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ORAL HISTORY

MUH-39

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DATE Nov 13, 1986

Elaine Baker
(Signature - Interviewee)

115 N. Queens Ct.
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Huntington WV 25705

DATE Nov 13, 1986

Annette Chapman
(Signature - Witness)

BAKER, ELAINE
MUH-39

see edit on p 1

REVIEW RELEASE

I, Elaine Baker, have reviewed by oral history
interview made on 11-13-86 and with my signature below give
permission for the use of my interview as agreed upon in the release
agreement.

4-18-91
(DATE)

Elaine Baker
(SIGNATURE)

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MUH - 39

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY HISTORY

AN ORAL INTERVIEW WITH: Dr. Elaine Baker

November 13, 1986

CONDUCTED BY: Annette Chapman

TRANSCRIBED & TYPED BY: Gina Kehali Kates

Chapman: Could you state your full name?

Baker: Elaine Baker.

Chapman: Where were you born?

Baker: In Bluffton, Ohio.

Chapman: Uh, when was that?

Baker: 1945.

Chapman: Okay, what were...what did your parents do?

Baker: Uh, my mother was a full-time homemaker and my father was uh, Personnel Manager and Vice-President of Labor Relations of a small industry that is located in that town.

Chapman: Okay. Uh, you didn't come to Marshall as an undergraduate, did you? (no) Where did you do your undergraduate?

Baker: At a liberal arts school in northern Ohio, called Heidelberg College.

Chapman: And then...well, we'll just ...what brought you to Marshall initially?

Baker: A job. (laughter) Well, now I finished my degree, my Ph.D. from Miami University of Ohio, and had taught for a year at a Quaker school, in southern Ohio, and was not really sure that that was the ...the size of an institution that I wanted; it was a very small school. (mmm-hmm) And uh, I became aware of a job here at Marshall, and they hired me.

Chapman: And what year was that?

Baker: 1972.

Chapman: When you came to Marshall, what was your impressions, or what was the atmosphere of the campus like? (uh...) Or the school in general.

Baker: It was a....I guess the school I would compare the most to was the one where I did my graduate work, and compared to Miami, Marshall is smaller, it has a much larger commuting population, students and of course, when I was in graduate school, it was through the real turmoil of the late '60's and uh, compared to what I had seen then and Marshall was a much quieter campus uh, because a lot of students were commuters, they...they just didn't seem to get involved in things that were going on on campus. Now it was a very relaxed feeling, a very comfortable feeling, but uh, I think also a relaxed feeling and a comfort that could be described as slow.

Chapman: Uh...when you began teaching...okay, did you think that you were going to stay here?

Baker: No.

Chapman: And now that you're here...

Baker: Do I think I'll stay here? (laughter)

Chapman: Uh, well, do you just want to go on with your how you found it and when you began?

Baker: Uh, I...you mentioned people sharing offices and telephones and things, when I was hired, and that was in '72, the Psychology was on the 3rd floor of Old Main, and we did have faculty sharing offices. I got my own little cubicle. What they had done was taken a long narrow room and put up kind of clapboard dividers (uh-huh), and uh, out of this long narrow room they created maybe six or seven offices as well as a hallway, and uh, the woman who had the office next to mine had a telephone and I did not. And so, what they did was cut a hole in this clapboard wall in between the offices and we shared that telephone with hole cut in the wall. So, course you could never have privacy because you could look right into the office next door, and you could hear everything that was being said. So uh, the facilities were still a bit old. Uh, I always have enjoyed the students uh, and have always enjoyed teaching here. So, that has certainly not changed since the very beginning. Uh, I never felt there were very many rigorous demands placed upon me as a faculty member, that if I was going to produce or if I was going to do anything, it primarily was self-motivated. Uh, it was a very easy campus to move into and do nothing as far as a faculty member, except meet your classes and then go home again. And a lot of faculty did that. Uh, you wouldn't see many and that's not true in the Psychology Department, but uh, we knew of many other faculty in many other departments who would teach and disappear. And I think that is slowly changing, although there are still some faculty on campus who teach their classes and they are never seen again. That was very common then. And uh, that allowed you know, that's not so much a good thing, but it was a nice atmosphere to work in, 'cause nobody was ever looking over your shoulder, nobody was ever saying, "you must do this, that or the other thing." (un-huh)

Chapman: What do you think accounted for the uh, faculty exodus?

