

1982

Oral history interview transcript with Carol Kabat

Carol Kabat

Lee Swedberg

Follow this and additional works at: <http://dc.ewu.edu/wsct>

Recommended Citation

Oral history interview transcript with Carol Kabat, 1982. Women of a Small College Town Oral Histories (EWU 984-0094), Eastern Washington University Libraries, Archives & Special Collections, Cheney, WA. <http://dc.ewu.edu/wsct/14>.

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives & Special Collections at EWU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Women of a Small College Town Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of EWU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jotto@ewu.edu.

CAROL KABAT
INTERVIEWED BY LEE SWEDBERG
EWU Women's Oral History Project
EWU 984-0094 #47
JULY 20, 1982

*[Editor's Note: Carol Elizabeth Gerken served as the Dean of Women from 1960 to 1962. She earned her BA in Education degree from San Jose College in 1953 and her MA degree from Eastern Washington State College in 1961. **KABAT:** was the President of the Washington Education Association in 1959-1960.]*

SWEDBERG: This is Lee **SWEDBERG** interviewing Carol **KABAT** for the Cheney Women's Oral History Project. Her topic concerns the development of Eastern Washington University. The date is July 20th, 1982.

KABAT: I was graduated from San Jose State with a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education in 1953. Had [sic] always wanted to be an elementary teacher and came [sic] up to Spokane and taught seven years in second grade at Wilson School and during that time became quite active in the Education Association of the city and then was President of the Washington Education Association in '59 and '60. During that summer, was [sic] contacted about perhaps becoming Dean of Women at Eastern. And although my background for the job was nil, I took it and learned on the job.

SWEDBERG: How long were you here?

KABAT: At Eastern? For a year and a half.

SWEDBERG: What was the role of Dean of Women like at that time? What were your duties, what was it you were supposed to do?

KABAT: Dean of Women was in charge of the student housing, jobs for women on campus, and in the community. The Dean of Women was also the advisor to the Associated Women Students, the freshman class, and Golden Circle, senior women's honorary organization. The Dean of Women was available to listen, to talk with all students and faculty on the campus. It was a wonderful time to be Dean of Women. It was a very relaxed period, a very happy period I think for students and faculty alike at Eastern.

SWEDBERG: The earlier Dean of Women forbade young college girls to date downtown young men, as I remember in Cecil Dryden's book-

KABAT: Light for an Empire?

SWEDBERG: Yes, and the young men then organized themselves into what they called the Cheney Downtown Element, and referred to college men as the Purity Squad. Was this kind of attitude still around when you took office?

KABAT: (laughs) No, not at all. I think my biggest concern was when I first started was what in the world would I do if a girl came into the office and said that she were pregnant. And during that year and a half that I was at Eastern, one girl came in, that was, I think the biggest problem that we had during the whole year and a half. As I said it was a very delightful time to be Dean of Women, it was a time when people really just enjoyed being in school, were proud of the University, and were very, very active in a great variety of campus activities. There were a good

amount of commuter, too, of course, who weren't able to take part because of conflicts, and jobs, and commuting time. But the people who did live on campus were very active and took part in many different types of activities-service projects as well as social projects.

SWEDBERG: Your job concerned mostly dorm women or-?

KABAT: We had an off campus group, too, that we tried to make it more comfortable for them with a lounge area and so forth, on campus, where they felt comfortable to come. Generally, yes, it was more with the on campus women. At that time, there were two dorms for women: Senior Hall, and Louise Anderson Hall. There were four dorms for men: Sutton, Monroe-that year. The next year Monroe became a women's dorm, Gary and Hudson, which were very old barracks [sic]. (laughs) One of the jobs I can remember doing that was quite interesting was, every once in a while, the Dean of Students, Daryl Hagi and I had to go inspecting the men's dorms. I suppose we did the women's too, but of course, I would remember the men's. It was so funny, you had to inspect them for fire dangers, and we would go into the rooms and at that time, it was kind of funny to see the different types of posters the boys put on the walls. And, I wasn't too much older than most of them, but it was still a revelation at times (laughs). One of the jobs, of course, of the Dean of Women, was to supervise the house mothers and the dorm assistants, and the girls who had those jobs as dorm assistants, and I, met regularly and we had dorm meetings, and I attended as many as I could. Rapport was marvelous. I think among the students and the faculty. It was a very congenial time. *[Editor's Note: Daryl G. Hagie began his service as Eastern's Dean of Students on August 1, 1955. He served continuously through the administrations of President Patterson and Shuck and well into the administration of President Frederickson until his retirement as Dean of Students Emeritus in 1982. After military service in World War II, Hagie earned his BS from Montana State University in 1949, his MS in 1950 from Indiana University. He served in as a counselor and assistant of students and foreign students at the State College of Washington while completing his work for the EdD.]*

SWEDBERG: Cecil Dryden had not been built yet? *[Dryden Hall was completed in 1965.]*

KABAT: No.

