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UNESCORTED GUESTS: YALE'S FIRST WOMEN UNDERGRADUATES AND  
THE QUEST FOR EQUITY, 1969-1973

A Dissertation Presented

by

ANNE G. PERKINS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies,  
University of Massachusetts Boston,  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2018

Higher Education Program

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ANNE G. PERKINS

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ABSTRACT

UNESCORTED GUESTS: YALE'S FIRST WOMEN UNDERGRADUATES AND  
THE QUEST FOR EQUITY, 1969-1973

May 2018

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“Unescorted Guests” provides a richly detailed portrait of a fundamental change at one US institution: Yale University’s 1969 transition from an all-men’s to a coed college. This study disputes several dominant narratives about the 1970s youth and women’s movements, and deepens our understanding of three core issues in higher education research: access, the experiences of previously excluded students, and change towards greater equity. I contest the myth of alumni as foes to coeducation, and show that the greatest opposition to equity for women came instead from Yale’s president and trustees. I document how women students, absent as powerful figures in youth movement history, played a key role in pushing change at Yale. I show how women administrators,

missing from standard social movement depictions of change, created power to advance equity despite efforts to undermine them. I chronicle the key role played by the federal government and the broader women's movement in advancing change for women at Yale, and conversely the ways that Yale used its power to slow progress for women. I challenge, through multiple sources of evidence, the idea that access alone brought equity for women.

“Unescorted Guests” also provides for the first time a comparison of the experiences and activism of black and white women students in a predominantly white college, a description of the sexual harassment and assault experienced by women at an elite college in the early 1970s, a joint portrait of women administrators and students at a newly coeducational institution, and 1970s student outcome data broken out by race, class, and gender. Lastly, this study contributes to the literature through using archival evidence, interviews, and contemporary press absent in earlier studies, most notably those providing the voices of women; showing how theory can strengthen the trustworthiness of historical narrative; and probing the practical implications of this historical study.

Women are welcome as guests of members at any time, but the Fence Club does not intend to . . . admit them unescorted.

—1969 policy of Yale student club<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David Hubbard to Elga Wasserman, April 9, 1969, box 24, folder 927, RU821, Accession 19ND-A-086, Records of the Yale University Office on the Education of Women, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library (YUA) (hereafter cited as RU821A).

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I have been graced in this work with a remarkable dissertation committee. Thanks above all to my chair, John Saltmarsh, for his enthusiasm about my research, encouragement about taking it to the next level, and knack for knowing the exact question to ask to help me think more clearly about all that I was uncovering. Linda Eisenmann, whose work I admired long before I first met her, has been a wonderful mentor and generous in connecting me with other historians. Dwight Giles sharpened my thinking about change. My understanding of methodology and theory owes much to my work with Gerardo Blanco. I am grateful as well to other University of Massachusetts Boston faculty who helped push my thinking about various aspects of this work: Jay Dee, Sana Haroon, Tara Parker, and Katalin Szelényi.



I could not have completed the oral histories that were so central to this research without the financial support I received from the University of Massachusetts Boston. I thank the Zelda Gamson Fellowship and the UMass Boston Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant program for supporting this work. I am also grateful for funding from the Kanter travel grant program, which enabled me to present my research at two different Association for the Study of Higher Education conferences, and for the reviewers there who gave insightful feedback on my papers.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Our demand that Harvard and Yale Colleges should admit women, though not yet yielded, only waits for a little more time.

—Lucy Stone, 1856 Women’s Rights Convention<sup>1</sup>

In April 1969, more than a hundred years late by Lucy Stone’s calculation, Yale University admitted its first women undergraduates. They arrived the following September to an institution that dragged behind it the accretion of habit and belief built up over Yale’s first 268 years, when only men were allowed. There were 575 women undergraduates in all that first year: 230 freshmen, 151 sophomores, and 194 juniors.<sup>2</sup> The male students outnumbered them seven to one, an imbalance achieved not by chance but by design, as Yale capped the number of women so as not to reduce the number of

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<sup>1</sup> Rosalind Rosenberg, “The Limits of Access: The History of Coeducation in America,” in *Women and Higher Education in American History*, eds. John Faragher and Florence Howe (New York: Norton, 1988),

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I have used “freshmen” to describe first-year students regardless of gender, as this was the term used by Yale’s women undergraduates in this era, who also called themselves girls and coeds as well as women. I also use the terms “male” and “female”, reflecting the binary view of gender in this era. Similarly, I have used “black”—the term used by Yale’s African American students—to describe African Americans, and “Afro-American”—the term chosen by Yale’s black students—for both the major and the cultural center that black students established in 1969; the academic department has since been renamed “African American Studies.” Lastly, I have used the first and last names that women students used while at Yale rather than those they used later in life.

men.<sup>3</sup> It would be another four years before activism by women students, faculty, and administrators succeeded in ending the gender quotas at Yale.

In the four years following Yale's coeducation announcement and Princeton's two months later, the majority of elite all-men's colleges in the US admitted their first women undergraduates. The rest soon followed.<sup>4</sup> Within a decade, coeducation had become such a dominant norm that the men-only pasts of places like Yale were soon lost from view, and the sharp edges of this history sanded down until all that remained was a sanitized tale of equity willingly and easily achieved. By the 1990s, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Gordon Wood could look back on this era and deem it the period that "democratized higher education in America."<sup>5</sup> The quest for equity did not end with the decision to admit women undergraduates, however, but began there.

While numerous scholars have studied the initial decision to admit women undergraduates,<sup>6</sup> the history of institutional change once these women arrived and the

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<sup>3</sup> Office of Undergraduate Admissions, "Female Enrollment to Date," August 27, 1970, box 1, folder 10, RU821A; Elga Wasserman, "Coeducation 1969-1970," report, December 14, 1970, Appendix A, box 1, folder 5, RU821, Accession 2006-A-213 (hereafter cited as RU821B).

<sup>4</sup> Stacey Jones, "Dynamic Social Norms and the Unexpected Transformation of Women's Higher Education, 1965–1975," *Social Science History* 33, no. 3 (2009): 248; Nancy Weiss Malkiel, *"Keep the Damned Women Out": The Struggle for Coeducation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 6, 26. See Appendix A for colleges that went coed following Yale's 1968 announcement.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon Wood, "The Losable Past," *The New Republic*, November 7, 1994, 47.

<sup>6</sup> See Claudia Goldin and Lawrence Katz, "Putting the Co in Education: Timing, Reasons, and Consequences of College Coeducation from 1835 to the Present," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper no.16281 (August, 2010), accessed December 29, 2017 from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16281>; Jones; Jerome Karabel, *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005); Malkiel; Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan Poulson, eds., *Going Coed: Women's Experiences in Formerly Men's*

stories of their experiences remain largely untold. “The historical literature on coeducation and higher education is sparse,” note Harvard economists Claudia Goldin and Lawrence Katz, and this gap impacts not only what we know, but how we think about it. As historian Linda Eisenmann observes, “Writing women’s history through the lens of access focuses historians too heavily on a story of victimization.”<sup>7</sup>

*Unescorted Guests: Yale’s First Women Undergraduates and the Quest for Equity* fills this gap by exploring in depth the first four years of undergraduate coeducation at Yale, 1969 to 1973. Using archival documents, oral histories, and contemporary press accounts, I place women at the center of this history, as actors rather than acted upon. I chronicle the diverse experiences of Yale’s early women undergraduates both inside and outside the classroom and explore the interaction of the US women’s movement and changes towards greater gender equity at Yale. This is a story of change—change that happened, and change that did not—and of power: power held through all its traditional means, and power created outside such hierarchies. Above all, *Unescorted Guests* is the history of the women students and administrators who changed how gender was defined at Yale, and in so doing pushed Yale closer to equity.

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*Colleges and Universities, 1950-2000* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004). Barbara Solomon’s *In the Company of Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), still the most comprehensive history of women in higher education, does not address the 1970s wave of postsecondary coeducation.

<sup>7</sup> Goldin and Katz, 1, footnote 3; Linda Eisenmann, “Reconsidering a Classic: Assessing the History of Women’s Higher Education a Dozen Years After Barbara Solomon,” *Harvard Educational Review* 67, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 699.



## Yale as a Case Study

I have chosen to focus on one institution because a case study approach enabled me to examine the mechanisms of power and change with a depth not possible in a broader overview. But of the 2,525 institutions of higher education in the US in 1969,<sup>8</sup> why choose Yale? Gender discrimination was widespread throughout American colleges and universities in this period, and not solely at the institutions that continued to ban women students. Elite institutions that were already coeducational limited access to women through quotas and housing. MIT, nominally coed since 1871, did not provide housing for women until 1963, when a woman alumna provided the funding; its undergraduate student body in 1968 was 95 percent men. Cornell, Purdue, Rice, Stanford, and Vanderbilt all kept women undergraduates at 30 percent or less of the student body at a time when they comprised 41 percent of US undergraduates overall.<sup>9</sup>

US Colleges discriminated against women faculty and administrators as well. Just 2 percent of the full professors at the University of California Berkeley were women in 1970, 4 percent at the University of Michigan, 9 percent nationally. Even at all-women's Barnard, women held just 21 percent of the full professorships and chairmanships. As the report of the US Commission on Higher Education concluded in 1971, "Discrimination

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<sup>8</sup> US Department of Education [USDOE], National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait*, January 1993, Table 23, accessed December 19, 2017 from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs93/93442.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Jones, 248, 276; Amy S. Bix, "From 'Engineeresses' to 'Girl Engineers' to 'Good Engineers'" in *Women in Engineering*, ed. Margaret E. Layne (Reston, VA: American Society of Civil Engineers, 2009), 18-22; Gardner Patterson, "The Education of Women at Princeton," report, *Princeton Alumni Weekly* 69, no. 1 (1968), 21, box 1, folder 4, RU821B; USDOE, 1993, 66.

against women, in contrast to that against minorities, is still overt and socially acceptable within the academic community.”<sup>10</sup>

Colleges that admitted their first women students in the late 1960s and early 1970s provide an important window into this inequity. The wave of coeducation that swept through top-tier US colleges in this period occurred with a rapidity that surprised even knowledgeable observers, thus exemplifying the type of “abrupt and destabilizing change” that can shed light on challenges today. Moreover, as historian Margaret Nash observes, examining “flashpoints of particular institutions” can help us better understand the practices through which power is enacted.<sup>11</sup> The flashpoint of instant coeducation at formerly all-male campuses thus provides an important site of inquiry into the larger history of the advance of social justice for women.

Yale and Princeton were the bellwethers of this sweeping change. Among US colleges in the 1960s, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton were the head of the pack. All three had been founded before the American Revolution began, and they had been providing the country with senators and statesmen, leaders in business and education, ever since. America’s brightest high school students vied for admission there. Schools lower down

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<sup>10</sup> Ann Sutherland Harris, “The Second Sex in Academe,” *AAUP Bulletin* 56, no. 3 (September 1970): 290; “Situation Report: College Education,” *Time*, March 20, 1972, 101; US Department of Health Education and Welfare, *Report on Higher Education*, by Frank Newman, March 1971, 80.

<sup>11</sup> Jones, 248; John L. Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 98; Margaret A. Nash, “Thoughts on Foucault, Power, and the History of Women’s Education” (paper presented at the History of Education Society, St. Louis, November 2015), 2.

the hierarchy saw them as models.<sup>12</sup> Yale's decision to admit women undergraduates and Princeton's two months later finally broke the coeducation taboo among elite US colleges, and helped launch the second wave of US postsecondary coeducation.

Yale represents another important extreme as well, that of campus climates developed in the absence of women. Yale prided itself on producing not just Yale graduates, but "Yale Men", and this ideal was so deeply embedded in the Yale ethos that the most popular film shown by Yale alumni clubs in 1969 was a documentary entitled *To Be a Man*. By 1969, Yale had been educating its male undergraduates in the complete absence of women classmates for 268 years, longer than any other US college. Harvard was the only US college older than Yale, but while Radcliffe students had been attending classes there since 1943, Yale never had a sister school. Even Princeton, founded forty-five years after Yale opened in 1701, had a coordinate women's college for a decade at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

One final reason guides the choice of Yale for this case study. I received my bachelor's degree from Yale, where I spent four years as a reporter and eventually editor-in-chief of the *Yale Daily News*. The deep knowledge of the university thus gained let me begin this research with what historian William James Hoffer calls "the advantages of an

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<sup>12</sup> Karabel, 18-19, 516; Patricia A. Graham, "Expansion and Exclusion: A History of Women in American Higher Education," *Signs* 3, no. 4 (1978): 768.

<sup>13</sup> *To Be A Man*, directed by Murray Lerner (Yale Office of Public Information, 1966), DVD, Yale University Film Study Center (hereafter cited as YUFSC); Joseph Soares, *The Power of Privilege: Yale and America's Elite Colleges* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 45; Marie Hicks, "Integrating Women at Oxford and Harvard Universities, 1964-1977," in *Yards and Gates: Gender in Harvard and Radcliffe History*, ed. Laurel Ulrich (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 371; Patterson, 25.

insider”: an intuitive grasp of the culture of the place, and personal contacts with people involved in this story.<sup>14</sup> Such insider knowledge brings risks as well, and I have had to take care that my own Yale experience did not create false assumptions about the Yale of the women who preceded me. Yet what historian can claim to arrive at their subject with no preconceptions or blind spots? “Objectivity is not possible,” observe historians Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier. “The trick then, is to construct our interpretations responsibly, with care, and with a high degree of self-consciousness about our disabilities and the disability of our sources.”<sup>15</sup> I have sought in the following pages to do so.

### **The Historiography of Change**

This study is located at the intersection of the field of higher education and the discipline of history, and addresses issues central to both. *Unescorted Guests* adds to our knowledge in three core areas of higher education inquiry: the expansion of access to previously excluded students, the experience of women undergraduates and students of color, and institutional change towards greater equity. These areas of inquiry in turn bear on broader historical issues: the impact of the youth movement, the advance of second wave feminism into America’s most elite institutions, and the unacknowledged role of women students as change agents during the early 1970s.

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<sup>14</sup> Williamjames Hoffer, "Dark Ages?," review of *Yale Law School and the Sixties: Revolt and Reverberations* by Laura Kalman, *Reviews in American History* 34, no. 3 (September 2006): 379-384.

<sup>15</sup> Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 148.

## Access and the Youth Movement

Historians have consistently found that decisions to expand access to women at US colleges and universities occurred not as an effort to achieve greater equity, but because enrolling women students benefited institutions by increasing revenue, improving the intellectual caliber of the student body, and reducing the negative impact of outside pressure.<sup>16</sup> *Unescorted Guests* finds the same dynamic at Yale: the 1968 decision to admit women undergraduates arose in response to student pressure and Yale's loss of top applicants to colleges with women students or coordinate women's schools.

This study disputes, however, a related and dominant narrative that depicts the decision to go coed as a struggle between progressive administrators who sought change and conservative alumni who opposed it.<sup>17</sup> I document instead how the staunchest opponent to admitting women undergraduates was Yale's president, Kingman Brewster, while alumni, pleased that their daughters could now attend Yale, increased their donations. The most vocal advocates for coeducation were Yale's men students, whose pressure proved crucial to pushing Yale to accept women undergraduates. This finding expands our understanding of the impact of the 1960s youth movement beyond the

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<sup>16</sup> Geraldine Clifford, "'Shaking Dangerous Questions from the Crease': Gender and American Higher Education," *Feminist Issues* 3, no. 2 (Fall 1983): 25-31; Goldin and Katz, 6; Jones, 270; Karabel, 8; Malkiel, xv-xxii; Susan L. Poulson and Leslie Miller-Bernal, "Conclusion: Coeducation and Gender Equal Education," in Miller-Bernal and Poulson, 309-310; Rosenberg, 108-116.

<sup>17</sup> See Goldin and Katz, 25; Karabel, 418; Malkiel, 57; Soares, 102-103; Marcia Synnott, "A Friendly Rivalry: Yale and Princeton Pursue Parallel Paths to Coeducation," in Miller-Bernal and Poulson, 112-13.

protest targets on which accounts of the era's student activism typically center—ending the Vietnam War, increasing the numbers of black students, and expanding student voice in university governance—and shifts the context of the advent of coeducation from the rise of the women's movement, still too new to drive the coeducation decision at Yale, to the youth movement, in which young men challenged gender roles by arguing for sexual freedom and “unconstrained sexual access to women of their own class.”<sup>18</sup> This difference would have a profound effect on the experience of early women undergraduates.

### **Experiences of Women in Token Numbers**

While the bulk of the literature on 1970s coeducation does not go beyond the access decision, two important exceptions are Nancy Malkiel's 2016 history and Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan Poulson's 2004 edited volume of essays. Both works examine the critical early years of coeducation at multiple institutions. However, the breadth of these studies—spanning fifty years and seventeen institutions in *Going Coed*, nine institutions and two continents in Malkiel—necessarily sacrifices depth, and we see the women only in glimpses. A few other case studies examine women undergraduates' experiences in this period, but with the exception of two articles on West Point, this research looks at institutions that were already coed or had coordinate women's colleges,

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<sup>18</sup> Alan E. Bayer and Alexander W. Astin, “Violence and Disruption on the U.S. Campus, 1968-1969,” *Educational Record* 50, no. 4 (1969): 345; Rosen, 96; Scranton, 22-29; Sarah M. Evans, “Sons, Daughters, and Patriarchy: Gender and the 1968 Generation,” *The American Historical Review* 114, no. 2 (2009): 342.

thus making the arrival of women students less abrupt.<sup>19</sup> Lastly, none of these existing studies distinguish between the experiences of the white, straight, middle-class students who formed the majority of women students, and women who were black, Asian American, Latina, gay, and/or working class.

Studies of Progressive Era coeducation are far richer in their description of the experience of women students.<sup>20</sup> Yet this first wave of coeducation, from 1870 to 1920, differed markedly from the wave that followed in the 1970s: it came primarily from the opening of new, coeducational colleges and universities; it took place among lower-tier institutions; and it occurred in a context in which US colleges and institutions were almost entirely segregated by race and college attendance itself was rare, with only 8 percent of young women attending college at all by 1920. In contrast, the second wave of coeducation occurred through the conversion of all-men's schools. It impacted the top tier of US colleges, and took place in a period when roughly two-thirds of African

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<sup>19</sup> See Bix; Polly Welts Kaufman, ed., *Search for Equity: Women at Brown University, 1891-1991* (Hanover, NH: Brown University Press, 1991); Robert Priest, Howard Prince, and Alan Vitters, "The First Coed Class at West Point: Performance and Attitudes," *Youth and Society* 10, no. 2 (December 1978): 205-24; Hicks, 245-270; Janice Yoder, Jerome Adams, and Howard Prince, "The Price of a Token," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 11 (Fall 1983): 325-337.

<sup>20</sup> See Clifford, 1-62; Marybeth Gasman, "Swept Under the Rug? A Historiography of Gender and Black Colleges," *American Educational Research Journal* 44, no. 4 (January 1, 2007): 760-805; Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Helen Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Knopf, 1987); Christine Lundt, Susan Poulson, and Leslie Miller-Bernal, "To Coeducation and Back Again: Gender and Organization at the University of Rochester," in Miller-Bernal and Poulson, 55-79; Amy Thompson McCandless, "Stopping the 'Flow of Co-Eds and Other Female Species': A Historical Perspective on Gender Discrimination at Southern (US) Colleges and Universities," *Forum on Public Policy Online* 2009, no. 2 (December 7, 2009): 1-21; Christine A. Ogren, "Where Coeds were Coeducated: Normal Schools in Wisconsin, 1870-1920," *History of Education Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 1-26; Rosenberg, 107-129; Solomon, 43-140.

American college students attended historically white schools and more than a third of the eighteen- to twenty-four year old population in the US was enrolled in college, with women representing 41 percent of those students.<sup>21</sup> These differing contexts preclude any assumptions that the experience of women undergraduates was consistent across eras.

I expand the literature on postsecondary coeducation by providing a detailed account of the experiences of the first women undergraduates at Yale, including how these women's experiences differed along lines of race, class, and sexuality. As sociologist Jessica Ringrose argues, "the treatment of gender as an undifferentiated, essentialized and monolithic category of analysis distorts the issues involved with educational equality."<sup>22</sup> I find that Yale's culture and policy decisions made it difficult for women students to form friendships with one another, and that as a result, these first women undergraduates experienced Yale not as a band of 575, but as 575 individuals "lost in a sea of men."<sup>23</sup> I show how women students' academic success mattered less to their standing at Yale than the extracurricular roles from which they were excluded, and document the presence of sexual harassment and assault from the year coeducation began.

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<sup>21</sup> Joy Williamson, "In Defense of Themselves: The Black Student Struggle for Success and Recognition at Predominantly White Colleges and Universities," *Journal of Negro Education* (Winter 1999): 94; Goldin and Katz, 9-11; Gasman, 764; Graham, 760; USDOE, 1993, 66.

<sup>22</sup> Jessica Ringrose, "Successful Girls? Complicating Post-Feminist, Neoliberal Discourses of Educational Achievement and Gender Equality," *Gender and Education* 19, no. 4: 480.

<sup>23</sup> Lucy L. Eddy, "In the Blue: A Freshman Coed's Account of Her First Yale Year," *Yale Alumni Magazine* (hereafter cited as *YAM*), April 1970, 25.



Yale's decision to go coed in 1969 brought the arrival not only of Yale's first women undergraduates, but also the first women administrators in the president's and dean's offices. Studies of US postsecondary coeducation are typically siloed, looking at either administrators or students, but *Unescorted Guests* encompasses both, thus building on Kelly Sartorius' model of an integrated approach to this history and reflecting a fuller story of the push to redefine gender at Yale.<sup>24</sup> I find that women administrators provided vital support to women students, thus contradicting the standard depiction of an adversarial relationship between administrators and students in this era. I also dispute Nancy Malkiel's portrait of coeducation administrator Elga Wasserman as ineffective.<sup>25</sup> While Wasserman did lack structural power, she built strength outside this structure, and effectively advanced change at Yale by publishing data that documented gender inequity, winning allies among some of Yale's most influential faculty, and serving as a role model and mentor for women students.

Lastly, my account of women students and administrators expands our understanding of women who found themselves a small minority in a male-dominated organization, an experience still relevant today, when women represent just 3 percent of US fire fighters, 6 percent of airplane pilots, and 20 percent of CEOs and members of

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<sup>24</sup> Kelly C. Sartorius, *Deans of Women and the Feminist Movement: Emily Taylor's Activism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). For earlier studies on women administrators, see Jana Nidiffer, *Pioneering Deans of Women: More Than Wise and Pious Matrons* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2000); Robert A. Schwartz, "Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education: A Brief History on the Importance of Deans of Women," *Journal of Higher Education* 68, no. 5 (Sep/Oct 1997): 502-522.

<sup>25</sup> Malkiel, 278-279.

Congress.<sup>26</sup> Building on Rosabeth Moss Kanter's pioneering 1977 study of the first women salespersons at a Fortune 500 company, I show the commonality of experience of token women—defined by Kanter as representing less than 20 percent of their organization—across age and environments. Like women legislators and salespersons of this era, also present in token numbers, Yale's initial women undergraduates and administrators faced isolation, the paradox of simultaneous invisibility and hyper-visibility, the stress caused by difficult interactions with men, and the need to represent the worth of all women.<sup>27</sup> The difference between my findings and these earlier works lies in how women students responded to these harsh conditions. Both Kanter and accounts of women legislators highlight a strategy of assimilation, including downplaying femininity, dressing to obscure sexual characteristics, and avoiding conflict.<sup>28</sup> I find instead activism and agency by the women at Yale.

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<sup>26</sup> US Department of Labor, Current Population Survey, 2017, Table 39, accessed December 29, 2017 from <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.pdf>; Center for American Women and Politics, *Women in the US Congress 2017*, accessed December 29, 2017 from <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-us-congress-2017>.

<sup>27</sup> Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); Rosabeth M. Kanter, "Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women," *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 5 (March 1977): 965-990 [Kanter, 1977b]; Jeane Kirkpatrick, *Political Woman* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 109; Drude Dahlerup, "From a Small to a Large Minority: Women in Scandinavian Politics," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 11, no. 4 (December 1988): 284; Marianne Githens, "Spectators, Agitators, or Lawmakers: Women in State Legislatures," in *A Portrait of Marginality: The Political Behavior of the American Woman*, eds. Marianne Githens and Jewell Prestage (New York: D. McKay Company, 1977), 196-209; Mary Hawkesworth, "Congressional Enactments of Race-Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced-Gendered Institutions," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 4 (November 2003): 529-550.

<sup>28</sup> Githens, 202; Dahlerup, 287; Kanter 1977b, 974.

## Activism and the Women's Movement

Current scholarship gives little recognition to the role of women in advancing change, thus distorting our understanding of how and why change happens. Moreover, the activism of women undergraduates falls between the cracks of the history of this era—not part of the women's movement, told mostly as protest outside of institutions; not part of the youth movement, where “a set of key male actors” dominates the narrative.<sup>29</sup> Nancy Malkiel's “*Keep the Damned Women Out*,” the only history of 1970s undergraduate coeducation written in the past seven years, excludes women specifically. The story of the 1970s wave of postsecondary coeducation, Malkiel argues, “is primarily about men: the decisions they made, the leadership they demonstrated, and the ways in which they harnessed the power of their institutions to meet the challenges of the time.”<sup>30</sup>

This male-focused view overlooks a fundamental aspect of this history. As Maggie Doherty writes in her 2017 *Chronicle of Higher Education* book review, “Administrators were indeed ‘powerful men,’ as Malkiel describes them, but they were forced into certain decisions when students — especially female students — wielded their own power.” Malkiel's omission of those who created power outside administrative hierarchies not only skews our understanding of this important past, but undermines

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<sup>29</sup> Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, *Faithful and Fearless: Moving Feminist Protest Inside the Church and Military* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 36; Evans, 2009, 332.

<sup>30</sup> Malkiel, 28.

future activism towards change, as potential activists may be led to believe that their efforts do not matter.<sup>31</sup>

I address this gap by documenting the central role of women students and administrators in advancing equity for women at Yale, thus expanding our understanding of both the path towards greater equity in higher education and the advance of the American women's movement into male-dominated institutions. I find that activist women students and administrators pushed an equity agenda that Yale's male leaders sought to ignore. These women fought to end admissions policies that discriminated against women, increase the numbers of women faculty and administrators, include women in the curriculum, create a women's center, and halt the ongoing habits of exclusion that barred women from full citizenship at Yale. They leveraged the power of the federal government in enacting change, benefited from the support of women's movement ideology and strategies, and succeeded in moving Yale from the more superficial change of simply enrolling women students to the cultural shifts that are at the core of equity.

Women's agitation for change inside US institutions was not just the sequel to the legal and policy changes of the 1960s and '70s, but represented the final test of whether the women's movement succeeded. The goal was nothing less than to "fundamentally change the way American institutions function," explains Mary Katzenstein, whose history of women in the military and the Catholic church provides an early model of the

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<sup>31</sup> Maggie Doherty, "A Case Study of Campus Change," review of *"Keep the Damned Women Out"* by Nancy Malkiel, *Chronicle of Higher Education* 68, no. 33 (April 21, 2017): B11.

study of feminist activism inside institutions, an incursion that marked “a new stage in the history of the women’s movement.”<sup>32</sup> Building on Katzenstein’s work, I extend our understanding of the advance of the women’s movement into US institutions during the early 1970s. American universities offer a particularly rich site to explore this critical phase, for as Howard University Law School Dean Patricia Harris observed in 1972, “The university turned out to be one of the most sexist institutions in the country.”<sup>33</sup>

### **Evidence**

I drew from three sources for this study: archival research, contemporary press, and oral histories. These different sources enabled me to see late 1960s and early 1970s Yale from multiple positions: student, faculty, administrator, and outsider. I worked through papers from seventeen different manuscript collections in the Yale archives, and explored a range of other primary documents held there and elsewhere. I read 450 contemporary news articles, conducted thirty-four oral histories, and studied thirty-one oral histories done by earlier interviewers. This deep base of evidence has given me confidence in the soundness of the historical narrative that follows.

One of the most significant contributions of this study is its expansion of the sources of evidence to include the perspectives of women administrators and students,

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<sup>32</sup> Katzenstein, xi.

<sup>33</sup> Patricia Harris, “Problems and Solutions in Achieving Equality for Women,” in *Women in Higher Education*, eds. W. Todd Furniss and Patricia A. Graham (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1974), 14.

almost entirely absent in the leading histories of the 1970s wave of postsecondary coeducation. I strove to find sources that reflected a range of intersecting identities, including gender, race, class and sexuality, and used for the first time a 1990 collection of videotaped oral histories of women from this era, the papers of Assistant Dean Elisabeth Thomas, and the reflections of women undergraduates contained in four different collections.<sup>34</sup> This more balanced approach to the evidence provides a rich profile of women's experience and activism, and addresses social historians' emphasis on giving voice to those ignored by previous histories. "The vantage point of women provides a new perspective on events and thereby forces historians to reconsider widely accepted interpretations," argues historian Norman Wilson,<sup>35</sup> and I have worked to provide that new perspective here.

Equally important, the observations of diverse Yale women provided valuable insight into the mechanisms of institutional power at Yale. As social movement scholars Debra Meyerson and Maureen Scully point out, "Change often comes from the margins of an organization, borne by those who do not fit well," and women occupied that margin in 1969 Yale. While such outsiders never truly belong, they witness what true outsiders

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<sup>34</sup> Julia Pimsleur, "The Boola Boola Archive Project," 1990, (hereafter cited as BB Archive), DVD, YUFSC; Records of Elisabeth M. Thomas, Assistant Dean of Yale College, RU575 (hereafter cited as RU575), YUA; Alison Buttenheim, ed., *Celebrating Women: A Commemorative Journal* (New Haven: Yale Women's Center, 1990); Rachel Donadio, ed., *Different Voices: A Journal Commemorating 25 Years of Coeducation at Yale College* (New Haven, Yale University, 1995); Pamela Geismar, Eve Hart Rice, and Joan O'Meara Winant, eds., *Fresh Women: Reflections on Coeducation and Life after Yale: 1969, 1989, 2009* ([United States]: P. Geismar, 2010); Emily Hoffman and Isobel Polon, eds., *Reflections on Coeducation: A Critical History of Women at Yale* (New Haven, s.n., 2010).

<sup>35</sup> Norman J. Wilson, *History in Crisis? Recent Directions in Historiography*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2014), 105.

are not privy to, and can see patterns and question assumptions that are invisible to true insiders. I find particularly helpful here Donna Haraway's image of "seeing from below," with its connotations of looking at the underbody of a car to discern how it functions, rather than simply staring down at the hood.<sup>36</sup> Expanding the voices represented in this history to include those who were able to see Yale from below thus provided key insights into power and change.

### **Archival Research**

"Organizational files," write sociologists Marc Ventresca and John Mohr, "enable researchers to view the ebb and flow of organizational life, the interpretations, the assumptions, the actions taken and deferred from a range of differing points of view."<sup>37</sup> The Manuscripts and Archives department of Yale University library was invaluable to this study, and its staff generous in providing access to previously restricted documents. The records of coeducation administrator Elga Wasserman, who kept meticulous files, were of central importance. Wasserman's records include her correspondence and personal files, minutes of the Coeducation Committee and of Wasserman's student advisory council, and key university reports.

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<sup>36</sup> Debra Meyerson and Maureen Scully, "Tempered Radicalism and the Politics of Ambivalence and Change," *Organization Science* 6, no. 5 (Sep-Oct, 1995): 586; Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," *Social Problems* 33, no. 6 (October to December 1986): S14-S32; Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1988): 584.

<sup>37</sup> Marc J. Ventresca and John W. Mohr, "Archival research methods," in *The Blackwell Companion to Organizations*, ed. Joel A. Baum (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 806.

My attention to sources reflecting the voices of women and other marginalized groups does not imply a neglect of those traditionally in power at Yale, but rather a goal of balancing a historical record currently skewed toward the perspectives of men. I thus used the papers of Wasserman and other women administrators in tandem with those of Yale President Kingman Brewster, Yale College Dean Georges May, Dean of Undergraduate Affairs John Wilkinson, and Secretaries Sam Chauncey and Reuben Holden. These documents were important to identifying differences among male administrators, teaching me how major decisions were made at Yale, and exploring the different views on how manhood and womanhood were defined at Yale in 1969.

Yale also holds a number of more targeted manuscript collections such as the Christine Pattee papers on the New Haven Women's Liberation movement, the May Day Rally collection, and the Asian American Alliance records. All of these helped me better represent the range of experiences of Yale students, and understand the university's responses to categories of students who did not fit the "Yale man" mold.

In addition to documents held in these manuscript collections, the Yale archives contains copies of Yale's student yearbooks and its freshman directory for the Class of 1973. I was able to match data from these publications to create a simple database of the 230 women and 1,024 men who matriculated as first-year students in 1969. This database enabled me to determine differing graduation rates and time-to-graduation for men and women, for students of color and white students, and for public high school and prep school graduates who matriculated at Yale in 1969. It also helped me map social



networks among the women undergraduates, identify individuals whom I wanted to interview, and better understand the context of statements and writings of individual women. A description of methodology for this database is provided in Appendix B. Lastly, I made use of a range of primary documents obtained outside of Yale's archives, including diaries, letters, and documents provided by some of the women I interviewed, and reports from governmental agencies and other organizations that placed the experience at Yale within the broader national context.

### **Contemporary Press**

The *Yale Daily News*, published five days a week during term, provided me with both the chronological scaffolding for this study and extensive detail not found in the archival documents. I was able to confirm the accuracy of *News* articles by comparing coverage of a number of events with press releases and archival documents on the same topic. Despite its male leadership, the *News* was also one of the few public venues where the voices of Yale's early women undergraduates could be heard. Initially, this occurred through letters to the editor, but increasingly it encompassed articles written by and about women students. When Brewster, in a 1973 meeting with Yale's feminist student group, requested that a *News* reporter leave the room, the women declined, and "insisted that the press was one of the only channels open to their grievances."<sup>38</sup> The *News* also showcased

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<sup>38</sup> Kim Rosenfeld, "Yale Sisterhood Sees Brewster about Grievances," *Yale Daily News* (hereafter cited as *YDN*), May 21, 1973. Unless otherwise noted, all *YDN* stories are available through the *Yale Daily News* Historical Archive at <http://web.library.yale.edu/digital-collections/yale-daily-news-historical-archive>.

the views of Yale men, both through its own editorials and through letters to the editor and op-eds written by members of the Yale community. In writing this history, I read over 320 *News* articles, editorials, and letters to the editor.

The extensive national press coverage of Yale in this era provided an outside perspective and detail not present in the manuscript collections. The *New York Times* was the major source here, with over fifty articles on Yale between 1969 and 1973, but I also read eighty additional articles from other publications, some national, some regional, and some based at Yale. The *Yale Alumni Magazine* proved surprisingly progressive in its depiction of coeducation and inclusion of women students' perspectives.

### **Oral Histories**

Oral histories provide a window into the issues of culture that are at the heart of deep change and enable researchers to go beyond the policies found in the documents to the practices and beliefs that underlie them. Oral histories give researchers access to voices that are missing in the written record, describe experiences omitted from these documents entirely, and reveal the meaning participants attach to these experiences, an important counterpoint to the meaning assumed by researchers. As oral historian Alessandro Portelli observes, "Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Sharlene Hesse-Biber, "Feminist Approaches to In-depth Interviewing," in *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Sharlene Hesse-Biber (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 182-232; Gretchen B. Rossman and Sharon F. Rallis, *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles:

While oral histories thus provide the third leg to my triad of evidence, human memory is imperfect. “Narrators do misremember: they collapse events, skew chronology, forget, and get details wrong,” observes oral historian Linda Shopes.<sup>40</sup> But human memory gets many things right as well, and since the late 1970s, oral historians have seen the subjectivity of memory as a strength, a tool to help us understand the meaning of historical events, and the relationships between past and present. Moreover, memory research finds that the veracity of memory does not decline with aging, and that memory of events deemed important when they occurred prove particularly clear.<sup>41</sup>

My search for oral histories began in the Yale archives, which house the Brewster-Griswold Oral History Project, a rich resource for this era. However, only six of the 156 interviews of administrators, faculty, and students in this collection are of women, three if you don’t count the interviews with President Griswold’s wife. Nonetheless, these interviews provided an important male insider perspective on the changes in this era. A second oral history collection contains twenty-three interviews with women, but covers a much broader span of history and thus includes only a few of

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Sage, 2012), 176; Linda Shopes, “Oral History,” in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th ed., eds. Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln (Los Angeles: Sage, 2011), 451-466; Alessandro Portelli, *Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 50.

<sup>40</sup> Shopes, 459.

<sup>41</sup> Alistair Thomson, “Memory and Remembering in Oral History,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Donald Ritchie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 77-81; Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 81-86.

the women faculty and administrators active at Yale between 1969 and 1973.<sup>42</sup> These two collections each include an interview with coeducation administrator Elga Wasserman, the first in 1992 and the second in 2007.

The best source of oral histories of women who were at Yale between 1969 and 1973 is the Yale Film Center, which houses former Yale undergraduate Julia Pimsleur's 1990 Boola Boola Archive project. The project includes videotaped interviews with individuals at Yale in this era, of which eleven—eight women students, two women administrators, and one woman professor—proved particularly valuable to this study. The Film Center also houses two documentaries created by the Yale public relations office in 1965 and 1970 respectively: *To Be a Man*, a window into Yale's male culture, and *Coeducation: The Year They Liberated Yale*, which provides images and interviews of women and men undergraduates in the first year of coeducation.<sup>43</sup>

In total, I used thirty-one existing oral histories from the collections in the Yale archives and film library. I still found many questions unanswered, however, and thus conducted thirty-four of my own interviews using skills developed while conducting oral histories for the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMB). I used purposeful sampling to select my interviewees, since this approach is more effective than random sampling in “clarify(ing) the deeper

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<sup>42</sup> Griswold-Brewster Oral History Project, RU217, YUA (hereafter cited as RU217); Oral Histories Documenting Yale University Women, RU1051, YUA (hereafter cited as RU1051).

