

TIMELINE: Women's Studies Movement Archive, Comparative Literature Women

March 1969: Marsha Hudson puts up notices on bulletin boards in humanities departments at UCB and makes announcements in her seminars that a group to discuss women and literature would meet once a week in her Berkeley apartment. Students of languages and literature soon become the core participants in "Marsha's Salon." Doris Ribera (Earnshaw) is one of the earliest members of the group.

1969: Doris (Ribera) Earnshaw begins collaborative translation workshops on women poets; this work will eventually develop into three separate women's poetry anthology projects.

Spring 1970: UC Berkeley campus wide-strike in protest of Nixon's expansion of the Vietnam War to Cambodia, April 30. Four students killed at Kent State on May 4.

Anti-war sentiment results in virtual closing down of normal UCB functions in many departments in what students call "reconstruction." Students organize to go door-to-door to engage citizens in discussions about the war.

At a joint Comparative Literature Department meeting of faculty and graduate students concerning the strike, Marsha Hudson makes a passionate speech about the justice of the women's liberation movement after someone makes a derisive comment about women's "oppression." Her speech silences any further demeaning comments about women.

After this meeting, in response to Comp Lit women's strong interest in redressing sexist practices, Marsha Hudson moves her literary salon to the UCB campus, and the Comparative Literature Graduate Women's Caucus is born.

Early Members include: Judy Wells, Jayne Walker, Marsha Wagner, Carol Urzi, Lisa Gerrard, Judy Kellogg, Naomi Cutner, Raquel Scherr, Melanie Kaye, Shelley Parlante, Susan Sterling, Ann Freeman, Doris Earnshaw, Deirdre Lashgari, Joanna Bankier, Page Dubois.

May 19, 1970 A subcommittee of the Committee on Senate Policy reports on the paucity of women on the Berkeley faculty, only 15 full professors in 1969. The report also noted the unequal treatment of female graduate students. It was written by Prof. Elizabeth Colson (co-chair), Elizabeth Scott (co-chair) and Herbert Blumer, Susan Ervin-Tripp, and Frank Newman. Scott's statistical research provided the basis for the report. Law School Dean, Sanford Kadish, was Chair of the Academic Senate Policy Committee to which their report was submitted.

1971 Academic Senate establishes a Committee on the Status of Academic Women.

1972: The on-going women's poetry translation group membership shifts over several years; early participants include: Doris Earnshaw, Deirdre Lashgari, Joanna Bankier, Bridget Connelly, Judy Wells, Marsha Wagner, Marsha Hudson, Ann Freeman, Elena Kolb, Nancy Zak, Ling Chung, Barbara Christian, Mitsuye Yamada, Ann Kilmer, Emilie Bergman, Chana Bloch, Laura Schiff, Laura Stortoni, Susan Strong, Kathleen Weaver, Brenda Webster, Joan Keefe.

Over subsequent years, six anthology editors eventually emerge from the group: Doris Earnshaw, Deirdre Lashgari, Joanna Bankier, Kathleen Weaver, Joan Keefe, and Carol Cosman. (In 1972, the original editors were Doris Ribera, Marsha Hudson, Deirdre Lashgari, and Hope Krauskop.)

May 1972: Graduate Comparative Literature Women meet with Chair Blake Spahr with five demands to redress lack of women writers in the male-centered comp lit curriculum: **(a)** The establishment of a permanent curriculum of a 4-quarter lower-division series of courses entitled "Women and Literature," one course to be taught each quarter. **(b)** The instructor, a woman grad student in the department, would be chosen based on her course proposal by a vote of the Comp Lit Women's Caucus. **(c)** The focus would vary depending on the course proposal chosen. **(d)** The establishment of one upper division course on a specific woman author or specialized topic, to be taught once a year either by a grad student or by a qualified, to-be-hired woman professor. **(e)** Hiring of additional women faculty in the department, with input and veto power by the Women's Caucus. There were two women professors on the faculty and ten or more men.

Surprisingly, Spahr accepts the core of the women's proposal, with the exception of **(e)** which violated campus rules. He also explains the Caucus could only "recommend" instructors for the women's courses, but that recommendations would probably be accepted by the department. The bombshell: Spahr asks, "Can you start teaching the lower-division course this summer?"

The Caucus selects the following women to teach the "Women and Literature" courses (Comp Lit 40 series) during its **crucial first year:**

Summer 1972: Melanie Kaye Persoff

Fall 1972: Marsha Hudson "Women Artists"

Winter 1972: Deirdre Lashgari "Women's Experience of Being Silenced and Finding Voice"

Spring 1973: Diane Levitin (with Françoise Meltzer)

Spring 1973 Judy Wells and Mary Stoker "Women and Madness in Literature"
(Comp Lit 191 D, upper division)

Summer 1973 Susan Sterling (included theme of "Women's Roles in Fairy Tales")

2nd year:

Summer 1973: Lisa Gerrard, "The Female *Bildungsroman*."

Fall 1973: Gloria Bowles, CL 40 A "Women and Literature" (225 students apply for course)

Other years

1975: Deborah Ellis, "Women and Violence"

Spring 1975: Judith Kellogg "The Woman's Voice in Literature" Comp Lit 191 B

1976 Summer: Kathleen Weaver, CL 40 D, "Women and the Industrial Revolution"

1976 Fall: Kathleen Weaver, CL 40A "American Women Poets" Women and the Industrial Revolution"

1976 Spring: Libby [Olivia] Eielson, CL 40, "The Myth of Romantic Love"

1973 Gloria Bowles begins to work with students trying to do individual majors in women's studies: a Women's Studies Committee is created to work on a proposal for a major. The original undergraduate members of the committee are Susan André, Marti Dickes and Lynn Witt.