SWEDBERG: Did you see the role of women at Eastern changing at that time, do you think?

KABAT: Well, you see, I don't have anything to compare [sic]. I wasn't there long enough to give a good answer to that question.

SWEDBERG: I see you, in a sense, as transitional between the University as parent, which we see in that quote from Cecil Dryden's book and the modern situation where we don't have a Dean of Women at all, women are on their own. I'm wondering if you have any comment on that.

KABAT: Well, as I look back of course from my college experience, which was only seven years before I was Dean of Women, I like the idea of Dean of Women, or someone who has kind of a comprehensive look at campus activities. I really don't know what the campus activities are now to know how much participation there is. I liked what was happening then. Times have changed; traditions have changed. So what was good twenty years ago maybe isn't applicable now. It just seemed to work then, very well. I don't know when the transition came. Of course, the '60's were a very turbulent time, but that was after I was there. This was Camelot time when I was there.

SWEDBERG: Were there any minority students then?

KABAT: Oh yeah [sic].

SWEDBERG: Was that usual?

KABAT: But not in great numbers, and I don't recall any abrasive souls, any ones that would campaign for any particular thing. I can remember a couple of obnoxious characters, WASP's (laughs) for whatever reason, they were obnoxious. One of things-you're talking about minorities-the foreign student group was very, very strong, then. Claire Kessler very, very, the whole faculty and the student body seemed to gather them up and honor them in friendships. There was one boy, Kengo, from Japan, who didn't have enough money to get back to Japan after he had been at Eastern for three years and worked very hard in custodial jobs as well as in his academic work, and the students had a special, I think it was a benefit con, or something, to help him raise money to go back to Japan. That was typical of their feelings about the foreign students. There were quite a few Africans, Chinese, and Japanese. It was a good size group, even then.

SWEDBERG: Tell me something about Clara Kessler. *[Editor's Note: Clara Kessler joined the faculty in 1947 as an instructor in English. She received her BA from Central Oklahoma State College and her MA from Columbia University. She was promoted to assistant professor in 1951, to associate professor in 1955 and retired in 1969 as Professor of English Emeritus.]*

KABAT: Oh, we correspond every Christmas. I wish you could have a chance to interview her. Maybe somehow she could write her comments to you and you could report them. She is one of the most positive spirits I have ever known, and she continues in her letters to us every Christmas. She is thrilled with life and is so busy in the community. She lives in Norman, Oklahoma. She is so active with the University there, and still so active with helping foreign students. Almost every time we hear from her, she says something about some former student of hers from another country who has passed by to visit her who has made a special trip. She's a remarkable woman. One of the most professional people I've ever met. I had a couple of classes from her when I was working on my master's, and just a joy, nothing negative about that woman.

SWEDBERG: Did she start the foreign students-?

KABAT: I don't know. I would kind of think so. She and Orolan Killen were very active during the time I was out there, but I don't know who started it. But it was a wonderful support service for those students, and it made their transition to life with the other students easier. There were special events that everyone was welcome to attend. *[Editor's Note: Orland B. Killen joined the faculty in the fall of 1953 as an instructor in industrial arts. He received his BA from the University of Washington and his M. Ed from Oregon State College (now Oregon State University).]*

SWEDBERG: Do you feel that you made significant changes?

KABAT: No. No, I really didn't. I wasn't there long enough. I think the only thing I can really point to, and say, "gee, that was something I'm sure hadn't been done before that I was glad that we started was, during orientation week for freshman, we had a special meeting for all the parents. They seemed to really appreciate that. We could tell them what their-(laughs) I wonder if parents even bring their students [sic] to campus anymore-and come to meetings, I don't know. We did what we could to answer any questions that the parents might have about the college, and about the facilities, and about the academic program we had. Faculty members, the President of the Faculty Senate, the Academic Dean, the President, they all addressed issues that were of great

interest to the parents, and I think that parent orientation session was maybe one of the only contributions that I can actually point to of mine.

SWEDBERG: Who were some of the people that you worked with most closely?

KABAT: Well, Don Patterson, President, wonderful man, very kind, rather serious. We have a close contact with Marcella, his wife, over the years, and their son Bruce. Don certainly served the University very well, and was a very even handed, very good person, very honest. Then, Daryl Hegi was the Dean of Students, and he just retired. Al Ogden was Assistant Dean, City Councilman, and active in community affairs now. Fred Johns, who has just retired, finance person, academic. Most of all of course, my relationship with George was a very, and has been a very wonderful and beautiful relationship. When I came to Eastern, I met George, and we were married-he was Academic Dean of instruction-and we were married the following year. I stayed on another nine months, almost nine months, and our son, Alan, was born. The associated women's students said that they certain hoped that we wouldn't call the baby Dean, because they were tired of saying Dean to both of us. Every week, Dr. Patterson had a little get together of all the division heads, and the administrative people. There were probably twenty or so of us who met together for lunch in a little meeting. That was an important time of just kind of sharing, in a very informal setting, some of the concerns we might have had about the University. We didn't have too many committee meetings, which was good, I thought. We were out and about around the campus, and had time to really visit with the students, as well as get to know the faculty.