<sup>43</sup> BB Archive; *To Be A Man*; *Coeducation: The Year They Liberated Yale*, directed by John Kennedy (Yale Office of Public Information, 1970), DVD, YUFSC.

causes behind a given problem.”<sup>44</sup> I identified and sought out administrators central to the implementation of coeducation, student activists, women administrators, women graduate students, and women undergraduates representing a range of demographic characteristics and academic and extracurricular interests. I asked interviewees for their suggestions of others to speak with, and used this snowballing strategy to identify additional individuals well-positioned to answer my research questions. Of my thirty-four interviews, thirty were with women, six with people of color. I interviewed eight administrators, two graduate students, and twenty-four undergraduates. Appendix C provides the gender, race and role of all sixty-five individuals whose oral histories are used in this study.

This oral history research, approved by the UMB Institutional Review Board, provided new evidence on the experiences and activism of women and students of color, and enabled me to strengthen my analysis by checking my emerging interpretations of this history with participants. I conducted twenty-seven interviews in person and seven by phone, with each interview lasting one to two hours. While most of those whom I sought to interview lived in New England, I also conducted interviews in California, Maryland, Virginia, New York, Oregon, and Pennsylvania. Participation was voluntary; roughly 15 percent of those whom I contacted did not reply to two separate requests for an interview. All interviews were transcribed, with interviewees given the opportunity to make deletions, clarifications, or additions to the transcript. These final edited transcripts,

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<sup>44</sup> Bent Flyvbjerg, “Five Misunderstandings about Case Study Research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (2006): 229. See also David Krathwohl, *Methods of Educational and Social Science Research*, 3rd ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2009), 172.

which I plan to donate to a suitable archive, were the documents used for this study. For additional details about my interview protocol, see Appendix D.

## **Methodology**

This dissertation is grounded firmly in the discipline of history, but I have also sought to bring interdisciplinary strength to this study by incorporating aspects more typically associated with the social sciences. This disciplinary boundary crossing shows itself in three ways: greater explication of methodology than is typical of most histories, a comfort with the use of sociological theory, and attention to practical implications. The methodology and theory discussions follow, with implications addressed in Chapter Five. In between, Chapters Two, Three, and Four comprise a standard historical narrative, the heart of this dissertation.

Social scientists emphasize transparency about methodology so that readers can better judge the trustworthiness of the results. How then would one describe the methodology of history? E. H. Carr's 1961 classic *What is History?* answers this question by describing historical inquiry as an interplay between fact and interpretation. The search for facts is guided and made more productive by the emerging interpretation; the interpretation is altered by the emerging facts. The two are inseparable. Without interpretation, history is "scissors-and-paste history without meaning or significance;" without a respect for the facts, history is "propaganda or historical fiction." Forty years later, John Gaddis updated Carr's language, replacing "fact" with "evidence", and

“interpretation” with “narrative”, but made essentially the same point: writing history is about finding the fit between evidence and narrative, an iterative process that uses both inductive and deductive reasoning.<sup>45</sup>

The approach I used in this study thus followed the emergent and iterative research design of historical inquiry. I began in the Yale archives with questions developed in my study of the secondary literature. Sources there helped identify individuals to interview and issues to probe more deeply in the contemporary press. This new evidence in turn raised new questions, which sent me back once again to the archives. I had initially assumed from the existing research, for example, that women undergraduates, most of them just teenagers, would not take an active role in the push for change, but found reference to their activism in the *Yale Daily News* as early as the spring of 1970, and was able to use interview questions and choice of interviewees to expand on this initial clue. Conversely, I had expected top male administrators to reflect the attitudes towards women of Yale’s president, Kingman Brewster, but found through interviews that a diversity of views on women in fact characterized this group, and was able to corroborate this through evidence in the contemporary press and archival documents.

The second core element of historical inquiry is the central role of the narrative. Historians shun oversimplification, and narrative enables them to “approach the complexities and contradictions of real life,” and “*simulate* what transpired in the past.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Edward H. Carr, *What is History?* 2nd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 29; Gaddis, 107.

<sup>46</sup> Flyvbjerg, 237; Gaddis, 105, italics in original.

I would in fact argue that the power of history as a discipline comes in part from the centrality of the narrative, which when done well is able to “compel attention, to stretch imaginations, and to change minds.”<sup>47</sup>

As with any methodology, a final aspect to consider is the means by which one determines the trustworthiness of the account. With history, and hence this dissertation, the two primary tests are the depth, breadth, and reliability of the evidence, and the fidelity of the narrative to that evidence. This dissertation brings in as well a range of strategies used by qualitative researchers to establish trustworthiness.<sup>48</sup> I have tested my interpretations by discussing them with interviewees. I included self-reflection on my own potential biases, and provided examples counter to my major themes, such as the presence of equitable subcultures. I have triangulated evidence from multiple sources both across categories of evidence—for example by comparing interviewee accounts with archival documents—and within them: asking interviewees questions about the same topic, checking multiple newspaper stories on the same event. Lastly, I have spent prolonged time in the field, with archival and contemporary press research spanning five years and my oral history interviews spanning three.

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<sup>47</sup> Joyce Appleby, "The Power of History," *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 1 (February 1998): 12.

<sup>48</sup> John Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 201-202.



## The Use of Theory in Historical Research

Historians have long been wary of the use of sociological theory. One concern is the risk of oversimplification, as the quest of some theory to provide universal causal explanations can “undercut history’s disciplinary sense of the complexity of social causation.”<sup>49</sup> A second and more fundamental fear is that the use of theory may skew the dialogue between evidence and narrative. Distrust arises from seeing theory as “an imposition of meaning rather than a discovery of it.”<sup>50</sup> Delving into theory might thus predispose historians to a particular interpretation before the research has even begun, or lead them to wedge their narrative into some preexisting plot line. Better to stay away from theory altogether than to run the risk that it might taint the resulting narrative. As historian Caroline Eick observes, “The prevalent paradigm argues that the trustworthiness of historical inquiry, by virtue of being an inductive process, is increased by the absence of preconceived theory.”<sup>51</sup>

I would argue the opposite. Theory, used correctly, is important to historians precisely because it strengthens trustworthiness, and it does so in multiple ways. The dialogue between evidence and narrative, for example, has not two but three parties: evidence, narrative, and the historian him or herself. Theory helps historians move

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<sup>49</sup> Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1055.

<sup>50</sup> Howell and Prevenier, 127.

<sup>51</sup> Caroline Eick, “Oral Histories of Education and the Relevance of Theory: Claiming New Spaces in a Post-Revisionist Era,” *History of Education Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (May 2011): 160. See also Scott, 1986, 1055; Wilson, 144.

beyond the false notion of omniscience and probe in a more systematic way their own preconceptions and assumptions. I come to this dissertation, for example, as a white, middle-class, straight woman who has been educated at elite universities. How does my own personal history limit what I can see?

Theory can help answer that question and in so doing help remove some of those limits. It can challenge us to consider questions we had not originally realized were there, push us to seek out evidence where we had not sought to look for it, and enable us to understand what we had not been able to see. And while the construction of the narrative may seem the most controversial part of the research to consider theory, a conceptualization of theory as “tools for thinking”<sup>52</sup> shifts theory from a possible intrusion to a means of examining our own thought processes and challenging the conclusions we are reaching.

A consideration of the theoretical literature also helps historians by expanding the conversation with existing scholars to include those who have thought about the issues raised in the study, such as the impetus for change or the position of women across different eras or locations. The academic enterprise is not about starting from scratch but instead values building on the thinking that has come before, and by shying away from theory, historians exclude whole bodies of thought that might strengthen their own perspectives.

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<sup>52</sup> Gerardo Blanco, personal communication, September 18, 2015.

Lastly, the use of theory increases trustworthiness by increasing transparency. A discussion of the theory informing the study can make evident to readers some of the thinking that underlies the finished narrative. Omission in turn can raise questions about the degree to which the historian has met Howell and Prevenier's criteria, noted earlier, of constructing interpretations "with a high degree of self-consciousness about our disabilities and the disability of our sources."<sup>53</sup> A discussion of the three main bodies of theory that I used in this study follows, with a goal of increasing both the transparency of my own work and outlining some of the theoretical literature that could prove useful to other historical studies of power and change.

### **Postmodern Theories of Power**

Postmodernism's rejection of the idea of objective knowledge would seem to make it anathema to historians, given their commitment to the quest for, if not the possibility of, some sort of truth in their interpretation of the past. Yet I have found postmodern theories among the most helpful to my thinking about the twin ideas of power and change. Rather than accepting or rejecting postmodern theories wholesale, I have used them as ideas that can in turn lead to new questions, evidence, or ways of understanding the evidence.

Michel Foucault's concept of the decentered, pluralistic nature of power has been particularly fruitful in this regard, because it pushed me to question the assumption that

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<sup>53</sup> Howell and Prevenier, 148.

Yale women lacked power, and look instead at the different ways they created power. I credit historian Margaret Nash, who has served as mediator between Foucault's ideas and historians, including myself, who might otherwise be wary of postmodernism. For Foucault, Nash writes, "Power is everywhere, diffused, and always relational; it is in constant flux and negotiation."<sup>54</sup>

This dissertation is in part an answer to Nash's call to ask new questions about women and power: "What is the nature of the power that particular women have?" and "What understanding of 'woman' is being created in this moment, who benefits from that definition, and what disciplinary measures are being used to police the boundaries of acceptability?" Nash points with the last question to a second aspect of postmodern thinking on power: Antonio Gramsci's idea of hegemony, in which culture proves more potent than the outright exercise of power in establishing the status quo as the unquestioned norm.<sup>55</sup> At Yale, for example, the concept that leaders were men was not simply an oversight or a lack of understanding that women could be leaders too, but a way in which women continued to be barred access to the paths through which leaders at Yale were made, beginning with an equal chance at admissions.

NeoMarxist Pierre Bourdieu is another thinker who, given his focus on class rather than gender, might seem to have little to offer women's historians. Sociologist Steven Seidman, however, argues that class for Bourdieu is not strictly Marxist, but

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<sup>54</sup> Steven Seidman, *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today*, 5th ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 186; Nash, 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Seidman, 132-138.

includes “an individual’s access to a variety of resources, social ties, and social opportunities,” a concept that encompasses the situation of outsiders at Yale such as women and people of color. Like Foucault, Bourdieu focuses on how culture reinforces the existing power structure, but highlights as well the possibility of agency, through which individuals can transcend some, although never all, of the cultural boundaries limiting behavior.<sup>56</sup> This idea made room for me to see the men in the Brewster administration who acted as allies to women, despite an overall culture that continued to see women as guests in a college whose mission still focused on men.

There is overlap between postmodernism’s insights on power and ideas more common to historical inquiry. Foucault’s emphasis on “the other, the marginal, the outsider” echoes social historians’ emphasis on those who are not kings or presidents. Cultural historians reflect postmodernism’s interest in hegemony through their examination of how various categories of people have been created, maintained, used, and sometimes changed.<sup>57</sup> I have sought in this study to examine both, and have felt my approach sharpened by an awareness of the related theoretical literature.

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<sup>56</sup> Seidman, 146; Diane Reay, “‘It’s all Becoming a Habitus’: Beyond the Habitual Use of Habitus in Educational Research,” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 25, no. 4 (September 2004): 432-433.

<sup>57</sup> Harland G. Bloland, “Postmodernism and Higher Education.” *The Journal of Higher Education* 66, no. 5 (1995): 552; David Hollinger in Drew Faust et al., “Interchange: The Practice of History,” *The Journal of American History* 90, no. 2 (September 2003): 602.

## Intersectionality

Institutional change is ultimately about power, and critical theorists have long been acute observers of power and hierarchy. I have found the concept of intersectionality particularly helpful in this regard. First developed in 1989 by Columbia Law Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality critiques both feminist theory and antiracist policies for treating gender and race as isolated categories of experience and analysis. By equating racism with what happens to black men and sexism with what happens to white women, Crenshaw argued, scholars and activists have effectively erased the experience of black women. Intersectionality's insistence that one can study neither individual experience nor institutional practice without considering "the mutually enforcing vectors of race, class, gender, and sexuality" has since been incorporated in both feminist and critical race theory.<sup>58</sup>

An intersectional lens is particularly appropriate to this historical era, which expanded college access not only for women but for students of color and low-income students, and during which the black power, women's liberation, and gay rights movements raised questions about the place of previously excluded groups in US

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<sup>58</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): 139, 152; Cornelia Dayton and Lisa Levenstein, "The Big Tent of US Women's and Gender History: A State of the Field," *Journal of American History* 99, no. 3 (December 2012): 797; Kathy Davis, "Intersectionality as Buzzword: A Sociology of Science Perspective on What Makes Feminist Theory Successful," *Feminist Theory* 9, no. 1 (2008): 67; Yosso, Tara, William Smith, Miguel Ceja, and Daniel Solórzano. "Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate for Latina/o Undergraduates." *Harvard Educational Review* 79, no. 4 (2009): 662.

society.<sup>59</sup> Yale in 1969 reflected this cultural upheaval. The Afro-American Cultural Center opened in the fall of 1969 and Yale's Asian American and Chicax student groups were both founded that year. Sexuality was equally salient, with the Stonewall riots and launch of the Gay Rights movement occurring less than three months before Yale's first women undergraduates arrived and the first meeting of the Yale Homosexuality Discussion Group occurring in October 1969.<sup>60</sup>

Intersectionality influenced this study in several ways. It helped shape my research questions by pushing me to continually distinguish between the experiences and activism of the white, straight middle class women who formed the vast majority at Yale, and the experiences of women who did not fit that mold. It led me to broaden my search for evidence, ensure that the oral histories represented a diversity of experience, and ask interview questions that probed issues of race, class, and sexuality as well as gender.

Incorporating intersectionality throughout my entire narrative, however, proved more challenging. This dissertation stands out from earlier histories of undergraduate coeducation by incorporating of race, class, and sexuality in its analysis of the experiences of women. Nonetheless, I have not fully represented the range of women's

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<sup>59</sup> Therese Baker and William Velez, "Access to and Opportunity in Postsecondary Education in the United States: A Review," *Sociology of Education* 69 (January 1996): 82-101; Williamson, 94; Alexander Astin et al., "Overview of the Unrest Era," in *The History of Higher Education*, eds. Lester F. Goodchild and Harold S. Wechsler (Old Tappan, NJ: Pearson, 1997), 724-738.

<sup>60</sup> Danny Serna, "Af-Am House Celebrates 40 Years," *YDN*, October 19, 2009; Daniel Hartwig, "Guide to the Records of the Asian American Students Alliance," RU1046, YUL (2009), 4-5; Movimiento Estudiantil de Aztlán, "Chicanos at Yale University," ca January 1971, box 4, folder 421, Records of the Dean of Undergraduate Affairs, RU95, Accession 1989-A-029, YUA, (hereafter cited as RU95B); "Sexuality discussion tonight," *YDN*, October 30, 1969.

experiences and activism at Yale. The primary challenge was the multiplicity of possible identities given the limited number of narratives one can feasibly write in a single study. Within the category of white women, for example, women's experiences differed by class, sexuality, religion, and the region of the country they came from. One could focus an entire study on the two women administrators of color hired in 1971—Asian American Jacqueline Wei Mintz and African American Marnesba Hill—and their close friendship and joint activism on behalf of women students and administrators of color. I hope to do so, but I have not done so here.

Recent writings on intersectionality emphasize its value as “a way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power. This framing—conceiving of categories not as distinct but as always permeated by other categories, fluid and changing, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power”<sup>61</sup> has challenged my thinking about the early years of coeducation at Yale and strengthened this study, but more work remains to be done.

### **Social Movement Theory**

Social movement theory seems perhaps the most obvious fit for this study, given the contested, bottom-up change that defined this era in US history: the Black Power movement, the antiwar movement, the youth movement. A social movement perspective adds yet another voice to the importance of a ground-up examination of change, and

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<sup>61</sup> Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall, “Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis,” *Signs* 38, no. 4 (Summer 2013): 795.



argues for a search for evidence beyond the papers of Yale's president, the archival focus of previous studies of this history, to manuscript collections and oral histories that encompass other voices. Like the postmodern theories of power discussed earlier, social movement theory fosters "a renewed appreciation of the many ways of creating and exerting power," and so too pushed me to think beyond traditional sources of power as the sole path to change. A number of insights specific to social movement theory such as collective identity, resource mobilization, and framing also informed my thinking about change at Yale.<sup>62</sup>

A significant challenge with current social movement theory, however, is that its characterization of social movements as contentious public activity ignores the history of other models of collective action towards change, most particularly that of women. I take a broader view, using sociologist Francesca Polletta's definition of social movements as "challenges to institutional authority," thus taking advantage of recent insights from the intersection of social movement and organization studies. Mary Katzenstein's work on the reach of the women's movement inside organizations, noted earlier, also pushes back at an image of social movement activists as organizational outsiders, and its corollary that

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<sup>62</sup> Elisabeth Clemens, "Two Kinds of Stuff: The Current Encounter of Social Movements and Organizations," in *Social Movements and Organization Theory*, eds. Gerald Davis, Doug McAdam, W. Richard Scott, and Mayer N. Zald (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 365; Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier, "Collective Identity in Social Movement Communities: Lesbian Feminist Mobilization," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller, eds. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Suzanne Staggenborg, *Social Movements*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 19-23; David Snow et al., "The Emergence, Development, and Future of the Framing Perspective: 25+ Years Since 'Frame Alignment'," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (2014): 23-46.

organizational insiders are too compromised by their institutional allegiance to be viewed as legitimate activists. Feminist activism, Katzenstein observes, often occurs both inside and outside the centers of power, an observation that underscores the value of a history that encompasses both women administrators and students, given the former's closer proximity to the centers of power at Yale.<sup>63</sup>

Mideast scholar Asef Bayat also critiques social movement theory's limited view of collective action.<sup>64</sup> Bayat argues that contentious political activity is not always possible, and that the collective impact of those who act individually may exert a powerful influence on change, an idea that I explore further in the conclusion. Bayat's insights proved particularly useful in helping me make sense of some of the paths to change I was seeing at Yale and avoid the error of dismissing as unimportant that which did not fit my initial image of the actions that lead to change. Katzenstein's and Bayat's criticisms of social movement theory point to the possibility of an evolution of social movement theory beyond its current association with activities such as protests and boycotts. In the interim, it may be more accurate to say that my thinking on change in this study has been challenged as much by the critics of current social movement theory as by the theorists themselves.

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<sup>63</sup> Francesca Polletta, "Culture in and Outside Institutions," *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 25 (2004): 162; Klaus Weber and Brayden King, "Social Movement Theory and Organization Studies," in *Oxford Handbook of Sociology, Social Theory and Organization Studies*, eds. Paul S. Adler et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 487-509; Katzenstein, 41.

<sup>64</sup> Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 4-5.

## Chapter Outline

Chapter One comprises this introduction. Chapter Two explores the context into which Yale's first women undergraduates arrived: the reasons behind Yale's coeducation decision, the nature of Yale's men-centered culture, and the preparations for women undergraduates' arrival. I argue that dominant views of women students as auxiliary rather than central to Yale's mission of producing national leaders informed the reluctance to admit women. I also find that the US women's movement, while critical to advancing equity at Yale after 1970, was still too nascent to influence Yale's decision. Lastly, I document the opposition of Yale's powerful president, Kingman Brewster, Jr., to enrolling women undergraduates and show how undergraduate coeducation arrived instead as a result of pressure by male students, both those enrolled at Yale and those who declined Yale's admission offer because of the college's single-sex status.

Chapter Three addresses the experiences of Yale's first women undergraduates, with a focus on the first year of undergraduate coeducation, 1969-1970. I provide an overview of the 575 women students who arrived at Yale in 1969, and show how differences in race, class, and sexuality shaped women students' experiences and position at Yale. I demonstrate that the inequitable ground rules of coeducation created by Yale became both a potent symbol of the higher status of male students and a cause of the challenging conditions faced by women. The chapter identifies three core aspects to the experience of being a woman undergraduate at Yale in the first year of coeducation,

aspects that transcended other differences in identity: being under the spotlight, being excluded from places and activities central to leadership at Yale, and being divided from other women students. Lastly, I document that sexual harassment and assault of women students accompanied coeducation from the start.

Chapter Four tells the history of the push to end the gender quotas through which Yale kept women undergraduates as an extreme minority. I document how change came through the activism of women students, administrators, and faculty, and was supported by sympathetic men and the power of the federal government. I argue that the most significant opposition arose not from alumni, typically painted as the villain in accounts of coeducation, but from Yale's president and trustees. I show how the activism of black women students ran parallel to that of white women students, and focused on race more than gender. Lastly, I portray how Yale's lead woman administrator, Elga Wasserman, responded to being excluded from positional power at Yale by creating power outside of that hierarchy.

Chapter Five begins by summarizing the contributions and significance of this study, including the areas where it supports current accounts of this history and those where it disputes them. I then explore the question of what the history chronicled here can teach us about change towards greater equity in higher education today. I identify strategies that advanced equity at Yale—collective activism by women students, the collective impact of individual actors, breaking the rules for expected behavior at Yale, and obtaining the support of the broader student body and the federal government—and

strategies that stood in equity's way, most notably the strategy of inaction by Yale's top administrators. I show how the women's movement provided critical support to institutional change, and how institutional change in turn made real the women's movement's aspirations towards equity. I conclude by examining the current status of women at Yale and across higher education, and arguing for the importance of a clear grasp of history to any effort to assess and attain equity on campuses today.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE DECISION, 1968-1969

#### **Yale Man**

The story of Yale's decision to enroll its first women undergraduates begins with the university's prominent and powerful president, Kingman Brewster, Jr., the epitome of 1968 manhood at Yale. Brewster was tall, handsome by most accounts, descended from ancestors who'd come over on the *Mayflower*—the first trip. He had gone to Yale, just like every Yale president since 1766 but one. For as every Yale man knew, quipped the *Harvard Crimson*, "a Yale man is the best kind of man to be, and only Yale can produce one." Brewster was a Republican, but moderately so; a conservative, but open-minded on many things. He could hold his liquor, sparkled at social gatherings, and addressed large crowds with grace and ease. Those who met him were struck by the force of his presence. "Whatever 'it' is, he had it," said Yale trustee Hannah Gray.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Steady Hand," *Time*, June 11, 1951, 76-84; John Back, Edward Coughlin, and Rudolph Kass, "Yale: For God, Country, and Success," *The Harvard Crimson*, November 25, 1950; John Blum, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, February 11, 1992, transcript, box 1, folder 10, RU217, 7; Lydia Temoshok, interview by author, Ellicott City, MD, December 12, 2016; Hanna Holbern Gray, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, December 17, 1991, transcript, box 5, folder 63, RU217, 13.

By 1968, Kingman Brewster had achieved a national prominence unthinkable for campus leaders today: the cover of *Newsweek*, the cover of *Time*, two different US presidential commissions, a gushing five-page profile in the *New York Times*, and rumors of a possible US presidential run. “He had more prestige at the time than any other president of any other American university,” said John Trinkhaus, the head of one of Yale’s twelve residential colleges. “He was the star.”<sup>2</sup>

At Yale, Brewster’s leadership ran unfettered by the usual constraints that frustrate campus presidents. “The faculty adored him,” said history professor John Blum, and well they should have. He had raised their salaries, enhanced their national reputation, and personally hired a good number of them.<sup>3</sup> And Brewster was not only a voting member of the Corporation, Yale’s board of trustees, but its president. Moreover, half of Yale’s trustees had attended Yale at the same time as Brewster, who had graduated in 1941 as “the biggest man on campus.” As former trustee Bill Horowitz retorted one day when Brewster sought to blame the Corporation for an unpopular decision, “Kingman, come off it. You know perfectly well that the Corporation will do

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<sup>2</sup> “The Ivy League,” *Newsweek*, November 23, 1964, cover; Mitchel Levitas, “Present and Future of Kingman Brewster,” *NYT*, February 12, 1967; “Universities: Anxiety Behind the Façade,” *Time*, June 3, 1967, 78-85; James Reston, “Washington: The Tragedy of the Republicans,” *NYT*, June 12, 1966; John Trinkhaus, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, April 27, 1992, transcript, box 1, folder 143, RU217, 58.

<sup>3</sup> John Blum, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, March 4, 1992, transcript, box 1, folder 10, RU217, 23; Jonathan Fanton, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, July 18, 1992, transcript, box 4, folder 54, RU217, 45; Levitas, *NYT*, February 12, 1967.

anything you tell them.”<sup>4</sup> But in September 1968, things at Yale were not going the way Kingman Brewster had planned.

He had spent his summer, as he always did, in Bermuda shorts and sneakers at the family’s waterfront home on Martha’s Vineyard. There, pecking out the words with two fingers on his typewriter, Brewster had written the initial draft of his 1968 presidential report, his annual statement of “what one believes Yale and its mission to be.”<sup>5</sup> Brewster liked to set the year’s agenda in advance, a task he accomplished with a lawyer’s love of detail, writing and rewriting his president’s report until it reached the final level of polish. But as he sketched out his priorities that summer, he did so in a shadow still cast by the previous spring’s events.

The assassination of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. had struck particularly hard, for here was a man whose hand Brewster had clasped when, as one of the first acts of his presidency, he had awarded King an honorary degree. Three weeks after King’s death, 168 students at Trinity College, forty miles up the road from Yale, held the trustees and president hostage in an attempt to force action on a long-delayed proposal to establish scholarships for black students. On April 30, a larger protest at Columbia over the university’s involvement in Vietnam War weapons research and its plans to build a

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<sup>4</sup> Kingman Brewster, “The Report of the President: Yale University 1967-68,” September 1968, 12, box 575, folder 5, RU11, Records of Kingman Brewster, Jr., President of Yale University, Series V, YUL (hereafter cited as RU11-V); Yale University, “Former Trustees,” accessed January 9, 2018 from <http://www.yale.edu/about-yale/president-leadership/yale-corporation/former-fellows>; “Universities,” *Time*, June 3, 1967; Elga Wasserman, interview by Florence Minnis, May 24, 2007, transcript, RU1051, Accession A-2012-056, 65-71. Yale graduation dates of trustees obtained through individual obituaries.

<sup>5</sup> Kingman Brewster, “The Report of the President: Yale University 1968-69,” October 7, 1969, 17, box 576, RU11-V; Henry “Sam” Chauncey, interview by author, New Haven, April 24, 2017.



gym on public parkland in Harlem ended with 200 students injured and 700 arrested. The specifics of the two protests differed, but both were part of the larger student movement that exploded into the national consciousness in 1964 with sit-ins and a student strike at Berkeley.<sup>6</sup> “Dramatic incidents on other campuses,” wrote Brewster on page one of his report, had drawn US universities into the public eye. In the summer of 1968, it was these incidents that occupied Brewster’s thoughts as he considered the year to come.

Brewster had been dodging calls for coeducation for years, and so his report was silent on the question of women students at Yale. Outside the institution, the women’s movement was just beginning to gain its footing. NOW, the National Organization for Women, was two years old. Consciousness-raising groups had started meeting in women’s living rooms and kitchens. Yet these initiatives are only widely known in retrospect, as the mass media did not start covering the women’s movement until the end of 1969.<sup>7</sup>

The movement’s seminal events did not in fact occur until after women undergraduates began attending Yale. The central works of second wave feminism—Toni Cade Bambara’s *The Black Woman*, Shulamith Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex*,

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<sup>6</sup> "Thousands View 263rd Commencement; King Leaves Prison to Receive Degree," *YDN*, April 13, 1964; Columbia University Libraries, "1968: Columbia in Crisis," accessed January 3, 2017 from <https://exhibitions.cul.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/1968>; Peter J. Knapp and Anne H. Knapp, *Trinity College in the Twentieth Century: A History* (Hartford: Trinity College, 2000), 344-353; William W. Scranton, *The Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1970), 28.

<sup>7</sup> Myra Marx Ferree, "A Woman for President? Changing Responses: 1958-1972," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (Autumn 1974): 393; Sarah M. Evans, "Women's Liberation: Seeing the Revolution Clearly," *Feminist Studies* 41, no. 1, (2015), 139-140.

Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, and Robin Morgan's *Sisterhood is Powerful*—were not published until 1970; the term “women’s lib” was not widely recognized before 1971; and it was not until 1972, four years after Yale’s decision to go coed, that *Ms.* magazine published its first issue and Congress passed Title IX and the Equal Rights Amendment.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, 1960s Yale was not totally impervious to questions about women’s second-class standing.

In 1962, a faculty report included a statement that Yale should provide the same education for women that it offered to men.<sup>9</sup> Pressure for change, however did not begin until 1965, and came not from the faculty but from Yale’s students. That January, newly elected *Yale Daily News* chairman Lanny Davis used his debut editorial to argue the imperative of coeducation, and over the next four months the *News* ran a barrage of columns and editorials on the topic. “Lanny beat the drums day in and day out and, in a wonderfully positive way, harassed the hell out of us,” said Brewster’s top advisor, Henry “Sam” Chauncey, Jr. Students throughout the college increasingly questioned Yale’s men-only policies, some on the grounds of equality, others because single sex education was “unnatural,” and many because they just wanted girlfriends.<sup>10</sup> Kingman Brewster, however, had little interest in turning Yale into just another coed school.

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<sup>8</sup> Ferree, 393; *Ms. Magazine*, “HerStory, 1971-Present,” accessed December 17, 2017 from <http://msmagazine.com/blog/about/>.

<sup>9</sup> Leonard Doob, “Report of the President’s Committee on the Freshman Year,” April 13, 1962, 12, accessed December 17, 2017 from [https://www.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/freshman\\_year.pdf](https://www.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/freshman_year.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> “Enter the 88th,” editorial, *YDN*, January 26, 1966; Cathy Caplan, “Women at Yale: Just How They Got Here,” *YDN*, October 30, 1972, box 1, folder 20, RU821B; “On the Advisability and Feasibility of Women

For all his national reputation, Brewster had lived his life behind the walls of a markedly insular world. A graduate of an all-boys prep school, Brewster attended all-male Yale, where he became chairman of the *Yale Daily News* and then, at a fraternity party following the Dartmouth football game, met the woman he would marry, the daughter of a Yale man. As Yale's president, Brewster spent his days surrounded by men: meetings with men, lunches with men, clubs with only men as members. Dinner parties at his home began with the couples seated together, but after the meal the men retired to the front parlor for brandy and conversation, while the wives went elsewhere to talk about women things. For Brewster, the notion of two parallel spheres—one for men and one for women—was so deeply embedded in the structure of his days that it was hard to imagine an alternative, or even the need for one.<sup>11</sup>

“What you have to know is that Kingman was *not* comfortable with the idea of coeducation,” explains Chauncey. “He believed in change, except when it came to things that were really important to him.”<sup>12</sup> And high on the list of things that Kingman Brewster deemed important was Yale's 268-year history as a college of men. Yale's graduate schools had admitted scatterings of women for decades by 1968, but the idea

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at Yale,” *YAM*, September/October 2009, accessed January 19, 2018 from <https://yalealumnimagazine.com>; Mark Zanger, “Women Now, Talk Later,” *YDN*, October 4, 1968; “The Coeducation White Paper,” *YDN*, October 31, 1968, 2; “It's Not about Home Economics: Q&A with Avi Soifer,” *YAM*, September 8, 2009, accessed December 30, 2017 from <http://archives.yalealumnimagazine.com>.

<sup>11</sup> “Universities,” *Time*, June 3, 1967; Geoffrey Kabaservice, *The Guardians: Kingman Brewster, His Circle, and the Rise of the Liberal Establishment* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004), 197; Karabel, 411; Aviam Soifer, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, September 6, 1991, transcript, box 10, folder 131, RU217, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Henry “Sam” Chauncey, interview by author, New Haven, April 15, 2014.

that Yale College, the heart of the University, would admit women, well, why would anyone want to do that? Brewster was hardly alone in this stance. America's most elite schools had long maintained their status not just by the types of students they let in, but by those they kept out, and even after the first wave of coeducation swept through US colleges and universities after the Civil War, those top-tier schools, with rare exception, remained staunchly all male.<sup>13</sup>

In 1966, the list of US colleges that still banned women undergraduates reads like an academic Who's Who: the Air Force Academy, Amherst, Boston College, Bowdoin, Brown, Caltech, Claremont McKenna, the Coast Guard Academy, Colgate, Columbia, Dartmouth, Davidson, Duke, Fordham, Georgetown, Hamilton, Harvard, Haverford, Holy Cross, Hopkins, Kenyon, Lafayette, Lehigh, the Naval Academy, Notre Dame, Penn, Princeton, Rutgers, Sewanee, Trinity, Tufts, Tulane, Union, UVA, Washington and Jefferson, Washington and Lee, Wesleyan, West Point, Williams, and Yale.<sup>14</sup> A few, like Harvard and Brown, had created sister schools that kept the women nearby without putting them on equal terms with men. But none admitted women to the same college that

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<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Davis, "Changing identities: When Yale's 'First' Women Arrived," *YAM*, October 1979, 21; Elga Wasserman, "Coeducation Comes to Yale College," *Educational Record* 51, no. 2 (Spring 1970): 143; Gray interview, 1991, 32; Jones, 248; Malkiel, 6, 26.

<sup>14</sup> For sources on the dates of undergraduate coeducation for these colleges, see Appendix A. Both Tufts and Wesleyan had previously been coed—Tufts from 1892 to 1910 and Wesleyan from 1872 to 1912—both in the backlash that followed the first wave of postsecondary coeducation, both schools became men-only, with Wesleyan banning women undergraduates altogether and Tufts placing women in a separate women's college. See "Tufts Student Life: Our History," <http://students.tufts.edu/our-history>; "A Brief History," <http://www.wesleyan.edu/about/history.html>.

the men attended. “In the minds of many,” observed the *Educational Record*, “all-male education has become synonymous with prestige education.”<sup>15</sup>

Nonetheless, Brewster could not ignore entirely the mounting pressure from Yale’s students and admissions office. Rather than moving forward on admitting women undergraduates, however, Brewster kept coeducation advocates at bay for two years through exploring the possibility of a sister school, a solution that would have brought women to New Haven without having to admit them to Yale. Yale even dallied for an entire year over a proposal to convince all-women’s Vassar to abandon its campus in Poughkeepsie and move to New Haven. When that plan fell through, Brewster was ready with another: Yale would happily build its own women’s college—as soon as a donor stepped forward to pay the \$50 million that Brewster said the additional facilities, faculty, and staff would cost.<sup>16</sup> And there the issue sat nicely stalled until the fall of 1968, when Yale students got tired of waiting.

### **Operation Coeducation**

Derek Shearer had graduated in June of 1968, but he was not finished with Yale yet. As a senior, Shearer had chaired Yale’s Student Advisory Board, and in his monthly

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<sup>15</sup> Wasserman, *Educational Record* (Spring 1970), 143.

<sup>16</sup> Colton Johnson, "A History of Coeducation," *Vassar Encyclopedia*, accessed April 5, 2017 from <http://vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu/coeducation/a-history-of-coeducation.html>; Michael Rosenhouse and Avi Soifer, "Vassar Turns Down Merger; Yale May Start Girls’ School," *YDN*, November 21, 1967.

meetings with Yale's president, he had used that pulpit to push Brewster on topics that Brewster did not wish to be pushed on. "Complete and immediate coeducation," he told Brewster in February 1968, was Yale's "most pressing educational need."<sup>17</sup> That spring passed with little progress, but over the summer, as Brewster was drafting his presidential report out on Martha's Vineyard, Shearer was hard at work as well.

When Yale students returned to campus in September 1968, they found that Shearer had been there before them. On entryway bulletin boards and hallway doors, on trees and telephone poles, was stapled a broadside featuring a large picture of Shearer's sister, and underneath it the question: "Please Mr. Brewster, why can't I come to Yale?"<sup>18</sup> You couldn't miss it. And there was no denying the boldness of Shearer's "Operation Coeducation" proposal: Bring a thousand women students to Yale for a week. Construct geodesic domes to house them. And see what Kingman Brewster said then.

Brewster was forty-nine years old in the fall of 1968, part of a generation whose values and views were so different than those of America's youth that the two groups were often left shouting at one another from across the divide. Vietnam, drugs, the purpose of life, the appropriate length of men's hair—the clashes came fast and frequent. Brewster, however, was different. He opposed the Vietnam War, consistently and publicly, and stood by Yale chaplain William Sloane Coffin when Coffin was indicted in 1968 for conspiring to encourage draft evasion. Brewster worked to increase the numbers

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<sup>17</sup> George Kannar, "SAB: 'This Organization Just Has to Go,'" *YDN*, February 4, 1969.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

of black students at Yale, and gave critical support to black students' efforts to create an Afro-American studies major, one of the first in the nation. And Brewster was comfortable with all those students in blue jeans; he would even invite them into his living room to chat.<sup>19</sup> Brewster belonged to all the right clubs, had attended all the right schools, and yet on some of America's hottest issues he stood not with the men of his own generation, but with the generation that challenged it.

The students loved him. Shearer's Student Advisory Board may have differed with Brewster over coeducation, but for their 1968 fundraiser they sold boxer briefs stamped with the slogan, "Next to myself, I like Kingman best." The following year, when Brewster entered a campus-wide meeting on the future of ROTC at Yale, four thousand students rose to give him a standing ovation. "Oh, I loved the King," said student leader Bill Farley. "He was always a favorite of mine."<sup>20</sup> On the issue of women, however, Brewster and his students stood apart. Perhaps Brewster was still hoping the coeducation issue would just go away, but Avi Soifer, a Yale senior in the fall of 1968, was not going to let it drop. While the Operation Coeducation posters had been Derek Shearer's idea, Soifer was the one to take the next step.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> John Wilkinson, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, May 19, 1992, transcript, box 12, folder 151, RU217, 7.

<sup>20</sup> "Yale Hierarchy Controls Change," *YDN*, September 16, 1968; Kannar, *YDN*, February 4, 1969; George Kannar, "Mass Meeting Splits Evenly on ROTC," *YDN*, May 2, 1969; William Farley, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, December 16, 1991, transcript, box 4, folder 55, RU217, 5.

