducational, but did not receive its first female students until August of 1997. The Citadel, however, upon hearing of the Supreme Court decision, quickly opened their doors to women on June 28<sup>th</sup> of that year.<sup>61</sup>

The *Mississippi University for Women v. Joe Hogan* case left a long term mark on the structure and existence of the University. The Supreme Court decision stripped the school of its unique niche among other Mississippi schools and ultimately challenged its name and very existence. By maintaining a mission to educate both men and women while offering a special focus on women's education, MUW has been able to salvage a purpose for its own survival. The larger impact resulted in the coeducation of the two

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<sup>59</sup> *United States v. Virginia et al.*, 518 U.S. 515, 26 June 1996, 561, 594-595.

<sup>60</sup> Biskupic and Witt, 290.

<sup>61</sup> McCandless, 115-116.

remaining single-sex public universities The Citadel and VMI. Ultimately, the coeducation of MUW was the final legal word to end the era of single-sex schools in the South.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

The events surrounding the coeducation of the public university Mississippi University for Women and the division that resulted epitomize the larger societal shift that transpired throughout the South over single-sex education. Early in American history social customs and beliefs held that the ideal educational environment was segregated based on not only race, but gender as well. The Southern ideal regarded women as genteel and ladylike. Although much of the nation transitioned to coeducational facilities by the mid 1900s, schools in the South did not officially adopt integration of the sexes until the last years of the twentieth century. It took one man, Joe Hogan, to legally end an era of single gender public higher education in America. The case created an explosion of debates, however, that revealed a polarization of society between traditionalists and reformers. For MUW, the debate did not end with the Supreme Court decision. Instead, the institution continues to struggle between maintaining vestiges of its single-sex status while conversely adjusting to coeducation.

Mississippi University for Women began in an era of little opportunity for women in higher education. Considered revolutionary in its establishment, the school was publicly funded and incorporated a multifunctional curriculum into its structure. The university would not be singular in nature, but rather include departments in liberal arts, industrial arts, and normal training. MUW was created in the aftermath of the Civil War alongside other public colleges throughout the state such as Alcorn University (now Alcorn State University) in 1870 and Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College (Mississippi A & M now Mississippi State University) in 1878. Although it experienced years of turmoil and change, the school also flourished and thrived. At its height in the

1960s and 1970s, the school had an enrollment of over 3,000 students. In 1979, however, the very existence and future of the university was called into question by Joe Hogan's challenge to traditional gender separation.

The suit brought by Joe Hogan over the single-sex admission policies at MUW traveled all the way to the United States Supreme Court by 1982. The case caused supporters of both sides to divide into two distinct groups, traditionalists versus reformers. Traditionalists argued in favor of the university's continued all-female status based on several factors such as tradition, history, and educational benefits. On the other hand, reformers demanded change and disagreed with and at times ridiculed what they viewed as antiquated educational standards. Such arguments echoed the debate at similar single-sex public institutions across the South.

Despite MUW's continued existence and the preservation of its name, the school continues to struggle over its identity as a coeducational university while trying to maintain the vestiges of a single-sex institution. While not specifically over the issue of males attending the University, the school is currently fighting to sustain its original Alumni Association. In February 2007, Dr. Claudia Limbert, president of MUW since 2002, took steps to sever the University's connections with the Mississippi University for Women's Alumnae Association (MUWAA now Mississippi University for Women's Alumni Association). Immediately, two conflicting sides emerged, those opposed to change or traditionalists and those in favor of a transformation or reformers. The division is similar to the one that occurred over the events of the early 1980s.

Events began on April 28, 2006 when Dr. Limbert ordered the seizure of alumni records and the locks changed to MUWAA's offices, located in Stovall House on the

MUW campus. Employees were asked to leave and alumni relations director Patsy McDaniel and assistant alumni relations director Tracey Dexter Ervin were placed on administrative leave for one week. Both women are alums of MUW, McDaniel graduated in 1964 and Ervin in 1999. <sup>1</sup> Charges by Dr. Limbert against McDaniel and Ervin included attempts to undermine her as president and the release of confidential information about financial contributors to unauthorized individuals.<sup>2</sup>

Many alumni were shocked at the suddenness and methods utilized to handle the situation and felt personally attacked by the administration. They pointed to Dr. Limbert as the reason and cause of the problems. Jane Dearing Dennis of Little Rock, Arkansas, an alum from 1980, demanded answers. Dennis said, “This is a complete fiasco and a travesty. I am feeling entirely ashamed that the president of my alma mater is acting in such a vindictive and secretive manner.”<sup>3</sup> Many responded with vocal condemnations in the local newspaper such as Bebe Roberts Freeman, alum from 1965, who wrote an angry letter to the editor. Freeman said, “Our alma mater has been demeaned and our reputation damaged by the unexplained action by Dr. Limbert. We have been discounted and marginalized...I say, “Sisters (and...men), rise up. Fight back, and reclaim our alma mater.”<sup>4</sup>

In spite of the backlash over the Alumni Office firings, the MUWAA and Dr. Limbert tried to reconcile and work together. By August, McDaniel’s was replaced by Jan Miller, former manager of Main Street Columbus and 1979 MUW graduate.<sup>5</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> John Mott Coffey, “MUW alumni outraged over probe of office,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 2 May 2006.

<sup>2</sup> John Mott Coffey, “Records request yields MUW alumni office e-mails,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 28 June 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Jane Dearing Dennis, “Wants Answers,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 5 May 2006, 4A.

<sup>4</sup> Bebe Roberts Freeman, “A Call to Action,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 8 May 2006, 4A.

<sup>5</sup> John Mott Coffey, “MUW looks ahead with posts filled,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 6 August 2006.

addition, as a result of the events at MUW, the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) ordered all state universities to formalize their affiliation agreements with their alumni associations. Therefore, Dr. Limbert and the MUWAA attempted to work together in order to create a new affiliation agreement. As part of the negotiations, Dr. Limbert pushed for a variety of alterations including changing part of MUWAA's name from "Alumnae" to "Alumni" to reflect the coed status of the University. The organization had maintained a female gender specific name even after twenty years of MUW producing male alums. In addition, she called for more control and veto power over the Association's bylaws. Changes to the bylaws could not be made without the president's approval and the MUW alumni director would appoint more members (four) to the MUWAA officer-nominating committee than the association president (three).<sup>6</sup>

Officers in MUWAA were reserved about the proposed affiliation agreement since no other university president in the state maintained such control over the school's alumni association.<sup>7</sup> Association president Betty Lou Jones said, "I feel like that document would cause us to make significant changes that we at this point are not ready to make."<sup>8</sup> Dr. Limbert, however, issued an ultimatum on October 24 requiring the document signed within twenty-four hours or the University would sever its relationship with the 117-year-old Alumnae Association.<sup>9</sup> In view of the ultimatum, the Alumni

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<sup>6</sup> John Mott Coffey, "Agreement gives MUW more power over alumni association," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 30 November 2006.

<sup>7</sup> John Mott Coffey, "MUW alums, Limbert working out new agreement," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 18 October 2006.

<sup>8</sup> John Mott Coffey, "MUW alums, Limbert working out new agreement."

<sup>9</sup> John Mott Coffey, "Wednesday deadline given for alums to OK agreement," *The Commercial Dispatch*, 24 October 2006.

Association signed the new agreement. Two months later, however, Dr. Limbert disaffiliated MUW from its ties with MUWAA.