Oct 1974: Gloria Bowles submits the first proposal for a Group Major in Women's Studies to the Executive Committee of L&S, sponsored by faculty members Carol Christ, Natalie Davis & Arlie Hochschild.

April 75: A second and revised proposal submitted.

Oct 75: Another revised proposal submitted.

Nov 75: Proposal accepted for major in Women's Studies to commence in Fall, 1976

Spring 76: Application submitted to Council on Educational Development (CED) to fund Women's Studies major.

May 18, 1976 Comparative Literature Women's Caucus responds by letter to the request of Vice-Chancellor Ira Michael Heyman for information on the status of women in the department. The Caucus continues to assert that "sex discrimination does exist in our department as long as an equal number of men and women do not hold (ladder) faculty positions. Men hold positions in the department in the ratio of 3:1, but the department continues to hire more men than women."

June 1976 Bowles' application for funding Women's Studies is accepted by the CED with the key support of Vice-Chancellor Mike Heyman.

1975 Judy Wells designs a Women's Re-Entry Program for Napa College, working part-time there. She hires Lauren Coodley, Deirdre's Lashgari's former women's studies student, to teach in the program. Coodley goes on to have a long career at Napa College in teaching and administration.

June 1976 Gloria Bowles, Judith Wells, and Olivia Eielson received their Ph.D.s in Comparative Literature.

Both Bowles and Wells submit feminist dissertations:

Gloria Bowles: "Suppression and Expression in Poetry by American Women: Louise Bogan, Denise Levertov, and Adrienne Rich."

Judith Wells: "Madness and Women: A Study of the Themes of Insanity and Anger in Modern Literature by Women."

1976 *The Other Voice: Twentieth Century Women's Poetry in Translation*, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. edited by Joanna Bankier, Carol Cosman, Doris Earnshaw, Joan Keefe, Deirdre Lashgari, Kathleen Weaver.

1977 Raquel Scherr-Salgado and Leonora Taboada publish "Nuestros Cuerpos, Nuestras Vidas," a Spanish translation of "Our Bodies, Ourselves." In collaboration with the Boston Women's Health Collective, 50,000 copies were distributed throughout the U.S. and Latin America.

1978 *Penguin Book of Women Poets*, Penguin, Viking Penguin. Coedited by Carol Cosman, Joan Keefe, Kathleen Weaver, 1978. Associate editors: Joanna Bankier, Doris Earnshaw, Deirdre Lashari.

1983 *Women Poets of the World*, Coedited Joanna Bankier, Deirdre Lashgari, associate editor, Doris Earnshaw, Macmillan, 1983.

1985 Comparative Literature Women's Reunion at Bridget Connelly's in Berkeley. Bridget Connelly, Joanna Bankier, and Judy Wells all receive replies and letters from Comp Lit women.

1991: A Women's Studies Department is recognized and funded as a distinct UC Department, currently Women and Gender Studies, renamed in 2005.

1999 2nd Comparative Literature Women's Reunion at Bridget Connelly's. An idea arises to compose a memoir of personal essays regarding our history as pioneering women's studies advocates in Comparative Literature at UC Berkeley. Five women volunteer to edit the project: Marsha Hudson, Bridget Connelly, Doris Earnshaw, Olivia Eielson, and Judy Wells. Editors meet for five years to complete the anthology.

2004 *Berkeley Literary Women's Revolution: Essays from Marsha's Salon* ed. by Marsha Hudson, Bridget Connelly, Doris Earnshaw, Olivia Eielson, Judy Wells. McFarland, 2004.

2009 Gloria Bowles, *Living Ideas, A Memoir of the Tumultuous Founding of Berkeley Women's Studies*. Gloria publishes her memoir as the first Women's Studies Coordinator at UC Berkeley.

(Month?) 2015 A reunion of the women's caucus at the home of Gloria Bowles, where the concept of a Women's Studies Movement Archive was first suggested.

Other early feminist dissertations or dissertations focusing on women writers by Comp Lit 1970s activists:

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz: *The Sword Philippan: Woman as Hero in Stuart Tragedy*, **1975**

Susan Sterling: *Witty Heroines and Lovely Victims: Changing Ideals of Femininity in 18th Century German Drama*, **1975**

Jayne Walker: *Gertrude Stein and her Objects; from "Melanctha" to Tender Buttons*, **1975**

Marsha Hudson: *A Woman of Words: A Study of Muriel Rukeyser's Poetry*, **1978**

Lisa Gerrard: *The Romantic Woman in 19th Century Fiction: A Comparative Study of Madame Bovary, La regenta, The Mill on the Floss, and The Awakening*, **1979**

Raquel Scherr: *A Voice against Silence: Feminist Poetics in the Early Work of Rosario Castellanos*, **1979**

Doris Earnshaw: *The Female Voice in Medieval Romantic Lyric*, **1981**

Deirdre Lashgari: *The Agony of Leaving: Relinquishing Scenes in the Novels of Austen, Bronte, and Eliot*, **1987**

Significant deaths:

Joan Keefe, b. 1932- d. Feb. 13, 2013

Deirdre Lashgari, b. April 7, 1941- d. August 16, 2014

Doris Earnshaw, b. Oct. 20, 1925- d. Jan. 4, 2018

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, b. 1945- d. July 9, 2018