SWEDBERG: Because of your marriage, you were probably in touch with many people here even after you were no longer with the University?

KABAT: Um hum. Socially, and well, in the Sociology Department, where George had a professorship, and in Education, especially those two areas. He was Academic Dean for ten years, and then chose to go into full time teaching, so our relationship with the campus has been a good one. Of course, living in Spokane has removed us from a lot of community activities that we would have taken part in, and campus activities, too, because, with our children in school here then, we had other obligations on our time, but we're very proud of our association with Eastern. It's been very interesting watching the changes. *[Editor's Note: George J. KABAT: began his duties as Dean of Instruction, a position later called Dean of Faculty, on September 12, 1959. He retired in 1979 as Dean of Faculty Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Education and Sociology. He completed his BA of Education at Winona State College in 1936. After attending the Lyceen Clemenceau in France, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Southern California, he completed his work for the MA at the University of Colorado in 1938. After a year in graduate work at the University of Maryland, he entered the U.S. Army in 1942 and rose in rank from private to major in the Corps of Engineers in both combat and intelligence duty. After the war he completed his work for the PhD in Education and Sociology at Maryland in 1947. KABAT: then served as a lieutenant colonel in the U.W. Army as the Chief of Education. Prior to coming to Eastern he served ad a professor at the university of Chicago – Pakistan.]*

SWEDBERG: Tell me about some of the women at Eastern who stand out in your memory. There must have been some of the old-how should I say-the old timers, some of the women who were, a long time important faculty members ... to the University.

KABAT: Well, Christine Elrod, was very active in the Education Department, and taught creative dramatics to the campus school children and to graduate students, too. Tony Dustin.

SWEDBERG: Tell me about Tony Dustin. *[Editor's Note: Hannah Antoinette Dustin joined the Normal School faculty in 1920 as an instructor in physical education. She was promoted to assistant professor for the 1943-44 academic year. She received promotions to associate professor in 1950. Dustin moved from the Physical Education Department to the faculty of the Campus Elementary School for the 1955-56 school year and remained with the Campus School until her retirement in 1964 as Associate Professor of Physical Education Emeritus. Dustin received her Bachelor in Physical Education from the University of Chicago, her M. Ed from EWCE, and her MA from New York University.]*

KABAT: I've never-that woman looks so fantastic now, and she's just a remarkable, outgoing lady, isn't she? She's just fun to get to see.

SWEDBERG: I've never met her, but I've certainly heard a lot about her.

KABAT: You've never-? Oh, well, there's a case where somebody looks a thousand percent better twenty years later. She's a neat lady.

SWEDBERG: She's involved in athletics?

KABAT: Yes, and the dearest people, Francis Houston and Agnes Colton, Just wonderful teachers, strong academically. Just good hearted ladies, and so good to all the students, a joy to work with, They were exceptional, I thought. *[Editor's Note: Frances Huston joined the faculty as an instructor in English. She retired in 1976 as Professor English Emeritus. She received her BA from Reed College and her MA from the University of Washington. Agnes Colton came to Eastern as an instructor in history. She was promoted to assistant professor of history in 1956. She taught in both English and History Departments and retired in 1972 as Professor of English Emeritus. In 1984, the History Department also recognized her as Professor of History Emeritus. Colton earned her BA from Whitman College and her MA from the University of Oregon and her Ph.D. from the University of Washington.]*

SWEDBERG: English and history?

KABAT: Yes, English and history. Celia Allen and Margaret Allen, both in education. Exceptional people. Margaret, no Mabel Bright in education. Louise Beefer in Home Ec.[sic]. *[Editor's Note: Celia Beck Allen joined the Education Department in 1948. She earned her BA in Ed and her M. Ed from Eastern Washington College of Education. As an instructor in the department she was one of the first master's candidates to receive the master of education from Eastern. Her example as a graduate student was one factor in the Graduate Council's decision to accept William "Red" Reese as a candidate for a master's degree in September 1951. Mabel Pearson Bright taught in the Campus School starting in 1941. She earned her BA in Education fro EWCE and her M. Ed from Colorado State College of Education in Greeley.]*

SWEDBERG: Anne Wiley?

KABAT: Yes. In art, wasn't she in art? Opal Fleckenstein in art. *[Editor's Note: See Flechenstein's oral interview for her biographical information.]*

SWEDBERG: Virginia Dickenson?

KABAT: Yes. And, Esther Gainridge, gosh there's so many, I-

SWEDBERG: Eugenia Clark?