Baker: Part of it may have been...I think Marshall has been historically been under funded. And so there never was a quality office or a quality library. In fact, the library has been greatly improved since, you know, at one point I guess in the accreditation prior to this last one, the accrediting agency said the library has to be improved, and so a lot of money went into the library. And uh, but uh, you know, so when I first came the library was still very small for a school this size. You didn't have the research facilities, you didn't have equipment. And so I think a lot of faculty just said, "what is there for me to do? I

may as well go home and read there or take another job and earn some more money or you know, why should I give all of this time and energy when there's not anything being given back to me.

Chapman: I see. Uh, one thing I've...I would like to discuss is the home-grown versus the imported (right), uh, I understand that at the late...end of the 60's there were a lot of people hired from Marshall but you know...do you think this contributed

Baker: It's possible, yes, it's possible. It's...whether it's the terminal degree that's critical I don't know, but I think that it is extremely important for people to...to have had a broad range of experience. I don't think it's good for a university to educate it's own teachers, and then hire those people. But you know, you see that same argument in the community, there are always these enormous fights when they need to hire a school board superintendent because and you know, you hear these two battles of we need to hire one of our own people as superintendent versus let's go outside and bring someone in. And I think that you ...I personally feel you can never go wrong with new ideas and a fresh outlook on life, and people who have experienced things elsewhere. I think that's critical to the energy and the viability of a school.

Chapman: Okay uh, do you feel like this has led to tension between the faculty in any way? (no) No.

Baker: You mean between outsiders and insiders and the like? No, I've never, never noticed anything like that.

Chapman: Okay. Uh, _____ says you want to relate. Can we talk about the two years you spent on the Institutional Board of Advisors?

Baker: Mmm-hmm, sure.

Chapman: Okay, do you want to explain a little bit about what the board does?

Baker: Uh, it's...it's an advisory board that is essentially supposed to review all of the major decisions that come out of the university uh, that are...it doesn't look at everything, like there's an academic planning and standards committee that deals with curriculum, and that never goes to the institutional board of advisors. That's seen as a faculty matter, and only the university you know, should have those kinds of decision-making things. But the budget, uh, a number of the decisions about physical facilities...are we going to build a stadium, are we going to...what are we going to do with the fine arts building, uh, those kinds of issues that are the global issues the university deals with do go through the institutional board. Now, I have...in the two years I was there, I never saw the institutional board disagree with anything the university did.

Chapman: Uh, what two years was that?

Baker: Uh, this past year, which would have been '85-'86, and the year before that, '84-'85.

Chapman: Okay, and the issues you were just mentioning, the stadium, and fine arts center, (mmm-hmm), those are what came before the board?

Baker: Right. I mean there are a lot of things, but those are examples of the kinds.

Chapman: What...if the...okay, if the board consists of people from Huntington are the businesses represented that want to save their city?

Baker: Uh....\

Chapman: That object to the stadium being built?

Baker: No, no, now a number of the board people are not from Huntington; they are from Charleston, from Beckley, from Logan, maybe not Logan, but some city down there in the southern part of the state. They are...they are people from all over. Now, in terms of the Huntington representation, uh, there is one physician, one ...there has always been one person from Ashland Oil, who may or may not live in Huntington, but works with an industry that's outside the city. Uh, I'm trying to think if there's anyone else from Huntington on the board. So, it's...out of the total number of board members who are not Marshall employees, a...only a portion of them are from Huntington itself. And there aren't any specifically from these businesses that are close by.

Chapman: Who chooses the board or asks them to serve?

Baker: I don't really know. Uh, the...the Marshall representatives are elected. (mmm-hmm) And the staff elects a person, the faculty elects a person and the administration elects a person uh, it's interesting. I don't know if the president nominates the other people. I know...someone new came on while I was on the board and the board wasn't involved in choosing that person. So, there must be legislation that tells how you do it.

Chapman: Yeah. So, you basically you went to the meetings and heard what was going on and nodded. (right) Okay. Uh...

Baker: In fact, at one point I raised a question about something that uh, I had been uh, approached by several faculty people who are really concerned about something that was happening on campus. And when I raised that issue in the board meeting, I did this fairly early, uh, several board members essentially said to me very strongly...now they didn't do it directly, but it was very clear that uh, those were not the kind of issues this board was to deal with, and that we were not really there to criticize. Uh, so after that, I said, Okay, I won't say anything.

Chapman: Yeah. Uh...are there other organizations that you've been involved in, government organizations, university....

Baker: I've been on a number of the standing committees, which are...which is the form of faculty governance that we have right now. (mmm-hmm)

Chapman: How do ...how is that working, as a form of faculty governance in your opinion?