<sup>21</sup> Soifer interview, 1991, 11; Avi Soifer, email to author, September 20, 2017; Avi Soifer, "Coed Week: A response," *YDN*, October 23, 1968.

Soifer was a member of the Student Advisory Board. He had covered Brewster's attempt to bring Vassar to New Haven for the *Yale Daily News*. But perhaps most important of all, Soifer, like Shearer, had attended public high school.<sup>22</sup> The private school boys had long set the tone at Yale,<sup>23</sup> but they lacked an experience common to all their public school classmates: they had not gone to high school with girls. Soifer did not quite know what to make of Yale men's practice of banging their spoons against their water glasses when a guy brought a good-looking date into the dining hall. All-male Yale, while normal for the kids from all-male Andover and all-male Exeter, was not normal to him.

It was not as if the Yale of Soifer and Brewster was totally devoid of women. The women were there—as wives and mothers and girlfriends, as secretaries and dining hall workers. A few had even found a place in the roles usually reserved for men. The Yale College faculty had 393 tenured professors in 1968: 391 men and 2 women. If you added in the assistant professors, you had 11 women out of a total of 633, thus doubling the percentage from 1 percent to 2 percent.<sup>24</sup> Yale's graduate school was technically coed by 1968, but that's not how it felt to many of the women there. Yale had eight hundred women graduate students, but they were spread out across ten graduate and professional

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<sup>22</sup> Rosenhouse and Soifer, *YDN*, November 21, 1967; Soifer interview, 1991, 16; Derek Shearer, email to author, September 21, 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Janet Lever and Pepper Schwartz, *Women at Yale: Liberating a College Campus* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), 24.

<sup>24</sup> Mary B. Arnstein, "Coeducation 1972-73," July 1973, Appendix VI, Table 6, box 1, folder 5, RU821B.



schools, and represented less than 10 percent of Yale's student enrollment. "Invisible" is the word they used to describe themselves.<sup>25</sup>

You could see why they felt that way. Yale had one of the finest gyms in the world, but women were not allowed to use it. Male graduate students lived in fireplaced rooms in the center of campus, but the women were housed in a boxy 1950s structure a half-mile away, several dark blocks past the cemetery. When an English graduate student arrived at Yale's famed Elizabethan Club with a male classmate, he was ushered in, while she was whisked out to the sidewalk. Women were not allowed. And at the Yale Club in New York City, with its fine leather armchairs and plum location directly across from Grand Central Station, men entered through the front door, while women had to use a service entrance down the block.<sup>26</sup> At Yale, Soifer came to know a few of those women graduate students, and they pointed out to him the ways in which women at Yale were assigned a parallel, and lesser, existence. Their observations about gender inequity at Yale echoed Soifer's own, and by the start of his senior year, Soifer was ready to act.<sup>27</sup>

When he returned to campus in September, Soifer pulled together some friends, and on October 15 they went public with their plans. Coeducation Week would start on

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<sup>25</sup> Jonathan Lear, "The Great Admissions Sweepstakes . . . How Yale Selected Her First Coeds," *NYT*, April 13, 1969; Yale University News Bureau, "Press Release #316," April 13, 1969, box 1, folder 5, RU821B; Lever and Schwartz, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Hillinger, "For the Athlete, It's a Bit of Heaven: Yale's Gym Has 14 Floors of Wall-to-Wall Physical Fitness," *Los Angeles Times*, December 30, 1985; "Gym to Go Coed," *YDN*, February 13, 1969; Jeffrey Gordon and Eric Rosenberg, "Wasserman Heads Coed Office," *YDN*, November 21, 1968; Brenda Jubin, interview by author, Bethany, CT, April 26, 2017; Christine Chase (pseudonym), interview by author, telephone, May 26, 2017; Chauncey interview, 2014; Wasserman interview, 2007, 96.

<sup>27</sup> Soifer interview, 1991, 16.

November 4, and bring 750 women from nearby colleges to Yale. The women would move into college dorm rooms vacated for the week by Yale student volunteers, attend classes, participate in forums and panels on coeducation, and give Yale men the chance to interact with the opposite sex “under more natural conditions than the infamous mixer.” Yale students were delighted. Organizations ranging from Yale’s secret societies to SDS offered their support, and more than fifty people joined Soifer’s committee and asked what they could do to help.<sup>28</sup> Coeducation Week was just three weeks away.

Brewster may not have taken Shearer’s Operation Coeducation posters seriously, but he was paying attention now. The following Monday, Soifer was summoned to meet with Dean of Undergraduate Affairs John Wilkinson, all twelve heads of Yale’s residential colleges, and Brewster.<sup>29</sup> Brewster was not pleased. He made that clear. It was too many women. It was happening too soon. The students should just be more patient.

“Well,” said Soifer, “we may go ahead anyway.”

“I wish you wouldn’t,” Brewster replied. But it was already too late.

### **A Competitive Disadvantage**

Two days before Brewster’s meeting with Avi Soifer, he walked over to Connecticut Hall, Yale’s oldest building, to join five hundred men in suits and ties at the

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<sup>28</sup> Timothy Bates, “SDS Proclaims Girls Next Year,” *YDN*, October 16, 1968; Soifer, *YDN*, October 23, 1968.

<sup>29</sup> Yale University News Bureau, “Press Release #158,” November 14, 1968, box 258, folder 5, RU11, Series II (hereafter cited as RU11-II); Soifer interview, 1991, 8-12.

annual gathering of the Yale Alumni Fund. The event served as a two-day pep talk before alumni fundraisers set forth to seek donations from their classmates, and this year each attendee received a small booklet, *Yale's Role in the Education of American Leaders*.<sup>30</sup> It was Yale's version of a party favor.

The pamphlet provided a pocket-sized scorecard of Yale versus its top rivals in sixteen different categories: Supreme Court Justices, state governors, CEOs of major corporations, and so on. According to Yale's tally, eleven Supreme Court Justices between 1789 and 1963 had graduated from Yale, while Harvard had only seven and Princeton nine. Yale won the CEO category too, and the one for members of Congress and seven more after that, a total of ten of the sixteen categories, with Yale second only to Harvard on the rest. A closer look at the statistics might have raised a few questions. Why count Supreme Court Justices between 1789 and 1963, but not start counting state governors until 1946? Why the top eighty-two law firms and not the top fifty or top hundred? But this was not the place for such nattering. The message was clear: Leadership was the metric that mattered at Yale.

"We want Yale men to be leaders in their generation," wrote Brewster in 1967, and nowhere was that goal more keenly felt than in the Yale admissions office, whose job it was to pick the men who would rise to the top.<sup>31</sup> Yes, the four years at Yale helped shape its graduates—the tight male friendships, the long bull sessions over meals in the

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<sup>30</sup> "Yale's Role in the Education of American Leaders," October 1968, box 13, folder 11, RU11, Series I (hereafter cited as RU11-I).

<sup>31</sup> Kingman Brewster to John Muyskens, March 15, 1967, box 1, folder 8, RU821A.

dining halls, the quest for the top spots on Yale's sports teams and student organizations. But the competition with Harvard and Princeton began at admissions, and this is where the woman issue finally struck a nerve. In the fall of 1968, the students who shaped Yale's direction were not just those who already went there, but those who kept turning Yale down.

“Speaking strictly from an admissions standpoint, a decision to educate women at Yale . . . is not only desirable but virtually essential,” Admissions Dean Inky Clark told Brewster in June of 1968. The numbers did not look good. They hadn't for a while. In 1965, 86 percent of the students accepted at both Yale and Harvard chose Harvard, with a majority of those who turned Yale down citing Harvard's “proximity to girls' colleges” as a reason. That two-hour car ride from Yale to Vassar or Smith seemed long indeed when compared with a Harvard man's distance to the Radcliffe girl a few blocks away. By 1968, when Clark wrote to Brewster, a third of the accepted candidates were turning Yale down, and still the problem was Yale's single-sex status.<sup>32</sup> If Yale was going to keep its standing as one of the top two or three colleges in the nation, the availability of women was an amenity it could no longer do without.

Inky Clark was not the only one who saw the need for change. There were the students of course, and Yale's faculty, an increasing number of whom had spent time at coed universities and found Yale's single-sex environment bizarre.<sup>33</sup> And then there was

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<sup>32</sup> Karabel, 416-420; Jeffrey Gordon, “Pressures on Admissions,” *YDN*, April 4, 1969.

Chauncey. Sam Chauncey had occupied the office right next to Brewster's ever since Brewster became president in 1963. The two talked all day long: first thing in the morning, as issues arose during the day, by phone if Brewster was out of town. Chauncey lived two doors down from Brewster on Hillhouse Avenue, and the two men met in the evenings as well, over at Chauncey's, or up the street at Provost Charlie Taylor's house.<sup>34</sup>

At one level, Chauncey was as Yale as they come. He was a direct descendent of Nathaniel Chauncey, who in 1702 was the first person ever to graduate from Yale.<sup>35</sup> The name "Chauncey" is chiseled with several others in large letters along the front of Woodbridge Hall, where Brewster had his office. But Yale man though he was, Chauncey brought to the conversation a different perspective than Brewster's. He was sixteen years younger than Brewster for one thing, but it was Chauncey's memories of his mother's experience that shaped his views on women.

Elizabeth Phalen Chauncey had won a scholarship to Julliard as a teenager, and her talent with the violin gained her spots on lesser orchestras throughout her life. What Chauncey never forgot, however, was her bitterness at being denied a chance to play with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Like all major US symphonies of the era, Boston's discriminated against women; it did not hire its first woman violinist until 1969, decades

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<sup>33</sup> Chauncey interview, 2014; Kai Erikson, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, March 9, 1992, transcript, box 4, folder 53, RU217, 13.

<sup>34</sup> Chauncey interview, 2017; Fanton interview, 1992, 47; Jeff Greenfield, *No Peace, No Place: Excavations Along the Generational Fault* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 204.

<sup>35</sup> Michael Knight, "Town-Gown Struggle Intensifies in New Haven," *NYT*, November 30, 1973.

after Elizabeth Chauncey had sought to get hired there.<sup>36</sup> Chauncey was careful not to get too far ahead of Brewster in public, and his December 1968 statement to the *Yale Alumni Magazine* that “women have a right to a Yale education” was a rare lapse.<sup>37</sup> But his voice was yet another in a growing chorus that made it ever harder for Brewster to keep coeducation on hold.

The final straw was Princeton. On September 14, the same time Derek Shearer was putting up his posters at Yale, Princeton issued a sixty-two-page report that concluded that coeducation was “vital to Princeton’s future.” Princeton’s trustees had not yet discussed the report; nothing was certain yet. But here was a threat Brewster could not ignore. It was bad enough to lose top students to Harvard. But losing them to Princeton, still a second choice to Yale for most applicants, was not acceptable. The Princeton report whetted Yale’s “sense of competitive rivalry,” said Brewster, and pushed him where he might not otherwise have gone.<sup>38</sup>

On September 29, Brewster released an eight-page memorandum, “Higher Education for Women at Yale,” in which, for the first time, he suggested the possibility of admitting women directly to Yale College. Two reasons drove his decision, Brewster explained: the loss of first-rate applicants to colleges that offered “coeducational

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<sup>36</sup> Henry “Sam” Chauncey, interview by author, New Haven, October 20, 2016; Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse, “Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of ‘Blind’ Auditions on Female Musicians,” *American Economic Review* 90, no. 4 (2000): 715-716; Boston Symphony Orchestra, “About us: Ikuko Mizuno,” accessed September 20, 2017 from <http://www.bso.org/strings/ikuko-mizuno-violin.aspx>.

<sup>37</sup> Chauncey interview, 2017; “The University Dips a Toe into Coeducation,” *YAM*, December 1968, reprinted in “Women at Yale,” *YAM*, September/October 2009, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Patterson, 6; Karabel, 420; Yale University News Bureau, November 14, 1968.

attractions,” and the Princeton report. Brewster had not abandoned the sister school option yet, and his proposal included the possibility of starting three separate women’s schools in New Haven, each tied to a career that Brewster thought “specially suited for women”: museum and theater administration, health care aides, and urban planning.<sup>39</sup> But wade through all the discussion of sister schools and special women’s careers, and it was clear that Brewster had shifted. Coeducation was finally up for discussion.

Yet still Brewster stalled. Thirty million dollars was his revised estimate for the cost of the new facilities and staffing needed for coeducation. That was the donation Yale needed, he said, before it would move ahead. And no, he had not asked anyone yet. Even Inky Clark, one of Brewster’s first hires and closest allies, thought the price tag issue was bogus.<sup>40</sup> Brewster was not the first, however, to require a donation as the fee for admitting women students. In 1883, University of Pennsylvania trustees called for a substantial gift before they would open a women’s college, and at the University of Rochester, it took Susan B. Anthony herself, then eighty years old, arriving by carriage with the final installment of \$8,000 before the university would enroll its first women.<sup>41</sup> Brewster’s \$30 million number was credible if Yale constructed the extra facilities and

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<sup>39</sup> Kingman Brewster, "Higher Education for Women at Yale," September 23, 1968, box 10, folder 107, RU578, Yale College Records Concerning the Education of Women, Accession 1988-A-009 (hereafter cited as RU578A).

<sup>40</sup> Ray Warman, "\$30 Million Needed to Adopt Coed Plan," *YDN*, September 30, 1968; Russell Inslee Clark, Jr., interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, May 13, 1993, transcript, box 3, folder 34, RU217, 29.

<sup>41</sup> George McClelland, "A Separate College for Women," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 15, 1933, Accessed January 21, 2018 from <http://www.archives.upenn.edu/primdocs/uplan/gazetteapr151933.pdf>; Lundt, Poulson, and Miller-Bernal, 55-79.

hired the extra staff and faculty needed for an additional fifteen hundred students. But this was not the only way to coeducate a college.

October filled with the build-up toward Coeducation Week, and on Monday, November 4, as Soifer had promised, 750 women students, ready to be Yalies for a few days, made their way to New Haven from colleges across New England and down through Pennsylvania. Some came from coed schools such as Swarthmore and Brandeis, others from women's colleges Wellesley and Smith, and still others from "coordinate colleges" like Radcliffe at Harvard and Pembroke at Brown. Soifer's committee had recruited at twenty different schools; so many women signed up that the committee had to turn some down for lack of rooms to house them in. The national press arrived as well, cameras and notebooks at the ready, adding to the pressure for change. Soifer's statement that "women are people too" was the *New York Times* "quote of the week."<sup>42</sup>

By Wednesday, students were giddy with the success of the experiment, and a group of them, led by the trumpets and drums of the Yale Marching Band, processed through the Yale campus, gathering students along the way as they marched to the home of the president, just a few blocks from the center of campus. By the time the crowd reached Brewster's front lawn, it had swelled to hundreds. The band played football songs, and Brewster came out of the house with his wife Mary Louise, who had attended Vassar, beside him. "Give us a date!" the students cried, urging Brewster to finally

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<sup>42</sup> Paul Taylor, "Coed Week Plans Set; Girls to Arrive Monday," *YDN*, November 1, 1968; David Fine, "Girls from 22 Schools Arrive for Coed Week," *YDN*, November 5, 1968; "Q&A with Avi Soifer," *YAM*, September 8, 2009.



commit to coeducation. The bandleader had a megaphone, and Brewster asked to borrow it. “Vassar was good enough for me!” he shouted to the crowd. If the students were puzzled by his joke—was coeducation really nothing more than shortening the distance between a Yale man and his girlfriend?—none pushed back. “Give us a date!” they called out, and Brewster did: “In 1972, there will be women at Yale.” But that was not soon enough. “Next Fall!” shouted the students. “1969!”<sup>43</sup>

Things moved very quickly from there. The following morning Brewster called a meeting with a one-item agenda: bringing coeducation to Yale. Avi Soifer was there, as were Chauncey, *Yale Daily News* chairman Alan Boles, Inky Clark, Dean of Undergraduate Affairs John Wilkinson, and a few other Yale administrators.<sup>44</sup> Two days later, on Saturday, Brewster headed down to the Yale Club in New York to meet with the Corporation. Trustee Irwin Miller had been arguing for women students since 1967, warning that “the quality of admission at Yale . . . will undergo a long, slow decline unless there are women.”<sup>45</sup> He was not alone in his views. The Corporation voted to accept 500 women students for the fall of 1969: 250 freshmen and 250 transfers. The price tag issue was quickly set aside. Yale would make do with the existing facilities and faculty: rooms designed to house three students would hold four; the few extra staff—a

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<sup>43</sup> Jeffrey Stern, “Coed Rally Meets Brewster at Home,” *YDN*, November 7, 1968; Trinkhaus interview, 1992, 32; “In Memoriam: Mary Louise Brewster,” April 19, 2004, accessed December 17, 2017 from <https://news.yale.edu>.

<sup>44</sup> Jeff Gordon, “On Coeducation: Hold Secret Parley,” *YDN*, November 8, 1968.

<sup>45</sup> Charles Taylor, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, March 2, 1992, transcript, box 11, folder 136, RU217, 59; Karabel, 418.

part-time gynecologist, an administrator to oversee the transition—would be covered by the women’s tuitions, and the experience thus gained would be used to solicit donors to pay for Yale’s final goal of adding 1,500 women to the existing enrollment of 4,000 men. Before Brewster could go public with the decision, one final step was needed. On Thursday November 15, he entered Connecticut Hall to present his coeducation proposal to the Yale College faculty. The vote was two hundred to one in favor.<sup>46</sup> Coeducation was coming to Yale.

### **Ten Months to Get Ready**

The day after the Yale Corporation voted to admit women students, Kingman Brewster, irritated at a result he had hoped to avoid, turned to Sam Chauncey. “You son-of-a-bitch, you pushed me into this thing. You’ve gotta make it happen.”<sup>47</sup> Chauncey agreed to serve temporarily as the Director of Administrative Planning for Coeducation. But the job of preparing Yale for women undergraduates couldn’t be his alone.

Brewster felt he needed a woman to help lead the coeducation effort, and he wanted a woman from inside of Yale. No outsider could understand the school’s unique

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<sup>46</sup> William Borders, "Yale Going Coed Next September: 500 Undergraduate Girls to be Admitted as a Start," *NYT*, November 15, 1968; Elga Wasserman, "Report of the Chairman of the Planning Committee on Coeducation, 1968-1969," Appendix B: Coeducation Budget 1969-1970, box 1, folder 13, RU821B; Ray Warman, "Brewster Offers Coeducation Plan: Faculty Vote Overwhelming," *YDN*, November 15, 1968; Timothy Bates and Jerry Ganzfred, "King Faces His Court," *YDN*, November 15, 1968.

<sup>47</sup> Sam Chauncey interview, 2014.

culture, or how to bring in women students without disrupting it.<sup>48</sup> Yale, however, had not made it a practice to hire women administrators. Of the top fifty-four administrators in the college and university central administration, all but one were men. Every administrator in the president's office was a man. Every administrator in the provost's office was a man. Every administrator in the secretary's office, in the treasurer's office, in the development office, in the admissions and financial aid office, was a man. The one woman? Associate Librarian for Technical Services, not exactly a position of influence and power. Widening the search to Yale's graduate and professional schools expanded the possibilities by precisely four: the two Nursing School deans, and two assistant deans at the Graduate School. And Graduate School Assistant Dean Elga Wasserman wanted the job. "Elga was a wonderful person and she was a great choice," explained Chauncey, who worked with Brewster on Wasserman's appointment. "But there were no options. We were lucky that Elga was there."<sup>49</sup>

By the time Brewster tapped Wasserman to help lead Yale's transition to coeducation, she had lived in New Haven twenty years. Wasserman was German by birth, born Elga Ruth Steinherz in Berlin in 1924, the second child of an upper-middle class Jewish family. The family fled the Nazis when Elga was twelve and settled in Great Neck, New Jersey; an uncle who stayed behind later died in a German concentration

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> "Offices of Administration," *Yale University Catalogue 1968-69*, box 4, folder 1, RU164, Yale University Corporation Records, Accession 1994-A-077, YUL (hereafter cited as RU164); Chauncey interview, 2014.

camp. Wasserman attended Smith College, graduated summa cum laude, and went from there to Harvard, where she earned her chemistry PhD and met Harry Wasserman, a fellow graduate student. When Yale's chemistry department hired Harry after his graduation from Harvard, the couple moved to New Haven.<sup>50</sup>

As a young wife and mother, Elga Wasserman had not been happy at Yale. She had done what was expected of a white, college-educated woman of her generation: marry young, have kids. But she had done what was unexpected as well: go to Harvard; get a PhD in chemistry. For a woman in 1950s Yale, that PhD was a path to exactly nowhere. Yale didn't hire women chemists. Instead, the university routed them into positions as research assistants, a job where women could tread water and watch the men with similar qualifications move swiftly by. This was the job that Wasserman got when she first came there. Women with degrees in history or English didn't do much better. When the Wassermans arrived in New Haven in 1948, there was not a single tenured woman on the Yale College faculty.<sup>51</sup>

Neither Princeton nor Harvard had a tenured woman professor then either; neither would have one for another twenty years.<sup>52</sup> But at least in Boston a woman with a PhD

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<sup>50</sup> Wasserman interview, 2007, 1-19; Elga Wasserman, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, May 7, 1992, box 12, folder 145, RU217, 1-2; Rebecca Davis, "Elga Ruth Wasserman," *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, March 1, 2009, accessed June 11, 2017 from <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/wasserman-elga-ruth>.

<sup>51</sup> Wasserman interview, 2007, 2; Chauncey interview, 2016; Wasserman interview, 1992, 1-3; Yale University News Bureau, April 13, 1969.

<sup>52</sup> Princeton University, "Princeton History: Women," accessed January 21, 2018 from <https://princetoniana.princeton.edu/history/women>; Harris, 283.

might teach at Wellesley College. For women who sought to work at a top-ranked school, New Haven was a one company town, and if you were the woman in a two-PhD couple as Wasserman was, well, you were out of luck. So Wasserman did what other Yale wives with PhDs did: she threw fancy dinner parties. “Every woman we knew in that generation was a cook,” recalled John Wilkinson, who worked with Wasserman at Yale. “I mean, dinner parties galore. They took all that energy, and --” He didn’t finish the sentence. Wasserman remembered those dinner parties too: “The wives did all the cooking.” After dinner, the men retired into a room to talk among themselves, while the women went off to a separate space. “Women were sort of the ornaments to the men, which was not my style,” Wasserman said in a 1992 interview. “I was very unhappy.”<sup>53</sup>

Wasserman’s first child was born in 1949, a year after she and Harry moved to New Haven, and over the next thirteen years she pulled together a series of part-time jobs, working as a lab assistant, teaching a few courses at two local colleges. She raised her three children, made friends, and crafted her life from the options available. A year spent in Berkeley, California, during Harry’s 1959-60 sabbatical introduced her to a place that suited her better, a place with a more open environment for women. “If it had been up to me, I think I might have stayed,” she said.<sup>54</sup> It wasn’t up to her, though, and the Wassermans returned to New Haven.

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<sup>53</sup> John Wilkinson interview by author, New Haven, October 19, 2016; Wasserman interview, 2007; Wasserman interview, 1992, 2.

<sup>54</sup> Wasserman interview, 2007, 1-40; Wasserman interview, 1992, 3.

Two years later, Elga Wasserman got a break. Graduate school dean John Perry Miller, who lived down the street, called and asked if she would be interested in working as assistant dean at the graduate school. It was an unusual move. Outside the Nursing School, Yale had no women deans at that time. Miller was only in his second year as dean, and he offered Wasserman not just a position as assistant dean, but assistant dean in charge of sciences, the land of men. “Can I work two-thirds-time, so I can be home when the kids get out from school?” asked Wasserman.<sup>55</sup> Miller agreed, and Wasserman became assistant dean at the Yale Graduate School, the spot from which, six years later, Kingman Brewster selected her to chair the Coeducation Planning Committee.

Those then, are the outlines of Elga Wasserman’s life up to age forty-four, when Brewster tapped her to work with Chauncey on coeducation. Over the next four years, she had both fans and critics. But of all the statements made about her, the sentence that rings most true is one Elga Wasserman uttered herself, a comment on Brewster’s 1968 decision to hire her: “I don’t think he knew who he was getting, really.”<sup>56</sup>

Yale had left itself ten months to transform a college that had been all-male for the previous 268 years into a coed school, and Wasserman and Chauncey got right to work. As Yale College Dean Georges May observed after the faculty’s affirmative vote for coeducation, “This is a crash program for next year.”<sup>57</sup> The question of where to

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Wasserman interview, 2007, 54.

<sup>57</sup> Warman, *YDN*, November 15, 1968.

house the women quickly became the most pressing problem, but sorting through the flood of applications soon rose to the top of the list as well. And would Yale be offering women the same financial aid as men? The list went on and on. The locks needed changing. The outdoor lighting was bad. The gym had to end its no-woman rule. The Yale Health Center had no gynecologist on staff. And there was the problem of potential pregnancies. Did Yale need to do something about that?<sup>58</sup>

As for the real changes, the changes that would shift an all-male institution to one in which women stood on equal footing with men, there was no time for that. The goal for September, declared Wasserman's hastily formed Coeducation Planning Committee, was to admit women "with the least disruption of the current pattern" of education at Yale.<sup>59</sup> Over the next four years, Yale's first women undergraduates would in fact disrupt this pattern again and again. A number of them—along with women graduate students, faculty, and administrators and a handful of sympathetic men—would actively work to push Yale to end the second-class status to which women undergraduates were initially assigned. First, however, would come the shock of realizing just how difficult being one of the first women undergraduates at Yale would be.

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<sup>58</sup> Minutes of the Coeducation Planning Committee, January 6, 1969, January 20, 1969, February 3, 1969, box 10, folder 152, RU 126, Records of Georges May as Yale College Dean, Accession 1980-A-017, YUL (hereafter cited as RU126); Chauncey interview, 2014; Gideon Gordon, "Scholarships Short: Coed Funds Sought," *YDN*, December 20, 1968; "Roundtable Discussion of Coeducation," December 3, 1968, box 10, folder 152, RU126; "Gym," *YDN*, February 13, 1969; Lear, *NYT*, April 13, 1969; Lorna and Philip Sarrel, interview by author, Woodbridge, CT, November 30, 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Planning Committee on Coeducation, "Plans for Housing Women at Yale for 1969-70," January 31, 1969, box 22, folder 908, RU821A.

## CHAPTER THREE

### WOMEN IN A MAN'S WORLD, 1969-1970

#### **575 Women**

Within four days of Kingman Brewster's November 1968 coeducation announcement, Yale received 800 letters of interest from women students. By March of 1969, nearly 4,000 had applied.<sup>1</sup> The men at Yale were not shy about offering their opinion as to how the decision should be made. Secretary Reuben Holden, the university's third highest-ranking officer, wrote Sam Chauncey in March after meeting with one applicant. "I want to give you a report on a very lovely girl . . . She is lean and tallish, not glamorous, but beautiful in a natural way . . . I really think Merrill is a superb candidate for our initial batch of coeds." Admissions Dean Inky Clark had his own view on the matter, which he explained to the *New York Times* in April. "We are going to be known by the girls we admit. What I want, if possible, is to make that image a diverse one. I don't want every girl to be beautiful or ugly." Alan Boles, the chairman of the *Yale Daily News*, followed with his opinion in May. "Hopefully Yale will turn out a new breed

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<sup>1</sup> William Borders, "Yale Beseiged by Female Applicants," *NYT*, November 24, 1968; Malkiel, 139.



of superwomen who will be beautiful, resourceful and intelligent—a joy to the mind and a delight to the eye.”<sup>2</sup>

The young women pioneers who applied to Yale in the spring of 1969, however, knew nothing of all this. To them, Yale represented one of the top two or three colleges in the country, a ticket to a future not otherwise on offer. “Ever since you’ve been two years old you’ve heard that Yale and Harvard are *the* schools,” explained Judy Berkan, a Brandeis sophomore who sought to join Yale’s junior class. “And suddenly now you had this chance to go.”<sup>3</sup>

For some who applied, the appeal of walking new territory was the draw. “It was just the idea that it was brand new, the first time women were going to be accepted,” said Darial Sneed, a black high school student from Manhattan. “It seemed like it was going to be exciting.” Shirley Daniels, a freshman at Simmons College in Boston, was drawn by Yale’s Afro-American studies major, one of the few in the country at the time. Others applied because their parents kept badgering them to do so, or to escape the cloistered atmosphere of the women’s college they were currently attending, or just on a whim, really.<sup>4</sup> With only 250 slots for freshmen women and another 250 for transfers, the odds

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<sup>2</sup> Reuben Holden to Sam Chauncey, March 6, 1969, Records of Reuben A. Holden, Secretary of Yale University, box 58, folder 388, RU19, Series II (hereafter cited as RU19-II); Lear, *NYT*, April 13, 1969, 58; Alan Boles, “Yes, Virginia, there is a Yale,” June 1969, in Donadio, 11.

<sup>3</sup> “Coeds on Coeducation: A Discussion,” *YAM*, April 1970, 34, italics in original.

<sup>4</sup> Darial Sneed, interview by Julia Pimsleur, 1990, DVD, tape 21, BB Archive; Shirley Daniels, interview by author, New York, April 25, 2017; See also Barbara Deinhardt, “‘Mother of Men?’” in Furniss and Graham, 66-69; Deborah Bernick, interview by author, Arlington, VA, December 14, 2016; Katherine Jelly, interview by author, Winooski, VT, May 17, 2017; Denise Maillet Main, interview by author, Mill

against getting in were high. But if you were one of the smart girls in your class, why not apply? You might just turn out to be the type that Yale was looking for.

All together, Yale enrolled 575 women in the first year of coeducation: 230 freshmen, 151 sophomores, and 194 juniors.<sup>5</sup> They came from west coast and east coast and most states in between, from city and suburb and hamlets so small the address was just an RFD number. Some had already been to college for a year or two, while others were fresh out of high school. They differed in race and ethnicity and in whether they took for granted their family's ability to pay their tuition, or worried about the size of the loan they had taken out. In many ways, they were as different as a group of 575 can be, but there were things they held in common as well.

These girls were smart for one thing, smarter than the boys, as the first term grades would show. And they were tough. Or at least, that is how they appeared on their applications. Sam Chauncey and Elga Wasserman were the ones who had made the final decisions on which women would get in, and regardless of the opinions of others at Yale, it was not looks they were after. "We chose them for survival qualities," explained Wasserman. "They had to show that they were resilient." Women with four brothers, women who had attended a huge high school, who had worked for a year, who had lived abroad, who had played sports, who had endured a traumatic event—those were the ones

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Valley, CA, February 22, 2017; Lawrie Mifflin, interview by author, Brooklyn, February 15, 2017; Patricia Mintz, interview by author, Oakland, CA, February 20, 2017; Carol Storey-Johnson, interview by author, New York, November 28, 2017; Deborah Tedford, interview by author, Mystic, CT, November 29, 2016; Temoshok interview, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Office of Undergraduate Admissions, August 27, 1970.

that Chauncey and Wasserman wanted. “There was no point in taking a timid woman and putting her in this environment,” said Chauncey, who knew the depth of the maleness of Yale. “Because it could crush you.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Race and Ethnicity**

For the most part, Yale’s first women undergraduates mirrored the racial and ethnic diversity of their male classmates, which is to say they were not that diverse. Of the 575 women, 90 percent were white. The freshman class included twenty-five black women; the sophomore class had eight, the junior class seven—forty in all, 7 percent of the women undergraduates. The numbers of Asian American women were smaller still: thirteen across all four classes, 2 percent of the women students. As for Latina students, there were three: one Chicana freshman and a sophomore and junior of Puerto Rican heritage.<sup>7</sup>

The predominance of black students among students of color at Yale reflected the surrounding demographics. In 1970, New Haven was 26 percent black, 4 percent Latinx, and less than 0.1 percent Asian American. New Haven’s two historically black neighborhoods, Dixwell and the Hill, were adjacent to Yale, Dixwell up by Payne Whitney Gym and the Hill over by Yale Medical School. As Houston Baker, one of the few black professors at Yale in 1968, observed, “The university was, in undeniable ways,

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<sup>6</sup> Wasserman interview, 2007, 62; Chauncey interview, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> John Muyskens to Elga Wasserman, June 8, 1970, box 1, folder 10, RU821A; author database. See Appendix B for database methodology.

merely the ‘white fixings’ of New Haven—sandwiched inescapably between two robust slices of black urban life.” In the summer of 1967, when African Americans erupted nationwide in protest over systemic racism in the US, New Haven was one of the cities where riots occurred.<sup>8</sup>

Yale’s focus on black students so outweighed that on other students of color that Yale did not even start counting the number of Chicana and Asian American students until June 1971, Puerto Rican students until June 1972, and Native Americans until June 1973.<sup>9</sup> Given the near absence of Asian American and Latina students at Yale in 1969, this dissertation focuses solely on the experience of black women undergraduates in its exploration of the intersection of race and gender during the early years of coeducation.

In 1969, black women arrived to an institution that was far more welcoming to black students than if coeducation had occurred even one or two years earlier. The Black Student Alliance at Yale (BSAY) was three years old by then, and September 1969 witnessed not just the start of undergraduate coeducation at Yale, but the fruition of three key BSAY initiatives: the opening of Yale’s Afro-America Cultural Center, known as

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<sup>8</sup> Tianna N. Terry, "Racial Residential Integration in Greater New Haven in the Post-Civil Rights Era," Yale Law School Legal Scholarship Repository, May 11, 2007, 81, accessed October 13, 2017 from [http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1050&context=student\\_papers](http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1050&context=student_papers); Houston A. Baker, "On My First Acquaintance with Black Studies: A Yale Story," in *A Companion to African-American Studies*, eds. Lewis Gordon and Jane Gordon (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 4, 11; Karabel, 385; Paul Moore, "Riots Mar City's Summer," *YDN*, September 15, 1967.

<sup>9</sup> John Muyskens to Elga Wasserman, August 13, 1970, box 1, folder 13, RU821A; Yale University Office of Undergraduate Admissions, "Yield Figures - Classes of 1967-1976," September 25, 1972, Table V, Minority Groups, box 1, folder 15, RU821A; "Admissions Office Annual Report, 1971-72," July 1, 1972, Appendage G, box 3, folder 113, RU52, Accession 1978-A-008, Secretary's office, Yale University, Records, YUL, (hereafter cited as RU52B). The numbers on Latina and Asian American women students come from the author's database.

“the House”; the commencement of Yale’s Afro-American studies program; and the matriculation of the largest number of black freshmen ever to enter Yale, ninety-six once you added in the seventy-one men, up from forty-three in the Class of 1972. In the words of black student Henry Louis “Skip” Gates, the Class of 1973 was “the blackest class in the history of that ivy-draped institution.”<sup>10</sup> That was still not very black, however, when white students in the Class of 1973 outnumbered black ones by twelve to one.

Black women students who chose to do so could find an existing community of color at Yale. “The people at the Af-Am House were reaffirming,” said junior Vera Wells. “It was a homey atmosphere, a guaranteed safe haven.” Freshmen black women were particularly appreciative of the BSAY’s social initiatives. “We have the BSAY to help us get together,” said one. “The BSAY is very important to me and it makes things a lot easier here.”<sup>11</sup>

The ability to be somewhat at home in a white institution, however, came at a cost. The agenda for racial equity was set at Yale before black women undergraduates arrived, and while it gave them support as black students, it did not address their unique challenges as black women. “Nobody at Yale really paid any attention to minority

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<sup>10</sup> Rodney T. Cohen to Yale Students and Extended Community, August 28, 2013, Yale University Afro-American Cultural Center, accessed January 21, 2018 from <https://afam.yalecollege.yale.edu>; Jeffrey Gordon, “Pressures on Admissions,” *YDN*, April 4, 1969; Steven Hiller, “How Black Students Arrived at Yale,” *YDN*, September 25, 1973; Yale College Afro-American Cultural Center, “About the House,” 2016, accessed March 21, 2018 from <http://afam.yalecollege.yale.edu/house>; Yale University News Bureau, Press Release #45, September 12, 1969, box 1, folder 8, RU821B; Office of Undergraduate Admissions, September 25, 1972, RU821A; Henry Louis Gates, Jr., “Joining the Black Overclass at Yale University,” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 11 (Spring 1996), 95.

<sup>11</sup> Vera Wells, interview by author, New Haven, April 24, 2017; Serna, *YDN*, October 19, 2009; Lever and Schwartz, 76.

women, because they were still paying attention to the Afro-American issue as a male issue since that is how it was introduced to Yale,” observed Jacqueline Wei Mintz, a rare Asian American administrator at Yale who in 1972 co-founded an organization for women students of color. Black student leader Kurt Schmoke noted the same. “Gender discrimination or black women’s issues . . . were not high on the agenda at BSAY, at least in 1969 to 1970.”<sup>12</sup> Those issues would remain for the black women themselves to advance.

### **Class**

When Admissions Dean Inky Clark attended Yale in the late 1950s, most students came from boarding schools and prep schools. Yale, he told the *Yale Alumni Magazine*, had a “somewhat unsavory image” as a “rich’s man’s sanctuary.” Clark had come from public high school; his father had never gone to college. Once Kingman Brewster appointed him admissions dean in 1965, Clark set out to change Yale’s image, and make it a place that better reflected the span of the nation as a whole. In 1966, Yale became one of the first universities in the nation to adopt a need-blind admissions policy, and by 1969, when the first women students arrived, private school graduates were no longer a majority at Yale. Instead, there were “Inky’s kids,” the public school students who would

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<sup>12</sup> Jacqueline Wei Mintz, interview by author, Cockeysville, MD, December 13, 2016; Kurt Schmoke, interview by author, Baltimore, December 13, 2016.

have been passed over in previous years, or who might never even have thought to apply.<sup>13</sup>

More than half of the women in the freshman class received some type of financial aid, and while Yale's financial aid students were not wealthy, many came from middle class homes. The working class kids, those classed as "economically disadvantaged," were 7 percent of the women students, the same percentage as among the men. The numbers of economically disadvantaged white and black women were the same, but the percentage of black women in this category was more than ten times that of whites, 53 percent versus 4 percent, a racial gap reflected in the male population as well.<sup>14</sup> The majority of black women students were therefore outsiders on three counts at Yale: women in a male university, black students in a white university, and poor students in a university whose tone had long been set by those with money.