KABAT: Home Ec.? Was she head of Home Ec.? *[Editor's Note: Eugenia B. Clark joined the faculty of the college in 1956 as an associate professor of Home Economics. She was also made chair of the Department of Home Economics and the Head of the Division of Fine and Applied Arts. She received her AB from the University of Wisconsin, her BS in Ed. from Southeast Missouri State College, her BS in Home Economics from the Stout Institute, her MS from Iowa State College, and her PhD from Texas State College for Women.]*

SWEDBERG: Can you remember specific contributions that any of these people made?

KABAT: Well, if you lumped them all together and generalized, you would say they were extremely diligent, very professional, and most of them had marvelous senses of humor (laughs). They just were-you would think that if they were representing this school, how fortunate this school is to have this group of very fine and dedicated professional people. They were excellent.

SWEDBERG: Did they give the school a flavor of the time? It must have been about this time when a predominantly women [sic] faculty gave way to a predominantly men [sic] faculty.

[Editor's Note: This assumption regarding the proportion of male to female faculty must be questioned. A tally of this male to female ratio in 1933-34, 42 to 27 in 1944-45, and 56 to 33 in 1955-56. The predominance of men in the physical social sciences was largely offset by the larger number of women in education and the fine and applied arts.]

KABAT: Gosh, I wouldn't have thought so, Lee. I would think that there-did it really change that much? I would think that there were probably more females after that? No? Oh well, then I . See, so many of these were singles ladies, weren't they? When you think about it [sic]? Yes. I think they were. At least the ones we've been talking about, or not married at the time.

SWEDBERG: Do you think that made a difference?

KABAT: No, I don't. I just think that the tradition before that time women [sic] didn't seek college positions, didn't go on and get the advanced degrees in the numbers that they're getting them today. I think the times have changed. That's fine. At that time colleges were looking for administration and faculty women, younger ones, who had advanced degrees, and it was difficult to find them. Things have changed since that time.

SWEDBERG: Did you meet the Cheney speaker, the granddaughter of the Founder of the Academy?

KABAT: The one who gave the invocation at Jerry Ford's thing? Was she the granddaughter or was that?

SWEDBERG: No. I'm speaking of the older one.

KABAT: No, I've not. Was this her daughter then?

SWEDBERG: I'm not sure.

KABAT: Marvelous gal who's a minister from Berkley, or a student of theology.

SWEDBERG: The one I'm referring to-speaking of was here in 1964.

KABAT: Was she just here for a program?

SWEDBERG: I think so (inaudible T1/s1-367)

KABAT: I don't recall meeting her, but then I had two little babies and maybe that was why (laughs). Louise Anderson was another person whom I didn't get to know very well, but she was a legend and, of course having the dorm named after her [sic]. I ran into her at a couple of social things in Spokane that had nothing to do with the college and she had a fine reputation, too. Faculty Wives, that's another thing we should talk about. At that time, faculty Wives-?

SWEDBERG: I think were President, weren't you?

KABAT: Um hum. Well, you were, too, weren't you? Faculty Wives was, a very, I think pretty strong organization. We tried to have activities to interest the newer faculty women as well as the-well, just kind of a social, it wasn't a service organization at all, it was a get together sort of social group, but one thing we did do during that time maybe '65 or '64, when I was President, whenever it was-we did change it to include faculty women which I thought was a good move.

SWEDBERG: Was that your suggestion?

KABAT: I thought it was (laughs) but maybe it wasn't. I sound like I'm 95 instead of 50 (laughs).

SWEDBERG: Did faculty women move into the organization in numbers?

KABAT: No. Only a few. I think only a couple did. I think they joined but I don't think they came. I don't know-now why do I say that? I don't know. I probably know. They were probably dead tired at the end of the day and had too many demands on their time, just as I felt when I was teaching. There were meetings to go to, and I would have to be selective in which ones I did attend.

SWEDBERG: What was the function of Faculty Wives?

KABAT: I think it was kind of a support for the spouses. You kind of had a feeling that you had a better understanding of the colleges because you knew so many people from the different disciplines, instead of just your own spouse's, your own husband's department. You had a chance to visit with people-wives of different ones. So, when your husband said so and so, you'd say, oh yeah [sic], I know his wife. I think it was kind of a support. There were special interest groups. I think we started that, but maybe not. I know a dozen or so-sounds so frivolous now (laughs)-but I'm sure there were some that were very serious, but I think of Friday Night Out Group, and maybe there was a bowling group. I don't know if there was a sewing group, I don't know if there were any great decision topic groups.

SWEDBERG: There was a seminar, if I remember, but it didn't last as long as the social groups?