Baker: Oh...I...I am eager to see a change, so I will personally vote for the senate (mmm-hmm), uh, there are some problems with the current system that maybe the senate can change, maybe not. Uh, some of the problems have to do with the major of Marshall, and that is that only a small number of faculty give a lot of energy to governance, and so you see the same people over and over and over again (mmm-hmm), and ...and secondly, uh, well, I don't know if there is a secondly. It just seems that many of the decisions that we deal with are rather insignificant things (uh-huh).

Chapman: What sort of significant things do you think that they're unable to deal with?

Baker: Well....for example, the issue of the stadium. We'll take the hottest one that's around. Uh, faculty have had no....students have had no input on whether they want a new stadium. And ...and I think that's really interesting 'cause so much of the student activity fee goes to Athletics, and we've just seen all these letters written to the Parthenon about why aren't students going to the football games, all these letters from the townspeople, chasticising Marshall students for not supporting their football team. And I don't think anyone ever asked the students, why don't you go? Do you want a new stadium? How important is football in your life here at Marshall? And uh, you know, those issues are...it's just assumed that the students want a new stadium. But that would be an example of ...of a really...what has become a very controversial decision, the faculty did not have much of a part in. Uh, and there are a lot of decisions that go on on campus that are controversial. You know, most of what we do is ...should this course be taught? How do we, you know, make these kinds of decisions. But uh, I...the governance system just seems to take up a lot of time, and that without seeing a lot of progress coming out the other end (um-huh), and I'm never really sure what the problem is.

Chapman: Uh, how do you see the faculty relating to President Nitzschke, and his administration?

Baker: It's probably the best relationship that I've seen and I have only been here for three presidents, including Nitzschke, but he is ...he is uh, he has a style that I think relates well to people. And I think his energy and his enthusiasm and what he's trying to accomplish appeal to a lot of faculty members.

Chapman: Okay, so you see it very positive?

Baker: I...more positive that it's been before.

Chapman: Uh...you're involved with the Women's Center, or the women's issues on campus quite a bit on campus, aren't you? Uh, how is that developing for...I assume it's a pretty recent thing that we've got, the Women's Center...?

Baker: Well, it is fairly recent uh, you know, since I've come, at least; it's been in the last maybe 10 years or so. (mmm-hmm) It's one of those programs that I think is vital but doesn't seem to get the student support that would really make it an important change or an important force on campus. And so uh, you know, the women's issues and...and the Women's Center just keep plodding along. That means I mean it don't mean that in a negative sense, in terms of a running...I mean in terms of an extremely hard working woman, she runs the Women's Center. But because students don't turn out in droves for the programs and things uh, the center remains very low funding uh, it doesn't...it doesn't have a change to grow because the students don't seem to be behind it.

Chapman: In relation to like the administration or within your department, are...is it pretty even handed treatment, like towards women faculty? Do you say....or?

Baker: Oh...in some ways, yes, in some ways, no. Uh, several years ago a study was done comparing salaries and it was found that some women were in fact being paid less than men, you know, who had the same amount of experience and rank, and most of those salary inequities have been taken care of. And I think the university is now very conscientious about making sure that there aren't salary inequities uh, among men and women. There still are some I think, some ways in which inequity occurs. If you look at the number of women in all administrative positions on campus, uh, we are ...we are greatly outnumbered by males. And women are not represented at the same proportion in administration that women exist in the faculty. And uh, one of the things I've just been looking at that's kind of interesting is if you look at what people have been promoted, either from faculty to administration, or from low-level administration position to another low...to another higher administration position; not hiring somebody new, but who is being promoted within the university, it's almost all white males. And that ...you know, is an example of where women remain with less power, because they're not being given jobs that allow them to exercise power.

Chapman: Okay. I'm kind of running out of topics, from what I know of you (yeah, yeah), activities....is there other things you'd like to bring up?

Baker: I really don't think so. You know, when you ask me about change, from then to now, there has been a lot of change in physical facilities. We've gotten new buildings, the campus is

expanding, it looks much nicer, people are planting flowers now, you know, (mmm-hmm), making sure the grass is growing and those kinds of things. Uh, and slowly we're...we're...I think we're gaining in stature and status, in terms of our reputation, both in the state and out of the state. And in a lot of ways Marshall remains the same. It's an easygoing campus, there isn't a lot of pressure on faculty members to perform uh, that same kind of comfortable feeling I think is still here. And that's true both in the students and in the faculty.

Chapman: Okay. Thanks.

END OF INTERVIEW

see 2 edits on p 1

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I, Elaine Baker, have reviewed by oral history interview made on 11-13-86 and with my signature below give permission for the use of my interview as agreed upon in the release agreement.

4-18-91

(DATE)

Elaine Baker

(SIGNATURE)

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Psychology Dept
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