Whether they were white or black, many working and middle class women students felt at a disadvantage compared with their wealthier classmates. "As I saw it, my Yale peers were an entire class of people—in terms of class, wealth, and social standing—with whom I could not possibly compete," recalled a freshman from Kansas, the daughter of a mailman who had never graduated high school. The prep school students were at ease in a world that still felt foreign to many public school students.

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<sup>13</sup> Karabel, 333-334; Jeffrey Gordon, "Inky's Era," *YAM*, March 1970, 32-37; Russell Inslee Clark, Jr., interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, April 8, 1993, transcript, box 3, folder 33, RU217, 1-3, 15-22, 34-47; Wasserman, coeducation report 1970, Appendix A, Chart 3, 19.

<sup>14</sup> Wasserman, coeducation report 1970, Appendix A, Chart 1, 18; R.C. Burr and L.M. Noble, "Scholarship Changes - Economically Disadvantaged," April 15, 1970, box 48, folder 476, RU19-II.

“They know the look and the way to act,” observed one public high school graduate. And the prep school kids had often benefited from stronger academic preparation.

While women as a group surpassed their male classmates academically, some individual women were shocked to find that their high school had not taught them what they needed to succeed at a place like Yale. “I was totally unprepared,” said freshman Linda Bunch, who had attended a large public high school in Washington, DC. “I had always thought of myself as being bright and smart, but I spent the first semester thinking I would flunk out.” A white student from a lower middle class suburban school had the same experience. “I had essentially coasted through high school and I was completely taken by surprise when I failed my first exam.” The girl from Kansas fared no better. “I did very, very poorly that first year.” And those who struggled could see the ease with which classmates who had attended fancier schools accomplished their assignments. Sophomore Debbie Bernick came from a large public high school in Queens, but her friend Mack had gone to prep school. She would joke with him about it, and point out that he had arrived at Yale already knowing how to write a twenty-five-page paper on the water imagery in Shakespeare’s plays.<sup>15</sup>

There were, however, some advantages to arriving at Yale from the middle economic strata of the US. While the ten hours that financial aid students worked each week at their campus jobs was time away from friends or studying, it gave them insights into

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<sup>15</sup> “The Vanguard: Five of the First Coeds,” *YAM*, October 1979, 25; “No Easy Answers,” in Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 104; “Radically altered expectations,” in Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 118; Bernick interview, 2016.



aspects of Yale not seen by other students: the workings of the departmental and administrative offices to which women students were assigned, for example, or the lives of the black women who worked full-time in Yale's dining halls. Women students were aware of those whose families were wealthier than theirs, but they did not envy them for it. "There are good things about not having money, and strengths and resources that you learn to use," said freshman Linda Bishop.<sup>16</sup>

### **Sexuality**

In 1969, the American Psychiatric Association classed homosexuality as a mental disorder, and consensual sodomy was a felony in every state but Illinois. National Organization for Women (NOW) founder Betty Friedan called lesbians a threat to the viability of the women's movement, and dubbed them the "lavender menace." And *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Sex: But Were Afraid to Ask*, which topped the bestseller lists, informed its many readers that gay men and women were a "sexual aberration." Author David Reuben, who bolstered his authoritativeness by the "M.D." featured prominently next to his name, spent just three pages on "female homosexuality," which he included in the chapter on prostitution. "The majority of prostitutes are female homosexuals," he informed his readers.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Linda Bishop, interview by Julia Pimsleur, 1990, DVD, tape 22, BB Archive. See also: Jelly interview, 2017; Mintz interview, 2017; Maillet Main interview, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Neel Burton, "When Homosexuality Stopped Being a Mental Disorder," *Psychology Today*, September 18, 2015, accessed October 11, 2017 from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog>; Ruth Rosen, *The World*

Yale was no haven for gay students. Being gay at Yale is “painful and difficult,” said a gay Yale man in the fall of 1969; gay students were not free to discuss their sexuality. For the most part, heterosexuality was assumed. “It’s impossible to be a complete human being if you’re a woman without a man, and vice versa,” explained one woman undergraduate that spring. On October 30, 1969, the Yale Homosexuality Discussion Group held its first meeting, but despite a statement the following year that both gay women and men were welcome, the group seems largely to have served as a support group for gay men.<sup>18</sup>

Residential College Dean Brenda Jubin had several gay women students at Morse College, where she served as dean from 1970 to 1973. “It was difficult for [gay women], and a lot of the relationships were not just Yale-based. We had a woman who had a partner who was off in New York somewhere,” she explained. Kit McClure and Barbara Deinhardt, both freshmen in 1969, dated women during part of their time at Yale. Both women looked outside of Yale to the New Haven Women’s Liberation community for support. Both were active in the women’s movement before they began dating women, and both partnered with men a number of years after graduating from Yale. Neither found it easy being gay at Yale. As McClure explained during a June 1972 gay-straight

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*Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 83; David R. Reuben, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex: But Were Afraid To Ask* (New York: David McKay and Company, 1969) 3, 217.

<sup>18</sup> *Coeducation: The Year They Liberated Yale*; “Sexuality Discussion Tonight,” *YDN*, October 30, 1969; Philip Sarrel, “The Ins and Outs of Sex at Yale,” Fall 1970, 54, box 33, folder 1010, RU821A; Kathleen McClure, interview by author, New York, November 13, 2017.

dialogue sponsored by the New Haven Women's Liberation group, "There is a lot of shit for being a lesbian. There isn't enough consciousness among non-gay women about how bad lesbians feel, how far out on a limb we are, how hard it is." Deinhardt spoke at this event as well. "Gay women are more oppressed than straight women and put up with things every day that straight women don't have to put up with."<sup>19</sup>

### **Ground Rules**

Yale's first women undergraduates may have thought they were enrolling in a coed school, but they quickly realized their mistake.<sup>20</sup> They were women in a men's school, a different experience altogether. Yale's deeply male ethos would have been challenging enough, but two other decisions made the situation harder still. The first was Yale's policy to limit women students to less than 240 in each class. The second was to spread that small number of women out across all twelve of Yale's residential colleges, self-contained communities whose residents rarely got to know other students beyond their own colleges walls. Those first young women thus experienced Yale not as part of a group of 575, but as one of the less than twenty women in their year who were in their residential college.

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<sup>19</sup> Jubin interview, 2017; McClure interview, 2017; Barbara Deinhardt, interview by author, Brooklyn, April 27, 2017; New Haven Women's Liberation Movement, "A Gay-Straight Dialogue," June 23, 1972, box 1, folder 1, MS1985, Christine Pattee Papers on the New Haven Women's Liberation Movement, YUL (hereafter cited as MS 1985).

<sup>20</sup> Susanne Wofford, interview by Julia Pimsleur, 1990, DVD, tape 23, BB Archive; Deinhardt interview, 2017; Diane Polan, interview by Julia Pimsleur, 1990, DVD, tape 15, BB Archive; Joseph Treaster, "Coeds Find Life at Yale Falls Short of Expectations," *NYT*, April 14, 1970; Women's Advisory Council minutes, February 2, 1972, box 35, folder 1035, RU821A.

## One Thousand Male Leaders

Limiting the number of women undergraduates had been a central tenet of Yale's decision to go coed, at least according to President Kingman Brewster. Yale must abide by coeducation "ground rules assumed by the Corporation and the faculty, namely: no reduction in the number of male matriculants," Brewster insisted in November 1968.<sup>21</sup> Such quotas on women students were not uncommon among elite US colleges before Title IX made them illegal in 1972.<sup>22</sup> What made Yale unique, however, was the clearly articulated rationale for such discrimination. "I remember that 'a thousand male leaders' line," recalled Betsy Hartmann, who arrived as a freshman in 1969. "I remember being pissed off at that."<sup>23</sup>

The full rationale went like this: Yale had a responsibility to the nation to produce one thousand male leaders a year, and therefore the number of women undergraduates was limited by Yale's ability to house extra students over and above those thousand men. The male undergraduates were the given, the non-negotiable, the heart of Yale's mission. The women were add-ons.

Brewster did not see the contradiction of his support for quotas based on gender and his opposition to those based on race. "It is extremely important to be unambiguous

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<sup>21</sup> Kingman Brewster to Masters of the Residential Colleges, memorandum, November 18, 1968, box 258, folder 6, RU11-II.

<sup>22</sup> Margaret Nash, Susan Klein, and Barbara Bitters, "The Role of Government in Advancing Gender Equity in Education," in *Handbook for Achieving Gender Equity Through Education*, 2nd ed., ed. Susan Klein et al. (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), 63-101.

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Hartmann interview by author, Boston, March 29, 2017.

in the rejection of any notion that Yale should admit any applicant by a notorious double standard, let alone the notion that there should be an arithmetic quota to govern admission on the grounds of race or color," he wrote in his 1969 Report of the President.<sup>24</sup> Men were owed special status at Yale, but students of color were not.

Yale's mission of producing national leaders had shaped admissions policy since before women students were even admitted. "While we cannot purport to pick seventeen and eighteen year olds in terms of their career aims," Brewster wrote the Yale admissions staff in 1967, "we do have to make the hunchy judgment as to whether or not with Yale's help the candidate is likely to be a leader in whatever he ends up doing."<sup>25</sup> It was Brewster's spokesman Sam Chauncey, however, who first linked publicly Yale's preference for enrolling future leaders with the need for a quota for men.

On October 15, 1968, Chauncey met with a group of Yale Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) who had just issued a statement calling for immediate coeducation with parity in numbers: 500 men and 500 women for each entering class beginning the following year. Chauncey pushed back. "I don't think there is anything we're more committed to as educating the number of males we presently do," he told the group. The reason was evident. "The society in which we live, rightly or wrongly, and I think wrongly, sees the men as the leaders."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Brewster, president's report, 1969, 9.

<sup>25</sup> Brewster to John Muyskens, March 15, 1967, box 1, folder 8, RU821A.

<sup>26</sup> Bates, *YDN*, October 16, 1968.

Ten days later, SDS head Mark Zanger paraphrased Chauncey as saying “Yale has a mission to turn out one thousand leaders each year, and women just aren’t leaders in this society,” and by the next day students were attributing the statement to Brewster himself, and printing it on fliers distributed to the entire campus. “We are familiar with President Brewster’s argument against complete co-education,” wrote the student Coeducation Action Group. “Yale, he insists, has as its mission the production of 1,000 leaders a year . . . and, of course, these leaders must be men. This seems to us to be a rather narrow view of both education and leaders.”<sup>27</sup>

The mistake was understandable. Chauncey spoke for Brewster, and while the exact words do not seem to have issued from Brewster’s mouth, every woman at Yale, including Brewster’s wife, assumed they had.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Brewster repeatedly voiced his opposition to reducing the number of men undergraduates at Yale, and his 1968 proposal on educating women undergraduates identified three careers for which he thought women were particularly suited: hospital aides, museum administrators, and urban planners—fields well outside of the kind of leaders Yale liked to tally.<sup>29</sup> As undergraduate Barbara Deinhardt told the *New York Times* in 1973 when asked about Brewster’s one thousand

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<sup>27</sup> Mark Zanger, “Why are We In Vietnam?” *YDN*, October 25, 1968; Coed Steering Committee, “Rally: 1:30,” flier, November 8, 1968, box 4, folder: Women and co-education, RU86, May Day Rally and Yale Collection, Accession 1971-A-004, (hereafter cited as RU86A).

<sup>28</sup> In the spring of 1970, Brewster told a group of women undergraduates who asked about the thousand male leaders, “I don’t remember having said it, but my wife says I did so maybe I did.” *Coeducation*, 1970.

<sup>29</sup> Brewster, “Higher Education for Women at Yale,” September 23, 1968, RU578A; Brewster to Residential College Masters, November 18, 1968; Wasserman to May, October 20, 1970, box 4, folder 80, RU52A; Brewster, “Memorandum in Response to Report of Mrs. Wasserman’s Committee,” December 11, 1970, box 58, folder 388, RU19-II.

male leaders, "It doesn't matter at this point whether he said it or not. It perfectly expresses his attitude."<sup>30</sup>

The "thousand male leaders" line shaped women undergraduates' understanding of their place at Yale from the start. Emma Reiss, who graduated in 1972, recalled that the phrase "was widely known and widely repeated and its meaning to the women of our class was clear: 'What are we, chopped liver?'" Some women students extended the tagline to make clear the status it implied for them: "one thousand male leaders and two hundred concubines."<sup>31</sup> During the spring of 1970, a small group of women undergraduates addressed Brewster directly on the topic in a meeting staged in his office for a coeducation documentary.<sup>32</sup> "Why can't women be leaders?" asked the eighteen-year-old girl seated across from him. Yale's president crossed his arms protectively across his chest and answered the question by explaining the importance of alumni loyalty to Yale despite the fact that Yale alumni had raised no concerted opposition whatsoever to coeducation at that point.<sup>33</sup> Brewster did not, however, give the young women the answer they sought: women can be leaders too.

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<sup>30</sup> Michael Knight, "Yale's First Full Class of Women, About to Graduate, Looks Back With . . .," *NYT*, June 3, 1973.

<sup>31</sup> Emma Reiss (pseudonym), interview by author, telephone, October 25, 2017; Jane Anderson (pseudonym) interview by author, Portland, OR, September 18, 2017. See also Polan interview, 1990; Vera F. Wells, "The Life and Work of Sylvia Ardyn Boone," Women of Yale Lectures, February 28, 2017, Yale University, New Haven, accessed March 5, 2017 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3pj-gPVZKA>.

<sup>32</sup> Wasserman to Brewster, October 10, 1972, RU11-II; *Coeducation*, 1970.

<sup>33</sup> The first organized opposition from Yale's alumni did not come until the summer of 1972. Lux et Veritas, "Coeducation at Yale," ca. June 1972, box 4, folder 1, RU164.

If Brewster had wanted evidence of women's potential as leaders, even using the narrow definition by which Yale defined leadership, all he had to do was look out his office window. Two blocks up at the graduate school, future Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen was getting her PhD in economics, while future UC Berkeley Chancellor Carol Christ was getting hers in English. Down the street, future US Senator and Secretary of State Hilary Rodham was just finishing her first year at Yale Law School, where future Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court Ellen Peters was on the faculty and future Children's Defense Fund founder and Presidential Medal of Honor recipient Marian Wright Edelman had graduated just six years earlier. The blindness to women's potential as national leaders was not Brewster's alone. Judging by Americans' choices at the polls, he was right in step with his era. In 1969, fifty of the fifty state governors were men, as were 99 of the 100 US Senators, and 425 of the 435 members of the US House of Representatives. A Gallup poll found that 45 percent of Americans would not vote for a woman president, even if she were nominated by their own political party and was qualified for the job.<sup>34</sup>

Yale's brand was producing national leaders, and if examples of women leaders—despite women's exclusion to date from nearly every avenue to power—could not be found in 1969, then Yale was going to waste as few admissions slots on women as

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<sup>34</sup> Center for Women in American Politics, *History of Women Governors*, accessed December 6, 2017 from <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/history-women-governors>; Mildred Amer, *Women in the United States Congress: 1917-2008* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2008), Table 1, 84, accessed December 6, 2017 from <https://www.senate.gov/reference/resources/pdf/RL30261.pdf>; Ferree, 392.



possible. The resulting gender discrimination was simply a given of Yale's admissions policies during the first four years of undergraduate coeducation, and during that period the thousand male leaders quota forced Yale's admissions office to accept scores of male candidates less qualified than the women it rejected. For the Class of 1973, for example, the chances of being accepted were twelve to one for women, more than twice the odds for men.<sup>35</sup>

The seven-to-one male/female ratio that resulted from Yale's policy shaped every aspect of the women students' existence. "Because the number of women in the entering classes was small," concluded an extensive study of the first two years of coeducation at Yale, "these women were not able to influence either the academic or the social activities of the institution."<sup>36</sup> Minutes from a February 1972 meeting between Elga Wasserman and a group of women undergraduates gives some indication of the pressures of living daily at the small end of Yale's male-female ratio. "The girls gave little response to the question of what the disadvantages of the ratio are once one has gotten over the initial strains," the minutes report, "for they felt that students rarely escape the strains."<sup>37</sup> The experience of Princeton's new women undergraduates, similarly outnumbered, was no better. Patricia Graham, who reported to Princeton's President Bowen on coeducation, told Wasserman in February 1970 that Princeton's women undergraduates suffered from

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<sup>35</sup> Dartmouth College, *An Analysis of the Impact of Coeducation at Princeton and Yale Universities*, (November 1971), V-4, Dartmouth College Rauner Special Collections Library, Hanover, NH.

<sup>36</sup> Dartmouth, 1971, II-3.

<sup>37</sup> Women's Advisory Council minutes, February 2, 1972, box 35, folder 1035, RU821A.

“a sense of isolation and a strained social situation that they attribute to the small proportion of women.”<sup>38</sup>

For black women students the experience of being one among the many was even more acute. They were outnumbered fourteen to one by their white women classmates, a scarcity twice as large as the seven-to-one ratio felt so keenly by the women overall. Some had already gone through being the one black face in the room in high school, but for others the experience was overwhelming. As one black freshman woman explained, “The first week I went to bed after every class. I wouldn’t sleep. I was just hiding. I was out of my mind frightened. It wasn’t so much Yale as coming to a white college.”<sup>39</sup>

### **Slices of Pie**

While Brewster had created the coeducation ground rule of capping the number of women undergraduates, he initially opposed the idea of scattering those women across the twelve residential colleges of Yale. These colleges were more than just dormitories with fancy names. They were enclosed communities within the larger campus, complete with their own coat of arms, academic dean, fellowship of faculty members, and master, the head of the college.<sup>40</sup> Yale had no central student center, no central quad of student dorms. Instead, there were the twelve residential colleges, each turned inward to a central

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<sup>38</sup> Coeducation Committee minutes, February 13, 1970, box 1, folder 7, RU575.

<sup>39</sup> Lever and Schwartz, 76.

<sup>40</sup> Yale has since replaced the term “Master” with “Head of College” given the slavery connotations of the original. To depict Yale as it was, I use the original term.

courtyard, accessible only through the college gate. Students lived in their residential college, ate in their residential college, attended social events and played on sports teams of their residential colleges. Yale assigned students to their college shortly after admitting them, and the system worked to create a smaller, more intimate environment for the white male undergraduates who were the vast majority of students at Yale. For groups that were in the minority—students of color, women—the process of dividing a small number still further did not work so well.<sup>41</sup>

Kingman Brewster understood the problem. In a November 1968 letter to the residential college masters, he made clear that the new women students should not be housed as “a small isolated minority” in each college. The solution was straightforward: some colleges would have women students, but others would have to wait. “Not all colleges can expect women in residence,” he explained. Later that week, Elga Wasserman emphasized the same imperative, telling the *Yale Daily News* that Yale sought “integration of the sexes on equal footing, not with women representing a small minority in a man’s world.”<sup>42</sup> Women students would still be vastly outnumbered in their classes at Yale, but at least they would live and eat in smaller units with a more balanced ratio between men and women.

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<sup>41</sup> Lucy Eddy, “No Ruffles and Lace for Girls at Yale,” *Hartford Courant*, November 30, 1969, box 58, folder 388, RU19-II; Wilkinson interview, 1992, 11; Lever and Schwartz, 13; Yale News Bureau, April 13, 1969, RU821B; Wasserman, *Educational Record* Spring 1970, 145. For black students’ critique of the system, see “Colleges Liberalize Social Transferring,” *YDN*, November 3, 1969.

<sup>42</sup> Kingman Brewster to the Masters of the Residential Colleges, November 18, 1968, box 10, folder 152, RU126; Gordon and Rosenberg, *YDN*, November 21, 1968.

Some of Yale's male undergraduates understood the importance of this guideline. When asked how they thought the women should be housed, students in Trumbull College, where Brewster originally proposed housing all the freshmen women, said they favored having women live in the residential colleges "in large blocs, rather than being distributed all over, even if this meant Trumbull might not get any." But others, including Derek Shearer's replacement as the head of the Student Advisory Board, Ray Nunn, argued that the women students should be divided equally among all twelve colleges. "There was a very strong feeling on the Yale campus that the presence of women in a residential college was an entitlement of the men," observed Wasserman, who fought against dividing the women among all twelve colleges long after anyone had stopped listening to her.<sup>43</sup>

Brewster never spoke publicly about what ensued, although he had been so stung by the vehemence of student opposition to his plan to house all the freshmen women in Trumbull College that it is possible he simply wished to avoid another clash with Yale's male students over where to house the women. Many of the college masters, all men, saw the impulse to house the women students together as the residue of an antiquated and patronizing chivalry, which viewed women as needing the protection of men.<sup>44</sup> By February 1969, Brewster's resolve to house the women in reasonable-sized groups was

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<sup>43</sup> Ray Warman, "Coeds' Housing Under Review," *YDN*, November 18, 1968; Malkiel, 138; Elga Wasserman to members of the Planning Committee on Coeducation, memorandum, January 16, 1969, box 10, folder 152, RU126; Wasserman interview, 1992, 8; Coeducation Committee minutes, January 20, 1969.

<sup>44</sup> Trinkhaus interview, 1992, 33-35.

gone. Every college, it was decided, would have its own small group of girls. As a student columnist in the *Yale Daily News* explained, Yale had to divide the women up “to prevent a spring riot by giving every undergrad a slice of—or at least a look at—the pie.”<sup>45</sup> And if the cost was creating an environment that was harder for the women, well, so be it.

## **Under the Spotlight**

### **The National Press**

On April 13, 1969, the week before Yale’s acceptance letters went out, the *New York Times* Sunday magazine ran an eleven-page article about the young women who had applied to Yale, every one of whom, the *Times* reported, came with effusive recommendations, straight A’s and flawless board scores, or close to it. One had traveled through Bosnia, taught in the newly formed Head Start program, and choreographed the dance scenes in her high school’s production of *The King and I*. Another had studied Anglo-Saxon poetry and religious art, and hoped to major in medieval studies; she had tutored high school students on a Navajo reservation over the summer. Of the entire eleven-page article, however, what Yale’s women undergraduates remember most is what the *New York Times* called them. They were “the female versions of Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Uebermensch*.” They were “superwomen.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Tim Bates, “Yale or Male?” *YDN*, February 13, 1969.

<sup>46</sup> Lear, *NYT*, April 13, 1969, 70-72.

The word stuck like a mark on the forehead of each woman undergraduate who arrived at Yale in the fall of 1969. “Oh,” they’d hear, “you’re one of those superwomen.” And for the students who arrived with any insecurities, any thoughts that maybe they had been admitted by mistake, there was that superwoman word, feeding their doubts. “It should make you feel super-powerful to be a superwoman but really, you spend a lot of time worrying that people will see you changing in the phone booth and realize you’re nothing without your cape,” observed freshman Kate Driscoll.<sup>47</sup>

The *Times* superwoman article was only the prelude. For the first few months of school, the press was everywhere, microphones in hand: the *Hartford Courant*, the *New York Times*, *Time* magazine, *Women’s Daily*, *Newsweek*, *Look*, *Mademoiselle*. “What does it feel like to be one of Yale’s first coeds?” they asked. “Tell us what it’s like to be a Yale woman.”<sup>48</sup> The instant celebrity was exciting for some. “We played it down, but secretly we thought it was sort of neat that there was that much attention,” said Susanne Wofford, a member of the class of 1973.<sup>49</sup>

For others, the experience was less welcome. “It was a heavy time—leaving home, going to college,” recalled freshman Betsy Hartmann, who was interviewed by the

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<sup>47</sup> “No Easy Answers,” 105; “Rich Soil, Messy Stuff,” in Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 43.

<sup>48</sup> Eddy, *Hartford Courant*, November 30, 1969; “Girl and Boy at Yale,” *Newsweek*, December 15, 1969; Betty Baer, “Yale and Female: Old Eli Bows with Grace to Rollers and Bubble Baths,” *Look*, 24 Feb 1970, 25-26; Treaster, *NYT*, April 14, 1970; “Woman and Man at Yale,” *Time*, March 20, 1972, 101-102. For *Women’s Daily*, see Elga Wasserman, interview by Julia Pimsleur, 1990, DVD, tape 16, BB Archive. For *Mademoiselle*, see “Mademoiselle Magazine,” *YDN*, October 21, 1969. For *International Herald Tribune*, see Hartmann interview, 2017.

<sup>49</sup> Wofford interview, 1990.

*International Herald Tribune* on one of her first days at Yale. “So all of a sudden to be in the limelight was kind of odd.” Betsy’s roommate Amy Solomon had inadvertently been the first women undergraduate to register at Yale, a feat she’d accomplished by mistakenly walking in the registration building through the wrong door. The press had their woman though, and Amy was photographed again and again. “I didn’t want to stand out from other people,” she said later, but that was not a choice Yale’s first women undergraduates had open to them.<sup>50</sup>

### **Forty Pairs of Eyes**

The press and its preoccupation with Yale’s first women undergraduates was largely gone by spring, but the pressures of being so unusual and so outnumbered at Yale remained. “The worst part was being constantly conspicuous, which is something you don’t think about until it happens to you,” recalled Christine Traut, Class of 1973. Alice Miskimin, a lecturer in the English department, captured eloquently the cost of always being under the spotlight. Yale’s women undergraduates, she wrote in the spring of 1970,

are denied, I think, the most precious right any of us ever achieves—the right to be alone. . . the gift of invisibility, the privilege simply to be able to disappear. To walk in the Grove Street Cemetery, or sit in the library courtyard or even on the hill beyond the chemistry labs, becomes a public act, and open to questions. (Why is she there alone? Is she safe? Is she unhappy? What’s she looking for?) The anonymity one needs becomes impossible, and it is one of the chief things sacrificed in order to be one of the chosen few, the best of the first.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Hartmann interview, 2017; Amy Solomon, interview by Julia Pimsleur, 1990, DVD, tape 19, BB Archive.

The dining hall was the worst. Each woman felt it from the moment she entered for the first time: forty pairs of male eyes watching as she walked up the long center aisle to where the food was served, forty pairs of eyes as she carried her tray to a dining hall table, forty pairs of eyes any time she got up to get a glass of milk or a cup of coffee. The self-consciousness from having all those men watching was so acute that freshman Becky Newman and her roommate Virginia Tyson made a pact. If one of them went up for coffee, they both would go up for coffee. Somehow, that made it not quite so awful.<sup>52</sup>

The experience was confusing: all those men, all that attention. This was exactly what every girl wanted, right? Before arriving at Yale, 64 percent of women undergraduates saw the seven-to-one male-female ratio as somewhat or very positive. But after they had been there a while, the number of women students who liked the lopsided ratio plummeted to 13 percent.<sup>53</sup> “I just always felt watched,” explained freshman Betsy Hartmann. “Your body was what was important to them. And at the same time, it was flattering in a certain way: you’re pretty; you’re the object that the men like to look at.

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<sup>51</sup> Christine Traut, interview by Julia Pimsleur, 1990, DVD, tape 22, BB Archive; Alice Miskimin, “Eight Views (of a Phenomenon in Progress),” *YAM*, April, 1970, 41. For additional observations on the experience of being conspicuous at Yale, see Dartmouth, 1971, II-3; Davis, *YAM*, October 1979, 23; Lisa Getman, “From Conestoga to Career,” in Furniss and Graham, 63; Ellen Keniston, “Eight Views,” *YAM*, April 1970, 39; Tedford interview, 2016; “The Vanguard,” *YAM*, October 1979.

<sup>52</sup> Rebecca Newman interview by author, telephone, November 16, 2017. Women students’ observations about being gawked at in Yale dining halls span multiple residential colleges: Berkeley, Davenport, Saybrook, Silliman, Timothy Dwight. See Elizabeth Spahn, interview by author, Boston, September 11, 2017; Tedford interview, 2016; Hartmann interview, 2017; Bernick interview, 2016.

<sup>53</sup> Christa Hansen, “The Yale Experience,” Office of Institutional Research (OIR) Report 73R008, May 12, 1973, box 2, folder 27, RU173, Office of Institutional Research, Records and Reports, Accession 1980-A-014, YUL (hereafter cited as RU173). Findings are based on a questionnaire sent December 1971 to 1,143 Yale students; the response rate was 41 percent.



On some level, you were taught that that was a good thing growing up. On the other level, it got more and more and more uncomfortable.” Oberlin transfer Deb Tedford sensed the unpleasant edge of all that male attention as well. “There was an uncomfortable sense of being observed, judged, and if one was not strikingly beautiful, perhaps found wanting.”<sup>54</sup>

Not all of the guys treated their new women classmates this way. Many women found male friends and boyfriends at Yale who saw them as peers and equals. But there were enough men who did not, and enough who did not intervene, to shape what it felt like to be a woman undergraduate in 1969. For women not deemed pretty by Yale’s men, the experience was not just uncomfortable; it was painful.

The morning after she moved in to her room at Yale, sophomore Betty Spahn went with two of her roommates to have breakfast in the college dining hall. “The room was full. It was packed, with all the men,” recalls Betty. And as the three girls walked in, one of the men began calling out numbers. “Two.” “Six.” Betty, five foot two with long, dark hair, got a high number. One of her roommates, tall and gangly, did not. She was “a lovely, wonderful, gentle soul,” explained Betty, “but she was very tall, and they were mocking her.” Betty’s roommate turned around and went back to the room. “She left. She didn’t have breakfast that morning. She left.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Hartmann interview, 2017; Deb Tedford, email to the author, March 14, 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Spahn interview, 2017.

The sorting of Yale's women students into the desirable and undesirable was prelude to the next step, asking them on a date. As the *Yale Daily News* had announced in the lead sentence of the lead story on the first day of coeducation: "The Yale University campus awoke from its annual summer siesta this week to discover that its 268 years of celibacy had come to an end." The new women students were to be the solution to that problem. "I remember dining hall scenes that were absolutely impossible," observed one freshman woman. "Two sentences after the guy in front of you asked you what your name was, there was the inevitable 'What are you doing tomorrow night?' and 'Would you like to get together?'"<sup>56</sup>

The dining hall was not the only way that Yale men identified potential girlfriends. Up in their dorm rooms lounging on second-hand sofas, or sitting outside in the warm September weather, Yale men studied their *Old Campus*, the Yale freshman face book. The book was small enough to carry around with you, a paperback just about a half-inch thick. Inside were page after page of photos of each of the first-year students, along with high school, nickname, Yale dorm and room number. "I think every man at Yale memorized the info in that book," said freshman Jay Meizlish, who would soon start dating one of the new coeds himself. The enterprising student editors of the *Old Campus* knew a market opportunity when they saw it, and along with the Class of 1973 edition,

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<sup>56</sup> Paul Taylor, "Yale Officially Begins Era of Coeducation," *YDN*, September 15, 1969; "Vigils for Peace," in Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 63.

they published *Old Campus* supplements for the Classes of '71 and '72, with photos and information on each of the women transfer students.<sup>57</sup>

The young men at Yale made good use of their *Old Campus* booklets, selecting the photo of a woman they deemed attractive, and then phoning her up. "Hi there, I saw your picture and I thought you'd like to have dinner with me." Some studied the books intently enough that they could identify by name Yale women whom they had never met. Junior Jessie Sayre was stopped by a male student one day on her way back from the gym. "Pardon me, is your name Sayre?" He had recognized her from her photo.<sup>58</sup>

Even when a girl began going out with one of the Yale men, and thus was "taken" and off limits for those perusing the pages of the *Old Campus*, the spotlight remained. "Everybody knew your business at Yale, as a woman. Everybody knew who you were dating," explained Denise Maillet, a Wellesley transfer in Saybrook College. "You moved in there, and you were one of just a handful of women, and all the men knew what you did every minute." If there were too many boyfriends, that was no secret as well. "There were some women that ended up becoming very promiscuous because they were sort of trapped in that, and treated very disparagingly," said Maillet, who led discussion groups in Yale's Human Sexuality course. "I heard a lot of the talk about them, and it

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<sup>57</sup> *The Old Campus: Class of 1973* (New Haven: Yale Banner Publications, September 1969), YUL; Courtney Pannell, "Forty Years of Women at Yale," *YDN*, September 21, 2009; *Transfers 1971: A Supplement to the Old Campus Volume XXIV* (New Haven: Yale Banner Publications, September 1969), YUL; *Transfers 1972: A Supplement to the Old Campus Volume XXV* (New Haven: Yale Banner Publications, September 1969), YUL.

<sup>58</sup> "No Easy Answers," 104; Kate Driscoll Coon interview by author, telephone, December 5, 2017; "Coeds on Coeducation," *YAM*, April 1970, 37.

was such trash talk, you know.”<sup>59</sup> The double standard about sexually active women and sexually active men had not disappeared with the sexual revolution, at least not in 1969.

## **Academics**

The attention continued in the classroom, where women students were “treated like an oddity, rather than an integral part of the discussion group,” reported Dartmouth’s 1971 study of coeducation at Yale. Black women were the greatest oddities of all. “They would sometimes look at me like I’m ‘the black opinion’; I’m ‘the female opinion,’” said Vera Wells, who transferred into Yale as a junior. “It’s not that they meant to be cruel. It’s like I was a curiosity factor. So I think that’s part of the defense mechanism that some of us built up, saying, ‘I’m not your experiment. And I can’t speak for all black people or all women.’”<sup>60</sup>

Because they were so new and so rare at Yale, many women students felt enormous pressure to succeed academically. “In classes where there was a lot of academic pressure and so few women, one felt the duty to represent and uphold the worth of all womankind at age eighteen, which could be overwhelming,” recalled Deborah Tedford, a sophomore in 1969. Freshman Virginia Dominguez felt the glare of the spotlight as well. “When we faltered here and there as individuals, we felt twice the

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<sup>59</sup> Maillet Main interview, 2017. See also Mintz interview, 2017; Julia Preston, “What is a Coeducation?” *New Journal*, December 13, 1970, 9; Wofford interview, 1990.

<sup>60</sup> Dartmouth, 1971, II-3; Wells interview, 2017. For other comments on being asked for “the women’s opinion,” see: Chauncey interview, 2014; Wasserman interview, 1990; Tedford interview, 2016; Wofford interview, 1990; “Coeds on Coeducation,” *YAM*, April 1970, 35.

burden men did. After all, our successes and our failures were going to be read as doubly meaningful—a comment about our individual abilities and motivations, and a comment about the abilities and motivations of women as a whole.”<sup>61</sup>

Doing well academically at Yale was not without its costs, however. Male students criticized the women for studying too fervently,<sup>62</sup> and, regardless of gender, students who got good grades at Yale generally kept the news to themselves. Yale was a culture that valued “character” over intellect, where the hierarchy had long identified leaders based on achievement outside the classroom rather than within it. As President George W. Bush, Yale Class of 1968, told graduates at Yale’s 2001 commencement, “To those of you who received honors, awards and distinctions, I say well done. And to the C students, I say, you, too, can be president of the United States.”<sup>63</sup>

Anti-intellectualism at Yale dated back well before George Bush served as president of Yale’s Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity.<sup>64</sup> In the early 1900s, Yale students who studied too hard faced derision, while in the 1940s a *Yale Alumni Magazine* article defined Yale’s mission as educating “fine citizens” who would be “rather unscholarly” but demonstrate “character, personality, leadership in school affairs, and the like.” The

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<sup>61</sup> Tedford email, 2017; “Scholar of the House,” in Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 32. For the pressure to demonstrate that women could succeed at Yale, see also Maillet Main interview, 2017; Getman, 1974, 65; Lynn Brachman, “Women in Administration at Yale: Individual Case Studies,” class paper for seminar taught by Elga Wasserman, April 24, 1972, box 1, folder 21, RU821B, 21.

<sup>62</sup> Getman, 1974, 63; Preston, *New Journal*, 1970, 8; “The Vanguard,” *YAM*, October 1979, 27.

<sup>63</sup> Dana Milbank, “Bush Embraces Yale In Graduation Speech,” *Washington Post*, May 22, 2001.

<sup>64</sup> Jonathan Lear, “No Intervention for Fraternities,” *YDN*, November 7, 1967.

“wrong sort of seriousness in study,” observed Mary McCarthy in a 1942 short story, was considered “barbaric” at Yale. And so it continued through the decades. In 1967, longstanding Yale Corporation member Wilmarth Lewis asserted that “learning was not fashionable at Yale,” and in the late 1960s Yale Economics Professor Ed Lindblom was appalled to find while serving on the Yale Admissions Committee that “scholarly achievement was viewed as a source of personality disorder or sickness or queerness.”<sup>65</sup>

So where did that leave the women undergraduates, who as a group outperformed their male classmates academically every semester of the first four years of coeducation at Yale?<sup>66</sup> They were correct in feeling under the spotlight in their classes. Yale still employed professors in 1969 who viewed women’s intellect as inferior to men’s,<sup>67</sup> and had women failed to hold their own, the evidence that their gender wasn’t quite up to snuff at a place like Yale would indeed have been damning. For many of them, that intellectual achievement was not just a responsibility, but a source of unalloyed joy. “We were all very much involved in our study. Just cared about it, worked on it,” Kathy Jelly, a junior in 1969, recalled of herself and her roommates. Deb Tedford may have felt it her duty to “uphold the worth of all womankind,” but she also discovered her passion for

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<sup>65</sup> Karabel, 20, 366; Mary McCarthy, “Portrait of the Intellectual as a Yale Man,” *The Company She Keeps* (1942; repr., New York: Harcourt, 1967), 169; Wilmarth Lewis, *One Man's Education* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 102; Charles Edward Lindblom, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, June 3, 1991, box 7, folder 14, RU217.

<sup>66</sup> Elga Wasserman, “Coeducation 1971-72,” July 1972, Appendix III, Table VI, box 1, folder 5, RU821B; Arnstein, coeducation report, 1973, Appendix VI, Table 5.