The disaffiliation led to immediate litigation on behalf of MUWAA against MUW and the IHL. According to Dr. Limbert, her decision to dissolve the connection between the two organizations was because of the inability of MUWAA to agree on a new constitution governing how the group works on behalf of the school. Dr. Limbert said, “It is important that the university have a healthy, supportive and future-focused alumni association that is committed to working with the university.”<sup>10</sup> The Alumni Association, however, wished for more flexibility in both choosing its leaders and in the methods by which it supports the University. Alumni Association president Jones said, “The affiliation agreement approved in November...clearly mandates that the association is an independent entity. The alums have met the required obligations.”<sup>11</sup> Members of MUWAA argued that as an independent and separate organization not under the control of MUW, the Alumni Association could therefore not be legally dissolved by MUW’s president.<sup>12</sup>

The current division at MUW between the University and its Alumni Association is a battle of power between forces wishing to maintain and continue characteristics of the former single-sex institution and others who seek to dissolve such aspects.

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<sup>10</sup> John Mott Coffey, “Limbert to ax ‘W’ Alumnae Association,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 2 February 2007.

<sup>11</sup> John Mott Coffey, “Limbert to ax ‘W’ Alumnae Association.”

<sup>12</sup> Garthia Elena Halbert, “Judge: Ousted alums must sue ‘W,’ not just Limbert,” *The Commercial Dispatch*, 3 April 2007, p. 3.

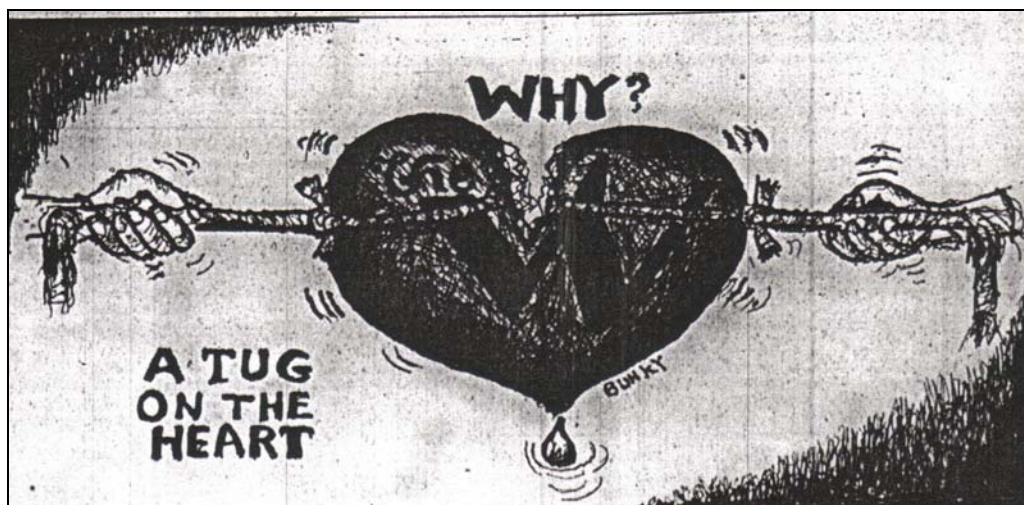


Figure 8. Illustration by “Bunky” with heart in the middle labeled “The W” (*The Commercial Dispatch*, 22 April 2007)

The conflict still rages in the Mississippi court system and will likely determine the University’s future ability to sustain features of its previously single-sex status. The struggles over the schools identity can be traced back, however, to 1980 with the filing of Joe Hogan’s lawsuit.

The subsequent decision in favor of Hogan is important on a legal level because it set the landmark judgment in sexual discrimination and the Fourteenth Amendment. It later influenced the fate of the last two remaining public single-sex universities, the Virginia Military Institute and The Citadel. The case and the events surrounding it were more than that, however. The schism that occurred over the coeducation of MUW represents the larger societal shift that occurred towards coeducation all across the South during the twentieth century. Ultimately, MUW was the first and the last of its kind in the country, a single-sex public institution of higher learning for women. Currently, the university is embroiled in a dispute between Claudia Limbert, president of MUW, and her disaffiliation with the school’s Alumnae Association. As a result, MUW still struggles to identify its place in the state’s school system and within society at large.

## **APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF WILBUR O. COLOM, ESQ.**

Tape #1  
May 11, 2007  
The Colom Law Firm  
200 Sixth Street North  
Columbus, MS 39701  
Wilbur Colom's Law Office

Interviewee: Wilbur O. Colom [**WC**]

Interviewer: Mona K. Vance [**MV**]

Transcribed by: Mona K. Vance

Biography: Wilbur O. Colom is a founding partner of The Colom Law Firm, started in Columbus, Mississippi in 1977 [In 1979, the practice operated as Steighner and Colom; later as Colom, Mitchell, and Colom; and then as Colom and Colom]. Colom was born in Ripley, Mississippi and graduated from Howard University in 1968. After graduating from Antioch School of Law in 1976 Colom served on the Board of Governors at Antioch College from 1978 to 1984. He was an adjunct professor at Mississippi University for Women in 1980, and at the University of Mississippi School of Law in 1985. He served as a municipal court judge in Columbus from 1985-87. He is married to Dorothy Colom, a Chancery Court Judge for Lowndes County.

Note: The words 'um' and 'uh' have been edited out. Also, any long pauses and word repetitions from either Wilbur O. Colom or Mona K. Vance have been edited. Contractions remain as they were spoken.

[Side A of Tape #1]

**MV:** This is Mona Vance on May 11, 2007 interview with Wilbur O. Colom in his office in the Court Square Towers in Columbus, Mississippi. It is twelve, noon. Okay. My first question is just going to be a general question. In your own words, tell me about the Joe Hogan case and your experience with it.

**WC:** Do you want...I'm trying to, you gotta...you want sort of the history of the case?

**MV:** Yes, that would be good.

**WC:** How it started? Or what?

**MV:** Well, let me kind of tell you what I'm doing. That might give you a good direction. My thesis is basically taking the Joe Hogan case and the importance of it, and, you know, and telling the history of it, but saying that there was a division that was created because of the case and it was between traditionalists and reformers. And this division was

occurring all across the South with, say, civil rights cases and such like that and coeducation....

**WC:** Huh-mm.

**MV:** ...And this shift in Southern culture and that's just basically my argument. That because MUW [Mississippi University for Women] was the first school of its kind it's important to know how coeducation affected the school because that case eventually affected VMI [Virginia Military Institute], the Citadel, and such.

**WC:** Well, I probably didn't see it from a cultural point of view.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** I saw it from a legal point of view. I was fresh out of law school. I had worked at the Supreme Court, not as a clerk, but as an intern for Chief Justice Burger [Warren E. Burger 1907-1995, Supreme Court Justice 1969-1986]. So, I'd been around a lot of constitutional law discussions, as we would sit in on the arguments....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...I was interested in constitutional law. And one of my dearest friends was a George Cochran who's a law professor at the University of Mississippi....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...constitutional law professor. So, when Joe Hogan came into my office with the issue what I knew about it was that the law on gender discrimination was changing....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...and that it was, at that time, unsettled.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And, as you may recall, the Equal Rights Amendment was out there and they were trying to pass it.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** And...if had the Equal Rights Amendment had passed that would have placed distinctions based upon sex....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...at the same level of scrutiny by courts. Disfavored scrutiny by courts as race.



**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** So, this uncertain area of law...It seemed to me to be an interesting constitutional argument. And when I took the case, I sort of understood from the beginning...and I brought George Cochran in to help me from the University [University of Mississippi] and a gentleman named Wayne Drinkwater [Attorney with Bradley Arant Law Firm in Jackson, Mississippi]....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...who was sort of an outstanding lawyer and had clerked for...at the Supreme Court himself.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** Much more of a lawyer than I am.

**MV:** I did see his name several times in your collection [*Papers of Wilbur O. Colom* located at the University of Mississippi Law Library].

