

June 18, 2003

Dear Kevin,

Perhaps I have written too much; however, I believe what I have written is accurate. I have attempted to highlight in yellow marker those parts that were your words as taken from the write up of my phone interview of May 27. If I have exceeded what you wished of me, please let me know.

I have also included photographs. Of course I am prominent in each of these photos since they are from my personal albums.

Finally, Grady and I will be out of the country from July 3 to July 21. Please let me hear from you before we leave.

Perhaps I will give you a call.

POSTSCRIPT:

Edna Saffy went on to earn a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Public Address. She joined the faculty at Florida Community College in Jacksonville. She served as Florida State President of the Florida Women's Political Caucus and was appointed by President Clinton to the Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts. In Jacksonville she served on the Human Rights Commission and was founder of the Jacksonville Women's Network.

Jeanette Helfrich earned her J.D. from UF Law School and works as an attorney for the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D. C. Government.

Alyce McAdam worked in the computer field and lives in Tampa.

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Please up date the page of Edna Saffy in the directory as follows:

(B) No Change

(H) No Change

EDUCATION: No Change

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE: No Change

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

Mayor's Commission on Human Rights (2003-2005), Mayoral Board appointments to Ritz Theatre and LaVilla Restoration, Duval Hospital Authority, Zoning Commission; Communication Association of America; Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Board of Trustees, Emeritus; National Women's Political Caucus; Democratic National Committee; District Five Democratic Committeewoman; Leadership Jacksonville Board; Uptown Civitan Board of Directors; Florida Women's Consortium; Delegate to Democratic National Convention (Bill Clinton 1992, Jimmy Carter 1980); Credentials Committee National Democratic Convention 1996 and 2000; Founder, Jacksonville and Gainesville National Organization for Women

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

Founder of the Jacksonville Women's Network; Appointed by President Bill Clinton to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; State President of Florida Women's Political Caucus; Planned Parenthood of NE Florida Board of Directors; Recipient of Mayor's Award for Women's History Month "Women of Courage and Vision 2001"; National Organization for Women Mary Nolan Award; Susan B. Anthony Award for Equal Rights Amendment Florida Women's Network, Charter Member

CATEGORY:

Founding Member, 1977 – Academic/Academic Management (1979)

RECOLLECTIONS

In October of 1972, Edna Saffy, a doctoral candidate who had been a convenor of the Jacksonville chapter of the National Organization for Women, posted notices around the UF campus announcing the organizational meeting of a UF chapter of N.O.W. Approximately 100 people showed up for that meeting—women and men, students, faculty and employees of UF, community people, spouses of students, etc. It was a clear indication of how important people in the area considered the issue of inequality against women. Those who assembled that October evening saw that change was needed not only on the individual level, for “all politics is personal”, but on the local and state level as well. The Women’s Movement sought to bring about equal access and equal rights with equal responsibility for Women.

Women were ready. This was a time when women had honed their leadership skills in the student movements of the 60’s. Many of these women were part of the Civil Rights Movement and the Peace Movement.

At UF they had marched with the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. They had joined Caesar Chavez's Farm Workers Movement. They had worked to make abortion a choice for women.

On the local level the evidence of discrimination was apparent. Students saw that women were not given equal consideration with men. Colleges like the Law and Medical Schools, except by special exemption, were closed to women. At the Law Library, when a woman entered, the male students loudly shuffled their feet in protest. The Charter Class of the Dental College admitted only two women to its class of twenty-two men. Other graduate and undergraduate programs were closed to women; for example, even in the College of Education, Dr. Wattenbarger's Educational Leadership Program refused to allow women. In many doctoral areas few if any women received Ph.D.'s.

In athletics, even though Title IX of the Federal law that required equal treatment in athletics for woman was law, women's teams were allowed use of the athletic facilities only after the men had finished. Often as with the basketball courts, women's teams could practice only late in the evening.

The pay and promotion of women faculty were not equal to their male counterparts. Few if any women were on the graduate faculty. Had it not

been for women like Drs. Ruth McQueen, Tommie Ruth Waldo, Carolyn Griffis or Professor Irene Thompson, students would not have had a woman professor. Without Phyllis Meek there would have been no woman at her level in the Student Affairs Office.