<sup>67</sup> “Coeds on Coeducation,” *YAM*, April 1970, 36; Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 61; Cynthia Russett, interview by Julia Pimsleur, 1990, DVD, tape 3, BB Archive.

medieval history at Yale, where a seminar with Jeremy Adams introduced her to the excitement of imagining from scant manor records the lives of those who lived in the centuries following the fall of Rome. Patty Mintz, class of 1973, spent her senior year probing the roots and reality of schizophrenia, with support from her academic mentor, psychiatrist Theodore Lidz. Up in Kline Biology Tower, Mintz's classmate Kit McClure spent hours conducting experiments in cell fusion with the support of biology professor Edgar Boell, who gave her access to lab space and the South African toads she needed for her research.<sup>68</sup>

If academics had been the bar that Yale's first women undergraduates needed to surpass, they did so with room to spare. But as Lindblom explained in a 1991 interview, "The official tradition here at Yale is that we are not producing intellectuals, we are producing leaders. . . . Brewster used to say it."<sup>69</sup> The worth of women undergraduates was not measured at Yale by the academics at which they excelled, but rather by the extracurricular activities from which they were largely excluded. The existing culture thus made it impossible for women to be leaders, at least as leadership was defined at Yale, and at the same time devalued the intellectual achievement at which women shone.

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<sup>68</sup> Jelly interview, 2017; Tedford interview, 2016; Mintz interview, 2017; McClure interview, 2017.

<sup>69</sup> Lindblom interview, 1991, 16.

## Excluded

### Sports

Lawrie Mifflin had played field hockey every year since she was eleven years old. She grew up in a town where that was just what girls did each fall; her mother had played as well. When Mifflin's family loaded up the station wagon in September 1969 to drive her to Yale for her first year of college, the hockey stick came too. At registration, Mifflin received an opening week schedule that held all kinds of notices for men's sports teams. Boys interested in track and cross-country should meet in Room 209, Linsly-Chittenden, at 1:00pm Monday. Football players should come at 1:30, soccer players at 3:00. Those interested in crew should go to Ray Tompkins House at 2:30. There were no notices for the field hockey team, however, so Lawrie figured she would just go over to the athletic office to find out when practices began.<sup>70</sup>

"Where do I sign up for field hockey?" she asked the man behind the desk. The man looked confused. There were no field hockey sign-ups, he told her. There was no field hockey team. There was also no women's soccer team, no women's cross country, no women's swim team, no basketball, no crew, no squash, no tennis. Yale did not provide any women's sports teams in the first year of coeducation. Title IX would not be

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<sup>70</sup> Mifflin interview, 2017; Lawrie Mifflin, interview by Julia Pimsleur, 1990, DVD, tape 23, BB Archive; "The Two B's," in Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 76; "Calendar for the Opening Days of the College: Class of 1973," September 15, 1969, box 31, folder 998, RU821A.



passed for another three years, and did not require colleges to provide equitable sports programs for women students until 1978.<sup>71</sup>

Instead of the wide array of competitive sports available to men, women undergraduates at Yale could take classes in modern dance, ballet, “women’s exercise,” and swimming. They could join a synchronized swimming club run by a part-time instructor from Southern Connecticut College. They could exercise the polo ponies, although they could not join the team. And they could be cheerleaders, sort of. Yale’s cheerleading squad announced that it would include four girls on the squad that year, a limit that ensured that the nine men on the squad remained a majority. And no girl-style cheerleading. “We don’t want rah-rah cheerleaders here at Yale,” Captain Peter Kenyon told the *Yale Daily News*. Any girl who wanted to cheerlead for Yale would need to learn gymnastics and “muscle beach tricks.”<sup>72</sup>

The absence of women’s sports teams in the initial years of coeducation deprived women students of the benefits that accrue to anyone who plays competitive sports: physical fitness, a healthy outlet for stress, the chance to be part of a team. “Being a member of a team gives you confidence and power,” said Constance Applebee, who coached the Bryn Mawr College field hockey team ten miles away from Lawrie Mifflin’s

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<sup>71</sup> US Department of Health, Education and Welfare, *Athletics: In Search of Equal Opportunity*, by Margaret Dunkle, September 1976, ERIC ED135789.

<sup>72</sup> Joni Barnett, interview by Julia Pimsleur, 1990, DVD, tape 13, BB Archive; Marie Rudden, interview by author, telephone, November 9, 2017; James Brandt to Elga Wasserman, April 1, 1969, box 24, folder 927, RU821A; Bruce Volpe to Elga Wasserman, February 18, 1969, box 24, folder 927, RU821A; Jeffrey, Gordon, "Coed Cheerleading Hits Snag: Girls Must Learn New Tricks," *YDN*, September 23, 1969; Christopher Luce, "Cheerleaders Elect Four Yale Women," *YDN*, September 26, 1969.

high school.<sup>73</sup> At Yale, the lack of women's sports teams also removed a rare opportunity to be among other women, a break from the majority men environment in which women lived their days. Within Yale's leader-focused culture, the loss to women undergraduates that resulted from their exclusion from competitive sports was profounder still.

Athletes at Yale were seen as leaders; leaders were athletes. A 1970 incident illustrates the prominence of Yale athletes, even among Yale's most senior faculty. When Yale junior Kurt Schmoke was ushered into a faculty meeting that April, southern historian C. Vann Woodward leaned over to World War II historian John Morton Blum and asked, "Who is he?" The appearance of a student at a faculty meeting was unprecedented. Yale College Dean Georges May had agreed to let Schmoke speak only because of the crisis sparked by the massive student strike that then engulfed Yale. Schmoke was a well-known student leader at Yale. He had co-founded an effort to create a daycare center for Yale's blue-collar workers, and played a key role just the day before in defusing a tense moment at a speech given by Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy. But most importantly, Kurt Schmoke played football. "He's a defensive back," Blum explained, and Woodward sat back in his chair, satisfied with the answer.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Liz Farquhar and Kaitlin Miller, "Constance Applebee: 'The Apple' Stands Alone," August 9, 2013, accessed March 22, 2018 from <http://www.ncaa.com/news/fieldhockey/article/2013-04-25/constance-applebee>.

<sup>74</sup> Hester Eisenstein, interview by Joel Krieger, March 20, 1971, box 1, folder 5, RU86, Accession 1983-A-108 (hereafter cited as RU86B), 7; Robert Brustein, "When the Panther Came to Yale," *NYT*, June 21, 1970; Kabaservice, 407; Kurt Schmoke, interview by Brook Manville, March 31, 1971, box 1, folder 12, RU86, 6; *The 1971 Yale Banner* (New Haven, CT: Yale Banner Publications, 1971), 38; Joseph Treaster, "Attendance at Yale is Cut '50% to 75%' by Pickets Supporting Black Panthers," *NYT*, April 23, 1970; Mike Goodman, "Nostalgia," editorial, *YDN*, September 15, 1971.

Athletes at Yale had an honored visibility that was the opposite of the unwanted conspicuousness that dogged the women students. Team captains had their photos on the walls of Mory's, where Yale's president, trustees, faculty, and alumni dined. Top players saw their names in 24-point type on the back page of the *Yale Daily News*. Fall weekends revolved around the football game, where Kingman Brewster and his wife Mary Louise were always in the stands.<sup>75</sup> "There is something very special about representing Yale on a sports team," observed Joni Barnett, who became the Director of Women's Athletics in 1971. "The men had a chance to have that identity," but the women did not.<sup>76</sup>

### **Other Extracurriculars**

Women fared only slightly better in their representation in the other extracurricular activities that were so central to the Yale experience. In the months before Yale's first women undergraduates arrived, Sam Chauncey and Elga Wasserman sent letters to the head of every student organization at Yale in order to find out which of them would be open to women. The letters were markedly deferential. "I wonder if you have given any thought to the question of whether women will be allowed in the Band?" Chauncey wrote Director Keith Wilson. Wasserman's letters were no more insistent. "Could you let me have a brief statement regarding the policy of your organization concerning the participation of women undergraduates?" The Coeducation Planning

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<sup>75</sup> Clark interview, May 1993, 17.

<sup>76</sup> Barnett interview, 1990.

Committee that Wasserman chaired was similarly unconcerned, and in February “agreed that pressure should not be put on these activities if they were not eager to admit women to their number next year.”<sup>77</sup>

Student opinion on the matter was divided. On February 13, 1969, sophomore Tim Bates used his *Yale Daily News* column to argue that all student organizations should be open to women, but two weeks later three members of the Class of 1970 *News* editorial board responded with indignation. “Coeducation at Yale is not jeopardized or compromised by the free decision of any group to retain all-male membership. It is inappropriate and an invasion of privacy for outsiders to tell these groups that they ‘ought’ to coeducate.” The Class of 1971 *News* board, however, was now at the helm of the paper, and printed their own editorial right above the views of their predecessors: “When the women arrive, they cannot be second-class citizens in a coeducated Yale community.”<sup>78</sup> Actions, however, did not speak quite so loudly as words.

Many student organizations at Yale agreed to include women: musical groups including the Concert Band, the Symphony, the Glee Club; outdoor groups such as the Fishing and Hunting Club, the Outing Club, the Rifle Club, the Skeet Club, the Ski Club; more intellectual endeavors such as the *Yale Literary Magazine*, the Mathematics Club, and the *Yale Scientific*; and other organizations including the Model United Nations, Yale

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<sup>77</sup> Henry Chauncey to Keith Wilson, January 15, 1969, box 24, folder 927, RU821A; Elga Wasserman to heads of student organizations, February 13, 1969, box 24, folder 927, RU821A; Coeducation Committee minutes, February 14, 1969.

<sup>78</sup> Bates, *YDN*, February 13, 1969; Ray Warman, Kim Hart, and Steve Schlessinger, "Free Not to Coeducate," *YDN*, February 28, 1969; "Completely Coed," editorial, *YDN*, February 28, 1969.

Volunteer Services, the university tour guides, and WYBC. A few organizations pointed out that they already had a few graduate women among their ranks: the Yacht Club, the Dramat, the Political Union, the Guild of Carilloneurs, the Battell Chapel Deacons. But as sociologist Francesca Polletta observes, “It is easier to transform institutional practices around cultural objects with lower prestige.”<sup>79</sup>

Great swaths of extracurricular life still planned to exclude women: all athletic teams, the highly visible Marching Band, every one of Yale’s seven a capella singing groups, and Yale’s most elite secret societies, the apex of extracurricular achievement: Skull and Bones, Scroll and Keys, and Wolf’s Head.<sup>80</sup> The majority of the most prestigious student organizations remained all male, and those that did accept women members relegated them, with rare exception, to a lower status than the men.

The *Yale Daily News* offers one example. The *News* was one of the most powerful organizations on campus. Past chairmen included Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, War on Poverty Director Sargent Shriver, Pennsylvania Governor William Scranton, *Time* magazine founder Henry Luce, and Yale’s current president, Kingman Brewster, who met regularly with the paper’s chairman to get a read on student opinion.<sup>81</sup> The *News*

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<sup>79</sup> Henry Chauncey to heads of student organizations, January to April 1969, box 24, folder 927, RU821A; Elga Wasserman to heads of student organizations, February to July 1969, box 24, folder 927, RU821A; Polletta, 173.

<sup>80</sup> Sam Chauncey to Elga Wasserman and file, [ca. January 20, 1969], box 24, folder 927, RU 821A; *The 1970 Yale Banner* (New Haven, CT: Yale Banner Publications, 1970), 102-103; John Wilkinson to Elga Wasserman, October 14, 1970, box 24, folder 927, RU821A.

had been quick to chastise other student organizations for relegating Yale women to “second-class status,” yet a quick look at its own editorial boards, elected each year by student reporters and editors, demonstrates a similar hierarchy. The Class of 1971 *Yale Daily News* editorial board had one woman, and twenty-five men. The Class of 1972 *News* board had zero women; the Class of 1973 elected three women to its twenty-five-member board, but only one of them served a full term. When women began forming their own sports teams in the second and third year of coeducation, the *News*’ male sports editors refused to send reporters to cover them.<sup>82</sup>

Such exclusion was a longstanding pattern in American colleges and universities. When the University of South Carolina admitted its first women students in 1893, its Student Government Association and literary societies amended their constitutions to ban women members. USC was not alone. In the period between 1860 and 1910, coeducational colleges and universities increased from 25 percent of all US colleges and universities to 60 percent, and just as at USC, women students were excluded from leadership and even membership in student government, campus publications, honor societies, and sports teams. By 1970, 41 percent of the students at US four-year colleges and universities were women, but women undergraduates made up just 5 percent of student body presidents, 6 percent of class presidents, 8 percent of debate squad captains,

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<sup>81</sup> Alan Mandel to Elga Wasserman, February 14, 1969, box 24, folder 927, RU821A; Greenfield, 208; “LaFollette Challenges College Men to Plunge into Political Struggle,” *YDN*, March 5, 1940; Levitas, *NYT*, February 12, 1967.

<sup>82</sup> Masthead, *YDN*, January 26, 1970; Masthead, *YDN*, November 24, 1970; Masthead, *YDN*, December 1, 1971; Masthead, *YDN*, September 28, 1972; “The Two B’s,” in Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 77.

and 25 percent of campus newspaper editors. While women did surpass men as college yearbook editors, in 1970 the most visible leaders in extracurricular activities at coeducational colleges and universities throughout the US were men.<sup>83</sup>

So too at Yale. Even by the fourth year of undergraduate coeducation, leadership of Yale's most influential student organizations remained almost exclusively male. Of the twenty-two officers of the Political Union, the largest student organization at Yale, none were women. The Yale Band had no women among its top four officers; the Yale College Council had one woman among its top six. The top eight editors of the Class of 1974 *Yale Daily News* board were all men, although six editors lower down the masthead were women: four arts editors, one "administrative" editor, and one magazine editor, a position never listed before on the *News* masthead.<sup>84</sup> The *News*' preference for men leaders was not lost on Yale's women students. Amy Solomon, Class of 1973, regretted not having written for the *News*, but explained that "there really was a sense that women were not going to be considered for leadership positions. I was put off by that, and I guess the message was strong enough that it made me not want to put in the effort."<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> McCandless, 6; Goldin and Katz, 11, 42; Sarah V. Barnes, "Student Government," in *Historical Dictionary of Women's Education in the United States*, ed. Linda Eisenmann (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998), 402; Horowitz, 1987; Ruth M. Oltman, *Campus 1970: Where Do Women Stand?* (Washington, DC: American Association of University Women, January 1970), 6-10. Oltman's findings were based on survey responses from 376 coeducational US four-year colleges and universities.

<sup>84</sup> Ruth Marcus, "Studies Show Lack of Women as Student Leaders, Scientists," *YDN*, February 3, 1976; Masthead, *YDN*, November 29, 1972.

<sup>85</sup> Solomon interview, 1990. For additional commentary of women students' sense of exclusion from Yale students organizations, see Preston, *New Journal*, December 1970, 8; "A Woman's Place," in Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 46-51.

One might well ask whether Yale's extracurricular hierarchy still mattered in the late 1960s and early '70s, a period when longstanding values were challenged at colleges and universities across the nation. But deep-seated cultures are not uprooted overnight. Even SDS leader Mark Zanger, the "Megaphone Mark" of his classmate Garry Trudeau's *Doonesbury* comic strip, wrote a regular column for the *Yale Daily News* through the fall of his senior year. BSAY leader Glenn deChabert played varsity basketball for Yale; Kurt Schmoke played football; and several of Yale's most visible black student leaders combined their civil rights activism with membership in one of the most elite senior societies, Wolf's Head."<sup>86</sup>

You could both challenge and participate at Yale, unless you were a woman. Yale's Coeducation Planning Committee, however, either did not see the inequity they would create by their laissez faire attitude towards extracurriculars at Yale, or saw but chose not to risk a political firestorm by attempting to change the status quo. The committee's final report, in May 1969, concluded that "there is no reason why some all male (and probably all female) organizations should not continue to exist, provided all students are welcome to participate in most campus activities,"<sup>87</sup> an analysis that ignored the hierarchy both among and within Yale's extracurricular organizations.

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<sup>86</sup> Barney Rubin, "A Change of Strips," letter to the editor, *NYT*, August 16, 1981; Mark Zanger, "Up Against the Wall," column, *YDN*, February 6, 1969, February 20, 1969, April 22, 1969, October 9, 1969; *Yale Banner*, Class of 1970, Glenn DeChabert, Daniels interview, 2017.

<sup>87</sup> Wasserman, coeducation report, 1969, 7, underline in original.



## Equitable Subcultures

The Yale Dramat offers an interesting counter-example of an organization that had high visibility at Yale, but which nonetheless created an equitable culture at odds with the campus around it. In the first year of coeducation, the Dramat elected two women to its six-member board; in the fourth year, the top position at the Dramat went to a woman. As Connie Royster, one of the first two women board members explained, “You could be a director, nobody told you that you couldn’t. In theater, nobody told you that you couldn’t.”<sup>88</sup>

Unlike the *News*, the Dramat had a history of challenging the boundaries of both gender and sexuality at Yale. Women from the broader Yale community had been acting in Dramat productions since 1915, when Yale instituted a rule barring male actors from playing women’s roles for two years in a row as part of a suppression of outward signs of homosexuality. By 1969, the Dramat could rightfully call itself “a coed enclave in an all-male university.” The Dramat was equally accepting of gay men, again in contrast to most of 1969 Yale. “We all knew who was and who wasn’t [gay], but it was one big family,” explained Royster. “In the arts community, we were very, very tight. Very tight.”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Mark Wheeler to Elga Wasserman, December 3, 1969, box 24, folder 927, RU821A; Marcus, *YDN*, February 3, 1972; Constance Royster interview by author, New Haven, December 2, 2016.

<sup>89</sup> George Chauncey, “Gay at Yale,” *YAM*, July/August 2009, accessed January 22, 2018 from <https://yalealumnimagazine.com/articles/2482-gay-at-yale>; “Extracurricular Activities Available to Women Undergraduates, 1969-1970,” ca. August 1969, box 10, folder 154, RU126; “Sexuality Discussion Tonight,” *YDN*, October 30, 1969; Lever and Schwartz, 167; Royster interview, 2016.

Community service also offered a venue in which women students felt themselves welcome. “The community-oriented organizations like the Grant Foundation . . . were very welcoming parts of the institution for women,” observed freshman Linda Darling.<sup>90</sup> Women students took part in a wide range of service activities: helping out at New Haven Planned Parenthood, teaching New Haven middle school youth through the Ulysses S. Grant Foundation, volunteering with a nonprofit low-income housing developer, leading dance classes for less advantaged community youth, tutoring elementary school children, volunteering at the Number Nine Crisis Center, providing companionship for children being treated at Yale New Haven Hospital.<sup>91</sup> The work was meaningful, significant, and arguably far more important than swimming the backstroke for Yale or working the Wednesday night copyediting shift at the *News*. It brought women students out of the cocoon of Yale and into the broader world. And it was also, within the student hierarchy at Yale, largely invisible.

One area where women might have been expected to participate equally at Yale was in the numerous political activist groups of this period. Organizations such as SDS and the BSAY provided a persistent voice for change at Yale, while numerous single-issue ad hoc committees sprung up around individual anti-war, anti-racism, or pro-labor marches, hunger strikes, and rallies. These new organizations, free of decades of men-

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<sup>90</sup> Linda Darling, interview by Julia Pimsleur, 1990, DVD, tape 18, BB Archive.

<sup>91</sup> “A Woman’s Place,” 47; Wofford interview, 1990; Solomon interview, 1990; Royster interview, 2016; Maillet Main interview, 2017; Driscoll Coon interview, 2017; Rudden interview, 2017; Bishop interview, 1990.

only history, offered the possibility of more equal standing for women members, but that potential was not always realized. Judy Berkan, who transferred to Yale as a junior in 1969, was politically active in myriad ad hoc political activist groups. “Women weren’t given a speaking role in those groups. That I remember,” she said. “We were the ones who licked the envelopes.”<sup>92</sup>

Sophomore Betty Spahn became briefly involved in SDS because of her concern over the sexual harassment of a woman dining hall worker. Her boyfriend Hank was active in SDS, which she thought might be able to help the worker. “I didn’t know where else to go, so I went to a place where Hank thought we might get some help to stop this activity. . . . And, very quickly, my voice was lost.” On November 5, 1969, SDS students staged a sit-in to protest Yale’s firing of a different dining hall worker. Yale suspended forty-seven students, including Betty Spahn and two other women. Spahn was put off by the machismo of the male SDS members, and the experience led her a few months later to help found Yale’s first undergraduate feminist group.<sup>93</sup>

The BSAY offered more equal standing for women students than did some of the white activist organizations. “I think women felt respected in BSAY because it was a smallish group,” said Carol Storey, a black member of the Class of 1973. “We kind of needed each other. It felt unified by ethnicity more than gender-divided.”<sup>94</sup> The BSAY

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<sup>92</sup> Judith Berkan, interview by author, telephone, November 30, 2017.

<sup>93</sup> Spahn interview, 2017; Marvin Olasky, “SDS at Woodbridge,” *YDN*, November 11, 1969.

<sup>94</sup> Storey-Johnson interview, 2017.

elected two women to leadership positions in the first year of coeducation, one as treasurer and the other as the head of its efforts to recruit more black applicants and retain them as students. Shirley Daniels held the second post. In that role, she and other BSAY members met regularly with Sam Chauncey for lunch during her first and second year, and felt comfortable walking into his office, right next to Brewster's in Woodbridge Hall. She met even more frequently with Associate Director of Admissions W. C. Robinson, one of the few black administrators at Yale, concerning black student recruitment, tutoring, and counseling.

But the BSAY was not entirely free of gender hierarchies. Just like the white population, the black one contained a span of attitudes and behaviors towards women. Here, however, it was more complicated, because it intersected with the pressing issue of race in America in 1969, and the oppression of black women as well as black men. "The men really felt as if black men didn't get a chance to lead in any kind of way in society, even though there were a lot of worker bee women who did a lot of work," Daniels explained. She took part in BSAY leadership meetings when strategy was developed, but once the group met with the Yale administration, she did not speak often. "I was privileged to be present in the room as the men talked, although I wasn't always part of the conversations because I was a woman."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Daniels interview, 2017

## The Male Face of Yale

Like Yale's sports teams and extracurricular activities, its clubs, faculty, and administration barely betrayed the fact that the school was had become coed. Mory's, the private club where Yale's academic departments and university committees often met over lunch, continued to ban women from the dining room before 5pm. Yale hired one more woman full professor and two more women assistant professors in 1969, bringing the total of tenured and tenure-track women to thirteen, the same 2 percent of the total that it had been the year before coeducation began.<sup>96</sup> Students could look back at their time at Yale and count on one or two or fingers the number of times they had been taught by a woman, and that was including instructors, guest lecturers, and graduate students.<sup>97</sup> Wasserman counted this as one of the most fundamental weaknesses of coeducation at Yale. "How could you have an education if the message out there is, 'You're gong to be taught by men because women aren't capable of being professors'?" she asked. "What kind of education is that?"<sup>98</sup>

Flipping through the *Old Campus* to view photographs of the administrators most central to the undergraduate experience yielded similar results. In the first year of undergraduate coeducation, all twelve of the residential college deans were men, as were

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<sup>96</sup> Arthur Greenfield, "The People vs. Mory's," *YAM*, June 1973, 25; Arnstein, coeducation report, 1973, Appendix VI, Table 6.

<sup>97</sup> Bernick interview, 2017; Darling interview, 1990; Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 34, 38; Mifflin interview, 2017; Storey-Johnson interview, 2017; Wells interview, 2017.

<sup>98</sup> Wasserman interview, 1992, 46.

the twelve residential college masters, the thirty-nine members of the Yale police force, every member of Yale's board of trustees, and Yale's president, provost, and dean.<sup>99</sup> The situation affected Yale's men undergraduates as well as the women. "How can you ever look up to a woman as a boss when you got your education at a top-notch school that found women so wanting they weren't there?" asked Wasserman.<sup>100</sup>

A few at Yale sought to actively increase the number of women in visible roles. Associate Dean John Wilkinson hired the first woman assistant dean in Yale College, Elisabeth Thomas, in 1969, and the second in 1971, Marnesba Hill, who was also the first black assistant dean. In other cases, the men in power at Yale used their position to block women from roles that they thought should go to men.

Deb Tedford, a sophomore in Saybrook College, had worked as a lifeguard the summer before she came to Yale, and so the financial aid office had her apply to the lifeguard opening in the practice pool at Payne Whitney gym. Deb already had her senior lifesaving and water safety instruction certification; she had experience as both lifeguard and swimming instructor. She applied with the freshman swim coach, who told her she had the job. A day or so later, however, the phone rang. "I just ran it by the men's head coach," explained the freshman coach, "and he said, 'No way.' No way would he have a woman be the lifeguard in the practice pool. No way." So Deb Tedford did not get the job. "They ended up hiring some other guy for the lifeguard job who didn't have as much

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<sup>99</sup> *Old Campus*, Class of 1973.

<sup>100</sup> Wasserman interview, 1992, 48.

background,” said Deb, who was eventually assigned to the football office, where she typed and filed scouting reports on high school prospects for the football team.

Elga Wasserman’s struggles over her title at Yale struck a similar note.

Wasserman had been pulled into the coeducation work in the fall of 1968 while still serving as Assistant Dean at the Graduate School, but when the time came to negotiate her role for the 1969-1970 academic year, the question of her title arose. Wasserman suggested “Associate Dean of Yale College,” a recognizable role at Yale and one held by men. Instead, “we came up with this insane title of ‘Special Assistant to the President on the Education of Women,’” Wasserman explained. The Yale College deans, Kingman Brewster told her, would have felt too threatened by a woman holding the Associate Dean title she had wanted. And so Wasserman became a “Special Assistant”, a position that existed at the pleasure of the president, a position located outside the established hierarchy, a position that branded her as someone holding “the woman’s job.”<sup>101</sup>

Even Assistant Dean Betsy Thomas, who benefited from a recognizable role, was not spared the slights that came with the woman’s territory in those early years. On her first week on the job, she received an invitation to the Freshman Assembly, an event replete with all the pomp and pageantry that a 268-year-old institution can muster. The university organist had practiced his Bach for the opening processional; the flags of Yale’s twelve residential colleges were arranged on stage; and Yale’s administrators and

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<sup>101</sup> Elga Wasserman to Kingman Brewster, May 12, 1969, box 1, folder 13, RU821A; Wasserman interview, 2007, 60; Wasserman interview, 1992, 33; Elga Wasserman, interview by Rachel Donadio, 1995, in *Different Voices*, ed. Rachel Donadio, 22.

faculty, dressed in richly colored academic robes, processed into Yale's Woolsey Hall, where the 1,259 members of the Yale Class of 1973 awaited their arrival.<sup>102</sup>

As the most recent hire in the Yale College Dean's office, Thomas was due the additional honor of leading the procession into Woolsey Hall and carrying the University mace, a four-foot long scepter gilded in gold. "The university mace, emblem of the Authority of the President and Fellows, is carried by the assistant dean of Yale College," explained the program. Ever since 1905, the honor of carrying the mace had gone to a man, and in 1969 the decision was made, perhaps by Dean Georges May, perhaps by Secretary Reuben Holden, that a man would do so again. Thomas did not find out until afterward that she had been skipped over for the honor. "They apparently thought it would just be too, I don't know, conspicuous, to have the only woman in the dean's office carry the mace," she reflected.<sup>103</sup>

This slight, like many borne by Wasserman and Thomas, was invisible to the students, but they were witness to the address delivered that day by Yale President Kingman Brewster. "Ladies and Gentlemen of the Class of 1973," he began, and the students cheered their approval, pleased at Brewster's acknowledgement of their status as

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<sup>102</sup> Yale University Freshman Assembly, Class of 1973, program, September 15, 1969, box 87, folder 700, RU19-II; Reuben Holden to individuals marching in the Class of 1973 Freshman Assembly, September 2, 1969, box 87, folder 700, RU19-II.

<sup>103</sup> Class of 1973 Freshman Assembly program, September 15, 1969, RU19-II; Brachman, 1972, RU821B, 23; John Wilkinson email to author, April 29, 2017; Chauncey interview, 2017; Yale University Freshman Assembly, Class of 1972, procession order, September 16, 1968, box 87, folder 699, RU19-II; Yale University Freshman Assembly, Class of 1974, procession order, September 14, 1970, box 87, folder 700, RU19-II; Elisabeth "Betsy" Thomas Peterson, interview by author, Boston, November 21, 2016.



the first class to begin their time at Yale with both men and women members.<sup>104</sup> What is most striking about the speech that followed, however, is all that it did not say about the transition on which Yale had embarked. Brewster noted that the women students would make Yale “even more cheerful.” He observed that housing the women transfer students in the overwhelmingly male residential colleges would “whet the Victorian imagination.” But that was it. For most of the speech, which dwelt on the perils of cynicism, it was as if the 230 women undergraduates in the room were invisible. “Yale is a place where a man is honored for his humanity,” said the president. He described for the students the traits of “Yale Men.” And then, with a final quotation noting that, despite their weaknesses, “men are also good and great and kind and wise,” he ended.<sup>105</sup>

Over the next four years, Brewster would continue to exclude women from his speeches and priorities. Three weeks after the Freshman Assembly, Brewster issued his annual president’s report, in which the only reference to Yale’s fundamental shift from all-male to coeducational was a brief comment on the “eminently cheerful” nature of the 1968 Coeducation Week organized by Yale students, a statement that was in turn part of a broader point about Yale’s responsiveness to student views. Brewster wrote forcefully in his report about both the nation’s and Yale’s “full responsibilities for the cure of racial injustice.” And yet again, the women were left out. “Efforts to make real the claim of equal educational opportunity without regard to race, income, or background are not new

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<sup>104</sup> Eddy, *Hartford Courant*, November 30, 1969.

<sup>105</sup> Kingman Brewster, “Freshman Assembly: Remarks,” September 15, 1969, in *Class of 1973 25th Reunion Book*, (New Haven: Yale University, 1998), lix-lxii.

to Yale," he wrote, mirroring the omission of gender in a similar statement issued eight years earlier by his mentor and predecessor, Yale President A. Whitney Griswold.<sup>106</sup>

“Kingman’s conception of the presidency was one that focused on the external aspects of the job and the big policy issues internally, on national issues that affected higher education,” explained Jonathan Fanton, who occupied the office next to Brewster’s for the third and fourth years of coeducation. Yet not once during those first four years of coeducation did Brewster include the place or experience of women as one of those issues. “I think nobody in his generation perceived women as being discriminated against,” explained Chauncey. For Brewster and his peers, “discriminating against people was making them servants and slaves, but no husband thinks of his wife as a servant.” Instead they saw their wives and thought, “Look at all they have: money, and a nice house, and healthy children.” That many women did not have such things, that others might want something else instead, did not occur to them.<sup>107</sup>

The continued absence of women in all levels at Yale would be a core component of women undergraduates’ experience during the early years of coeducation at Yale. To be a young woman at Yale in 1969 was to be simultaneously excluded and under a spotlight, invisible and unable to blend in. The coexistence of the two categories seems a paradox: how could both be true? Yet the categories were two sides of the same coin, the absence of the healthy state of being seen as an individual.

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<sup>106</sup> Brewster, president's report, 1969, 9; Karabel, 331.

<sup>107</sup> Fanton interview, 1992, 45; Chauncey interview, 2016.

## Divided

### Connections With Other Women

One might imagine that Yale's 575 women undergraduates would have provided critical support to one another through the challenges of those early years. That did not however prove possible. "The situation drove us apart rather than bringing us together," explains Amy Solomon, Class of 1973.<sup>108</sup> Women students' experience of isolation from one another recurs again and again in accounts of the early years of coeducation at Yale. "Many of us didn't even know each other. If we knew our roommates, we were lucky. We were so few," explains Connie Royster, Class of 1972. When surveyed in November of 1969 about their experience at Yale, women sophomores and juniors cited the lack of opportunities to make friendships with other women as their top concern at Yale.<sup>109</sup>

There were two aspects to the problem. The first was that most basic need: having a friend. "How is your daughter doing at Yale?" an interviewer asked one father in the spring of 1970. "Well, I think she is like most freshmen," he replied. "She is very lonely and it's a lonely time." The second aspect tied more to identity, the sense of being a part of a larger "us" with the other women undergraduates at Yale. "Yale women cannot, do not get together," wrote sophomore Robin Alden in the second year of coeducation.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Solomon interview, 1990; Royster interview, 2016.

<sup>109</sup> Coeducation Committee minutes, November 14, 1969, box 1, folder 7, RU575; "Coed Survey: Questioned Girls Voice Problems," *YDN*, November 17, 1969.

<sup>110</sup> *Coeducation*, 1970; Deinhardt interview, 2017; Robin Alden, "First Outpourings Thinking About Yale," ca. spring 1971, box 1, folder 9, RU821B. See also "Being a Yale Man," 84; Driscoll Coon interview, 2017.

Multiple reasons explain women students' separation from one another, but the problem began with coeducation ground rule number one: limiting the number of women students. "The problem with relationships with other girls is simply that it's hard to find them," a woman sophomore told the *Yale Daily News* in November 1969. Her experience was not uncommon. "I could walk for blocks at night without seeing another woman's face,"<sup>111</sup> said Lisa Getman, a freshman that year.

The decision to spread the women out across the twelve residential colleges just made things worse. "The housing facilities tended to separate the women from each other and thus to reinforce their feeling of isolation," concluded a 1971 study of coeducation at Yale commissioned by Dartmouth, which was exploring a possible coeducation decision of its own.<sup>112</sup> Each residential college was its own walled community, and women rarely got a chance to meet other women from outside their college. "We were all in our little mini silos because of the way they divided us up among the twelve colleges, especially when we had so few numbers," explained Vera Wells, a junior in 1969.<sup>113</sup>

Even within the residential colleges and Vanderbilt Hall, where the freshmen women lived, Yale's architecture worked against women connecting with one another.

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<sup>111</sup> Getman, 1974, 64. For other accounts citing the impact of the low numbers of women on the ability to make women friends, see Alden, [ca. spring 1971], RU821B; Bishop OH, 1990; Knight, *NYT*, June 3, 1973; Trout interview, 1990; Wofford interview, 1990.

<sup>112</sup> Dartmouth, 1971, p. II-3

<sup>113</sup> Wells interview, 2017. For other accounts of the impact of women's low numbers on the ability to make women friends, see Bernick interview, 2016; Maillet Main interview, 2017; Polan interview, 1990; Preston, *New Journal*, December 1970, 8; Wofford interview, 1990; Women's Advisory Committee minutes, February 12, 1970, box 35, folder 1032, RU821A.

Vanderbilt had “basically only two suites to a floor: we had four women; in the room next to us were four women,” explained Patty Mintz, a freshman in Silliman College. “You didn’t bump into people-- it’s not like you were all in a dorm on a hallway and you had a bunch of women in the bathroom.” The set-up in the residential colleges was equally isolating. “The structure is such that it’s like living in a hotel,” explained Davenport College Master Seymour Lustman in a November 1969 letter to Elga Wasserman. “The girls only know their roommates or the girls on their own floor.”<sup>114</sup> Yale might have eased the situation by providing social opportunities for women in different residential colleges to get together with one another, but it did not.<sup>115</sup>

Yale’s coeducation ground rules and physical structure separated women students from one another, but even women who lived across the hall or in the same room did not always form close friendships. “You were siloed by the structure, but you were also siloed by your own temperament, personality, interests, etc.,” noted Mintz.<sup>116</sup> A pre-med student from Cape Cod does not automatically become fast friends with a radical feminist from Manhattan; a Boston hippie is not a natural companion of a cheerleader from

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<sup>114</sup> Mintz interview, 2017; Seymour Lustman to Elga Wasserman, November 17, 1969, box 258, folder 7, RU11-II. See also “Comments Taken From Transfer Questionnaire,” November 21, 1969, box 1, folder 5, RU821B.

<sup>115</sup> Bernick interview, 2016; Deinhardt interview, 2016; Royster interview, 2016.

<sup>116</sup> Mintz interview, 2017. See also “Being a Yale Man,” in Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 84; Bishop interview, 1990; “Coeds on Coeducation,” *YAM*, April 1970, 39; Driscoll Coon interview, 2017; Jelly interview, 2017; Polan interview, 1990; “Radically altered expectations,” 119; Solomon interview, 1990; Temoshok interview, 2016.

Ohio. “If you didn’t really find a really close sympatico friend in your college, that was hard,” explained undergraduate Lawrie Mifflin. “You really felt alone then.”<sup>117</sup>

### **The Priority of Men**

Some women students did forge close women friendships over their time at Yale.<sup>118</sup> For most, however, their friends were men. “More often than not, you found a group of nine guys and one girl,” observed Edward Frank, Class of 1973. His classmate Kate Driscoll saw the same thing. “My world of friends was mostly men. The ratio was always eight to one wherever you were. So you’d be at a table at dinner and it would be one or two women and eight or ten guys.” Hers was a refrain repeated again and again by women undergraduates, across all three years of women at Yale. “I had a lot of male friends. Most women there did,” said Linda Darling, Class of 1973. The same was true for Deb Tedford, Class of 1972. “My memories are mostly hanging out with guys, because that’s who was there. I mean, there were so few women.” Frances Beinecke, Class of 1971, had the same experience. “Most of the people I hung around with were the boys -- because there were so many of them.”<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Mifflin interview, 1990.

<sup>118</sup> Bernick interview, 2016; Mintz interview, 2017; Rudden interview, 2017; Storey-Johnson interview, 2017; Lever and Schwartz, 76; Laurie Frank, “Second Thoughts on Being ‘First,’” *Baltimore Sun*, September 8, 1995.