KABAT: Well, I'm sure it was a worthwhile one. That reminds me of one of the things that happened when I was Dean-and I had nothing to do with it-but it sticks in my mind as something kind of funny. The model U.N., that year in '61, was held at University of Oregon, and the delegation from Eastern represented Poland. I'm sure at that time, they had to do a lot of study to bone up for this, but one of the things that shocked the whole general assembly at this model U.N. which was drew [sic] from 80 colleges over the western part of the united states-the west coast-was that Eastern delegations submitted some proposal and there was very adverse criticism of it and the delegation walked out-stormed out. I guess it was something very unusual, and so the Eastern delegation I'm sure was remembered by the rest of the group. I don't know if they came back.

SWEDBERG: Do you know what the proposal was about?

KABAT: No. That would be interesting. The following year, the Eastern Delegation represented Finland, which I thought was interesting. Those two would have been excellent countries. Getting back to Faculty Wives, I don't know, I haven't had a note from Faculty Wives organization for years, so I have no idea if there even is one.

SWEDBERG: It died a year ago.

KABAT: Boy.

SWEDBERG: It was given euthanasia.

KABAT: Euthanasia. Well, I [sic] bet it's been twelve years since I've had a note or a call or anything, so I can see why it died.

SWEDBERG: That's the question that I was going to ask you. Why do you think it did?

KABAT: Have no-well, I guess the communication was very poor (laughs).

SWEDBERG: I wondered if the social function has changed, or perhaps the need for it has changed.

KABAT: Well, it surely seems-people will say that there are so many demands on people's time, but I doubt there are any more than when you and I were in school, or beginning our careers, because I think we had a tremendous number of responsibilities, too, although, I do think that for time element that we have been thankful that we have spent as much time with our children. I think that, perhaps maybe [sic] some people would [sic] say, I'd rather stay home with my family than go and sit and play bridge with those faculty wives. I don't know.

SWEDBERG: You suggested that they needed-that Faculty Wives was a support group. Why do you suppose faculty wives needed support? Do you think now, perhaps, it's not needed?

KABAT: Perhaps. I think it was a good organization especially for the new faculty wives.

SWEDBERG: When the Newcomers Group was started-?

KABAT: That's right!

SWEDBERG: (T1/s1-458 can't hear-**KABAT:** talking over)

KABAT: Forgot about that.

SWEDBERG: (T1/s1-459 inaudible)

KABAT: That's right, it was.

SWEDBERG: Perhaps you were responsible for that?

KABAT: No, I don't think so, Lee. See, there again I think, the significance of the Faculty Wives was that you mixed with people of all ages, not just the brand new ones all together. I think Newcomer's Group was a good idea, but I like the idea, if you're going to have an organization, not to have it specifically all one age group or one special interest. I think it's important for you to have that contact across the disciplines and across the age groups. Probably, why it failed, I couldn't even guess now. As you say, maybe people didn't feel the need, but I would guess that if it had strong leadership over the years that it could have kept going. When they were so lax about sending out notices and things-you're not going to seek ,you're not going to call up and say, "what's happened?" and "when am I going to find out about the next meeting?", or else maybe it just got to be too big of a job contacting [sic].

SWEDBERG: What were some of the activities that Faculty Wives carried out?

KABAT: There was a faculty dinner each year that the Faculty Wives were responsible for at the beginning of the year, and it welcomed the new faculty members. We had a dance-dinner dance and then the special interest group. Meetings. What did we do at the meetings (laughs)? Probably planned the other two activities.

SWEDBERG: What about the Dames? Do you know-?

KABAT: No, in fact that came to my mind. What were the Dames-the wives of the students?

SWEDBERG: Yes, I believe so.

KABAT: No, I didn't have any contact with them.

SWEDBERG: Do you remember anything about the women's service clubs named Tawanka or Spurs?

KABAT: Tawanka wasn't-I don't think Tawanka was an alumni group at that time. There wasn't an active group on campus called Tawanka. I think it had gone already off and had become an alumni group. Spurs was an excellent sophomore women's organization. Kathleen Kennedy was the advisor to Spurs. They did a lot of service projects around the schools. There were a great number of service organizations like Intercollegiate Knights, and the Spurs. Those were kind of the joint groups-companion groups. Blue Key, AWS, AMS, Associated Women Students-Associated Men Students, you see. A Student Body-ASB, of course. Golden Circle-the senior women's honorary, which, of course, found a mortar board. I don't know why we didn't have mortar board.

SWEDBERG: Were there ever any social sororities?

KABAT: Not when I was there. A couple came after I left. Dormitories provided a lot of social activities for the students. During homecoming week, the whole week, the dorms tried to see which one could create the best decoration for the front of the dorm, the best float. Each dorm had a queen candidate and there was a lot of campaigning for that candidate. There was a lot of social opportunity for the students on the campus, as well as service opportunities. One of the things I remember specifically is that there were a lot of projects that the students had with the community and with Spokane. A couple of other groups-it was called orphan day [sic] and they would adopt, for the day, orphans, to take them on special outings and they would try to keep in touch with the child during the year, but mostly it was confined to one day.

SWEDBERG: Do you remember any other specific social or service group efforts?