**WC:** Yes. Well, actually at the time, when we were going to the Supreme Court I could not sign a brief because I was actually too young as a lawyer to be a....

**MV:** Oh.

**WC:** ...to sign a brief. I think it was only a month or so before the oral arguments was I eligible to argue the case.

**MV:** Oh wow.

**WC:** Cause you gotta think you have to be practicing law five years. It was some number. I had not done it.

**MV:** Oh. Huh.

**WC:** So, that's the context in which I took it [the case] and Joe Hogan understood that this case was going to be a precedence setting case.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And it was filed having knowing that.

**MV:** Huh-mm. What was your experience with The W [Mississippi University for Women] prior to the Hogan case?

**WC:** I had actually taught a course at The W.

**MV:** Oh really?

**WC:** As an adjunct professor. I can't recall what it was. It was some kind of law related course, I think.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** Business law, publishing law. Just something law, law something.

**MV:** Yeah.

**WC:** So I had actually taught there. My experience with The W had been somewhat ambiguous. The W, at that time, we had just gone through the worst parts of racial integration. It hadn't really settled at all. It wasn't even...the school system had been...in Columbus...had only been completely desegregated in 1972.

**MV:** Okay.

**WC:** So, you know, you're less than a decade at the time that this lawsuit is filed.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** Within a year...a year before that there was litigation over getting black people on the City Council [Columbus].

**MV:** Oh.

**WC:** I mean there were no blacks on the city government holding office. There was, I think there was none in the county [Lowndes]. I mean...this was...so in the mix...you had this really...cauldron of...where you would mix in this issue of race that was really creating tumult. And then you bring into this question of sex....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...discrimination at this school [Mississippi University for Women] it really was problematic. Now you ended up with a white guy [Joe Hogan] and a black lawyer [Colom]. But it was an interesting legal question. I thought the community was...I was actually...some very unkind things were said to me.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** A lot of blacks felt I was devoting energy on an issue where race was really much more important than sexual discrimination.

**MV:** Huh-mm. That must have been an interesting dynamic.

**WC:** Yeah. And so there was a, you know, “Why are you devoting time to that?” I had...I was doing a lot of civil rights litigation at that time. Some of the female lawyers particularly since a lot of the female lawyers including our local chancellor who became Supreme Court Justice and became President of The W....

**MV:** Interim President?

**WC:** Yeah, Interim President [Lenore L. Prather, 1931-present; Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice, 1982; Interim President of MUW from July 2001 to June 2002] Was my local chancellor.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** And so she felt that The W gave women unusual opportunity and that this would be a setback. And she said that to me....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...said it to me for the next twenty years. [Laughter] She'd say well I like that Wilbur Colom except for him doing that Hogan case. [Laughter]. I think she ultimately changed her mind about that. I sort of...I jokingly told people...and I said this about a number of cases that I've handled, I say in twenty years you'll praise me. [Laughter] Because you'll see in the future...you can see the trends in the law in society.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And, you know, you can resist those trends...or you cannot. Now, there are a lot of trends that are very unpleasant. I think a lot of the pathology we see in society today...if you really just put your antennae up twenty years ago you could've seen it...you could have seen it coming.

**MV:** Yeah.

**WC:** You know you could see the music, the culture, the absence of marriages, the sexual morays changing...you're going to end up with a lot of kids out of wedlock. You know you could see that coming. I'm not making a value judgment about it, but most...a lot of people can't...won't put their antennae's up....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...and see what's coming. And that's very important for a society...to really understand what's coming. Cause you really can affect the future.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** It's just the present you can't affect. [Laughter] I always think it's ridiculous to me the people who said live here and for the day...no, live for today and not for tomorrow. And I always say to myself, you know something, all these self-help books, that is the most ridiculous concept [Laughter] I've ever heard.

**MV:** Yeah.

**WC:** Really what you do today affects tomorrow. For example, if you control your diet today, it'll improve your health years from now, but you know something, it won't do a thing for you today.

**MV:** Yeah.

**WC:** If you save today, it'll improve your wealth years from now, but you know what it will do you for you today? Not one single thing.

**MV:** That's true.

**WC:** The importance is to look for the long term and if you do now, if you do now and do it early enough in life...if you do what's good in the long term, the short term will take care of itself. So, you see this trend. So, I thought it was an interesting issue in that sense, so...but I filed the case...it was really three lawyers involved myself, George Cochran, Wayne Drinkwater and they were more...they're more the brain-trust behind this cause I was a fairly young lawyer. And we were tried for a [inaudible] sentence. One of the interesting historical things that Judge Senter [Lyonel Thomas Senter, Jr., 1933-present; United States District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi, 1979-1998] told me, who was the District Court Judge, who ruled against me. Right? Well, years later he said to me, "Well, Wilbur, I said, he said, I gotta thank you for The W case." He said, "Why?" I said, "Why?" He said, "My son, the one that was up to Ole Miss [University of Mississippi] drank and partied to much so he never could get finished at Ole Miss. So, after he finally, you know, I got him out of Ole Miss I sent him down to The W [Laughter] were he didn't have all these fraternities and parties going on so he finished up."

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** And so he's like, "I guess I'm glad...I'm glad you got me overruled."

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** So.

**MV:** Well, when you brought the case did you have any kind of anticipation as to how the reaction was going to be? I mean cause you had dealt with Civil Rights.

**WC:** Yeah, I had come here and I had sued Johnson Tombigbee Furniture Manufacturing, which was one of the biggest employers. I had...you'd see headlines calling me "Civil Rights Lawyer". I had filed cases against...we called it...when people couldn't pay fines they would hold you in jail....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...which was unconstitutional. And I would file a habeas corpus petition....

**MV:** Oh.

**WC:** ...to get people released so they could pay the fines on installment.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** I actually had one case I was reminded of by my son not long ago where a woman, an unwed mother, had had her baby at the hospital and they would not release her baby to 'til she paid her bill.

**MV:** Wow.

**WC:** I had actually gotten involved in that. So I was...I was always, you know, I had always been involved in quite a few sensitive cases. I didn't think they were controversial, I just thought they were sensitive. And so, my response was that...I have done a lot of stupid things in life, some very bad mistakes that I've made. Things I've done not very well...

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** But sometimes you know that you're right. Sometimes you just know that you know that you're right. That was one of those cases [*Mississippi University for Women v. Joe Hogan*] where I knew that I knew I was right. I didn't know that they were going to rule for me....

**MV:** Yeah.

**WC:** ...I barely won, five to four. And I knew it was going to be close. And I knew it was going to be five to four, but I thought Sandra Day O'Connor [1930; United States Supreme Court Justice 1981-2006] was going to rule against me. And one of the other Justices we had anticipated was going to vote for us, who didn't vote for us. And so our five/four was a slightly different formulation than they had....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...than we initially anticipated. But it was just something I would withstand. I mean it was unnerving. People were critical of you, but I was confident I was right. But

you know, I always tell people this...you know, everybody loves this lone guy, who can stand out there on the hill by himself against the prevailing winds and pursue a goal based upon principle.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And we create those people, those heroes and those people of character. Right? But there's two kinds of people who do that, there are people of character and heroes and there are fools. [Laughter] So, you could be either one of them...

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...and it looks the same. [Laughter] So you could go out there and do something...and I've seen people they think they're being courageous and acting on principle and I say to myself, no, you're really just a fool. So, I was hoping I was not a fool.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** And so I took it with the understanding that there was going to be some criticism, but that I would...that ultimately people would understand and they would say in ten or fifteen years from now, Oh that was a good thing to do.