<sup>119</sup> Pannell, *YDN*, September 21, 2009; Driscoll Coon interview, 2017; “Women at Yale,” *YAM*, September/October 2009; Tedford interview, 2016; Darling interview, 1990. For other accounts of the predominance of friendships with men, see Bishop interview, 1990; *Coeducation*, 1970; Caroline Kim, “Through Women’s Eyes,” January 1994, in *Different Voices*, ed. Rachel Donadio, 20; Knight, *NYT*, June

The high male-female ratio made it hard for women to find one another, and it also made them a scarce commodity. Because there were so few women to go around, the women were expected to always welcome male students' presence, an additional challenge to forming friendships with one another. "If you sat down by yourself, or with a roommate or woman friend, a group of men would sit down with you before you had barely lifted your fork," explained Jane Anderson, Class of 1973. Deborah Rose, Class of 1972, was similarly thwarted. "The one time ten of us purposefully sat together to have a women's consciousness-raising group, men kept coming up all evening and saying, 'What's wrong? Why aren't you talking to us?'"<sup>120</sup>

The numbers explained the situation in part, but equally important was a culture at Yale, among both men and many women, that placed a higher value on relationships with men than those with women. Relationships with boyfriends took priority.<sup>121</sup> "We were utterly male-oriented, utterly male-directed. By directed I mean turning toward, not directed by," explains Kathy Jelly, a white junior from Maine. In both her years at Yale, she and her roommates focused on academics and on their boyfriends, leaving little time for friendships with women. Black undergraduate Virginia Kaye, so beautiful that her

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3, 1973; Mintz interview, 2017; "New Old Blue," in Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 111; "No Easy Answers," 106; Polan interview, 1990; Temoshok interview, 2016; Traut interview, 1990.

<sup>120</sup> Anderson interview, 2017; *Arrival: Women at Yale College*, directed by Presca Ahn, 2010, accessed January 13, 2017 from <https://vimeo.com/13664639>. For other accounts of the expectation that women would spend their time with men, see Connie Gersick, interview by author, Hamden, CT, November 28, 2016; "Coeds on Coeducation," *YAM*, April 1970, 42.

<sup>121</sup> Alden, ca. spring 1971, RU821B; Frank, 1995; Jelly interview, 2017; Mintz interview, 2017; Preston, *New Journal*, December 1970, 8; Wofford interview, 1990.

face graced the cover of Dizzy Gillespie's 1970 album "Portrait of Jenny," spent her first semester moving from coffee with one suitor, to drinks with the next, to dinner with a third. Four years later, she looked back with regret on how much time she had spent with men, how little with women. "The tragedy of all this is that I took on many of the male chauvinistic attitudes toward females . . . I didn't think females were worth spending time with. I picked that up from the institution, and I'm only now getting out of it."<sup>122</sup>

Yale's culture not only prioritized relations with men, it denigrated those with women. "There is a definite stigma about hanging around with girls too much. It can be taken as proof that one is not attractive to men, that one could not get a date if one wanted one," observed Yale sociology graduate students Janet Lever and Pepper Schwartz, who studied the experience of Yale's first women undergraduates throughout the first year of coeducation.<sup>123</sup> The women students saw this as well. Lucy Eddy, a white freshman from Concord Academy boarding school, described the problem in an article she wrote for the *Yale Alumni Magazine* in April 1970.

Most attempts on the part of girls to form these famous Yale friendships are scorned by male students as being 'hen parties' or coverups by desperate girls who would rather be with boys. Of course, Yale men see nothing wrong with their all-male gangs and activities, but groups of girls are regarded as pathetic and queer. This attitude denies real female friendships to women. The process of making girl friends is consequently difficult and discouraging."<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Newman interview, 2017; Knight, *NYT*, June 3, 1973.

<sup>123</sup> Lever and Schwartz, 194.

<sup>124</sup> Eddy, *YAM*, April 1970, 25.



Shirley Daniels, a black sophomore, observed the same. “In those days, women didn’t meet. They didn’t talk, they didn’t really support each other. But there were exceptions, most notably Vera Wells in the class of 1971, who was a mentor to me during my time at Yale.” When Daniels and a few other black women tried to get black women students together, the initiative disbanded after a few meetings. “It didn’t last very long, because the guys were putting pressure on their girlfriends. They didn’t want them going to a women’s thing.” Women also internalized the stigma of spending time with one another, explained Judy Berkan, a white student the year ahead of Shirley. “At Yale, there are women, myself included, who feel uncomfortable knocking on another woman’s door on a Saturday night and saying, ‘Let’s go over to the film society because neither of us have anything to do.’”<sup>125</sup>

Yale’s first women undergraduates were thus not a cohesive band of 575, unified by the challenges they all faced as coeducation pioneers, but instead were divided by the coeducation ground rules under which Yale admitted them, by their own identities and personalities, and by a culture which said that their relationships with one another were unimportant, or even suspect. That division would in turn create challenges for collective action towards change. But what stands out equally is the sadness many women express

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<sup>125</sup> Daniels interview, 2017; See also Alden, ca. spring 1971, RU821B; "Coeds on Coeducation," *YAM*, April 1970, 42.

at that lost opportunity. As Kathy Jelly, looking back on her time at Yale, observed, “It’s like we barely knew one another. Gosh, what a loss.”<sup>126</sup>

### **Sexual Harassment and Assault**

Undergraduate coeducation commenced at Yale before colleges had procedures and trained personnel to support women who had been raped, before the idea that sexual assault was somehow the woman’s fault began to be challenged, before the terms “sexual harassment” and “date rape” had even been invented. Yet this lack of protection, support, and language did not mean that sexual assault and harassment did not happen. The silence that surrounded it, however, isolated the women who were targets, and left all but a few of those who had not been harassed or assaulted unaware of what was going on. This section examines sexual assault and harassment at Yale in the early years of coeducation by looking at three different groups of perpetrators: outsiders, Yale faculty and administrators, and other Yale students.

#### **Harassment and Assault by Outsiders**

From the outset, any threat to the safety of Yale’s new women students was assumed to come from the City of New Haven rather than the Yale community, and Elga Wasserman readied for coeducation by improving security measures against outsiders.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Jelly interview, 2017.

<sup>127</sup> Wasserman, Coeducation Report 1969, 4-5.

Not everyone shared her sense of urgency however, and two months into coeducation the lighting improvements she had requested six months earlier were still not done; the provost was sniping at the need for the shuttle bus that she had instituted on her own; and women's entryways and bathrooms had no locks, enabling strangers to walk in off the street and right into a bathroom where a woman was showering.<sup>128</sup> In their first semester at Yale, women undergraduates in Pierson College, Trumbull College, and Vanderbilt Hall were all surprised by strangers—sometimes teenage boys, sometimes what Sam Chauncey described as “creepy characters from the outside”—entering the bathroom when they were showering so as to see them naked.<sup>129</sup> The advances did not always stop there. In November 1969, sophomore Linda Temoshok was showering in her Yale dorm at Ezra Stiles College when two local teenagers, one carrying a knife, wrenched open the shower curtain and stepped in. “Gimme a kiss,” said one. “I’m crazy, hear, just be quiet...It’ll be over soon.” Temoshok screamed and the teenagers fled. After that, Yale installed locks on the women’s bathrooms.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Coeducation Committee minutes, October 31, 1969, box 1, folder 7, RU575; Wasserman interview, 1992, 34; Elga Wasserman to James Thorburn, November 18, 1969, box 258, folder 7, RU11-II; “Colleges Put Locks on Girls' Bathrooms,” *YDN*, December 9, 1969; Mary Arnstein to Sam Chauncey, December 15, 1972, box 22, folder 915, RU821A.

<sup>129</sup> Chauncey interview, 2017; John Wilkinson, interview by author, New Haven, October 25, 2017; “Girls Face Problem of Town Intruders,” *YDN*, October 29, 1969; Women’s Advisory Committee minutes, October 8, 1969, box 35, folder 1032, RU821A; Elisabeth Thomas to Daniel Sullivan, January 30, 1970, box 8, folder 1060, RU575.

<sup>130</sup> Temoshok diary, November 17, 1969; Temoshok interview, 2016; “Colleges Put Locks,” *YDN*, December 9, 1969.

While the concern that outsiders posed a safety threat to women at Yale was not unfounded, two related assumptions proved false. The first was that Yale need not concern itself with the behavior of its men faculty and students. The second was that assailants were always black. “I picked up on needing to be fearful of black men in particular,” recalled Betsy Hartmann, a freshman in 1969. “There was a racial subtext to the messages Yale was sending . . . I remember thinking back then that it was kind of ironic that my second friend [who was raped] was raped by a white guy.” A woman undergraduate who was raped her sophomore year, a different woman than Betsy Hartmann’s friend, found that New Haven police questioned her statement that her assailant was white.

[The police] wanted to know if the person was black. And I said “No.” And they said, “Well how do you know?” because the person had a ski mask on. And I said, “Well, he had a New Haven accent.” They didn’t know what I was talking about. But you know, white men who were from New Haven had a certain way of speaking and black men had a completely different way of speaking. It was a white man, and I knew that. But they were put out; they were offended.

The assumption remained that criminals at Yale were black. Yale’s black students were asked so often to show their I.D.s that Elga Wasserman raised her concern about the practice at an October 1969 meeting of Yale faculty and administrators.<sup>131</sup>

Regardless of the race of the assailant, the experience of rape victims was made all the worse by the climate of the times. In the early 1970s, “conventional wisdom held that a raped woman had ‘asked for it.’” Women who were raped could expect callous

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<sup>131</sup> Hartmann interview, 2017; Kate Field, interview by author, telephone, November 15, 2017; Coeducation Committee minutes, October 31, 1969, box 1, folder 7, RU575.

treatment from police and hospital workers. If they chose to press charges, their own sexual history became fair game for courtroom discussion; they had to prove that they had resisted their assailant; and in states like New York they had to provide a second witness.<sup>132</sup> Nonetheless, stranger rape was discussed far more openly at Yale than harassment and assault by faculty or students. Wasserman discussed one 1970 rape at a meeting with the Masters of all twelve of Yale's residential colleges. The *Yale Daily News* carried several stories about rapes and attempted rapes of Yale women between 1969 and 1973. The Yale police reports documented six rapes during the second and third years of coeducation.<sup>133</sup>

The police numbers were low. Even in the 1990s, when support for rape survivors had significantly improved, two out of three rapes went unreported,<sup>134</sup> and the Yale numbers did not include all the rapes the police were aware of. In the first year of coeducation, Yale police asked Assistant Dean Betsy Thomas to come comfort a student who had been raped, but the police statistics recorded zero rapes that year. In the fourth year of coeducation, the police statistics again showed no rapes, but Yale Police Chief Lou Capiello himself had been quoted in the *Yale Daily News* about a rape of a Yale

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<sup>132</sup> Rosen, 181-182.

<sup>133</sup> Council of Masters, January 22, 1971, minutes, box 18, folder 608, RU299, Yale University Council of Masters, Minutes of Meetings, YUL; Thomas Kent, "Rape, 2 Attempts Reported," *YDN*, December 10, 1970; Robert Rosenthal, "Female Student Sexually Attacked," *YDN*, September 19, 1972; Ernest Tucker, "Rapist Attacks; Still at Large," *YDN*, October 13, 1972.

<sup>134</sup> US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Rape and Sexual Assault: Reporting to Police and Medical Attention, 1992-2000*, by Callie Marie Rennison, NCJ 194530, August 2002, 1, accessed March 19, 2018 from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/rsarp00.pdf>.

woman that fall. “This is the only rape this year,” he said, adding, “We didn’t have one last year at all,” even though his police report for that year included two rapes.<sup>135</sup>

Whatever the total actually was, the numbers tallying rapes at Yale do not capture the trauma of the experience. In December 1970, a sophomore woman from Morse College was raped while walking back to her dorm room from the library. She talked a number of times about it with Margie Ferguson, one of the women graduate students hired by Wasserman to serve as mentor and model for the undergraduate women. As Ferguson describes:

[The student] was walking back to Morse from the library when a car pulled up beside her. There were several young men in the car, and one of them jumped out and grabbed her, telling her to get in and putting what he told her was a knife to her back. They were townies, not from Yale. She had on a big coat so she couldn't feel the knife, but she believed that he had one. She was gang raped in the car.<sup>136</sup>

The young woman dropped out of Yale for a time, as did two other sophomore women who were raped that year. Two of them eventually graduated from Yale; one never did. There was little counseling at Yale to support them. After Betsy Hartmann’s friend reported her rape to Yale, “there were really no services to help her. It was a pretty traumatic experience for her.”<sup>137</sup> Women who tried to help those who had been raped felt

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<sup>135</sup> Yale University Police Department, "Annual Report 1969-1970," box 2, folder 11, RU52B; Thomas Peterson interview, 2016; Elisabeth Thomas Peterson interview by author, Boston, May 16, 2017; Tucker, *YDN*, October 13, 1972; Yale University Police Department, "Annual Report: July 1972 to June, 1973," box 10, folder 64, RU52B, 25-26.

<sup>136</sup> Margie Ferguson, interview by author, Davis, CA, February 22, 2017. See also Kent, *YDN*, December 10, 1970; Hartmann interview, 2017; Jubin interview, 2017.

<sup>137</sup> Hartmann interview, 2017; Driscoll Coon interview, 2017; Ferguson interview, 2017; Field interview, 2017; Jubin interview, 2017.

their lack of training for the task. Margie Ferguson recalls her experience with the student in Morse. “There was no official rape counseling service at Yale in those days. I had no training as a counselor, and though I wanted to help, I don't think I did any more than give a sympathetic ear to a terrible story.” Assistant Dean Betsy Thomas similarly felt unprepared when asked to help a rape victim the year before.

I didn't know what to do. It's one of those things I still think of sometimes. Why couldn't I have been useful in some way? I just was pretty naïve myself, and that would have been my first fall . . . All I really remember is how I felt badly about not being more helpful, and not knowing what to do . . . I was in a car with her and just didn't know what to say.<sup>138</sup>

### **Harassment and Assault by Faculty and Staff**

Sexual harassment and assault of women at Yale by men faculty and staff was occurring before the first women undergraduates arrived and continued after they left. It included as targets women dining hall workers, undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty members.<sup>139</sup> It was able to continue unchecked because there were no consequences for the perpetrators, no procedures for filing a complaint, no certainty that

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<sup>138</sup> Ferguson interview, 2017; Thomas Peterson interview, 2017.

<sup>139</sup> Spahn interview, 2017; "Graduate Women's Survey," in *Sex Discrimination at Yale: A Document of Indictment*, May 10, 1971, box 280, folder 991, RU19, Series III (hereafter cited as RU19-III); "The Adventures of Jane Smith at Yale University," in *Sex Discrimination at Yale*, May 10, 1971; Debra Herman and Ann Gilmore, "Undergraduate Women at Yale," in *Sex Discrimination at Yale*, May 10, 1971; Ferguson interview, 2017; Jubin interview, 2017; Maillet Main interview, 2017; Charlotte Morse, interview by Florence Minnis, May 26, 2008, RU1051, 122-124; Ann Olivarius, "Title IX: Taking Yale to Court," *New Journal*, April 18, 2011, accessed February 11, 2018 from [www.thenewjournalat Yale.com](http://www.thenewjournalat Yale.com); Russett interview, 1990; Sherrie Selwyn, "The Social Scene in 1969," in Donadio, 17; Anne E. Simon, "Alexander v. Yale University: An Informal History," in *Directions in Sexual Harassment Law*, eds. Catharine A. MacKinnon and Reva B. Siegel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 55-56; Pannell, *YDN*, September 21, 2009.

a woman would find her situation any better as a result of reporting the harassment, and no language yet to even describe what had happened. “Sexual harassment” did not become part of the national vocabulary until the late 1970s and was not classed as a form of sex discrimination until 1980. Sexual harassment of women undergraduates did not become a focus of concern until the 1978 publication of a report by the Association of American Colleges and another in 1980 by the US Department of Education.<sup>140</sup>

Comments from a few women at Yale in the early 1970s provide a small window into the climate around sexual harassment at the time.

There were many inappropriate approaches to women on campus, by professors, by mentors, very, very upsetting, all ages, all marital situations, sometimes advisors, sometimes people whose courses one took over and over again. [There was] no recourse, really. I don’t think anyone ever complained about it . . . At least for me, I felt that saying anything could only hurt me further. So mostly you just changed advisors, changed classes, avoided professors, for whom there was no punishment if they pressured a female student.

—Jamie Stern Connolly, Yale Class of 1972, Branford College

The expectation was that if you got into some sort of trouble, it was because you led that professor on somehow . . . you came across as wanting to jump into bed with him. You know, it was your fault. It wasn’t something you’d really talk about with other people . . . I don’t think any of us reported anything that happened to us to the authorities. But I think we also had the feeling that nobody would do anything.

—Denise Maillet Main, Yale Class of 1972, Saybrook College

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<sup>140</sup> N. Davis, “Sexual Harassment in the University, in *Women in Higher Education: A Feminist Perspective*, Judith Glazer, Estela Bensimon, and Barbara Townsend, eds. (Needham Heights, MA: Ginn Press, 1993), 241-257; Simon, 51-59; Rosen, 187; Project on the Status and Education of Women, *Sexual Harassment: A Hidden Issue*, (Washington DC: Association of American Colleges, 1978); US Department of Education, National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, *Sexual Harassment: A Report on the Sexual Harassment of Students*, by Frank J. Till, August 1980, ERIC ED197242.



I know of students who complained. In most cases, it didn't go very far. And then eventually the offending faculty member would be shoved off to the side. But this was after maybe ten people complained. So Yale, I suspect, was doing an awful lot of cover up.

—Brenda Jubin, Yale Residential College Dean, Morse College

It was very clear when something like that happened, there was nobody you could go to officially. Nobody. Officially, unofficially.

—Charlotte Morse, Assistant Professor<sup>141</sup>

Yale was by no means unique. In 1965, Stanford University Dean of Women Lucile Allen resigned in protest over the ongoing sexual harassment of students by faculty members, who received no sanction other than being asked to stop. In 1972, University of Wisconsin Assistant Professor Joan Roberts described in a speech at an American Council on Education conference the “social ostracism” risked by any woman who reported harassment. “Women have traditionally been silent on such matters,” she explained, as ““Nice girls’ did not tell what happened to them.”<sup>142</sup> And so the cost of harassment by men was borne by women.

The experience of sophomore Denise Maillet provides one example.<sup>143</sup> Maillet transferred to Yale from Wellesley in 1969 and in the spring of 1970, her first year at

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<sup>141</sup> Connelly, in *Arrival: Women at Yale College*; Maillet Main interview, 2017; Jubin interview, 2017; Morse interview, 2008, 126.

<sup>142</sup> Kathryn Tuttle, "What Became of the Dean of Women? Changing Roles for Women Administrators in American Higher Education, 1940-1980," (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1996), 338, accessed March 10, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses; Joan Roberts, “Women’s Right to Choose, or Men’s Right to Dominate,” in Furniss and Graham, 51.

<sup>143</sup> Maillet Main interview, 2017.

Yale, one of her professors started giving her assignments and exams different than the ones her men classmates got. Hers always had sexual overtones. He also started calling her at night. Maillet had a rare single at Yale and thus no roommates. Caller I.D. and answering machines had not yet been invented. And so when the phone rang, thinking it might be her parents or friends or boyfriend, Maillet picked it up.

The professor would call me at night and want me to describe what nightgown I was wearing, and how soft it felt, and was it tight, and things like this. I ended up dropping his class after the deadline, so I couldn't pick up another class. That semester I got behind in credits, so I had to take five all the following semesters. But that sort of started with the professor calling me at night, and my feeling compelled to drop that course.

This was not the only incident for Maillet that semester, however. She was serving on a campus committee chaired by one of Yale's administrators, who asked her to meet him in his office and then assaulted her.

He took me to his office, with all the pictures of his wife and children and everything, and he tried to rape me. And I managed to get away . . . but it did psychologically make me feel much more vulnerable . . . I remember feeling very strongly that because of that event, I should have sex with my current boyfriend, so I would have a choice of whom I had sex with. And it was not a particularly good choice of boyfriend at the time, but it was in my mind connected to that event . . . I spent a lot of time of that semester home. I think a lot of that was instigated by the event with the administrator.

Women graduate students at Yale were no strangers to harassment either, and documented examples of what they had experienced in a May 1971 report on sex discrimination at Yale. "I am physically molested by my advisor," explained one woman graduate student. "We have had numerous exasperating discussions about this and he doesn't seem to learn that I don't like to be touched while discussing data." Another had

problems with her Director of Graduate Studies, the gateway to her work both at Yale and beyond. “You begin to wonder about the intentions of a Director of Graduate Studies who spends more time patting your thighs and pinching your rear than discussing your academic career,” she observed.<sup>144</sup>

Another had been attacked when presenting her portfolio as part of the graduate admissions process. “When I had finished discussing the final picture with professor, he asked me, ‘Now don’t you have something else to show me?’ and with that he grabbed me by the shoulders, as they say in Victorian novels.” Another woman was asked to meet with her professor in his office. “A faculty member in my department suggested that there was more to faculty-student relations than academics. In his office he demanded that I perform perversions with him. I have since left the school.”<sup>145</sup>

The sense of betrayal by students who were harassed or assaulted by Yale professors comes out in accounts by both undergraduate and graduate students. Kate Field was a published poet when she arrived at Yale as a freshman in 1969, and she enrolled in a poetry class her first semester there. She was flattered when the professor asked her to join the weekly literary lunches he held with a select group of upperclassmen and graduate students.

I had lunch with them once a week for maybe a month, and then this walk happened. I was seventeen years old. He took me out to the Grove Street Cemetery for a walk and made a really heavy pass at me. What did I know? Just

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<sup>144</sup> "Graduate Women's Survey," in *Sex Discrimination at Yale*, May 10, 1971.

<sup>145</sup> "The Adventures of Jane Smith," in *Sex Discrimination at Yale*, May 10, 1971.

dumb, I guess. So much for being picked out as a brilliant up-and-coming writer.<sup>146</sup>

Graduate student Margie Ferguson was propositioned by two different professors.

The first overture came from a professor who was prominent nationally in his field.

Ferguson turned him down but had two friends who each later became his mistress.

And then after this professor had approached me, I had the same offer from a second one. We were having lunch in his residential college and he started playing footsie and saying how compellingly attractive I was . . . I knew and liked his wife. It was one reason why I was so aghast when he made his move on me. I think it made me feel like I was sort of doubly devalued, for somebody to be breaking his marriage partnership in order to pursue a student or younger faculty member. It just seemed creepy to me. I was not tempted.<sup>147</sup>

In the second year of coeducation, President Brewster appointed a committee to investigate the status of professional women at Yale. Thomas Greene, the professor he tapped to lead that committee, was known among women graduate students as a serial harasser of young women, a trait of which his men peers were apparently unaware. “His intellectual work was all about humanism and morality,” explains Ferguson. “This other part of him, I think, was not well known, especially not then. I think that the fact that he was chosen to lead this committee suggests how little the administration at Yale understood about how endemic sexual harassment at Yale was.”<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Field interview, 2017.

<sup>147</sup> Ferguson interview, 2017.

<sup>148</sup> “Report to the President from the Committee on the Status of Professional Women at Yale,” [Greene Report], May 1971, 8, accessed February 5, 2018 from <https://wff.yale.edu>; Ferguson interview, 2017.

On the day Greene handed in the “Report of the Committee on the Status of Professional Women at Yale,” he invited Assistant Professor Charlotte Morse to lunch. They decided to meet in his office, since Morse thought she might be late and didn’t want to keep him waiting outside the dining hall.

So I walked into his office . . . and then he started telling me how wonderful it would be to have an affair and that he would keep it secret from my husband and he would certainly never tell his wife and it would all be very discreet. And this went on for some while. And I made it clear that I was not interested. I escaped from having him put his hands on me, although he was making some moves in that direction. I found it very disturbing . . . I didn’t tell anybody . . . it was years before I told anybody.<sup>149</sup>

### **Harassment and Assault by Other Students**

Sex between fellow students at Yale in the early years of coeducation ranged from sex where consent was freely given, to sex where consent was given as a result of inordinate pressure, to sex where consent was never given at all. As backdrop were both the pre-existing culture around sex at Yale and the rapidly changing context for sex at colleges across the nation. In the 1950s, college women who were not ready to have sex with their boyfriends had three ways to say no: the risk of getting pregnant, the costs to their reputation of violating social mores against premarital sex, and the existence of parietal rules that threatened the expulsion of women undergraduates who were caught

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<sup>149</sup> Morse interview, 2008, 122-124.

out after curfew.<sup>150</sup> In the late 1960s, just as the second wave of postsecondary coeducation began, all this changed.

The sexual revolution had made headlines throughout the 1960s, but it did not take hold among college girls until the end of that decade, at just the time that coeducation began at Yale.<sup>151</sup> Many saw the shift in sexual norms as a critical aspect of equity for women. The sexual revolution ended the idea “that sex is something men do to women” and gave women permission to enjoy sex outside of marriage just like men did. The birth control pill, first available in 1960, was widely used by unmarried women by the end of the decade. Feminists such as Kate Millet celebrated the sexual revolution for ending longstanding sexual inhibitions. As Yale undergraduate Linda Temoshok explained, “To me it was the dawn of a new era. I mean, that’s the essence of women’s lib. If you just sit there and go ‘Oh, God, he’s looking at me’ you might feel set upon and scrutinized. But in my case, *I’m looking at him.*”<sup>152</sup>

But the sexual revolution had its feminist critics as well. “The sexual revolution was hell on women. It never helped us—it just made us more available,” said Robin Morgan, editor of the 1970 anthology *Sisterhood is Powerful*. Howard University Law

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<sup>150</sup> Sartorius, 6, 88, 93; Robert Cavanaugh to Henry Chauncey, November 21, 1967, box 32, folder 1001, RU821A.

<sup>151</sup> Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Random House, 1995), 65.

<sup>152</sup> "Situation Report: College Education," *Time*, March 20, 1972, 101; Rosen, 51; Evans, 2009, 342; Claudia Goldin and Lawrence Katz, "The Power of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives and Women’s Career and Marriage Decisions," *Journal of Political Economy* 110, no. 4 (August 2002): 732; Maggie Doherty, "What Kate Did: Today's Most Heated Literary Arguments Uphold the Legacy of Kate Millet's 'Sexual Politics,'" *The New Republic*, March 23, 2016; Temoshok interview, 2016, italics in transcript.

School Dean Patricia Harris reiterated the point two years later at a conference on women in higher education.

The sixties girl was not permitted to retain even the appearance of chastity. Males insisted on the establishment of sexual relationships without any commitment to a continuing relationship, and made the establishment of such sexual relationship the sine qua non of the establishment of any relationship at all. The “new sexual freedom” of women in the sixties was based on sexual exploitation of women by men.<sup>153</sup>

Phil and Lorna Sarrel understood what this climate might mean for women undergraduates at Yale. The Sarrels ran Yale’s pioneering sex counseling service, opened in the first year of coeducation as part of the Yale Department of University Health. Lorna Sarrel was a social worker. Phil Sarrel was a gynecologist at Yale Medical School, where he taught a sexuality course to medical students. The couple worked as a team, a professional model that itself was unusual at Yale in this era. And while Yale’s impetus for hiring the Sarrels had been to avoid a rash of pregnancies among its new women students, the Sarrels did not just hand out birth control devices and prescriptions, but spent time talking with students about their current relationship, their sexual history, and their values and beliefs around sex. “We are trying to help them think through the meaning of their sexuality and sexual behavior for themselves and their partners,” Phil Sarrel told the *Yale Daily News* in October 1969. “We don’t preach.”<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> “Who’s Come a Long Way, Baby?” *Time*, August 31, 1970, 18; Robin Morgan, ed., *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women’s Liberation Movement* (New York: Random House, 1970); Harris, 13.

<sup>154</sup> Philip M. Sarrel and Lorna J. Sarrel, “A Sex Counseling Service for College Students,” ca 1970, box 33, folder 1010, RU821A; Eleni Skevas and Eric Rosenberg, “DUH’s New Gynecology Duo Discuss Sex

Nonetheless, both Phil and Lorna Sarrel were concerned about sexual pressure on Yale's women students. In the fall of 1969, Phil said he hoped "that a coeducational system can exist in this institution without girls paying a high price." He was "very worried," however, "about a lot of girls getting involved in a relationship they don't really want, and are not really ready for, but are getting involved in because of social pressure here."<sup>155</sup>

Yale's women students felt this pressure. "There was so much pressure from the upper class guys to bed down with the women," explained Patty Mintz, a white freshman from Massachusetts. Some of the juniors and seniors would take the student directories and "systematically X out anyone they'd had a relationship with, had sex with. So it was kind of feeling like you were. . . prey." Mintz made clear that not all Yale men treated women like this. "There were many lovely, smart, kind, funny, wonderful guys," and many men and women students at Yale developed close and meaningful relationships that included open communication about sex.<sup>156</sup> But some of the men students had a different view on women, and that defined Yale's culture on sex as well.

By today's standards, the public ogling of women undergraduates and pressure on many of them to date Yale men, described above in "Forty Pairs of Eyes," would be

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Counseling Role," *YDN*, October 3, 1969, box 2, folder 1, MS1922, Philip M. and Lorna Sarrel Papers, YUL (hereafter cited as MS1922); Judy Klemesrud, "Yale Students Have Own 'Masters and Johnson'," *NYT*, April 28, 1971; Sarrels interview, 2016.

<sup>155</sup> Skevas and Rosenberg, *YDN*, October 3, 1969.

<sup>156</sup> Mintz interview, 2017; "Ins and Outs of Sex at Yale," 6; Sarrels interview, 2016; Maillet Main interview, 2017.



classed as sexual harassment. At the time, however, it was just part of the way things were. Underneath it was an assumption by at least some of the men that women undergraduates were at Yale to be their sexual partners, an opinion that was not restricted to white men. As black sophomore Shirley Daniels observed, “There was an extraordinary amount of pressure put on freshmen by the men to be their girlfriends and have sex.”<sup>157</sup>

Few of the women undergraduates who arrived at Yale in 1969 were sexually experienced; 75 percent of the freshmen seen by the Sarrels were virgins. That status itself became a source of pressure. “There was this feeling that you should lose your virginity, and it was the sexual revolution and all that,” said Betsy Hartmann, a freshman that year. Kate Driscoll and her friends, also freshmen, picked this up as well: “Our virginity was the subject of many conversations, what to do about being a virgin, to stay one or not to stay one.” Two years later, another freshman, Joyce Maynard, expressed the same view. “The problem is that no lines, no barriers, exist. Where, five years ago a girl's decisions were made for her (she had to be in at 12), today the decision rests with her alone . . . It's peer-group pressure, 1972 style--the embarrassment of virginity.”<sup>158</sup>

Maynard's reference to former midnight curfews points to another key change in this era: the nationwide end of parietal rules. An aspect of the *in loco parentis* role of US

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<sup>157</sup> Daniels interview, 2017.

<sup>158</sup> "The Ins and Outs of Sex at Yale", 7; Sarrel and Sarrel, "A Sex Counseling Service," ca 1970; Hartmann interview, 2017; Driscoll Coon interview, 2017; Joyce Maynard, "An 18-Year-Old Looks Back on Life," *NYT*, April 23, 1972. See also "The Ins and Outs of Sex at Yale", 7.

colleges, parietals had long sought to control the sexual behavior of college students by regulating the behavior of women, who were subject to curfews, sign-in rules, limited visiting hours, and supervision that the men were not. Parietals, in place in the vast majority of colleges and universities in 1967, were swept away at college after college in the late 1960s and early '70s, with students successfully arguing that colleges had no business intruding in their private lives.<sup>159</sup> Yale's parietal rules had been loosened following student protests in 1964 and 1968, but were still on the books when women students arrived in 1969. The rules were not enforced, however, save for the guard at the entrance of Vanderbilt Hall, whom students easily circumvented, and they were opposed by Elga Wasserman, who saw parietals as a vestige of past moralities that implied women were incapable of making their own decisions about sex. By 1971, parietal rules were gone at Yale entirely.<sup>160</sup>

Like the sexual revolution, the end of parietals packaged freedom and equity for women along with potential harm. Their absence "made it tough, in some ways, to be able to say no to guys," explained undergraduate Debbie Bernick. "There was more pressure, over time, to go all the way." As Bernick explained,

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<sup>159</sup> Cavanaugh to Chauncey, 1967; Tuttle, 320-321; Sartorius, 79-89.

<sup>160</sup> Lanny J. Davis, "1600 Upperclassmen Petition University for Liberalization of Visiting Hours for Women," *YDN*, October 1, 1964; Student Advisory Board, "Report on Parietal Restrictions, January 24, 1968, box 32, folder 1001, RU821A; Yale University Corporation, Parietal Rules, January 25, 1968, box 48, folder 647, RU 126; "Coed Survey," *YDN*, November 17, 1969; Wasserman to John Wilkinson, February 26, 1970, box 35, folder 1027, RU821A. Wasserman, *Educational Record* (Spring 1970): 146; Wasserman to parents of women undergraduates, August 1969, box 22, folder 908, RU821A; Coeducation Committee minutes, October 31, 1969; Georges May, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, March 19, 1991, transcript, box 7, folder 96, RU217, 32.

[Women] may look back and know it later on that they felt pressured, that it wasn't all that great an experience, losing your virginity -- you know, there's a whole big brouhaha about it. For many of us, it was the college years when that happened. But maybe it wasn't the spectacular experience, or maybe the relationship changed quickly and then they felt hurt in some ways, or they were more emotionally engaged than the guy was. Maybe there's some hurt involved in a quicker, easy environment of sexuality.<sup>161</sup>

When Yale and colleges across the nation stepped back from intruding into students' sexual activity, they also stepped back from protecting women students from unwanted sex. Forty years later, when news broke of the multiple Title IX investigations triggered by sexual assault and harassment on college campuses, University of California Berkeley Chancellor Nicholas Dirks would observe, "I worry that, effectively, we forgot about the extent to which we're dealing with young people . . . and under the name of giving them the space to be adults, we don't necessarily think hard enough about how we should make sure it's a safe environment."<sup>162</sup>

The behavior of a group of students in Yale's final decade as a men's school, and Yale's reaction to this incident, did not bode well for women's safety once coeducation began. In 1960, twenty Yale students were arrested for engaging in repeated acts of oral sex with a fourteen-year-old girl in a dorm room in Yale's Calhoun College. All twenty students were convicted in the City of New Haven Courthouse of lascivious carriage, a term that covered "wrongdoings of a sexual nature," and all twenty were dismissed or resigned from Yale. The following year, however, Yale readmitted all but three of them.

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<sup>161</sup> Bernick interview, 2016.

<sup>162</sup> Richard Pérez-Peña and Kate Taylor, "Fight Against Sexual Assaults Holds Colleges to Account," *NYT*, May 3, 2014.

Yale undergraduates took note. Even students who were not yet at Yale when the incident occurred knew about the abridged punishment. As two of them opined in the *Yale Daily News* in May 1964, the administration's decision to reinstate the students "indicates that the intensity of moral shock felt within the university was not especially severe."<sup>163</sup>

The "Susie scandal," as the incident came to be known, became a running joke among some at Yale, while others laid blame on the girl herself. In 1962, 1963, and 1964, the *Yale Daily News* ran a bogus poll of the most popular name of Yale prom dates; the name "Susie" always won. "What has Susie got?" asked the subtitle for the article on the 1962 poll results. In April 1964, on the day that Kingman Brewster was inaugurated as president of Yale, a mob of 750 Yale freshmen spilled out of the Old Campus and into the New Haven streets. In what was termed a celebration by students and a riot by campus police, the students blocked traffic on Elm Street and stopped cars with women drivers, chanting: "We want Susie! We want Susie!" In 1967, a Yale administrator described Susie to the *Yale Daily News* as a "13-year-old nymphomaniac who looked as though she were 16."<sup>164</sup> By 1969, the story was still in circulation enough that at least one

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<sup>163</sup> "3 at Yale Arrested on Morals Charge," *NYT*, January 19, 1960; "20 at Yale Fined in Morals Case," *NYT*, January 28, 1960; Lance Liebman, "City Court Convicts 20 Students of Misdemeanor," *YDN*, January 28, 1960; *Yale Class Book 1961* (New Haven: Yale Banner Publications, 1961); *Yale Class Book 1962* (New Haven: Yale Banner Publications, 1962); *Yale Class Book 1963* (New Haven: Yale Banner Publications, 1963); *Yale Class Book 1964* (New Haven: Yale Banner Publications, 1964); Chauncey interview, 2017; Robert Blanc and Thomas Inoze, "Outdated Rule," letter to the ed., *YDN*, May 11, 1964.

<sup>164</sup> "Only 9 Girls Represent Smith at Junior Prom," *YDN*, February 23, 1962; Gideon Gordon, "Yale Freshmen Prefer Smithies," *YDN*, March 2, 1962; Zick Rubin, "Girls from Vassar, Girls Named Susie to Dominate Prom," *YDN*, March 1, 1963; "Vassar Again Dominates NEWS Prom Analysis," *YDN*, February 28, 1964; "Freshmen Instigate Two Riots; City Streets Blocked by Students," *YDN*, April 13, 1964; George Kannar and Hugh Spitzer, "Parietals: Up for Revision?" *YDN*, November 28, 1967.

woman freshman knew about it and, based on what she had heard, had imagined what Susie was like: “What I had envisaged ‘Calhoun Susie’ to be was some whore, who enjoyed and ‘asked’ for it. Some blowsy floozy.” Later, the woman realized that Susie was nothing more than a scared, teenage girl.<sup>165</sup>

The Susie incident reflects attitudes about class at Yale as much as those about sex. Yale men had long maintained a distinction between “townie” girls like Susie and the girls who visited on weekends from schools like Vassar and Smith. This latter group might include the woman they would one day marry; the townies were the girls with whom Yale men had sex.<sup>166</sup> Once Yale’s first women undergraduates arrived, however, earlier boundaries around sexual behavior became more blurred, at least for some Yale men.

Of the varieties of sexual assault examined in this study, date rape and acquaintance rape were the least discussed and least understood in the early 1970s. The terms themselves were not even coined until 1987, twenty years after women students arrived at Yale.<sup>167</sup> As Lorna Sarrel observed, in the early years of coeducation “sexual assault and rape were not front and center of our awareness or awareness on the campus. It really was still hush-hush, like pretending it never happens.” “Who did we think was raped?” she asked her husband Phil in an interview many years later. “I suspect we didn’t

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<sup>165</sup> Geismar, 82.