KABAT: A lot of money raising for organizations. They had a campus chest day, or week probably, and the campus chest was like united crusade, and they had convocations where they would raise money and stunt night, oh carnival where there'd be booths. Another thing that was always quite an attention getter was the annual blood drive. I think it was just annual where the students on campus gave blood to the blood bank. One of the traditions-and I'm sure this is no longer there either-the AWS-there's no AWS anymore, I suppose, is there?

SWEDBERG: No, there's the Associated Students, but no women's organization. The Associated Students, perhaps, rises out of that organization
(Side two)

SWEDBERG: There was a Mother's Day?

KABAT: Um hum. A Mother's Day. The AWS-AMS both sponsored it, and a Dad's Day, and the Dad's Day, I don't know, they were probably both in the spring, but the Dad's day was like a Reno night, a carnival night with card playing and so forth. A tremendous amount of decorations and fun, and a tremendous turn out of the dads. The boys and the girls had their dads come. And then for Mother's day, they had a luncheon and a program and a symphonic band, a concert and a tea-I guess each of the dorms had a tea and the boys and girls on campus hosted their moms. That was a tradition that probably had been going on for quite a while.

SWEDBERG: Do you feel there was a difference in the kinds of activities that the young men and the young women sponsored?

KABAT: Yes-well, you see, they both sponsored both didn't they? AWS and AMS sponsored the carnival night-the casino night, and the tea, but they were for men and for women.

SWEDBERG: I was wondering if there was a special kind of contribution that the women made that was all theirs.

KABAT: Well, I would think in their dorm living, and in their teas and so forth, kind of helping the girls-many of the girls were from farm areas-to learn some of the social amenities, which I think was very important. When I went to San Jose State and lived in a house, I felt that I learned an awful lot about graciousness in life, through the contacts that I had. Through some of the good training. It was supposed to help us learn how to meet people more easily and maybe be more sensitive to other people.

SWEDBERG: This may be a pretty open ended question, but what would you say was the most frustrating and the most fulfilling part of being Dean of Women?

KABAT: Oh, what a beautiful question? The fulfilling part, well, let's see. I loved having the chance of getting to know so many young people. It was wonderful. I guess as I look back, and as I have watched so many of them during the last twenty years, and in my job as teaching-television teacher, I run into so many of these men and women who are now in their '40's and successful in their careers in teaching or whatever, here, and throughout Eastern Washington. Just to get to see how well they have done in their lives. I've met many of their children. That's the best part of any job, when you enjoy the people you worked with. The tremendous help that I had, because as I say, I came into this job less qualified to be Dean of Women than probably they will ever have again, or well I hope. It wasn't difficult because I had so much help. Everybody was supportive. Also, the campus life at that time, as we said, was a Camelot sort of thing. It was not difficult. The most frustrating, I can't think of anything, unless it would be that there weren't enough hours in the day, but I think that's always the case (laughs). We enjoy our work, and would like to have more time. I would think that would be the only frustrating thing was, I would have liked to have had more time to devote to the advisorships that I had, or more time to do a better job in finding more jobs, or better living accommodations for the students in town. It was kind of diversified. The job had a lot of angles to it, but I didn't give enough-wasn't able to give enough time to it.

SWEDBERG: You were a counselor to the students. Did you also have a punitive function? Were you a policeman of sorts?

KABAT: What privileges did we ever take away? I don't want to make it sound as if they were all saints on campus, because I know they weren't. I am sure we had problems, but they are dimmed by age and by current problems, I suppose. I know that, as the Dean of Women, I had the authority to do whatever needed to be done. I'm sure. Oh, well, what was the detail? Daryl Hegi had a heart attack just after I took over, a really, really bad one, so I had to take over some of his responsibilities as Dean of Students too, which was one of the things that made the job extra good, because I met with more fellows, as well as girls, which gave me a better outlook I think.

SWEDBERG: There were a Dean of Men, a Dean of Women, and a Dean of Students?

KABAT: Was Al the Dean of Men then? Maybe he was. I think that was it. Housing took a heck of a lot of time.

SWEDBERG: One problem that I remember from that time was the anti-nepotism rule, and you must have run up against this, since you started out as a Dean and married a Dean. What happened then?

KABAT: Um hum. Well, Dr. Patterson was concerned about it and he felt though that it would be alright for both of us to continue. Maybe, do you think George told him that George would take care of it, and as George tells the story, the only way to get rid of me was to make sure that I got pregnant (laughs). I know there was that problem there were those husband and wives on the faculty at that time, too. After I left, I didn't keep up my interest in that particular problem. What is it like now?

SWEDBERG: I believe there was a test case in the Supreme Court, and nepotism rules were not legal in institution in the United States as I understand it. It must have happened about that time. I'm not sure quite when. Who do you think is the most knowledgeable women still alive today-knowledgeable about Eastern's history?