**MV:** Huh-mm. Well, you had mentioned the reaction that you got, some negative reactions. What form did that take and what kind of things were they saying?

**WC:** It was two kinds of forms. You know, we lived...you lived in segregated communities. I mean, as a professional I had more contact with the white society probably than other...than the average black person. But among blacks they would say to me things like, you know, there are a lot of other important things you could do, you need to be suing some of these companies that are discriminating and, you know, what's going on with the public school system....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...they're firing the black teachers, they're doing this, they're doing that. You know, you need to focus on those things and you just...not that they disagreed with it, they thought there was too much energy being put in it they thought I could devote that energy to something else. They also didn't like, its sort of what I call this victim selfishness, you know. They did not like the comparison being drawn between themselves and women.

**MV:** Oh.

**WC:** That they were being a discriminated group. How could that be, you know.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** You know, and there was some valid argument. I've always made one argument that there is a big difference in discrimination against blacks and women...enormous one big discrimination. White men always have white girls.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And so it means white daughters. [Laughter] And if everybody would integrate...if we all had children...for example, everybody had mixed blood kids they would suddenly not be prejudice. Cause suddenly, when you've got a kid that's half black, suddenly I don't care what your prejudices were they tend to go away.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** [Laughter] But, you know, so I think that one, that men have daughters, white males do who are the dominant people in society. And the second thing about it is that white women actually have more wealth than anyone in society. Because of their longevity....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...they outlive their husbands and more wealth actually passes to white women....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...than anyone else in our society. Now, this is also true, they tend to then turn it over to men.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** So, they don't tend to control their own money. Right. So, they don't become the ones who handle money.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** But they actually do inherit it. And so, the biggest difference between blacks and whites I thought in 1980 was that because of their experiences in America blacks had no net worth...hardly any at all. They had no inherited wealth.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And where white females did have inherited wealth. So, consequently once change...once your mental state changed....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...they had tools to do something with it, i.e. money. That's the reason they're doing so much better in business now because they come to the game with inherited wealth.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** But anyway, so, that's the criticism on the blacks side. On the whites side, it was just kind of stay out of our business, you know, why are you getting into this, you know, we like it this way....ya'll just creating some disruption...intention is unnecessary...it's fine like it is. Kinda that sort of thing, you know.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** You know, why be a pest? Nothing physically threatening or anything of harm. But just, you know, it's a testy issue why dig it up.

**MV:** Were these mainly verbal, you know, just through conversations....

**WC:** Oh yeah.

**MV:** ...or did they write you letters?

**WC:** No, no one.

**MV:** No.

**WC:** No one like wrote me a letter. I think there were editorials. People writing letters to the editors. I think maybe a couple of them, not many, but people had strong views about...and it was almost exclusively women. Actually, I never had a white guy complain to me. It was white women who said you're trying to mess up our institution.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And it has a history, and it has a purpose, and it's how white women have succeeded. Just look at the records. And why would you want to change that.

**MV:** Right

**WC:** And it was purely on that basis. And actually one of the interesting things someone said to me was...you shouldn't change things cause we've done it better when we integrated our school and we let blacks in. We did a better job of integrating than any of the other schools. You as a black person should really want to keep The W because we were the ones who did a good job of integrating. And its been a very easy and pleasant affair because women don't have all the trouble that men have.



**MV:** Right. Integration was thought of as a race rather than sexual...

**WC:** Right. But they thought that they did that well and that the black person should want to encourage to keep a single-sex school like The W.

**MV:** Yeah.

**WC:** Cause they had integrated racially so well. And it's probably true. They probably did do a better job integrating racially....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...than the other schools in the state. So, that was the totality of it. I mean, all the political institutions sort of backed it up, you know, kind of the official word even among men....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...was that they were for The W winning. And they would say so publicly, but that's because of the perception of the political power....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...of The W women, you know. They had the reputation they could defeat anybody in political office and so if you went against them the alumnae would end your political career.

**MV:** Oh. The reactions that you got was it mainly restricted to say Columbus or did it go statewide or...?

**WC:** It was, yeah, it was almost...it was women and statewide. So it would come up. I would go to other places in the state particularly among Republican women that had gone to The W....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...who would say something to me, I just can't believe that you would do...that you brought that lawsuit....

**MV:** Yeah.

**WC:** ...trying to destroy our tradition. But it would go no further than that.

**MV:** Yeah. Let's see. What has been...I mean, I know that that was the reaction that you got initially and you had kind of hit on this a little bit, but what has the reaction been over time? It's been positive or negative.

**WC:** I think immediately, almost immediately it became very positive among men. And there was the issue about the name change. It was...why keep the name?...it should fit The W. Which I think is a big mistake but it's a mistake they have a right to make I think at this point. I mean, over time, slowly women have come around. To the point that last night I was...I usually use a limo when I'm going someplace....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...and last night the driver of the limo was a white W [MUW] student who was born in 1983 and I said to her as I was riding in the vehicle I said, "I represented Joe Hogan" and she said, "Uh, okay." I said, "Do you know who Joe Hogan is?" She said, "No." I said, "I represented the first guy that went to The W."

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And she said, "Oh, oh. Way back then." [Laughter] She said, "I'm surprised, you don't look like you're that old." [Laughter] I said, "It was just a year before you were born." [Laughter] We ended up somehow getting to that point. And so to her it was like oh that happened sometime like, you know, back past....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...World War II or something like that...[Laughter] you know, World War II so it's the kind of perception to them it's almost like it's always been this way.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** And over time it has just been progressively changed. I always expected that say at the tenth anniversary or the twentieth anniversary someone would finally write something to say, you know, this was the right thing to do.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** But it sort of never happened. I don't know why. So I waited for some W [MUW] alumni to sit down and write that article definitive article saying historically progress was the right thing to do, but you know.

**MV:** Do you think that's because they are still kind of struggling with the results of it?

**WC:** Yeah, I don't know. That's an interesting question. I would actually like to know the answer to that myself.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** You know, not being a woman. Not being a W [MUW] Alumni, I can't quit put my finger on it. I don't understand why they keep the name Mississippi University for Women. I think it's...I think the university would double its population if it wasn't Mississippi University for Women.

**MV:** I think it...I mean, I don't...I actually went to The W [1998-2002] and from my own experiences I know that there were still...I think there's still resentment.

**WC:** Huh-mm.

**MV:** It's...there's an undercurrent. Because you'll hear older alum's talk about, you know, the first male, you know, "Oh that guy."

**WC:** Huh-mm.

**MV:** And you're always like "Who is that guy?" You know, who was that? You don't...you're not really told much about it. And it's only been through my research that I've obviously found out more. I've gone and spoken with other current students and they're like "Who's Joe Hogan?" like you said. You know, the name means nothing, but everyone knows the story in a way. It's an interesting dynamic and the debate over the name definitely still rages. So.

**WC:** At one point I filed some litigation to start changing that and then at one point we decided that it wasn't worth it, that it was going to be too much trauma. They were going to put that...that's that phrase "Admitting Men Since 1982"....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...was the result of that litigation and some other things we wanted to change on the brochure. I always thought it was crazy when Clyda Rent [President of MUW from 1989 to 2001] said "And for Smart Men Too" because that means that...what does that imply that the other men weren't smart?

**MV:** Or that there were dumb girls?

**WC:** Yeah, that's true.

**MV:** Cause I went there during that time.

**WC:** Yeah.

**MV:** During Dr. Rent and that always irritated me.

**WC:** I don't know why she did that, but she thought it was clever. [Laughter] I never did, but, you know, she thought a lot of things were clever that I thought were kind of

shallow. So, how does it rage now? Tell me, how do you think it rages now? Does it still rage among the alumni?