<sup>166</sup> Robert Mascia, “Townies: The Perennial Myth,” *YDN*, September 24, 1968; Sarrels interview, 2016; Chauncey interview, 2017.

<sup>167</sup> Rosen, 184.

think it was Yale men raping Yale women.” “No,” Phil replied, “We would never have thought of that.” Other Yale administrators who worked with women students were similarly unaware.<sup>168</sup>

Because understanding of date and acquaintance rape lagged the start of coeducation so significantly, the evidence of their occurrence at Yale in these years is thinner than that on the other varieties of sexual harassment and assault addressed in this section. Yet there is enough evidence to merit mention. When undergraduates shared accounts of their sexual experiences with Lorna and Phil Sarrel at the Yale Sex Counseling service, they sometimes referenced sexual assault. “We always did detailed sexual histories, and first intercourse is an important part of that sexual history,” explained Lorna Sarrel. “And many times I would hear, ‘Oh, I didn’t have a very good experience the first time.’”

Over weeks of talking about it, it would turn out that it was a sexual assault. The women did not want to recognize that themselves. They certainly didn’t want to talk about that . . . In some instances, the word rape may have applied, and to see yourself as victimized in that way is not easy. So there was a lot of denial. And of course at the professional level there was also a kind of denial.<sup>169</sup>

Date rape also came up in a discussion of the Yale Sisterhood, an undergraduate women’s group founded in the spring of 1970. Betty Spahn, one of the Sisterhood’s founders, remembers.

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<sup>168</sup> Sarrels interview, 2016; Chauncey interview, 2017; Thomas Peterson interview, 2017; Jacqueline Wei Mintz, interview by Florence Minnis, December 9, 2008, RU1051, 59.

<sup>169</sup> Sarrels interview, 2016. See also "Yale Sex Counselors at YHC Offer Unique Student Service," *YDN*, September 28, 1971, box 2, folder 1, MS1922.

A lot of the women had gone on a date and had been forced into having sexual relations on that date, and felt guilty about it. Their skirt was too short; they had somehow given the wrong signals; and they were carrying this guilt and shame around with them. Of course, at that time, we didn't have language for any of this, what we would today call date rape . . . The consciousness-raising sessions were real eye openers for me, because I had been very sheltered and very lucky, and the men in my life had never -- I had no idea this was going on. None. No idea. And the other women, to whom it had happened, had no idea it was so widespread.<sup>170</sup>

Audrey Tucker, who arrived as a freshman at Yale in 1973, used a poem to describe an experience that happened her junior year.

I WAS INVITED BY A SENIOR TO TALK  
I VISITED HIS ROOM TO TALK  
HE WOULD NOT ALLOW ME TO LEAVE  
I SCRATCHED AND CLAWED AND DREW BLOOD  
TO NO AVAIL  
DAMN  
I WAS RAPED ANYWAY.<sup>171</sup>

All of this was largely invisible in early 1970s Yale, however. The language, understanding, and ability to shift societal attitudes towards victims of sexual crimes was still years away. Instead, early women activists at Yale focused their energies on the discrimination that everyone was able to see.

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<sup>170</sup> Spahn interview, 2017.

<sup>171</sup> Buttenheim, 19.

CHAPTER FOUR  
FIGHTING FOR EQUITY, 1970-1973

January 1970 marked the start of the second semester of undergraduate coeducation at Yale, and with it the emergence of an activism that sought to move the university from the superficial shift of enrolling a few women to the deeper changes that true equity required. On January 29, eighteen women students from Yale Law School, accompanied by one male classmate, sat down at the polished oak tables at Mory's for lunch, and waited to see what would happen.<sup>1</sup>

Today Mory's is just a withered version of its former self, a white clapboard house tucked in between a bar called Toad's Place and the towering Hall of Graduate Studies. Tables go empty at lunchtime. But in the 1960s, Mory's fairly throbbed with power. It was the place to meet at Yale, the venue for department meetings, lunches with job recruiters, dinners with outside guests, and regular concerts by the Whiffenpoofs, the Yale singing group that Cole Porter had been in. Professors lunched with students there; department chairs hosted candidates for job openings; formal meetings elsewhere would

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<sup>1</sup> "Women's Liberation Enters Male Mory's," *YDN*, February 9, 1970; Thomas Kent, "'Up from Under': Women Seek Liberation," *YDN*, March 6, 1970; Laura Kalman, *Yale Law School and the Sixties: Revolt and Reverberations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 197.



end with a “Let’s go to Mory’s.” And why not? Mory’s was a cozy, clubby place, with lots of dark wood, walls filled with photos of Yale sports teams and captains, and a see-and-be-seen main dining room where one might bump into President Brewster having lunch with a key staff member, or members of the Yale Corporation relaxing after their meeting in Woodbridge Hall. But Mory’s did not allow women members in 1970. It did not even allow women to enter the main dining room before 5:00 pm, and even then only if escorted by a man.<sup>2</sup>

The women law students caused quite a stir. They left when the maître d’ threatened to have them arrested for trespassing, but their sit-in was merely the first skirmish in a battle that would become one of the many frontlines of activism at Yale between 1970 and 1973. Over the next three years, women’s collective efforts at change encompassed a host of issues: enabling women students to participate in Yale’s sports teams and singing groups, adding women’s studies to the curriculum, increasing the numbers of women faculty and administrators above the single digit percentages at which they hovered, and ending the “no women” policy at Mory’s. Of the multiple targets of activism at Yale in those years, however, perhaps the most fundamental was the push to overturn Yale’s first rule of coeducation: the gender discrimination in admissions that kept women students as a small minority at Yale, thus robbing them of a voice in every other matter.

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<sup>2</sup> Daphna Renan, “To the Tables Down at Mory’s: Equality as Membership and Leadership in Places of Public Accommodations,” *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 16, no. 2 (2004), 241-245, accessed February 13, 2018 from <http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/>; Clark interview, May 1993, 13; “A Woman’s Place,” in Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 49; Greenfield, *YAM*, June 1973, 25.

Unlike the media attention that shaped the early months of coeducation, the hardships caused by Yale's gender quotas did not end with the first semester. Women still faced the simultaneous exposure and invisibility of the token, still found it hard to meet other women, and still lived with the evidence that they were auxiliary to, rather than part of, the university's core mission. Not all women undergraduates experienced Yale in the same way. Some simply felt lucky to be there, and others created for themselves a safe space within the university as a whole. But for many, the first year at Yale brought with it the shock of realizing that they had not enrolled in a coed school, but rather a men's college that had let in a few women.<sup>3</sup>

Yale's men undergraduates were no happier with this partial coeducation than the women were. Back in November 1968, both Avi Soifer's Coeducation Week committee and SDS leader Mark Zanger had argued for the admission of men and women in equal numbers, and even the *Yale Daily News*, a more conservative voice on campus, pushed back at the thousand-men quota. On January 21, 1970, the outgoing *News* board used its final editorial to urge that Yale adopt the most obvious solution to its gender imbalance: admit fewer men in order to admit more women. Their argument was not grounded in concepts of equity but rather the goal of making Yale a "more natural place" by bringing its gender ratio in line with the world at large. Nonetheless, the student editors of the *News*, all men, rejected both the notion that Yale had a national obligation to graduate a

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<sup>3</sup> *Women at Yale College*, 2010, comments by Cynthia Margolin Brill; Wasserman interview, 1995, 23; Story-Johnson interview, 2017; Tedford interview, 2016; Preston, *New Journal*, December 1970, 8-10; "Coeds on Coeducation," *YAM*, April 1970; Berkan interview, 2017.

certain number of men each year, and the assumption that women would never be leaders.<sup>4</sup>

The opposition to reducing the numbers of male undergraduates at Yale, however, was both powerful and longstanding. At the center was Brewster, but the idea that coeducation should leave untouched the number of male undergraduates had originated before he was even president. It was Yale's faculty that first proposed this directive. Their 1962 report on the freshman year stated not only that Yale should admit women undergraduates, but that in so doing "there should be no reduction in the number of men admitted to Yale College." In 1966, when Brewster and the Yale Corporation first considered bringing a woman's college to New Haven, they reiterated this position, and by November 1968, when Brewster set forth the ground rules of coeducation, "no reduction in the number of male matriculants" was top among them.<sup>5</sup> It would take more than a *Yale Daily News* editorial to change that.

### **The First Steps Toward Change: Spring 1970**

#### **Student Protest**

February 21 marked the start of collective action to increase the numbers of women undergraduates at Yale. A thousand business-suited alumni, their wives in

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<sup>4</sup> Coed Steering Committee, November 8, 1968, RU86; Zanger, *YDN*, October 4, 1968; "But Dink Remains," editorial, *YDN*, January 21, 1970. For conservatism of the *Yale Daily News*, see Lever and Schwartz, 244; Temoshok interview, 2016; Wofford interview, 1990; Cookie Polan, "The Dilemma of the NEWS," editorial, *YDN*, May 7, 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Doob, 1962, 12; Karabel, 417; Brewster, November 18, 1968, RU126.

cocktail dresses beside them, had gathered in the Yale Commons for the annual alumni luncheon, but before Kingman Brewster could begin his remarks, forty young women students came in through a side door carrying protest signs. Student Kit McClure had never done anything like this before. “It was scary,” she recalled. The demonstration was a first for McClure’s classmate Margaret Coon as well, and Coon was nervous as she approached President Brewster and asked if she could use his microphone. “There are not enough of us,” she told the crowd before her. “We ask that Yale admit 1,000 students next year: 700 men and 300 women.”<sup>6</sup>

The day before, Coon and a small group of male and female undergraduates had brainstormed over lunch about how they might use the alumni gathering as a way to move Yale towards a more equitable gender ratio. The group named themselves “Women and Men for a Better Yale”, and planned a quick and respectful protest in which just the women would take part. It went exactly as planned. They easily recruited a few dozen women undergraduates to join them. Coon took just three minutes to deliver the remarks they had agreed on. The students left the luncheon immediately after she handed the mike back to Brewster. But the results were not what they had hoped. “I had thought that an issue like admitting men and women to Yale College on an equal basis would not be

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<sup>6</sup> Margaret Coon, "Our Call for True Education," in Hoffman and Polon, 26-27; Kathleen McClure, diary, ca May 1970, copy in author's possession; McClure interview, 2017; "Yale Coeds Invade Alumni Fete to Protest Male Dominance," *NYT*, February 22, 1970; Richard Fuchs, "Girls Demand Fewer Men, More Women," *YDN*, February 23, 1970. The remaining account of this incident is based on these sources as well, with additional citations as noted.

considered extremely threatening to Yale,” Kit McClure wrote in her diary later. “I was mistaken.”

Some in the audience laughed as Coon spoke; Brewster chuckled. After the students left, alumni board chairman Melville Chapin acted as if nothing had happened, and proceeded to present the planned alumni awards to the three men sitting at the dais beside him. When it came time for Brewster to speak, however, he did not ignore the protest. Coeducation is a “terrific success,” he told the audience. He would not renege, however, on “Yale’s educational responsibility to the nation,” nor would he “increase the number of women at Yale at the expense of the number of men.” Brewster went on to deliver a speech on Yale’s finances, and the thousand alumni and their wives rewarded him with a standing ovation. At the end of the lunch, the room stood and sang Yale’s anthem, “Bright College Years”, pulling out their handkerchiefs and waving them overhead, as traditional, for the closing words: “For God, for country, and for Yale.”<sup>7</sup>

The alumni lunch protest was a “very ‘un-Yale’ thing to do,” observed Yale graduate students Janet Lever and Pepper Schwartz,<sup>8</sup> but the standard channels of change were closed to women at Yale. The leadership roles of Yale’s most powerful extracurricular organizations were all held by men; Elga Wasserman, Yale’s most highly placed woman administrator, had no one reporting to her save her secretary and an

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<sup>7</sup> "Coeds Invade Alumni Luncheon, Call for Enrollment Reduction," *YDN*, February 23, 1970.

<sup>8</sup> Lever and Schwartz, 253.

administrative intern; and not a single member of the Yale Corporation was a woman.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, many of the reactions to the protest responded as much to the audacity of the women's speaking out as to the substance of their request. The *New York Times* registered its shock through the language in its page-one story. "About 40 of Yale University's new coeds invaded a quiet Alumni Day luncheon . . . and, with clenched fists and placards, protested the ratio of women to men," the article began. "One coed strode to the dais, seized a microphone and lectured the 1,000 stunned guests." Peggy Coon, the striding coed, was in fact a freshman from Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, and all of nineteen years old. But if any alumnus had been predisposed to view the protest negatively, the *Times* account ensured he did so.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the alumni who attended the event, at least the older ones quoted in the *Yale Daily News*, were taken aback. "I think it was a bit presumptuous of them," said a member of the Class of 1926. "You invite them here, and now they want to take over the place." A younger alumnus deemed the students' request "reasonable," but some of the criticism degenerated into personal attack. "No wonder you're feminists—you're so ugly," one alumnus told a group of girls of which Kit McClure was a part. And while the male students of Women and Men for a Better Yale understood the need for change, that view was not universal. "From male Yalies we heard, 'Women's liberation? What you

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<sup>9</sup> Wasserman to Jonathan Fanton, September 28, 1971, box 3, folder 1, RU821B; Masthead, *YDN*, January 26, 1970; Barnett interview, 1990; Wilkinson to Wasserman, October 14, 1970, RU821A; Marcus, *YDN*, February 3, 1976; Yale University, "Former Trustees."

<sup>10</sup> "Yale Coeds," *NYT*, February 22, 1970.

need is a good lay,” McClure wrote in careful cursive in her diary. “The reactions disturbed and surprised me.”<sup>11</sup>

The protest and its coverage ignited widespread discussion throughout the campus. A *Yale Daily News* editorial used for the first time the word “discrimination” to describe Yale’s admissions policy, and pointed out the inconsistency between Yale’s steps to end admissions bias “against blacks, public school graduates, and non-alumni sons” and its continued exclusion of qualified women. Admissions Dean Inky Clark, who by then had announced his intention to resign, told the *Yale Alumni Magazine* that the quota on women should be abolished. Kingman Brewster, however, dismissed the demonstrators as a “much too small band of women undergraduates.”<sup>12</sup>

Women and Men for a Better Yale responded by circulating a petition that went even further than Peggy Coon’s remarks: Yale should select the students in the Class of 1974 based on “qualifications alone, not on the basis of their sex.” Within three days, the group obtained 1,700 signatures, a third of the student body.<sup>13</sup> The use of a petition was particularly significant in the context of a major address with which Brewster had opened the academic year. The speech, delivered to a crowd of four hundred and covered by the national press, was Brewster’s solution to the student demands for greater voice that had

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<sup>11</sup> "Coeds," *YDN*, February 23, 1970; McClure diary, 1970.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Goldberger, "Girls at Yale," *Todays Education* 59, no. 7 (October 1970): 51; Temoshok interview, 2016; "Male Enrollment," editorial, *YDN*, February 27, 1970; Gordon, *YAM*, March 1970, 34; Fuchs, *YDN*, February 23, 1970.

<sup>13</sup> "Petition Signers Increase; Group Sees Brewster," *YDN*, February 27, 1970; Women’s Advisory Committee minutes, February 26, 1970, RU821A.

unsettled campuses across the nation. Brewster rejected the “participatory democracy” which had been a central tenet of the youth movement since the phrase first appeared in the 1962 Port Huron statement, and rejected with it the idea of giving either students or faculty a seat on the Yale Corporation. Instead, Brewster put forth the solution of “administrative accountability.” The concept had three components: transparency, regular performance reviews of the university president, and “the right of petition by those affected by decisions.”<sup>14</sup>

In using a petition to register their dissatisfaction with Yale’s gender quota, Women and Men for a Better Yale were doing exactly what Brewster had asked, but he was unmoved. “I think it would be far better for Yale and the country to coeducate by expansion,” Brewster told the *Yale Daily News*. Yale would continue to graduate its one thousand men each year.<sup>15</sup>

The issue came to a head at the Yale Corporation meeting on March 7, 1970. The Corporation members, all men, met with Women and Men for a Better Yale beforehand. Yale’s trustees received the petition, which by then had grown to more than 1,900 signatures, and declared themselves impressed with the students’ arguments. They then

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<sup>14</sup> Tom Warren, "Brewster Closes the Door on Participatory Democracy," *YDN*, September 25, 1969; John Darnton, "Yale Head Suggests a Limit to His Term," *NYT*, September 25, 1969; "Universities in Ferment," *Newsweek*, June 15, 1970, 69; Tom Hayden, "Participatory Democracy: From the Port Huron Statement to Occupy Wall Street," *The Nation*, March 27, 2012; Charles Sprague, "Brewster Calls Upon the Corporation to Reassess his Tenure in 1971," *YDN*, September 25, 1969.

<sup>15</sup> "Petition," *YDN*, February 27, 1970.



voted to leave Yale's admissions policy just as it was.<sup>16</sup> For Kit McClure, this was the last straw. That month, she and sophomore Betty Spahn, who had also been politicized by her experiences at Yale, started Yale's first undergraduate feminist organization, the Sisterhood.<sup>17</sup> Over the next three years, the group would provide the support to its members that Yale had not, and become the most vocal student group pushing to end Yale's discrimination against women.

### **The Activism of Black Women**

Like their white classmates, Yale's black women undergraduates worked for change during their time at Yale, but their efforts focused on greater equity for black women and men, rather than improving the lot of women as a whole. Yale's forty black women students grew up with stories of family members facing discrimination because of race, not gender, and when pushed to dissect their own identity, placed race above gender as well. "I pictured myself more a black person first, a woman second," explained Darial Sneed, one of the twenty-five black women in the Class of 1973. Junior Vera Wells felt the same. "We had so many problems as people of color, that that's where the energy

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<sup>16</sup> Yale University, "Former Trustees"; "Last Chance," editorial, *YDN*, March 6, 1970; Treaster, *NYT*, April 14, 1970; Richard Fuchs, "Trustees Reaffirm Endorsement of Coeducation by Expansion," *YDN*, March 9, 1970.

<sup>17</sup> McClure diary, 1970; McClure interview, 2017; Spahn interview, 2017; Rudden interview, 2017.

needed to be, and we didn't need anything to take us away from that. Yeah, I probably would not have seen myself as a feminist."<sup>18</sup>

Black women students' distance from white gender-based activism at Yale reflected a racial divide within the women's movement as a whole. Women's liberation, observed historian Sarah Evans, emerged in "a context of racial polarization in the broader society," and this separatism included US college campuses. Following Stokely Carmichael's June 1966 Black Power speech, black college students across the country embraced the ideology of Black Power, which rejected the integration that had left many black students isolated and alienated, and instead called for racial solidarity, self-determination, and the celebration of Black culture."<sup>19</sup>

It was no different at Yale. "We knew we had dreamed white dreams long enough," wrote senior Skip Gates in his 1973 yearbook. "To understand, to preserve ourselves as black people . . . we turned inward individually and collectively." Black and white women roommates were friendly, but with rare exception did not become close friends. Black and white women students were politically active, but not always on the same issues, and not often as part of the same group. And while the Sisterhood became active on a wide range of women's issues, black women, both nationally and at Yale,

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<sup>18</sup> Sneed interview, 1990; Wells interview, 2017. See also "The Vanguard," *YAM*, October 1979, 26; Storey-Johnson interview, 2017; Daniels interview, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Evans, 2015, 142; Simon Hall, *American Patriotism, American Protest: Social Movements Since the Sixties* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 54-55; Rosen, 14, 32, 281-282; Peniel E. Joseph, "The Black Power Movement: A State of the Field," *Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (December 2009): 755; Williamson, 94.

instead saw friction over gender equity as a potential threat to unity within the black civil rights movement.<sup>20</sup> When black freshman Linda Bunch attended the alumni lunch protest on February 21, she did not like what she heard. “We listened to the speaker, but it sounded more like an anti-male than a pro-female kind of thing, so we left.”<sup>21</sup>

The women’s movement as a whole was also criticized for equating the experience of white middle class women with that of all women. NOW founder Betty Friedan may have lit a fire within other college-educated white women when she wrote of the despair of the suburban housewife in *The Feminine Mystique*, but the book did not speak to the condition of women of other races and classes. As black activist Frances Beale wrote in 1970, “The economic and social realities of the black woman’s life are the most crucial for us.”<sup>22</sup> In addition to chastising the women’s movement for ignoring racism, Beale criticized black activists who “exerted their ‘manhood’ by telling black women to step back into a domestic submissive role.” But black women rarely saw the US women’s movement as the vehicle for solving any of these problems.<sup>23</sup> When white student Cookie Polan surveyed Yale black undergraduates, she found that black women students felt no connection with the women’s liberation movement. “Black liberation

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<sup>20</sup> Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Through the Veil," *The 1973 Yale Banner*, 145; Bernick interview, 2016; Daniels interview, 2017; Deinhardt interview, 2017; Hartmann interview, 2017; Mintz interview, 2017; Newman interview, 2017; Sneed interview, 1990; Storey-Johnson interview, 2017; Tedford interview, 2016; Traut interview, 1990; Wells interview, 2017; Hall, 55.

<sup>21</sup> "The Vanguard," *YAM*, October 1979, 26

<sup>22</sup> Rosen, 14, 32, 281.

<sup>23</sup> Jo Freeman, *We Will Be Heard: Women’s Struggles for Political Power in the United States* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 97; Rosen, 281-282.

took priority for the women answering: all saw women as equal to men in the context of the black struggle,” Polan reported. “Women’s liberation was seen as a white middle class movement.”<sup>24</sup>

With rare exception, Yale’s black women students thus did not become involved in the efforts to end Yale’s gender quotas, and are hence largely absent from the narrative that follows. It is important to note, however, that black women students at Yale engaged in a wide range of activism, just not on the issue that is the focus of the remainder of this dissertation. Linda Bunch, who had left the alumni lunch protest early, was one of a group of BSAY members who met with Sam Chauncey to discuss issues of concern to black undergraduates. Sophomore Shirley Daniels oversaw the BSAY’s massive effort to recruit black high school students to Yale, through which black undergraduates traveled to high schools in nineteen different cities, from Los Angeles and San Diego to Detroit, Little Rock, and Philadelphia. Freshman Darial Sneed took part in an October 1969 protest at Yale Law School, at which students concerned about police harassment of black students and residents entered classrooms chanting ““Stop the Cops!” and distributed a proposal calling for a civilian police review board, racial sensitivity training, and a national study of racism and policing to be conducted by Yale Law School.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Diane Polan, “Black Women and Women’s Liberation: Is there a Connection?” final paper for Sociology 62A, January 1971, box 12, folder 132, RU578A, 25. Findings based on questionnaires completed by sixteen black undergraduates at Yale.

<sup>25</sup> Sam Chauncey to Carl Banyard et al., February 18, 1972 and May 4, 1972, box 3, folder 59, RU52, Accession 1977-A-008 (hereafter cited as RU52A); Chauncey interview, 2017; Black Student Alliance at Yale to Mr. Henry Chauncey, memorandum, October 21, 1971, box 3, folder 59, RU52A; Sneed interview,

While these efforts focused on race without regard to gender, some black women undergraduates were also active on women's issues. This work was within rather than across lines of race, however, thus emphasizing instead of erasing the unique experience of black women. "As time went on," Shirley Daniels explained, "we noticed that there was a kind of totem pole situation, and that black women were at the bottom of it. There were white men, black men, white women, and black women." US wage statistics put numbers on Daniels' observation. While the median salary of white men who worked full-time in 1968 was \$7,900, it fell to \$5,300 for black men, \$4,600 for white women, and \$3,500 for black women.<sup>26</sup>

Daniels and a number of other black women students began meeting to talk about their experience as black women. "We decided that our issues were pretty significant and very unique, and that we needed to focus on understanding where we fit in American society. What does it mean to be a black woman? Because a lot of times, black women don't think about who they are and what they are, and what they need to do. We basically serve everybody else in the world." Action followed discussion. Daniels and black sophomores Sheila Jackson and Jeryll Kemp organized a welcoming conference for black women in the Class of 1974,<sup>27</sup> and black junior Vera Wells led an effort to correct the absence of black women in Yale's faculty and curriculum.

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1990; Nick Perensovich, "Blacks Give Reply to Grievance Plan," *YDN*, October 21, 1969; Tom Warren and John Coots, "Law Dean Recommends Mild Rebuke for Blacks," *YDN*, October 30, 1969.

<sup>26</sup> Daniels interview, 2017; "Who's Come a Long Way, Baby?" *Time*, August 31, 1970, 17.

Wells had spent her first two years of college at Howard University, and was taken aback at how white the faculty at Yale was. She spoke to her classmate Cecilia McDaniel about it, and together the two wondered: “Why couldn’t we have a course dealing with black women?” By spring 1970 Wells had put together an application for a residential college seminar that would study black women leaders from Nzinga and Nefertite through Sojourner Truth and Rosa Parks. “The Black Woman: Yesterday and Today” was offered the following fall. Demand was so high that Sylvia Boone, the Hunter College professor whom McDaniel and Wells recruited to teach the course, had to offer two different sessions.<sup>28</sup>

In December 1970, Wells and Boone organized the first academic conference in the US on the experience and history of the black woman. A rapt crowd of two hundred listened to Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Gwendolyn Brooks, the poet laureate of Illinois; Maya Angelou, whose *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* had just been published; author and activist Shirley Graham DuBois, the widow of W.E.B. DuBois; and black cultural historian John Henrik Clarke. The substance of what was said resonated for many months, but the symbolism mattered as well. Yale’s prestigious Chubb Fellowship had funded the event, and Brooks, Angelou, and DuBois were the first women ever named as Chubb fellows. As Wells observed, “To be the focus of a Chubb Seminar put you in the ranks of some of the most prominent people in the world.” The conference drew full-page

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<sup>27</sup> Daniels interview, 2017; Constance Royster interview by author, New Haven, May 29, 2017.

<sup>28</sup> Wells lecture, 2017; Wells interview, 2017; Elga Wasserman, "Enrollment in Women's Studies Courses, 1970-71," Fall 1971, box 12, folder 137, RU578A.

coverage in both the *New York Times* and *Jet*, thus underlining the importance of black women at Yale.<sup>29</sup>

### **Women on the Agenda**

Yale's black women students were not the only ones who prioritized other issues than the women's liberation movement. Opposition to the Vietnam War dominated student protests at Yale during the first semester of coeducation, and every month saw a new event that kept the war at the forefront of student concern: the October 15 National Vietnam Moratorium, the November 15 March on Washington, the December 1 Vietnam War draft lottery.<sup>30</sup> Concerns about America's racial divide energized white students as well as black, and many spent time volunteering as tutors and teachers for New Haven youth.<sup>31</sup> "The turmoil that was occurring in terms of the war and race was more present for me than women's issues," explains white student Kathy Jelly, a junior in 1969. "Shortly after I left Yale, I did join a consciousness-raising women's group, and our

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<sup>29</sup> "To Analyze the Roles of the Black Woman in Society," *YAM*, January, 1971, 38; Wells lecture, 2017; Wells interview, 2017; Thomas Johnson, "Yale Conference Studies Role of Black Women," *NYT*, December 14, 1970; Carole Parks, "Today's Black Woman Examines Her Role with Black Men," *Jet*, January 14, 1971, 24-27.

<sup>30</sup> Jeffrey Gordon, "50,000 Mass at Convocation on Green," *YDN*, October 16, 1969; Jeffrey Gordon, "Washington Peace Rally Biggest Ever," *YDN*, November 17, 1969; Nicholas Perensovich, "September 14 Comes Out on Top in First Draft Lottery Since 1942," *YDN*, December 2, 1969.

<sup>31</sup> Bishop interview, 1990; Darling interview, 1990; Maillet Main interview, 2017; Royster interview, 2016; Wofford interview, 1990; "Blacks at a White University," *YDN*, April 27, 1971.

feminism was central to us. But at Yale, although I had interests and concerns regarding sexism, the more disturbing occurrences related to the war and to race.”<sup>32</sup>

Those who took action to challenge Yale’s treatment of women in that first year of coeducation were thus just a small minority. But they were enough, and over the spring, the momentum towards change continued to build. On the weekend of February 28, one week after the protest at the alumni luncheon, five hundred women and a noticeable contingent of men gathered at the Yale Law School, right in the middle of campus, for the Free Women Conference. The event, billed as “four days of events by and about women,” was organized by the Yale Graduate Women’s Alliance and the Yale Law Women’s Association, feminist groups that had both begun that fall. It offered feminist films, speakers, and workshops, and gave women from Yale and the surrounding community a venue to meet one another and begin organizing for change.<sup>33</sup> “Last weekend I attended a woman’s conference here and got this incredible lift,” explained Yale junior Judy Berkan. “It was the first time since I had been at Yale that I had really spoken to girls.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Jelly interview, 2017. See also Bernick interview, 2016; Geismar, Rice and Winant, 52, 69; Dahlia Rudavsky interview by author, Newton, MA, November 18, 2017; Wofford interview, 1990.

<sup>33</sup> Barbara Packer and Karen Waggoner, “Yale and the New Sisterhood,” *YAM*, April 1970, 27-31; “Free Women Conference,” flier, February 1970, box 4, folder “Women and Co-education,” RU86A; “Dinner Drama: Women’s Liberation Acts,” *YDN*, February 25, 1970; *Yale Break*, newsletter, April 6, 1970, box 58, folder 388, RU19-II; Judith Plaskow, *The Coming of Lilith: Essays on Feminism, Judaism, and Sexual Ethics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005), 6-7; Kalman, 195. The Graduate Women’s Alliance originally called itself simply the Yale Women’s Alliance, but with the growing number of Yale women’s groups soon added the “Graduate” to its name for clarity.

<sup>34</sup> Eddy, *YAM*, April 1970, 39.



A highlight of the conference was the two keynote speeches on Friday night, the first by Kate Millett and the second by Naomi Weisstein. Millet was a few weeks away from defending her Columbia University dissertation, the work that would be published that spring as *Sexual Politics*, and, with its application of Marxist theory to gender relations, become a seminal work of second wave feminism. By the time Millet made the August 1970 cover of *Time*, glowering out from the newsstands with her sleeves rolled up, *Sexual Politics* was already in its fourth printing. That night at Yale, Millett argued that if women were to achieve the deep transformation needed in US gender relations, they needed to go further than changing a few laws. Yale junior Linda Temoshok was in the audience. “Questions were fiery and there was a current of excitement, no doubt aided by shouts of ‘Right on!’ or Kate Millett’s ‘We have 53% -- the most powerful political force in the nation!’” she wrote in her diary.<sup>35</sup>

Weisstein followed Millett. She had graduated from Harvard in 1964 with a PhD in psychology, and told the audience about the gender discrimination she had faced in academia. Individual attainment of credentials, no matter how impeccable, she argued, was not enough. Women graduate students faced roadblock after roadblock in attaining their degrees, and then were denied jobs and grants even after they had them. Weisstein’s

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<sup>35</sup> Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1970); Doherty, *The New Republic*, March 23, 2016; *Time*, August 31, 1970, cover, 16; *Yale Break*, April 6, 1970, 6; Temoshok diary, 1970.

message was clear, wrote a Yale woman graduate afterward. "Changes in social structures require a social movement." You can't do it alone.<sup>36</sup>

The Free Women conference sold out all its women's liberation literature and buttons and had to send away to Baltimore for new supplies. It generated discussions groups on abortion, women and the law, and coeducation at Yale. It produced a two-page document, "Unofficial Proposals for Equality," that identified a range of priorities for action: create a Women's Studies department, increase the percentage of women faculty at Yale to match that of women students, provide daycare and maternity leave, end salary inequity and the division of job categories into those for women and those for men. And there on the list, under the heading "WHY NOT DEMAND," was the following: "a 50-50 undergraduate admissions policy beginning with the Class of 1974."<sup>37</sup>

Even those who did not attend the conference found it hard to ignore. Fliers advertising the event had been papered all over campus, and a group of eight women, including Kit McClure on trombone, paraded through college dining halls the Tuesday before urging women to attend. The *Yale Daily News* ran a long front-page story on it and on women's liberation as a whole, and those who had not understood the difference between NOW's strategy of working within the system and more radical feminists'

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<sup>36</sup> Leila McNeill, "This Feminist Psychologist-Turned-Rock-Star Led a Full Life of Resistance," *Smithsonian Magazine*, April 7, 2017, accessed August 1, 2017 from <http://www.smithsonianmag.com>; Packer and Waggoner, *YAM*, April 1970, 30, italics in original; Plaskow, 7.

<sup>37</sup> Kent, *YDN*, March 6, 1970; "Free Women" flier, February 1970; Florence Bayard et al., "Discussion," July 1973, box 1, folder 1, MS 1985; A Number of Yale Women, "Unofficial Proposals for Equality," February 29, 1970, box 4, folder "Women and Co-education," RU86A.

challenge of the assumptions on which the system was structured were given a primer on the topic.<sup>38</sup> The status of women had finally made the agenda at Yale.

On March 26, a letter to Kingman Brewster heightened the issue still further. Assistant Professor Keith Thomas was one of ten faculty members on the Yale Admissions Committee, and over the previous weeks had seen first-hand the impact of Yale's "thousand male leaders" quota. "I am not naturally a petition signer or a writer of hectoring letters," Thomas began, "but this is a matter that has affected me considerably in the last few days." The problem was the cap on women students, which was resulting, in Thomas' estimation, in the rejection of 400 women candidates "who have every qualification for acceptance" and another 250 on the waiting list with "qualifications that many of our male candidates would envy." Thomas proposed a modest solution: free up one hundred slots in the Class of 1974 that were currently reserved for men, and make them available to women. Otherwise, we must "reject exceptionally well-qualified women in large numbers and at the same time accept some 10% of men who are . . . relatively less impressive." The next day English Instructor Paula Johnson, the only women of the ten faculty members on the committee, wrote Brewster as well. Yale's thousand men quota, she argued, "results in a crueler double standard than the simple exclusion of women ever did."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Bayard et al., July 1973; Packer and Waggoner, *YAM*, April 1970, 27-31; "Dinner Drama," *YDN*, February 25, 1970; Kent, *YDN*, March 6, 1970.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas to Brewster, March 26, 1970, box 1, folder 8, RU821A, underlines in original; Johnson to Brewster, March 27, 1970, box 1, folder 8, RU821A.

The committee members' concerns about gender discrimination were well founded. In April, a study of applicants to Yale's Class of 1974 found that women students had to be in the top 5 percent of their high school class to be accepted by Yale, while men needed only to rank in the top 30 percent. A subsequent analysis by Yale's Office of Institutional Research confirmed the gender bias by examining the differences in how men and women fared according to the thirty-six-point scale used by the Yale Admissions Office. Of candidates for the Class of 1974 who scored between nineteen and twenty-four, for example, 91 percent of the men were accepted compared with 71 percent of the women.<sup>40</sup>

Yale was not alone in discriminating against women applicants. In 1969, selective US liberal arts colleges accepted 92 percent of men who were in the top fifth of their high school class, but only 62 percent of the women. Of students who ranked in the second fifth of their class, 58 percent of men were accepted and 18 percent of the women. In the third fifth and below, 36 percent of the men got in, compared with 4 percent of the women.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> University Committee on Coeducation, "Comparison of Male and Female Applicants," March 1970, box 22, folder 908, RU821A; Admissions Office Annual Report, 1971-72, box 3, folder 113, RU52B, table 4, percentage calculations by author. In addition to the rejection of women candidates with the same score as men, I wondered whether admissions discrimination occurred in the initial ranking of candidates as well. My analysis of Office of Institutional Research data for the Class of 1975 found that this did *not* occur. On the personal rankings, for example, 18 percent of both women and men received an 11 out of the possible 18 points; on the academic rankings, 10 percent of both women and men received a 12 out of the possible 18. Gender-based gaps were within two percentage points on every category, with women scoring slightly higher overall.

<sup>41</sup> Patricia Cross, "The Woman Student," in Furniss and Graham, 34. Cross' study was based on 1969 data from the College Entrance Examination Board.

The heat on Yale's admissions discrimination continued to rise. On April 6, the *Yale Daily News* ran the issue as its lead story. If the admissions committee had made its decisions without regard to gender, committee member John Ostrom told the *News*, three hundred acceptance letters mailed out to men would have instead gone to women. The *New York Times* picked up the story, and got a quote from Admissions Dean Inky Clark. The admissions committee "was frustrated over turning away many highly qualified women. Only one of every 14 women applicants for next year's freshman class could be accepted, compared with one out of 7.5 men."<sup>42</sup>

Change was in the air. The *Yale Alumni Magazine* devoted its entire April issue to the state of coeducation at Yale, including one article with the teaser: "Two of the new feminists report on the women's liberation movement and what the University should do about it." The *New York Times* reported that "a general campaign for women's rights has been mounted" at Yale. Dining hall conversations buzzed with the topic, and over in Vanderbilt Hall, the Yale Sisterhood held its first meeting. "At long last," observed one male junior, "women were beginning to be viewed as a factor to be reckoned with."<sup>43</sup> And then came May Day, and the conversations at Yale about equity for women came to a halt.

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<sup>42</sup> Bill Robbins, "Size Restrictions Keep out Many Qualified Women," *YDN*, April 6, 1970; Treaster, *NYT*, April 14, 1970.

<sup>43</sup> Packer and Waggoner, *YAM*, April 1970, 27-31; Treaster, *NYT*, April 14, 1970; Berkan interview, 2017; McClure interview, 2017; Goldberger, *Todays Education*, 1970, 51.

