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# Up Against the Wall

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## Up Against the Wall

The Institute for Life-Span Development and Gerontology was the university's concession to women's studies but Faye Dambrot, who co-directed the program with a colleague, Harvey Stern, never gave up on the idea of a recognized, independent Women's Studies program. She and others plotted and campaigned until life handed them a "get out of jail free pass." Akron's new provost, Frank Marini, was married to Dr. Elsie Adams, the feminist and author of *Up Against the Wall Mother*. Seizing on this connection, Faye and her band of feminist faculty and students—by this time including me—threatened to organize a sit-in in the women's restroom in Buchtel Hall, the building housing the offices of the president and provost.

We didn't have to carry out our threat. Instead we invited Dr. Adams to visit campus to lecture about her book and discuss other feminist writers. For the first time in my academic career I heard someone talk about books like Rita Mae Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle*. It was exhilarating and it was also the impetus that brought about the Women's Studies at the University of Akron. The program was approved in the spring of 1986 and I, by mandate of Faye, became its founding director.

Faye Dambrot never stopped being the wind beneath the wings that propelled Women's Studies to expand creating a vibrant town and gown for Akron's academic and community women. She is the reason that Akron still has a Women's Studies program today and a Women and Gender resource center where students can find their voices and discover their futures.

Professor Carole Garrison, retired