**MV:** If you were to get them started on the topic, yes.

**WC:** Yes.

**MV:** Yes.

**WC:** But you have to give up. It's like giving up on the Civil War. I mean....

**MV:** Well...

**WC:** ...it's like, you know, you got to give up on the Great Cause. [Laughter]

**MV:** I think to kind of to kind of reverse it it's like an African American University.

**WC:** Yeah.

**MV:** There's a lot of pride in the history and the circumstances that....

**WC:** Gave rise...

**MV:** ...created that kind of institution and it's almost like a sense of mourning at its passing.

**WC:** You know, I always say...I've said to my black friends...I went to a historically black school, Howard [University] undergraduate, my law school was not historically black, but I always said, "You can't have integration and your black schools too." Can't have it. Now, if you want integration...if that's your goal...then you have to give up on this thing of black schools.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** And so, Jackson State [Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi] has, in my view, an obligation...the greatest act of integration would be to desegregate Jackson State. And there are ways of doing it...the Alumni resisted it..."The whole area would have to be renovated," "You would have to change the faculty." You know, bring in a white president of Jackson State would be the greatest thing in the world. Give white kids scholarships out of the kazoo.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** You know, integrate it. It would become the biggest school in Mississippi. It would swamp Ole Miss [University of Mississippi] eventually because of where it's located. But, you know, they would rather hold onto their little black traditions. But, you know

what? Let the white kids join the black fraternities. I'm a member of the oldest black fraternity [Alpha Phi Alpha] and I'm all for having a...just load it up with white boys. [Laughter] You know what I'm saying? So what? I mean, that's the way of the world.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And what they'll do is they'll listen. Whites have, in this society, done some truly remarkable things in Western Civilization and the emphasis that Western Civilization puts on preservation...that I think of the contribution that whites have made in preserving the Blues [Music].

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** The contribution that whites have made in preserving Jazz [Music].

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** They would do the same thing in any other institution they're involved in because Western Civilization puts a premium on preserving traditions and they increase the value of that because those historical things become important. So, I have no fear...people tend to fear...whites get too dominate...they out number us and their going to have the control. So what? All they're going to do is one increase the preservation....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...and increase the value. [Laughter] Cause you know what? When ten percent of people are buying jazz records it has one value, but when you get the whole...when you open it to the whole hundred percent of the population of the country the potential of buying jazz records you just make the demand even better. So, I don't have all these kind of fears that other people have, but you know, I complain. I'm a non-conformist in a sense. I hear people whine and complain this sort of stuff and, you know, fear is for the weak.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** So, go ahead that was the...what was the next question?

**MV:** Oh, okay.

**WC:** I'm sorry.

**MV:** No, you're fine.

**WC:** I ramble.

**MV:** Okay. [Laughter]

**WC:** I'm too old, see. I used to complain about old people rambling. [Laughter] I do the same damn thing. [Laughter] Ramble on.

**MV:** Let's see. Some of these you've answered. You kind of answered this, but I'm going to kind of ask it a different way.

**WC:** Okay.

**MV:** Because my main topic deals with dividing and kind of naming these groups either traditionalists or reformers. Would you kind of back that up as a fair assessment as to the division that occurred?

**WC:** Well, you know, labels are very difficult to deal with.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** They're always extremely difficult to deal with. If you define traditionalists as people who accepted the status quo and saw no reason to change things or even that it was disruptive and damaging to change things and there was another group of people who you would say progressives or whatever you want to call it....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...saw that this was just the natural evolution of change, then I would agree with you.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** You know, when we got to the Supreme Court the National Organization of Women [NOW] and the feminists groups, which most Southern women didn't like at that time....

[Side B of Tape #1]

**WC:** NOW, the National Women's Political Caucus and all the feminist groups understood it even though the label was a man....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...that the importance of the decision was for women. I mean people talk, we openly discussed as this case was being prepared....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:**...and we knew that it was going to the Supreme Court...that VMI [Virginia Military Institute] and The Citadel....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:**...that this was going to determine whether they came down. And I don't think...there wasn't nobody that didn't know that. [Laughter]

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** You know and it was almost fortunate for the women who were the feminists that it was coming up in the context of a man.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** Right, and [inaudible] because the real prestige associated with single-sex school's was actually at the male school's, you know, and it was [Inaudible] school in Philadelphia it was I think, if I remember correctly, and it was The Citadel and VMI the other kind of institutional schools that were single-sex. The real status and damage was at male schools so I think everybody was a little bit aware of that. At one point you saw the inside of that package of materials there was a memo written by Clarence Thomas [Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court 1991-present]....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...which actually just kind of arrived in my mailbox. [Laughter] You know, it just kind of arrived in my mailbox no return address or anything.

**MV:** Oh.

**WC:** And so that was interesting, so the Department of Education position on it. So, that's all I got at that point.

**MV:** Okay. And again we kind of touched a little bit on this do you feel that the decision to bring the lawsuit in the nineteen, late nineteen seventies....

**WC:** Huh-mm.

**MV:** ...was influenced by or affected by the larger cultural influences at the time?

**WC:** I think that the trend in the law was clearly there. You know there was this big debate about whether sexual discrimination was going to be treated as what we call a suspect classification as opposed to intermediate scrutiny or just a rational relationship.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** Now people walk into my office and they say to me, "I've been discriminated against." And I say, "Okay, well that's not against the law." I mean, you can discriminate against someone and that's okay. I mean, discrimination is okay it is just discrimination based upon some particular classification. If it's race, religion, national origin...I could probably legally discriminate against people based upon whether or not they live in a certain neighborhood. And actually we do discriminate based upon location and that sort of thing. And [Inaudible] discriminate against people based on physical size unless you can claim that's a physical disability. But you can say, I don't want any heavy people. I always wondered about how did they get away with at Hooters [Restaurant] with their physical requirements for women....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...at least early on. So, that's a kind of discrimination. So, there's unlawful discrimination, race, sex, national origin, religion that sort of thing. Then, after you know that the next question is, "What level of scrutiny do you give it?" It can be, is it a rational distinction...it all has to be a rational relationship between some governmental interest? Does it have to be what's called intermediate scrutiny, which is a higher level of scrutiny?

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** Or you have a suspect classification level of scrutiny, which is like it has to be a substantial relationship to a compelling governmental interest.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And that determines to some extent how it comes out, the level of scrutiny. Virtually all racial distinctions have high level of scrutiny. I always wondered if you have an Ethiopian restaurant, which is kind of popular in Washington [D.C.] and Mount Pleasant, right.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** Could you not discriminate against whites working cause you wanted to have an Ethiopian environment? What about a Chinese restaurant?

**MV:** Or Mexican?

**WC:** Or Mexican? Or Greek?

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** You know, you want some Chinese guy up there in a Greek restaurant...do you want to have kind of a Greek atmosphere? It's all interesting questions to me. Societies kind of dealt with it. You know, we've done a better job of dealing with these old



questions of race than any other place in the world. I've traveled all over the world and we've done a pretty good job. And your question was, as I ramble on about in my old age again [Laughter]. I'm going to have to remind myself to stop rambling.

**MV:** Well, it was about just because prior to the nineteen, in the nineteen seventies and prior....

**WC:** Yeah, the environment, yeah, and I just thought that the feminist movement was going, I told you about the Equal Rights Amendment....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...was hot and heavy there. It was a time of change.

**MV:** What type of media attention did you receive? Was it, did you receive...I know you did locally and even regionally, but what about nationally?

**WC:** When the decision was made it was covered in the *New York Times*. I think the major media covered it. You know, there was an article that I did in 1982 in the *New York Times Magazine*.