KABAT: Let's talk about the people who could probably give you a lot of information about the women over the years. Amsel Barton would be an excellent one. She has been retired quite awhile, but has started, oh gosh-maybe ten years ago-she started in the First Presbyterian Church facilities, a school, which has been named the Barton School to teach literacy to anyone who needs it on a one to one basis. And they had 200 students-adult students, from all over the world, as well as American citizens who just-of all ages-who just want to get their high school diploma, or want to learn to drive, or from other countries, who want to get their citizenship papers. On a one to one basis, with adult helping adults two times a week, mornings, evenings, whenever it's convenient to the student and tutor. So, I think this has been a very important contribution of a faculty woman. *[Editor's Note: Amsel B. Barton in Ed at Eastern Washington College of Education Department in 1940. She earned her BA in Ed at Eastern Washington College of Education and her MA at Teaches College, Columbia University. She retired in 1968 as a Professor of Education Emeritus.]*

SWEDBERG: What was her position at Eastern?

KABAT: She was in the Education Department. She would be an excellent one. Kathleen Kennedy, Margaret Whitfield, all were very active faculty wives who watched the campus grow-the college grow. Celia Allen would be an excellent one to help you. She's in education. Of course, Agnes Colton and Francis Houston, you'll want to interview. Clara Kessler could write her thoughts and you could report. Marcella Patterson would be an interesting one to talk to. She's in good health, living in Bellevue-Dr. Patterson's wife. We mentioned Dorothy Young Carroll, who lives here in Spokane and who is very active, Student Centennial commemorative book was dedicated. She has been a guiding light to all in her group in the alumni association. There are many dozens and dozens more. These are just the ones off the top of my head. One of the famous Eastern women, I must hasten to fit in here before I forget again, was Sacajawea, and people from pre-1960 years will especially remember going into the rotunda or foyer at Showalter and seeing the big plaster-of-paris statute of Sacajawea. Sacajawea was a Shoshone Indian guide for the Lewis and Clarke expedition who married a French trapper. She was a French trapper's wife, and the legend goes that she was guiding Lewis and Clarke and dropped along the trail for a few hours and had her baby, and then quickly caught up to the expedition and didn't take any time off from the trip because she had her duties to guide them safely to the pacific ocean. Well, anyway, Sacajawea has been such an important part of Eastern's life over the years. This marvelous, huge plaster-of-paris statute in the foyer of Showalter was the welcome. She carried a papoose on her back, and her arm was outstretched to point the direction

for Lewis and Clarke. Evidently, a lot of students did chin-ups on her arm and the arm cracked off and was kind of a stump there. Whitworth, which had been through the year, in athletics, Eastern's big competitor-cross town rivals and I guess the Whitworth students would steal Sacajawea, so she had a lot of bruises. When I was Dean of Women, the veterans club, the ASB, the alumni's, and the AMS and I guess friends of the University contributed enough money to commission Harold Blades, who is a very, very talented artist in Spokane, and as you know does beautiful work, well anyway, we commissioned Harold to design a new Sacajawea statue. I can remember when that statue was wheeled into the foyer of Showalter and the old one was wheeled out, you would certainly have to admit that Sacajawea, the new one, brought forth more comments than anything that has appeared in the artistic works. I don't know what the proportion or percentage of negative comments was, but it was probably 9 to 1 at that time. I think people have grown used to her, but most people thought she looked like an emaciated mummy. It was a modernistic metal sculpture and it certainly was different. And I don't know why I, as Dean of Women, thought I had to stick up for the darn thing, but anyway, I tried to ease her into her surroundings, and one day somebody came running up to my office and said, oh you should see what somebody put down by the new statute of Sacajawea. So, in my indignity, I hurried down there, and someone had brought out a skeleton from the biology department and put it next to it [sic], and honest-to-Pete, it probably looked better than she did, but in my youth and in my stupidity, I insisted that it be taken away. It really was funny as we look back. It was a marvelous idea to do that. I thought it took away from the dignity of this new statue. Now, I'm sure everybody's so used to it twenty years later. I think I have seen many more works of Harold Blade that I admired and really liked, his purple cabbages, and beautiful birds of the northwest, like that. But this was certainly interesting. So Sacajawea changed as the University made changes, too. *[Editor's Note: Sacajawea became a heroine of the feminist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. She was captured as a child by Hidatsa band, longtime antagonists of the Shoshone, and traded eastward into the Mandan region of the northern Great Plains. She indeed was married as a teenager to the French trapper, Charbonneau, who hired on to the Lewis and Clark expedition as a guide. Sacajawea did give birth to a boy named _____ on the westward journey. Her primary utility to the expedition was not, however, as a guide but as a symbol of the peaceful intentions of the expedition. The only indication in the journals of the expedition that she gave the explores information about the geography confronting them was on the return journey when she identified the "buffalo trail" over what is now known as Bozeman Pass. For further reading consult C.S. Kingston's article entitled, "Sacajawea as Guide, the Evolution of the Legend," in The Inland Empire in the Pacific Northwest (Ye Galleon Press, 1981). Harold Balazs is a noted sculpture in the Inland Northwest Region. The Sacajawea sculpture was removed from the Showalter Rotunda in the 1980s to the Isle Memorial Rose Garden between Showalter Hall and the President's Home. In 199_ the statue fell victim to vandals and has not been seen since.]*

SWEDBERG: I was talking to Frank Nichols.

