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# Watkins first woman dean at university in nine years

*Part two of four*

by Rhonda Morin  
Staff Writer

Julia M. Watkins, the acting dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, has a history at the University of Maine that dates back to 1971.

"I've been a faculty member here since 1971 and I was an assistant dean in (the College of Arts and Sciences) from 1983 to 1984," she said. "From 1984 to '87 I served as a chairperson for the Department of Sociology and Social Work, and last year I was a fellow with the American Council on Education, which is an administrative internship program."

Watkins is the first woman in nine years to serve as a dean at

the university, said Devon R. Storman, assistant to the vice-president for Academic Affairs, John Hitt.

Donna Brown Evans, a former acting dean of the graduate school in 1979, was the last woman dean at UMaine. At University College in Bangor, Constance Carlson served as acting dean from April 1974 to August 1979.

Watkins was selected to serve as acting dean following Michael C. Gemignani's resignation in late June. Because the College of Arts and Sciences is in the process of being reorganized into three separate colleges, a temporary dean was needed to oversee the college until the division was completed.

Watkins was a national finalist for the deanship that

eventually led to Gemignani's appointment in 1986.

Watkins believes she received her appointment because of her extensive experience and not as a result of a recent report on the status of women at the university. The report recommended that more women be appointed to the higher echelons of the university.

"I think that I was appointed because of my competence, because of my understanding of the university as a whole having been here for a very long time, and the kinds of skills and abilities that one would bring to this job," she said.

Watkins's appointment occurred while the administration awaited results of the task force investigation. Watkins said the task force's report on hiring

(see WOMEN page 8)

# ● Women

(continued from page 1)

practices specifically dealt with permanent deans and not with temporary deans as in her case.

Watkins is convinced that her position as a national finalist for the deanship of the college in 1986, coupled with her availability to fill that role when it was vacated, resulted in Hitt's recommendation.

"I think at this point in time the university is in a different spot," Watkins said. "I've had some other experience in the meantime, and as I understand it, I was a viable candidate at the time and I was still available."

When asked if she would consider filling one of the three deanships that would result in the restructuring, Watkins remained undecided.

"Well, I stand a chance at being appointed only if I become a candidate, and I do not know at this time if I will become a candidate — I haven't made that decision yet," she said.