**MV:** Oh, okay.

**WC:** Called "Trials of a Mississippi Lawyer". I mean it was wall-to-wall in Mississippi. [Inaudible]

**MV:** What kind of reaction was there after the actual Supreme Court decision?

**WC:** You know, I was surprised. I didn't think the decision required them to integrate the whole school.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** If you read that decision it basically said that they had to let males into Nursing School.

**MV:** And there was debate over that was there not?

**WC:** I don't think there was any debate I just think they just opened the school up.

**MV:** Oh, okay.

**WC:** I mean, it was like they had a meeting and then they just opened it up for men. Now, I did not know...I always wondered and I never knew the answer to this, was there a constituency in the College Board [Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning or IHL Board] that was just glad that we lost so that they could make

it a co-ed school and whom they got the chance there's the decision let's go ahead and do it? Okay, cause I know that decision did require them to just let men in undergraduate and every place else. Or was there a view that if we don't let men everywhere we're just going to open it up for another lawsuit and we're going to spend another bunch of money trying to defend another lawsuit....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ... and then we'll lose that and we'll have to let the men in and it will just cost us a lot more money?

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** I thought that that was a possibility. Or was it just magnanimous that it's the right thing to do and we're just going to do it? I don't know. No one's ever told me and I've always been curious. [Laughter]

**MV:** Well, I might be able to answer that for you actually. A lot of the research I've done...the initial reaction was, especially from alums and individuals at The W, was that it was a restricted decision just to the school, the Nursing School and that the School Board [IHL Board] said, "Look, we don't want to do this anymore we don't want to go through anymore legal problems you're just going have to open the whole school." So....

**WC:** So you think the IHL Board just kind of....

**MV:** They wanted to wash their hands of it.

**WC:** Okay. See, I didn't know the internal discussions so I didn't know why it came down the way it did because I interpreted the decision as being just the Nursing School. I think that was a fair reading of it.

**MV:** And I think initially, like in the very beginning, the school was very...almost kind of breathed a sigh of relief in a way..."Oh, it's just the Nursing School" you know.

**WC:** Right.

**MV:** And then, questions started to creep up and the IHL Board just said, you know, we're done. So....

**WC:** They were right cause I was going to sue them again. [Laughter] They would have been in court the next year cause I would have...it would have been going again.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** So, I don't know what the other decisions would have been in the other schools [various academic schools or departments within MUW]. I mean, I thought that they

made a...one of the only errors I thought was that if you look at those pleadings...I had a hearing on a preliminary injunction....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...and the judge denied it and he entered an order that said I had thirty days to enter additional evidence or final judgment would be entered.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** It may have been sixty days I'm not sure about the number of days, but something to that affect.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** The big debate on our part was whether or not we were going to put up any additional evidence. So, we had a conversation with Mr. Drinkwater and George Cochran...we discussed this a great deal, a great deal of discussion and debate. I mean we spent hours on this.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And in the end, we decided that it was better for us to have a skimpy record than it would be for them because they had the burden of proof in the long-term that they had to justify the discrimination. And they hadn't put forth a bunch of experts saying this is the reason we do it and this is the justification. And we thought we should put evidence to show how this....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...expert evidence showing that this is not necessary or discriminatory and had detrimental effect on women and on men. But the problem we had is that if we did that then that would invite them to do the same.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** And who's better off with this record? And we concluded that we're better off. It went to the Fifth Circuit [United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit]....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...and they made a *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision [The 1896 Supreme Court decision that upheld racial segregation and resulted in government sanctioned 'separate-but-equal' public facilities], which is that separate-but-equal decision. Which was a favorable decision for us, but we didn't like the reasoning. I mean, it was a good outcome with,

what I thought, was bad reasoning. In other words, you could have The W, just you had to create a male school that was equivalent.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** Which, you know, was not going to happen. That would have meant that the school absolutely had to open up cause they were not going to create an equivalent school. I think Ole Miss [University of Mississippi] at one time was all male. So, maybe they could just change Ole Miss back to all male. That wasn't about to happen. I really didn't like the reasoning in that decision, but it was a final outcome in our favor cause that would have ended The W's single sex status everywhere. And the Supreme Court had more nuance reasoning, but that's the way they always are. They're so incremental, slow. Which is good government needs to be incremental and slow unless there's something that's compelling that needs to be done.

**MV:** Huh-mm. I have just a few more questions. I've also done a little bit of research into the Darrell Glenn and the David Turner case in the late 80s and also the Keith Washington and Phyllis Pleasant....

**WC:** Huh-mm.

**MV:** ...just the subsequent cases that you filed in association with The W and I was just wondering if you could tell me a little bit more about them?

**WC:** You've got to tell me what they were about.

**MV:** Well...[Laughter]

**WC:** I don't even remember.

**MV:** It basically was about the name....

**WC:** Okay.

**MV:** ...and the fact that some of the arguments were that, you know, the diploma still says "For Women" and the first case, my understanding, is that the Darrell Glenn and the David Turner case was thrown out because they weren't students.

**WC:** Huh-mm.

**MV:** I might have that wrong. And then Keith Washington and Phyllis Pleasant, Phyllis was the mother of one of the students....

**WC:** Huh-mm.

**MV:** ...and that that one actually did go through and that was, I think, what resulted in the and “Smart Men Too” tagline [In 1991 MUW’s official name was changed to Mississippi University for Women and Smart Men Too].

**WC:** Yeah, everything has “Admitting Men Since 1982”. You know, I had two real concerns with my clients and I discussed that. If I remember correctly, and I’m not absolutely sure about dates and things, but for some reason I remember that they were talking at that time about reorganizing the Universities in Mississippi.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And there was on the table a proposal to close Valley, Mississippi Valley [Mississippi Valley State University] and/or The W or merge The W with Mississippi State [Mississippi State University] and basically make it a satellite.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And in the midst of all of those changes that it was too much public policy questions going on to burden it with the question of what the name of the school was seemed terribly trivial....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...in light of these monumental decisions that had to be out there and that some people were using that whole issue as a weapon to try to close the school. And my clients above all did not want the school closed, cause I think, if I remember correctly, they were all local.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** So, and I think my former law partner, Don Steighner [Donald Steighner], actually filed some kind of lawsuit on the issue....

**MV:** Oh, okay.

**WC:** ...at the same time. Don Steighner, I think that he was a plaintiff. I think that case was a bridge too far. I don’t think it was...the time wasn’t right to change the name. It would have been too tumultuous it would have been too difficult it would have created trauma. And the value of changing it did not compare well with the friction that it was going to create at that moment. I think it’s time now, but I think it’s a public policy question because at some point it was difficult for me to say, okay, is this a constitution or a legal argument or is this just a public policy question....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...something for the democratic process to produce an answer for as apposed to litigation. I really came down to the conclusion that it was for the democratic process, executive branch. It's not a legal argument as long as we made it clear that men could go.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** I think The W is doing itself a disservice because I think a lot of men go two or three years at The W and then transfer to Mississippi State just so they won't have a Mississippi University for Women.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** But see that's not a problem at the Citadel or VMI. They don't identify themselves by sex so consequently we can take women into this system to get VMI degrees.

**MV:** What I've found is there is a double standard. At traditionally or previously all-male institutions when females get there there's still that sense of the same type of, what's the word, just sense of enjoying the school, or not enjoying the school, but...well, I'll just counteract it at female schools traditionally previously female schools when men get there they don't want the female name they don't want anything female whereas at male schools, that the maleness stays so to speak. And it's just an interesting dynamic to see.