However, to those who formed N.O.W. that night in October 1972, the most openly blatant example of exclusion, of discrimination, of sexism was the all-male student group funded through student activities fees (as well as by the University) that boasted their membership was closed to women—Florida Blue Key. Not only did Florida Blue Key (FBK) receive funding from the activity fees of both women and men students, they also received a broad area of space for their offices in the Reitz Student Union, as well as UF personnel and other University resource support. FBK had control over student government. They held the majority of seats in the Student Senate. Elections of Student Body offices were dependent on their support and usually they were member of FBK. They ran Gator Growl, the Accent Speakers' Bureau, Legislative Receptions, the Blue Key Banquet (at which women were not allowed), held the Miss U of F Beauty Contest, etc. These activities seemed to be sanctioned at all levels of the University.

N.O.W. had achieved legitimacy on campus. They worked closely with both the University and Gainesville police, of course always requesting

women police officers. The members broke no laws and destroyed no property. The members were academically strong students. They lobbied legislators and gained the support of State Representative Buddy MacKay for the State ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. They even held a reception in honor of State Representative Ralph Turlington for his local and State support. They worked closely with the media and were sought by them. Both the student newspaper, the Alligator, and the radio stations supported their efforts. Their public image was sound.

Though their objective was serious, the student body was attracted by N.O.W.'s activities, which were seen as a symbol of the times. These actions often appeared as fun and at times humorous. For example, FBK held an annual beauty contest called Miss University of Florida. N.O.W. picketed outside the Reitz Union as their beauty contest was being held. Then N.O.W. held its own contest for **Mr. University of Florida**.

Another activity which drew attention was the night Jane Fonda came to a N.O.W. meeting. She was in support of equality and had come to campus seeking support for military men missing in action (MIA's). Jane Fonda had last been seen in the film Barbarella and the students flocked to see her at the meeting. Dressed casually and without her Barbarella makeup she was not recognized until she came forward to speak

N.O.W. reached out and coalesced with other campus activities.

Many were already part of the Civil Rights and Peace Movements. N.O.W. joined with Caesar Chavez and the farm workers in their boycott against Gallo Wine and Red Coach Lettuce. The women led, by N.O.W. liaison Jeanette Helfrich, joined in other endeavors in the city such as appearing before the Gainesville City Commission as it debated excluding women from their Fair Housing Code since “women used too much water”, as well as working with groups such as G.W.E.R (Gainesville Women for Equal Rights) a forceful civil rights group.

On campus N.O.W. worked to give 18 year olds the right to vote. N.O.W. worked with Felicity Truebood and supported completely the UF Women Faculty’s attempt to achieve equity. As did the other equality organizations, the UF Women Faculty also supported N.O.W.

Vice President Harold Hanson appointed Edna Saffy to the President’s Committee on the Status of Women. Alyce McAdams, a prominent N.O.W. member and the woman who was to become the second President of N.O.W. ran for Student Body President with the support of the Sunshine Party. Several N.O.W. members (both women and men, including Edna Saffy’s husband Grady Johnson) were elected to the Student Senate. N.O.W. succeeded, by following all policies including nondiscrimination in

membership, in acquiring office space in the Reitz Union within 20 feet of the FBK offices. Members of N.O.W. were elected to “Who’s Who” and Edna Saffy was honored by inclusion into the UF’s Hall of Fame. From these positions N.O.W. moved to change forever what they called “the Brotherhood of the Bell”, Florida Blue Key.

Yet FBK remained intractable. Even when the Board of Regents (the State of Florida governing body for all state universities) expanded its policy of nondiscrimination to include sex as well as the use of facilities, FBK still occupied the Reitz Student Union and still excluded women from membership. N.O.W., working from within the Student Senate and with other Student Senators voted not to fund FBK’s three programs for \$8,000, the same amount that the women students were paying each year from their Student Activities fees to FBK. Students and other UF organizations that supported N.O.W. and in which N.O.W. men and women held membership like Savant wrote formal letters to President O’Connell protesting FBK’s use of campus facilities and asking for the implementation of the Regents’ policy.