KABAT: Oooohhh! That's one of the few things if I had to live my life over that I would do differently. I just adore Frank we were such close friends, and he was so kind to me that day. He should have said, get off it, who do you think you are, or who do you think you're kidding, because I was a stuffed shirt about it, I was stupid, and he was so good natured. Here I am saying

in front of the students he has with him, with whom he is enjoying this prank, you go take that away. Well, that was cruel to him, as I think back, and he was so kind about it.

One of the things that I remember, is there a year book, *Kinnickinick*, still at Eastern? Probably not. Well, one of the things that I remember about those years too, important times on the campus of course, were all the sweetheart dances and proms, there was a tremendous number of dances. I had chaperoned a lot of them. Have you ever heard of a tolo? It's not in the dictionary. A tolo, as I remember, is a girl ask boy dance, instead of calling it a Sadie Hawkins. The social life on the campus was very, very strong, as I had pointed out before. I can remember the year books, when we were moving a book like a couple of weeks ago, page after page of the queen of the IK, or the blue queen, or the junior prom queen, this dance or that dance, just these full page pictures of these girls. There was a great interest in the social life. The students didn't abuse it I mean. There was academic group in the meantime ... Something that I notice as I look through the year book, and as I think back, do you know, I don't recall ever seeing a girl on campus in anything but a dress or a skirt, in twenty years! Isn't that funny how things have changed? And I remember kids wearing pedal pushers, but it was always in off campus activities. I don't think they wore jeans. They might have.

SWEDBERG: Were there rules about dress?

KABAT: Oh, we did have dress codes. I had forgotten all about that, yes. I can't remember the details, but it probably said no bare tops, or slacks, but I don't know. I shouldn't.

SWEDBERG: Did it refer to both men and women?

KABAT: Oh, I would think so.

SWEDBERG: Were there any rules regarding coming into the dormitory?

KABAT: Oh yes. Maybe 11:00 on week nights and maybe 1:00 on Fridays and Saturdays, a sign in sort of thing, but I'm not precise, I'm not sure.

SWEDBERG: Now was that for women only?

KABAT: Yes, I think so. I think it must have been. One of the things that was quite a treat for the students and for the faculty was called the last lecture. Have you ever heard of that?

SWEDBERG: (inaudible)

KABAT: Various professors were asked, one for each session of this, I think it was ASB sponsored activity, if you could give only one more lecture in your life, what points would you want to make, and it was a very, usually quite philosophical sort of thing where you had a chance to really give your all to your thoughts and present them to the students with a time for questions. That was a great idea. I don't know how long that lasted.

SWEDBERG: Posing a question. Do you feel that you have been important in history, as a woman? Have you contributed to Eastern?

KABAT: As a teacher, I think I have, yes. I think as Dean of Women out at Eastern, I was just taking kind of a break from my teaching career, but I loved teaching. I think as a classroom teacher, and in my job as a television teacher, I have?

SWEDBERG: Tell us about your job now.

KABAT: Okay, for fourteen years, I've been the news teacher, producer, tele-teacher at KSPS T.V., our public television station, and I've had complete freedom through those fourteen years in deciding the content of the program-it's like a current events weekly reader of the air sort of program for elementary age students, and it's been the most widely watched instructional

program that our station has ever had, consistently. I think part of that is because, each week, during those fourteen years, I've visited all the second, thirds, and fourths [sic] at one particular school in Spokane. When we were more widely viewed, before we went on cable, I would go to schools that were part of what we called our subscriber schools, like the campus school in Cheney, Ephrata, or Colfax, and so forth. During the time that I worked at channel 7, I visited like, gosh I think it was like 3500 classrooms, to talk with each classroom for about 20 minutes about my job. How I became a television teacher, what I especially like about the work-just the kind of things you're talking to me about, asking today. More than that, getting suggestions from children and teachers to make the program more interesting. The purpose of news for young people is to create within the children a tremendous desire to be aware and keep aware of what's going on around them, broadening it to the whole world, so that they have a better understanding of other cultures, so that hopefully, if they understand how other people live, then maybe they will be more inclined to want to do what they can to have a peaceful world. I'm taking a leave of absence this coming year because of all these changes in our lives, and our moving and our children going away to school, so I don't know what will happen the following year. I have loved teaching. I'm so proud to be a teacher. George loves teaching. Both Alan and Anne would like to teach, so we are thankful for public school education wherever we have found it