**WC:** Well, VMI is gender neutral. The Citadel is gender neutral.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** I mean that's the thing they didn't have to identify themselves...the issue was....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** That wasn't the Virginia Military Institute for Men.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And so, you know, just the Mississippi Institute for Women...Mississippi Institute...a Mississippi University of Columbus. It would have been [inaudible] wouldn't have changed anything.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** I don't know...I don't think you have to have an institution where you have women are leaders designed to make women leaders. Actually, I think that the people in our society right now most threatened are males, men in academia. I think men are not naturally, because of how we cultural, because of our culture, men aren't as suited or do as well in academic things that are classroom based. You go to law school, the leaders in

the law school class are women and probably the numbers are predominately women now. They're naturally good at things that require reasoning and word skills and because the culture teachings them very early on to do those things, starts emphasizing those things in their life.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And you know girls don't sit around playing war games or video games. I mean guys spend hours doing it. I mean it teaches you some skills. I don't know what the hell it is you know what I mean. [Laughter] But they have good hand eye coordination I guess if they do that long enough. So men, I think, are really being weakened in our society and we got to figure out in the modern society how to make education more suitable for men or we're going to lose a lot of them.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And you know, I always think, you can always tell a backwards [inaudible] society by how they treat women or men. For example, one of my grievances with Muslim society and I've traveled a lot to places that have Muslim population where they have multiple wives....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...now, if the society generates just about an equal number of men to an equal number of women and some men get multiple wives then you assign some other group of men to loneliness.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And we are social creatures. And you have a group of women who being a part of some multiple relationship who create for themselves lives of a great deal of loneliness.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And that creates an unhealthy society. And I think that Western civilization discovered that and that's the reason polygamy and in Islam you see that in these sort of attitudes of these young men in Muslim countries who are so unattached that they become so fervent in these religious things....

**MV:** Yeah.

**WC:** ...and they have not a great deal to live for because absent wealth you can't really have a wife....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...and the shortage is designed into the system.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** It's built into the system, a shortage. That creates an unhealthy...I think in Western society has gone so far in trying to remove 'maleness' in a sense that there are differences between sexes, and there really are, that we run the risk of...the things that nature gives men that makes them special and makes them able to do certain things are sort of disfavored in a way. They have to be managed, you know. The same kind of instinct that make men go out into the ocean and explore for new worlds are the same things in men that make them go to battle and slaughter people unnecessarily. I mean it can create great positive forces in society and great evil in society.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** And they have to be matured and raised in a way that do well. I mean I'm very traditional in the sense that I believe that the best way to raise kids is with a husband and a wife because they bring different things...my wife who's a judge....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...who's my peer....

**MV:** And she's involved with The W right now [Mississippi University for Women Alumni Association v. Mississippi University for Women].

**WC:** ...involved with the W case [Laughter]...is my peer, right. But, you know, we bring different things to our relationship to child raising...

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...because I bring a maleness and she brings a femaleness. And, you know, I know she's...I mean I love this woman...she's smart, I think that she's beautiful...I'm crazy about her. But I also think she's a woman and I like the fact that she's a woman. I don't want her to be like me. [Laughter] You know, and I hope that she doesn't want me to be like her. I mean, I don't think so, but...our society, we'll figure it out. It's going to take us a little while. I find that young men now to be a little a-feminine to me.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** Especially urban men. You know, I'm not used to men who are very prickly about how they dress and very concerned about how they look and....

**MV:** Right. [Laughter] What is that the...there's a word for that...the, gosh I can't think of it.



**WC:** Metro-sexual.

**MV:** Metro-sexual.

**WC:** That's what my sons call it. You know, their concerned...it takes them as long to get dressed as a girl does. You know they want to be pretty. You know, I say to myself, you know what, I like that girls are pretty. [Laughter] I like that girls dress up. I like that....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...I particularly don't want to see any guys, you know what I mean. [Laughter]  
[Two friends of Wilbur Colom's enter the room] Hey. [Inaudible] Alright, here you go. Thank you.

**MV:** We're almost done. I apologize. Actually, my last question is...is there anything else you'd like to add to it that I have failed to bring up or....?

**WC:** I can't think of anything other...you know. Anything interesting...oh, I got...I think at one point the people that was doing the VMI [and] the Citadel case consulted me.

**MV:** Oh, really?

**WC:** And the people doing the VMI case consulted me. I think one of the guys was doing who was doing the defense work actually came down here to see me. So, I had a talk with the people who were doing both of those cases.

**MV:** Huh-mm. And what was that reaction...interaction like?

**WC:** Well, I was...I think most of the time it was the defense lawyers and I kept telling them...I said, "You're gonna to lose."

**MV:** [Laughter].

**WC:** They said, "We're going to draw this distinction between your case and our case." And I said, "You're gonna lose." [Laughter].

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** I mean, "We're gonna do this, we're gonna do this." Ah, you're gonna lose. I mean it's, you know, you're trying to stop the tidal wave. You just can't do it. It is not about...so sometimes I tell lawyers it is not about these little techniques and stuff....

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** ...you know, so I'm gonna pull this little trick and I'm gonna pull that little trick and I'm gonna do this little different thing...some things are just the wave and it's either you're gonna ride the wave or the wave is gonna ride you.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** It's just one of the two. I could have been on the other side of that case, my case, The W case, and been the most brilliant lawyer known to mankind and I would have lost it. You know, you actually may...I could...they could have drawn the distinction and said well because it's so narrowly drawn or the record is not developed....

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** ...they could have remanded it down to no decision. You could delay, but it's just like desegregation of the public...it was inevitable. It was...I mean, people were just fighting the wave of change.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** And I think it's a phenomenon going on right now that people don't understand [Colom's secretary pages him over the intercom]. Barack Obama [U.S. Senator from Illinois] I think that Barack Obama is emblematic of something that is going on among black people. It's the end of blackness as a strong political identity. It'll always be a cultural identity, but it'll be interesting just like some people say their Greek.

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** You know, you do Greek dances and you like some Greek food, but that's about the end of your Greek-ness. You know [Laughter] you know a few Greek words. [Laughter]

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** And you're proud of your Greek ancestors and you're a little bit interested in Greek history, but that's it. But you know, right now what's emerging is a group of black political leaders who don't have black as an issue with them.

**MV:** Huh-mm.

**WC:** Cause all of our leaders in the past have been very conscious of their blackness and representing black people. You're gonna have a group of political leaders...I'm very proud to see them coming up, who don't even care. I mean they're just political leaders and they happen to be black and that's culturally interesting [Laughter] and an amusing thing to talk about, but you know other than talking about your, you know, your background and I like, you know, grits and [Inaudible].

**MV:** Right.

**WC:** You know [Laughter]. It's of no importance, you know.

**MV:** Right [Laughter].

**WC:** Alright, thank you so much.

**MV:** Thank you.

**WC:** [Laughter]

[End of Interview]

## **APPENDIX B: TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF DR. JAMES STROBEL**

Interviewee: Dr. James Strobel  
Interviewer: Mona K. Vance  
Transcribed by: Mona K. Vance

Original questions mailed to Dr. Strobel on September 20, 2007  
Answers received by Mona K. Vance on November 22, 2007

Biography: Dr. James Strobel was born in 1933 in Wintersville, Ohio. He graduated from Ohio University and received his PhD from Washington State University in Plant Pathology. Strobel worked at the University of Florida researching disease resistance in crops, tomato, and strawberries. In 1968, he became Director of the Gulf Coast Experiment Station and two years later Head of Horticulture in Gainesville. Prior to becoming president of Mississippi University for Women in 1977, Strobel was the Head of the Department of Horticultural Science at North Carolina State University. In 1988, he was appointed Director of the University Medical Center in Jackson, MS. Strobel became President of Erskine College and Seminary in 1990 until 1998. He currently lives in Lake Gaston, South Carolina.