Even with the ongoing protests to UF, the \$8,000 funding was reinstated, for in April, with FBK members casting the deciding votes, the Senate Judicial Committee of Student Government ruled in favor of FBK

funding, 5 to 2. That same month FBK voted 38 to 24 against admitting women; no roll call was taken, and there were no reporters present.

NOW requested an opinion from the State of Florida Attorney General Robert Shevin. Attorney General Shevin replied he could not give an opinion unless the request came from an elected state official. The power of FBK alumni was far reaching and an elected state official could not be found who was willing to make the request. However, finally one person who by definition was “an elected state official” stepped forward. That person was the President of the University of Florida Student Body, a student at the Law School, and a member of Florida Blue Key. His name was Tyrie Boyer. He later became a judge in Jacksonville.

In 1974, Attorney General Robert Shevin issued the opinion that FBK could not discriminate against women. If they continued to do so, they could use neither student money nor University facilities. FBK had a choice: stop the discrimination against women or, if they continued to do so, leave the Reitz Union.

That night FBK held a closed and supposedly secret meeting at the Law School; however, the men and women of N.O.W. had been advised the meeting was to take place, so they were listening in the next room as the distraught men of FBK passionately argued over changing the policy of

discrimination against women. After several votes, and much venting of emotions, FBK finally voted to admit women in order not to lose their budget from Student government or their offices in the Reitz Union and their other University support.

The National Organization for Women celebrated with other students and other campus and city organizations, for the victory was for all women. Later that night, in front of the FBK offices in the Reitz Union, N.O.W. placed a large funeral wreath of dead flowers with a banner on which was printed, "Rest in Peace Florida Blue Key". Women became members of the next FBK class.

Thus ended the local and primary focus that began in October of 1972 at UF; however, from the first, the University of Florida N.O.W Chapter had not only local, but also a state focus. Those women of N.O.W. on UF campus became the organizing force behind the first march on Tallahassee for ratification by Florida of the Equal Rights Amendment which Congress had sent to the states for ratification in March of 1972. This second endeavor of UF N.O.W. was also a success in that the result was the first ever march on Tallahassee for the Equal Rights Amendment. The women of UF were the major organizers of the "Florida Parades for the ERA". On April 14, 1975, at exactly 11:00 a.m. when Alyce McAdam (who was in

charge of security for that day) gave the signal to begin by blowing her whistle, over 1,000 women and men marched from the Governor's Mansion to the Capitol Steps in a show of support for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.

When the 1,000 reached the Capitol, they first were welcomed by Governor Reuben Askew, then by speakers from the Florida Senate and House of Representatives, then by national dignitaries and by famous stars. No, Jane Fonda was not there at this time; however, Alan Alda from the TV drama M*A*S*H was part of the program. He had marched that morning holding the hand of his daughter Elizabeth. Marlo Thomas of the TV series "That Girl" spoke to the supporters from the platform. She had almost been crushed by the crowds when they recognized her earlier. The day before the march. Between lobbying legislators she had spent time on the phone speaking with a mysterious person later discovered to be her then boyfriend and soon to be husband, Phil Donahue.

Betty Freidan, the author of The Feminine Mystique encouraged the crowd with her words. Karen DeCrow, the National President of N.O.W., Karen DeCrow spoke. The entire platform was the result of the work of Jeanette Helfrich, another UF N.O.W. member had been in charge of that historic program. Responsible for accommodations for any of those 1,000

who needed them was Gainesville's Linda Bassham. The State Director of the "Florida Parades for the E.R.A." and one of the platform speakers was Edna Saffy.

No, the UF Chapter of N.O.W. did not accomplish that day alone. It was a statewide effort; however the University of Florida Chapter of the National Organization for Women that was formed that October night in 1972 provided the leadership.

Proudly, it can be stated that the University of Florida National Organization for Women changed history, or as they called it "HERstory".

Recollections

Edna Saffy, Ph.D.