Note: Due to the physical distance between interviewee and interviewer a set of thirteen questions were created and mailed to Dr. James Strobel. Upon receipt, Strobel typed his responses onto two pages and mailed them back. Therefore, the questions were written and not verbally spoken. As a result, the layout of the transcript uses the letters “Q” for “Question” and “A” for “Answer”. The subsequent number represents the numerical question and the corresponding numerical answer.

Dr. Strobel’s answers have been copied exactly as they were written including any contractions.

### **[Page One]**

**Q1:** What was your position at Mississippi University for Women and how long were you there?

**A1:** President 1977-1988 11 years

**Q2:** In your own words, tell me about the Joe Hogan case and your experience with it. For example, how did you first hear about the suit and how were you involved with it?

**A2:** My first knowledge of the suit being filed came from media reports, the attorney general’s office through the Board of Trustees. It’s hard to recall details of the beginning of the case....I feel there were some informal/rumor type reports (verbal) floating prior to the actual filing and formal notification. Since the case was essentially aimed at state and Trustee policies of long standing, their attorney’s and the state attorney general’s office were the lead entities in the case—as president of the “W” it was, it was my

responsibility to follow these policies in all aspects of the institution...thus our administrative offices supplies all data and information to the attorney's, trustees needed for the case. We were also very active in working with all campus alumnae and support groups in keeping them informed and up to date on our efforts to support our legal team [in] defending the single sex status of "W". One can easily understand the high anxiety created by their challenge to the single most distinctive of the institution. This high level of concern was heightened by the ever present (for decades) cloud of closure—merger that offend surfaced in the media, legislature and trustees. Alumnae leaders and many loyal alums were always concerned.

**Q3:** What kind of reaction was there to the Joe Hogan suit? Initially? Over time? From the community? From The W?

**A3:** The reaction that surfaced on campus was negative toward the suit as it was in the community which has close ties with the institution through family connections, business leader support such as Business Week and other community outreach programs at the "W". Of course, there was a variety of opinions most of which were kept private i.e. not made known to administration. Some MSU [Mississippi State University] and other University interests may have viewed it as a positive step in the direction of closer/merger—with the elimination of the distinctive mission of the "W". I'm sure legislators felt this way. We did not find a way to measure the various reactions to the suit, we were [too] busy putting out brush fires and minimizing publicity damage to recruitment and fundraising.

**Q4:** Did The W receive any type of support? Backlash?

**A4:** The "W" received considerable support from the Attorney General's office and professional staff who defended the State's position of preserving the single sex statue. A number of local attorney's—male and female offered legal support to the states case—some of it on behalf of alumnae (some were W spouses). The fact that 1 or 2 national women's organizations came out against the W at the Supreme Court level was a downer for campus and alumnae interests. I think they filed a brief but I can't recall for sure. The main backlash was the uncertainty the whole matter placed in the minds of prospective parents and students. The legal situation played directly into the hands of key state leaders (legislators, Governor and some trustees) who did not have the "W's" interests on their agenda.

**Q5:** If so, who were people or organizations supporting single-sex status at The W? Who were the people or organizations against the school remaining single-sex? Why do you think they felt the way they did?

**A5:** Virtually all alumnae and the campus community. I would imagine that some in these had connections with other institutions and people that would support merger or closure of the "W". The "W" was a very visible target for those opposed to "states rights", the old traditions, etc., etc., including those who felt single sex education was a thing of the past. The community support groups (men's committee, M & W Foundation

folks and others were against the suit, feeling it was antithetical to a solid future for the W. Feelings were mixed with individuals, especially for those for the case.

**[Page Two]**

**Q6:** Initially, what was the reaction from the administration? Alumnae? Students?

**A6:** Negative and ready to defend the status of the “W”.

**Q7:** Would you say that there were two main opposing sides over the issue of coeducation at the W: traditionalists, those who wished for the culture of single-sex education to remain intact, and Social Reformers, those who desired cultural changes? If so, were these sides distinctive and noticeable?

**A7:** Probably, yes but with a variety of degrees attached to either position, due to other personal relationships people had with the “W”—other colleges, etc. There were some blurring of various positions, in the large community and state.

**Q8:** Do you feel that the decision to bring the suit in the late 1970s was affected by larger cultural influences or events at the time? If so, what were those influences?

**A8:** Most certainly—there national influences away from anything that could be classed as sex discrimination. There are always those who seek to change for its own sake or for personal reasons including the recognition and publicity that change often engenders. The complex set of factors that fostered this type of suit also existed before the period of the late 70’s—for the “W” and for single sex institutions throughout the country. Many made administrative structural changes to preserve the central core of the academic programs to both sexes. This was true at both the private and public institutions of higher learning. The “W” Administrative structure was not changed.

**Q9:** What type of media attention did you receive regionally? Nationally?

**A9:** Considerable local and state wide. Nationally these events were published in the Chronicle of Higher Education and perhaps some other publications dealing with Education and the Law. There was considerable coverage of the Supreme Court hearing. I don’t know how much of it went national.

**Q10:** Did you ever meet Joe Hogan? How was he treated while attending classes at The W?

**A10:** Yes, my only meeting with him was after he had entered school and had left. He was walking towards me on College Street—[the street where the campus is located] in front of old main [Callaway Hall] (just the two of us) we recognized each other and greeted each other cordially—he said there is something I’ve wanted to tell you for a long

time it was “I was a graduate at Itawamba College the year you gave the commencement on the topic of ‘Potential Survival Mindsets’ using your ‘Bite a Blue Apple Speech’ . . . that experience prompted me to go higher in my preparation for nursing and to seek to enter the “W”. We wished each other well and moved on. I did not hear of any adverse treatments by faculty, students or staff—that does not mean that everyone was welcomed and happy about his presence. I did not personally visit his classes.

**Q11:** What was your reaction to the Supreme Court decision? The W’s? Alumnae? Students?

**A11:** Disappointment, especially with the swing vote (O’Connor) but without anger or hostility at any parties involved. A group of alumnae got together as a toast to the “W’s” future—smashed their glasses in the fireplace and said “Let’s get on with supporting the state’s finest institution”—that was what they did.

**Q12:** What changes occurred at the school as a result of the decision? Initial? Long-term?

**A12:** After consulting with the Attorney Generals’ staff and their own legal council the trustees decided to open the W to men—rather than fighting additional lawsuits, case by case---knowing that the negative publicity, cost and probability of losing were all high. The alumnae kept their support and later were the key influences in stopping the merger/closure efforts of trustees and legislators in the mid eighties and again later in the eighties or early 1990’s (Dr. Rent). The institution has done a good job in keeping its distinctive role as an institution preparing women for leadership and careers in all fields and has won national recognition for all its students—males and females. It is probably one of the best national examples of keeping balance in its mission and distinctiveness—not to mention excellence in its programs.

**Q13:** Is there anything else you would like to add that I have failed to mention?

**A13:** Our 13 years in Mississippi (W. & Univ. Center Director) were challenging causing many sleepless nights and amazing days of problem solving—but out of it all we were privileged to work with some of the nation’s finest folks—who were Mississippi’s greatest assets. The campus and alumnae friends are among our about the negative intentions of others—a concern that events in the 80’s proved to be valid. It went along the lines—“if we lose our main distinctiveness—we will be more vulnerable to those with negative intentions in mind for the “W”. Therefore, one of our obligations was to surface in all possible ways the value of single sex education for women—and what it had meant for thousands of alumnae over decades (since 1884). Of course, I was present for all the legal proceedings including the case before the Supreme Court. I don’t recall providing any direct public testimony during these proceedings—other than providing requested supporting information to our attorney’s prior to and during hearings etc.

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