## May Day

In May 1969, as Yale was hurriedly readying for the arrival of its first women undergraduates, Black Panther Alex Rackley was tortured and killed in New Haven by Black Panther members who mistakenly thought he was an FBI informant. The FBI used the crime as an opportunity to move against Black Panther leadership, and indicted nine Black Panthers for murder and conspiracy to commit murder. Among those indicted was Black Panther Party co-founder and National Chairman, Bobby Seale.<sup>44</sup>

In March 1970, Bobby Seale was extradited from San Francisco to New Haven for the trial, which was to be held two blocks from Yale's campus in the New Haven Courthouse. Many on the left saw Seale and the Black Panthers as political prisoners and the trial as part of a larger governmental effort to wipe out the Black Panther Party. But the campus as a whole did not become engaged until mid-April when two back-to-back events thrust the trial to the forefront at Yale, and all else—coursework, the normal functioning of the university, and the questions raised about the status of women—was set aside. After mid-April, the Black Panther trial, the massive May 1 rally planned in protest, and the larger issues of racial justice raised by the two events were all that anyone thought about.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Stuart Rosow, "Black Women: Panthers to Rally on Jail Conditions," *YDN*, November 3, 1969; Paul Bass and Doug Rae, "The Panther and the Bulldog: The Story of May Day 1970," *YAM*, July/August 2006.

<sup>45</sup> Stuart Rosow, "Seale's Transfer Cleared," *YDN*, March 10, 1970; "Panther Aid Group Meets," *YDN*, November 3, 1969; Thomas Kent, "Students Supporting Panthers Demand to Speak," *YDN*, December 2, 1969; "Over 150 Hear Wald Speak at Fast's End," *YDN*, December 19, 1969; Sneed interview, 1990.

The first event that April occurred in the courtroom. On April 14, Judge Harold Mulvey sentenced two Black Panthers who had simply been talking to one another in the visitor's section to six months in jail for contempt of court. The severity of the penalty for such a minor infraction engaged the Yale campus, and raised the possibility of a broader miscarriage of justice in the trial to come. "Those contempt sentences were outrageous," observed Yale Chaplain William Sloane Coffin. "That really triggered the concern."<sup>46</sup>

The next day, a riot at Harvard made clear that violence could come to Yale as well. The event began as a peaceful anti-war rally on Boston Common, but turned ugly when Youth International Party (Yippie) leader Abbie Hoffman told the crowd that demonstrators would come to New Haven on May 1 and "burn Yale down." Fifteen hundred protestors left the Common and marched to Harvard, chanting "Free Bobby Seale!" and "One, two, three, four; we don't want this fucking war!" Once they reached Harvard Square, mayhem ensued, and by the time the riot was over, three hundred people were injured and property damage totaled \$100,000. "The concern about May Day really gripped the Yale campus when Harvard was trashed," said John Wilkinson, Yale's Dean of Undergraduate Affairs. "That was when we understood for the first time that something dangerous could happen."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Kabaservice 404-405; Greenfield, 212, 226-227; William Bulkeley, "The Strike: Crisis at Yale," *YDN*, June 1, 1970.

<sup>47</sup> Garrett Epps, "Rioting Devastates Harvard Square," *Harvard Crimson*, April 16, 1970; Kabaservice, 405; Bass and Rae, *YAM*, July/August 2006; Kalman, 204; Wilkinson interview, 2017.

Yale students, administrators and faculty quickly focused on the triple goals of avoiding violence, supporting a fair trial for Seale and the Black Panthers, and addressing Yale's impact on the surrounding black community. On Monday, April 19, Black Panther Doug Miranda spoke in Yale's Battel Chapel to a crowd of 1,500 students, who erupted in applause when Miranda told them that a student strike could create the pressure needed to push Yale to demand Bobby Seale's release. By Thursday, the strike was on, and three quarters of Yale students stopped attending classes.<sup>48</sup>

Brewster did not shy from stating his own concerns over the possibility of injustice. During an April 23 Yale faculty meeting, Brewster said he was "skeptical of the ability of black revolutionaries to achieve a fair trial anywhere in the United States." Two days later, the statement was on the front page of the *New York Times*. Students admired Brewster for his stance, but more conservative Americans were shocked. On April 28, US Vice President Spiro T. Agnew reacted to the comment by suggesting that Yale's trustees would do well to find "a more mature and responsible" president.<sup>49</sup>

As the day for the May 1 rally approached, the threat of violence pervaded the campus. Thirty thousand protesters, seven times the size of Yale's undergraduate student body, were expected to flood into New Haven for "the biggest riot in history," according to Abbie Hoffman's announcement on New York radio station WBAI. Storeowners on the streets surrounding Yale boarded up their windows. Connecticut Governor John

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<sup>48</sup> Bulkeley, *YDN*, June 1, 1970; Bass and Rae, *YAM*, July/August 2006.

<sup>49</sup> *Newsweek*, June 15, 1970, 68; Joseph Treaster, "Brewster Doubts Fair Black Trials," *NYT*, April 25, 1970.



Dempsey deployed 4,000 National Guardsmen and then asked for backup from federal troops. Outrage over Vietnam, as ever, was in the air, and on April 30 President Nixon inflamed the issue on campuses across the nation by announcing the invasion of Cambodia.<sup>50</sup>

It could have gone very differently, but in the end, no harm came to Yale, its students, or residents of New Haven. The crowds at the rally on May 1 did not exceed 30,000; the next day the protestors all went home. Despite the presence of National Guard tanks right on York Street and a tense stand-off between protestors and gas-masked Guardsmen who affixed bayonets, the weekend passed without a single serious injury. Two days later, a protest at Kent State brought far different results, with four students killed by the National Guard.<sup>51</sup>

The outcome at Yale did not occur by chance, but through a combination of factors: the Brewster administration's thorough advance work and successful strategy of opening the university up rather than attempting to keep protestors out; the diligent efforts of New Haven Black Panthers and Yale student peace marshals to prevent the most radical band of protestors, almost uniformly white, from inciting violence; and the

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<sup>50</sup> Bulkeley, *YDN*, June 1, 1970; Kabaservice, 405; Greenfield, 212, 242; Henry "Sam" Chauncey, John T. Hill and Thomas Strong, *May Day at Yale, 1970: Recollections* (Westport, CT: Prospecta Press, 2016), 43-49; Homer Bigart, "U.S. Troops Flown in for Panther Rally," *NYT*, May 1, 1970; Scranton Report, 239.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Kent and Tom Warren, "Gas Slows Protesters," *YDN*, May 4, 1970; Michael Sherman, "Rally Hits Racism," *YDN*, May 2, 1970; Homer Bigart, "New Haven Police Set off Tear Gas at Panther Rally," *NYT*, May 2, 1970; Homer Bigart, "New Haven Rally Ends a Day Early," *NYT*, May 3, 1970; William Bulkeley and Michael Sherman, "Weekend of Demonstration Ends With Second Night of Disorder," *YDN*, May 4, 1970; Chauncey, Hill, and Strong, 28, 112-115; Tedford interview, 2016; Schmoke interview, 2016; Scranton Report, 17.

close coordination between Yale and New Haven Police Chief James Ahern, who was given control over all local, state, and federal forces in New Haven, and praised for his skill in managing the massive crowds so as to reduce rather than heighten tensions.<sup>52</sup>

The May Day protest did have two casualties. Brewster never recovered his standing with Yale's most conservative alumni, who were appalled by his black revolutionaries statement and by what they saw as his acquiescence to students in the matter of the strike.<sup>53</sup> And the question of equity for women at Yale was pushed aside. "May Day sucked the oxygen out of a lot of that we were doing," said Sisterhood member and student activist Judy Berkan. Compared with the Black Panther trial, Cambodia, Vietnam, Kent State, Jackson State, "there was a sense among male activists, and I think we bought into it ourselves, that our struggles as women were kind of trivial. And so it sucked the oxygen out."<sup>54</sup>

Another three weeks of the spring semester remained following May Day, but classes never really resumed and students were given the option of taking incompletes.

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<sup>52</sup> Chauncey, Hill, and Strong, 24-26; Tom Warren, "Evening Outbursts Follow Peaceful Rally," *YDN*, May 2, 1970; Murray Schumach, "'Marshals' seek calm in New Haven," *NYT*, May 3, 1970; "May Day Mixes Many Moods," *YDN*, May 4, 1970; John Darnton, "New Haven Panthers Preached Calm," *NYT*, May 4, 1970.

<sup>53</sup> Fanton interview, 1992, 18; Alfred Fitt, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, April 10, 1991, transcript, box 5, folder 58, RU217, 27; M.A. Farber, "Brewster Tells Friendly but Questioning Yale Alumni He Cannot be 'Personally Neutral' on Public Issues," *NYT*, June 14, 1970.

<sup>54</sup> Berkan interview, 2017. For similar comments on how Yale was consumed by the trial, see Tedford interview, 2016; Mintz interview, 2017; Sneed interview, 1990; Wofford in *Arrival*.

Instead of coming to a clean close, the first year of coeducation simply disbanded.<sup>55</sup>

Those who sought to end gender discrimination at Yale would need to pick up where they had left off, when the second year of coeducation began.

## **Power: 1970**

### **The Yale Sisterhood**

At the end of the 1960s, the women's movement is only a few years old . . . This is before the web, before e-mail. There are no newsletters dealing with women's rights and discrimination. There are no conferences on women's rights and discrimination . . . It is difficult for women both to gather and to share information.

—Bernice Sandler, Women's Equity Action League<sup>56</sup>

In March 1970, in the wake of the Yale Corporation's decision to leave unchanged Yale's gender quotas, students Kit McClure and Betty Spahn decided to call a meeting. They posted fliers all over campus inviting women to attend, and on the designated evening, McClure and Spahn went to the lounge in Vanderbilt Hall and waited to see who else would show up. There were no more than twenty women that first night, but the gathering marked the start of the Yale Sisterhood, the first undergraduate women's group at Yale.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> William Bulkeley, "Brewster Opposed: Yale Strike to Continue," *YDN*, May 5, 1970; "Dean May's Directive," *YDN*, May 5, 1970; Fanton interview, 1992, 29.

<sup>56</sup> Bernice Sandler, "Title IX: How We Got It and What a Difference it Made," *Cleveland State Law Review* 55, no. 4 (2007): 473.

<sup>57</sup> All Sisterhood information in this section comes from interviews with the following Sisterhood members, with additional citations as noted: Berkan interview, 2017; Field interview, 2017; Hartmann

The name came from the slogan “Sisterhood is powerful,” by then a staple of the women’s movement.<sup>58</sup> The group met weekly for the rest of the semester, with about a dozen women at each meeting, and the students would talk together about what it was like to be a woman undergraduate at Yale. “The Sisterhood was useful for getting the women together to talk about this common experience,” recalls Marie Rudden, one of the early Sisterhood members. “Even if you were in the same residential college, that’s not what we sat around and talked about. We had male friends and sat in mixed groups, so our experience as women students wasn’t a central topic of discussion.”

As with the women’s consciousness raising groups that had arisen across the country,<sup>59</sup> the Sisterhood’s conversations shifted how the students understood their experiences by showing that what each of them had thought was peculiar to her was in fact common to all. As Betty Spahn recalled,

We discovered things like when you’d make a comment in class, and then the conversation would move on like you hadn’t spoken, and then ten minutes later a man would make the same point and everyone would say what a good point it was. I thought I just wasn’t articulate enough, and Judy Berkan, who’s very articulate, thought she wasn’t articulate enough, and Dahlia Rudavsky thought she wasn’t articulate enough. It turned out it wasn’t us, was it? It was them.

The conversations touched on classroom experiences, and they touched on social ones too. “I remember talking at the Sisterhood about all of the attention we got, and it

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interview, 2017; McClure interview, 2017; Mintz interview, 2017; Rudden interview, 2017; Spahn interview, 2017. Direct quotations and biographical information come from the relevant student interview.

<sup>58</sup> Florence Howe, *Women and the Power to Change* (Berkeley: Carnegie Foundation, 1975), 136.

<sup>59</sup> *Time*, August 31, 1970, 18.

just not being normal to be a woman student there. It was hard to have it just like normal,” said Rudden. Some shared stories about what had happened to them on dates with men at Yale.

The group included freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. All of the members were white save for Anna Tsing Lowenhaupt, and they represented varying degrees of knowledge about the women’s liberation movement. Betsy Hartmann had never really thought about feminism until May 1970, when a high school friend, whose sister had become a feminist, came to Yale to take part in the May Day protest.

He said to me, "Betsy, you need to become a feminist." He didn't say it in a macho way, but like, "My sister's really getting into this." And then, what really happened was the Sisterhood meeting. I went to that . . . It was just very liberating, because there were all these other women who felt insecure, and were starting to feel ever more pissed off, too . . . this was the first airing of these grievances. It was very powerful.

Even for Spahn, one of the Sisterhood’s founders, feminism “was a new word, a really new concept” in 1970. She came from a Republican family in Illinois, and had decided to start the group with McClure mostly out of a desire to get to know other women at Yale. McClure, however, had been involved in radical feminism since high school.

Kit McClure grew up in suburban New Jersey in a family that was active in the civil rights movement and was the only white family in town, she was sure, that subscribed to both *Jet* and *Ebony*. Two black students McClure’s age, one from Mississippi and the other from Tennessee, lived with McClure’s family, and McClure spent time in both of their homes as well. “I think the presence of my two ‘sisters’ helped

the ideas of the black liberation movement feel more urgent and real to me. I believe that my reading and thinking about feminism grew from that,” she explains.

During her junior year in high school, McClure won a National Science Foundation scholarship to study at Cornell over the summer, and once she got there she started asking around. “How do you find the women’s movement in New York?” By her senior year, McClure was commuting into Manhattan to attend a consciousness-raising group. “And these adult women were thinking, ‘Why are *you* here?’” McClure recalls. “I was so curious. And I felt that the women’s liberation movement was something that I really wanted to be involved with.”

One other Yale student, a freshman like McClure, had also been involved with a New York feminist group, and she brought some literature for the others to read and proposed an organizational structure that was the opposite of the hierarchies so dominant at Yale. “It was a structure of no structure,” explains Spahn, “of learning why we didn’t want to have a leader.” Such structures and their insistence on “leaderless ultra-democracy” were typical of student women’s groups of this era.<sup>60</sup> “The feminist political norm was very strong – no stars, no leaders,” says Spahn. “Our political organization had a different geometry than male-dominated patriarchies. Male-dominated patriarchies are a triangle, with an alpha authority leader at the top. Feminist organizations in that era were collectives, a circle of women, enclosing and protecting each other and everyone else that we could encompass.”

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<sup>60</sup> Evans, 2009, 342.

Like much of what the Sisterhood did during the early years of coeducation, the decision to avoid a hierarchical structure, while seemingly an organizational detail, was an act of protest in and of itself. Yale was an institution focused on sorting the leaders from the followers, yet the Sisterhood rejected the concept of leadership altogether. Yale was a place where women students were expected to be constantly on call as “mother, lover, sister, confidante” to men,<sup>61</sup> yet the Sisterhood meetings were a space where no men were present. Yale was a place where women did not go out on the weekends unless they had a date, but women in the Sisterhood did. Susanne Wofford was not in the group, but she knew some of the women who were. “They would get up the nerve to go to the theater together. In other words they didn’t wait for a date. They would go in groups with women.”<sup>62</sup>

Following May Day, the Sisterhood members all went their separate ways for the summer. Some did not return to the group the following fall. The New Haven Women’s Liberation Rock Band, in which McClure played trombone and tenor sax, began performing,<sup>63</sup> and she soon devoted all of her spare time there. Marie Rudden dropped out of Yale for a year, and worked as a psychiatric aide at Bellevue. But a core group of women remained in the Sisterhood, and when the second year of coeducation got underway, they stapled another round of fliers all over campus. On September 21, the

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<sup>61</sup> Deinhardt, 1974, 68.

<sup>62</sup> Wofford interview, 1990.

<sup>63</sup> "Women's Liberation Day," flier, August 26, 1970, box 4, folder "Women and Co-education," RU86A.

first Monday after the start of fall classes, the Yale Sisterhood met once again in the lounge of Vanderbilt Hall. This time seventy women showed up.<sup>64</sup>

The girls went around the room, and each spoke about why she had come and what she hoped the group might do over the course of the year. The sophomores, juniors, and seniors talked about how isolated they had felt in their first year at Yale, how hard it had been to meet other women. The freshmen women spoke too when conversation turned to the problem of being so outnumbered at Yale and what the Sisterhood might do to change that. The students in the Vanderbilt Lounge talked about the lack of courses on the experiences of women, about their need for the support that came from other women, and about their hope that future Sisterhood meetings might include smaller consciousness raising groups to achieve that end.<sup>65</sup> Sophomore Patty Mintz had attended a Sisterhood meeting or two the previous spring, and was struck by the numbers of women who came to that September 1970 meeting, and how often each one of them struck the same themes. “The fact that there was so much coherence and unity, even though we were very different people with different academic and career paths, was very powerful,” she recalled. “It was really probably one of the five most powerful experiences in my life.”

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<sup>64</sup> Lee Fleming and Joanne Lawless, "'Raise Consciousness': Women's Lib," *YDN*, September 28, 1970.

<sup>65</sup> Fleming and Lawless, *YDN*, September 28, 1970.



## **Elga Wasserman**

Throughout her time at Yale, Special Assistant to the President for the Education of Women Elga Wasserman fought a battle on two fronts. The first was advancing equity for women, a goal that she quickly expanded to include not just the undergraduate women who were her initial charge, but women graduate students, faculty, and administrators. The second goal was personal, her own quest for a recognizable position at Yale. The two were connected. As Wasserman's power grew, so did her ability to enact change for other women. And when she was undermined, so too were the prospects of change.

After being denied a title and role within Yale's administrative structure for the first year of coeducation, Wasserman tried again. In May 1970, she met with Brewster to discuss her job for the following year, and requested a position in the provost's office.<sup>66</sup> There was precedent among Yale's peers for such a move. Jacquelyn Mattfeld had been associate provost at Brown University for two years by then, and Shiela Tobias had just taken on the role at Wesleyan.<sup>67</sup> The position would enable Wasserman to better shape future policy on women, she told Brewster, and her appointment to the provost's office could "establish a significant precedent for the participation of women in policy making

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<sup>66</sup> Wasserman to Brewster, May 11, 1970, box 3, folder 1, RU821B.

<sup>67</sup> "Jacquelyn Mattfeld files, biographical note," John Hay Library Special Collection, Brown University, accessed January 31, 2018 from <https://library.brown.edu/riamco/xml2pdffiles/US-RPB-of1CA.M3.pdf>; "Inventory of the Sheila Tobias Women's Studies Collection, biographical note," Olin Library Special Collections and Archives, Wesleyan University, accessed January 31, 2018 from <https://www.wesleyan.edu/libr/schome/FAs/to1000-67.xml>.

at Yale.” But Brewster preferred Wasserman’s current title, and she spent the second year of undergraduate coeducation, once again, as his “Special Assistant”.

The lack of title was not Wasserman’s only problem. During the 1970-71 academic year, Wasserman found herself excluded “from most of the deliberations at which decisions affecting women at Yale were reached.” She arranged a meeting with Brewster on March 11 to discuss the problem, and followed up with a letter the next day. “If, as you indicate, you want me to continue to share responsibility for women at Yale, I will need your active backing . . . I fully realize that even with your help it will be difficult to change established habits and practices. Without it any significant change becomes an impossibility.”<sup>68</sup>

As if Wasserman’s status wasn’t tenuous enough, Provost Charles Taylor, whose position at Yale was second only to Brewster’s, and Yale College Dean Georges May both devoted time to undermining her. During the first year of coeducation, Taylor sniped at Wasserman’s shuttle bus initiative, through which she sought to ensure that women students had a safe way to get back to their dorm at night. “Charlie’s office used to send me notes saying that only two people had been on the bus, or only one person had been on the bus,” said Wasserman. “The message was very clear.” When Wasserman got a grant to pay for career seminars for women students, Taylor told her that her initiative would continue only as long as she found outside funding for it; Yale would not pay for it. In the third year of coeducation, when Wasserman sought to get involved with the

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<sup>68</sup> Wasserman to Brewster, March 12, 1971, box 3, folder 1, RU821B.

creation of Yale's affirmative action plan as part of her efforts to support women faculty, Taylor told her to back off; it was not her concern.<sup>69</sup>

Dean Georges May was just as bad. In 1969, he asked Wasserman to vacate the position she held on the Yale College Faculty Executive Committee, which he chaired, and she never again regained her spot as a member of that important group. In June 1970, May complained to Brewster that Wasserman's initiatives on women's careers infringed on his own turf. In November 1970 he wrote Provost Charlie Taylor expressing doubts about the need for a coeducation office at all. In February 1971, as one parting blow in his final semester as Yale College dean, May wrote Taylor again, this time requesting "that the space now occupied by the staff of the University Committee on Coeducation be reassigned as of next summer to the Yale College Dean's office."<sup>70</sup>

The Brewster administration was not uniform in its approach to Wasserman. Sam Chauncey maintained a good relationship with Wasserman throughout her time at Yale, and she regarded him as "a wonderful mentor." After Chauncey was promoted to overseeing university admissions and financial aid policy, he hired five members of the Sisterhood look into how Yale's admissions practices might discourage women from applying. When the students produced an eighteen-page report, Chauncey sent it to Admissions Director John Muyskens, who reported to him, with a request for a report

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<sup>69</sup> Wasserman interview, 1992, 34; Paul Moritz to Georges May, October 14, 1970, box 10, folder 156, RU126; Elga Wasserman to file, "Charges of lack of good faith," ca May 1972, box 3, folder 1, RU821B.

<sup>70</sup> Wasserman to Brewster, September 26, 1969, box 3, folder 1, RU821B; May to Taylor, November 10, 1970, box 10, folder 156, RU126; May to Taylor, February 25, 1971, box 1, folder 13, RU821B.

back on the contents. But Chauncey would not openly oppose Brewster. In October 1970 he stated privately that while he personally believed the ratio of women to men undergraduates should be even, he needed to support Brewster's stance that Yale should not reduce the number of men.<sup>71</sup>

Dean of Undergraduate Admissions John Wilkinson had more personal friction with Wasserman,<sup>72</sup> but many other women at Yale saw him as an advocate. Beginning in 1969, Wilkinson became one of the few male administrators at Yale who boycotted Mory's because of its exclusion of women, and he went out of his way to help the first women administrators in the Yale College Dean's Office. Assistant Dean Betsy Thomas, hired in 1969, described Wilkinson's support as "wonderful." Residential College Dean Brenda Jubin, hired in 1970 despite Georges May's statement that he was "not sure Yale is ready for a woman dean," called Wilkinson "terrific" as her immediate boss. Assistant Dean Marnesba Hill, hired in 1971, benefited from the "incredibly important supportive role" played by Wilkinson. Women undergraduates saw Wilkinson as an ally as well. "He was really a nice guy. He really tried to help," said Sisterhood member Barbara Deinhardt. "I think of him as an advocate for us."<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Wasserman interview, 2007, 58; Robert Sternberg to Sam Chauncey, memorandum, September 3, 1971, box 1, folder 8, RU821A; Chauncey to Muyskens, July 20, 1971, box 1, folder 6, RU821A; Chauncey to Muyskens, November 5, 1971, box 1, folder 8, RU821A; Coeducation Committee minutes, October 13, box 4, folder 80, RU52A.

<sup>72</sup> Wasserman interview, 1992, 30; Wilkinson interview, 2016.

<sup>73</sup> "The Dispute Over Mory's: 'Male, Yale and Wet?'" *YAM*, December 1971, 23; Thomas Peterson interview, 2016; Jubin interview, 2017; Wei Mintz interview, 2016; Deinhardt interview, 2017. Marnesba

Despite the lack of support from Brewster and the absence of a title, Wasserman created power at Yale in other ways. Money helped, and when Wasserman's budget came with barely enough funds for an office and administrative support staff, she went out and obtained a grant on her own from Radcliffe Trustee Susan Hilles. The Yale fundraising staff "was furious at me," Wasserman recalled. "Yale said, you had no right to get money from her. She's got to give it to us." But the grant enabled Wasserman to hire a part-time staff person to support women students in negotiating career paths, bring in women speakers in a range of professions to provide advice and role models, and create a directory of women's resources, "SHE", that was distributed campus-wide. As Wasserman wrote to Hilles in 1973, "The funds which you made available gave me the necessary freedom to be innovative, even independent."<sup>74</sup>

Connections mattered too, and although Georges May kept Wasserman off the executive committee, she identified other key committees at Yale and asked Brewster to appoint her to them. In this area, he granted her request. Brewster saw committees strategically, as a way to delay action he was not yet ready for. "Whenever there was an issue which became thorny, he would create a committee, and this served to disarm it," observed student leader Bill Farley. "It was action, and yet it put off a decision."<sup>75</sup> Yet committees serve a social network function as well, one that Brewster, who was at the

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Hill died many years before this research began. The quotation about Wilkinson's support comes from Hill's closest friend at Yale, Jacqueline Wei Mintz.

<sup>74</sup> Wasserman interview, 2007, 22; Moritz to May, October 14, 1970.

<sup>75</sup> Farley interview, 1991, 11.

center of Yale's most powerful networks, may have been less aware of. For an outsider like Wasserman, though, these committees built important connections and proved a source of information about events and issues at Yale that she would not have otherwise known about.

Wasserman served on the Undergraduate Admissions Committee and the Council of Masters from 1968 to 1972. During the second year of coeducation, she was one of the nine members of the Greene Committee, which studied the status of professional women at Yale. During the third year, she was one of five on the Dahl Committee, charged with reviewing the entire structure of undergraduate education at Yale. Through her committee roles, Wasserman came in regular contact with every one of Yale's residential college masters and with leading faculty members: Sociology Department Chair Burton Clark, Yale Law School Professor Ellen Peters, Sterling Professor of Political Science Robert Dahl, Chinese Historian Jonathan Spence, Child Psychology expert William Kessen, and Physics Professor Horace Taft, the grandson of President William Howard Taft (Yale Class of 1878) and Yale College Dean beginning in July 1971.<sup>76</sup>

Wasserman used her committee memberships to her advantage. She built relationships with faculty members and administrators who possessed the status she lacked, shared with them her observations about the experience of women at Yale, and influenced the committees' final recommendations. Both the Greene and Dahl

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<sup>76</sup> Elga Wasserman to Kingman Brewster, Georges May, and Charles Taylor, June 5, 1969, box 1, folder 13, RU821B; Greene Report; "Report of the Study Group on Yale College" [Dahl Report], April 1972, ERIC ED067024, 8; "New Yale College Dean: Horace Dwight Taft," *NYT*, February 6, 1971.

Committees called for the creation of an associate provost position charged with advancing equity for women at Yale, the exact job Wasserman sought for herself, and the April 1972 Dahl Committee Report, in direct opposition to Brewster, called for ending the gender quotas at Yale.<sup>77</sup>

Wasserman's most important base of power, however, was the University Coeducation Committee, which she chaired. On paper, the committee had little authority; it served solely in an advisory capacity to Brewster.<sup>78</sup> But the stature of the committee's members and their representativeness of key Yale constituencies gave the group more power than it might appear. During the first year of coeducation, the committee's members were Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Pierson College Master John Hersey, Yale College Dean Georges May, Assistant Dean Betsy Thomas, Associate Provost George Langdon, student leader Kurt Schmoke, junior Kathy Jelly, Chemistry Professor Michael McBride, History Professor Edmund Morgan, Yale Law School Professor Ellen Peters, Yale Law School student Ann Freedman, and Yale Chief of Psychiatry Bob Arnstein, who was Brewster's Yale College classmate and personal friend.<sup>79</sup> Wasserman's title may not have carried weight at Yale, but the positions of her committee members did.

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<sup>77</sup> Dahl Report, 49.

<sup>78</sup> Coeducation Committee minutes, May 26, 1970, box 1, folder 7, RU575.

<sup>79</sup> Wasserman, Coeducation Report 1970. On Arnstein's relationship with Brewster, see Blum interview, February 1992, 11; Edna Rostow, interview by Geoffrey Kabaservice, January 3, 1991, transcript, box 12A, RU217, Series II, 12.

That status was particularly important when the committee challenged Brewster's thousand male leaders dictate in May 1970 by issuing a recommendation that Yale reduce the number of male freshmen in the Class of 1975 from 1,025 to 800 in order to make room for more women. The vote was unanimous.<sup>80</sup> Wasserman forwarded the recommendation to Brewster on May 28, but held off on releasing the committee's stance and its full report until Brewster had a chance to respond. The next move was his. In the meantime, the recommendation sat on his desk quietly ticking, waiting for the moment when Brewster gave the nod for it to go public.

### **Kingman Brewster and the Yale Corporation**

In his 1968 Report of the President, Kingman Brewster devoted a few pages to discussing the levers of power afforded to the president of Yale. He noted his role as the presiding member of the Yale Corporation, and highlighted his power to set the budget and the extra weight accorded to his views because of his position.<sup>81</sup> But Brewster omitted one critical tool that he and the Yale Corporation made good use of when it came to women at Yale: the power to do nothing. As Kit McClure reflected in her diary after Yale's trustees decided not to act in March 1970, "The campaign for full coeducation has been stopped by the Yale Corporation's decision to ignore it."<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Wasserman to Brewster, May 28, 1970, box 1, folder 13, RU821B.

<sup>81</sup> Brewster, President's Report, 1968, 8-9, 12.

<sup>82</sup> McClure diary, May 1970.



After sending the Coeducation Committee's recommendation to Brewster on May 28, Wasserman waited for a reply. Over the summer there was silence, and when the new school year began on September 15 she still had not heard from Brewster. Another month passed with still no response. On October 15 Brewster and Dean Georges May attended the meeting of the Coeducation Committee to discuss the committee's report. Commentary on their recommendation was brief. Reducing the number of men students was not negotiable, said Brewster.<sup>83</sup>

In the conversation that followed, however, Brewster raised a roadblock to increasing the number of women that the committee had never heard before. Before Yale could even consider changing its male-female ratio, the university needed to examine "the basic assumptions lying behind our entire undergraduate educational approach," including the optimum size of Yale College, the size of the university as whole, the length of an undergraduate career in Yale college, and whether Yale should begin offering three-year bachelor's degrees or joint degrees with its graduate or professional schools.<sup>84</sup> Increasing the numbers of women had already been put on hold until Yale could build more housing.<sup>85</sup> This new entanglement threatened to hold women undergraduates to less than 20 percent indefinitely.

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<sup>83</sup> Wasserman to May, October 20, 1970, box 4, folder 80, RU52A.

<sup>84</sup> Georges May to Kingman Brewster, December 3, 1970, box 10, folder 158, RU126.

<sup>85</sup> In September 1970, Yale trustee John Whitney donated \$15 million to build two new residential colleges, enough to house 600 students. By September 1972, however, construction had not yet begun and Brewster began describing the additional capacity as a way to reduce overcrowding, not expand the number of women students. Moreover, Yale had run into trouble because of longstanding friction with the City of

More time passed. The Coeducation Committee's recommendation and its full report, which also included data documenting the status of women faculty, were still not public. On December 3, Georges May wrote to Brewster summarizing his and Brewster's current stance on the need to postpone any coeducation decision until larger matters were resolved, and recommending that Brewster appoint a committee to look into them.<sup>86</sup>

Brewster received a letter from Wasserman the following day, a nudge, perhaps, about the limbo in which the Coeducation Committee recommendation had been left. "There is widespread sentiment among many students and faculty that the male-female ratio should be improved as rapidly as possible," she wrote. "As far as I am aware, we still have no specific plans for attaining the ratio announced as a goal in 1968, 4000 men and 1500-2000 women." Wasserman's letter came with two questions that no one at Yale was answering: "Are we planning an expansion to 5,500 or 6,000 students in the near future? If not, how will a 2:1 or 3:1 ratio be obtained?"<sup>87</sup>

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New Haven, which resented, among other things, Yale's 350 tax-exempt acres and its refusal to provide any other meaningful financial contribution. The city had the power to stop the project, as Yale needed its approval to remove further land from the tax roles. In the fall of 1971, Yale sent trustee Cyrus Vance, who had played a lead role in the 1968 Vietnam peace negotiations, to negotiate with New Haven Mayor Bart Guida. Eighteen months of discussion came to naught, and in April 1973, the New Haven Board of Alderman denied Yale's request to build the two new residential colleges. Yale did eventually build those two colleges; construction was completed in 2017, forty-seven years after the Whitney gift was received. See Chuck Critchlow, "Yale Gets Funds to House 600," *YDN*, September 14, 1970; Stephen Hagan, "Yale Officials Unveil New College Designs," *YDN*, September 15, 1972, 1; Knight, *NYT*, November 30, 1973; "First Students to be Welcomed in Two New Residential Colleges this Week," *YaleNews*, August 23, 2017, accessed February 12, 2018 from <https://news.yale.edu/>.

<sup>86</sup> May to Brewster, December 3, 1970.

<sup>87</sup> Wasserman to Brewster, December 4, 1970, in Coeducation Report 1970, 34.

One week later, Wasserman was given the chance to ask those questions of the Corporation, whose December agenda included the report of the University Committee on Coeducation. As was true at the Corporation meeting the previous March, students made certain that Yale's trustees knew the strength of student support for gender-blind admissions. The Yale Sisterhood was at the forefront. On Friday, December 11, as the Corporation met in Woodbridge Hall, the Sisterhood organized a rally out front, with speakers, chants, and signs calling for Yale to end its thousand-man quota.<sup>88</sup>

Inside, Wasserman presented the Coeducation Committee's report to the Corporation, and with it the recommendation that Yale admit 800 men and 400 women for the Class of 1975. The proposal, with its two-to-one male-female ratio, was hardly revolutionary. The March 1970 student petition had called for sex-blind admissions, as had the *Yale Daily News* and a new petition for which the Sisterhood had gathered more signatures than the March version. But even the Coeducation Committee's more moderate suggestion never stood a chance after Brewster shared with the Corporation his own views on what he termed "Mrs. Wasserman's Committee on Coeducation."<sup>89</sup>

Brewster began graciously, acknowledging the hard work that had gone into the committee's report, but then proceeded to lay out a trio of reasons why the Corporation should ignore it. First was the "thousand male leaders" obligation. Brewster would have never recommended that Yale admit women undergraduates, he explained, "if I had not

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<sup>88</sup> William Bulkeley, "Rally Demands Full Co-education," *YDN*, December 14, 1970.

<sup>89</sup> Wasserman, Coeducation Report 1970, 4; Bulkeley, *YDN*, December 14, 1970; Brewster, "Memorandum in Response to Report of Mrs. Wasserman's Committee," December 11, 1970, box 58, folder 388, RU19-II.

been able to assure anyone who asked that we did not intend to reduce the number of men in Yale College.” Second were the alumni, although here Brewster reported not what any alumni had actually said, but only his assumptions two years earlier about what they might think. “It was my judgment, and the judgment of the trustees, that coeducation would not be acceptable to many of our most loyal alumni if it meant a cut-back in the size of the male population at Yale.” Third was Brewster’s new reason for inaction: the imperative of first rethinking Yale’s approach to undergraduate education. “Any long-range projection about either size or ratio between the sexes will have to be considered in the context of these other educational and human assumptions.”<sup>90</sup> The position of the presiding officer of the Yale Corporation was clear.

On Saturday, December 12, the Corporation met again. The Sisterhood did not realize the battle had already been lost. Unlike Men and Women for a Better Yale, the group had not been given an audience with the Corporation, and so they walked right in: fifty women students, some in jeans, some dressed up in skirts and blouses. “We went in and disrupted this Corporation meeting to demand that they do something about this horrible ratio, and how bad it was making people’s lives,” recalled Cookie Polan, Class of 1973. The Yale Corporation meets in a chandeliered room with an oriental carpet on the floor and ornate moldings on the ceiling. As was true the year before, the trustees were all men, and many of them were prominent nationally as business, political, or religious leaders. But when asked how it felt as a nineteen-year-old student to walk into

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<sup>90</sup> Brewster, "Memorandum," December 11, 1970, RU19-II.

that room of important men, Betsy Hartmann said she was not scared. Instead, she captured the experience of being part of that group of women in one word: “Great.”<sup>91</sup>

Four days later, the *Yale Daily News* ran the recommendation of the Coeducation Committee, finally public, on its front page. The student editors were as frustrated by the inaction as Wasserman was, and their accompanying editorial showed it. The administration “has dawdled long enough . . . The change in Yale’s policy must be made now. The sex quotas are unacceptable.”<sup>92</sup> But Yale’s trustees had considered the matter for the year, and once again inaction was the chosen response. It would be two more years before the Corporation considered the matter again.

### **The Help of the Federal Government: 1970-1972**

#### **Executive Order 11246**

As the Yale Corporation met in New Haven in December 1970, a fundamental shift was occurring in Washington DC. For the first time, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) halted payment of government contracts to a university because of sex discrimination.<sup>93</sup> Absent change to its admissions policies and employment practices, the University of Michigan was out four million dollars. At issue

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<sup>91</sup> Polan interview, 1990; Hartmann interview, 2017; Mintz interview, 2017; Bulkeley, *YDN*, Dec 14, 1970.

<sup>92</sup> Charles Cuneo, "Committee Urges More Coeducation," *YDN*, December 16, 1970; "Co-Education," editorial, *YDN*, December 14, 1970.

<sup>93</sup> In 1979, the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) was reorganized into the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services.

was Executive Order 11246, which prohibited discrimination by federal contractors on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex.<sup>94</sup> The day after the announcement of the Michigan penalties, Yale assistant professor Charlotte Morse bumped into her colleague Bart Giamatti in a New Haven coffee shop. “What the hell difference would it make to Yale if the feds cut off our funding?” she asked. Giamatti looked up at her with raised eyebrow. “About thirty-three percent of the annual operating budget.”<sup>95</sup>

Executive Order 11246 had been on the books since 1965, but its use to fight gender discrimination was new. The order had initially applied only to race, and even after President Lyndon Johnson amended it in 1967 to include gender, it sat unused for that purpose until Bernice Sandler came across Order 11246 in a footnote. Sandler was a PhD from the University of Maryland, and had been told a few months earlier that she was not suited for any of the seven open positions in her department because she “came on too strong for a woman.” After two more job rejections—the first because the interviewer said he never hired women, the second because Sandler was “not really a

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<sup>94</sup> Nancy Gruchow, "Discrimination: Women Charge Universities, Colleges with Bias," *Science* 168, no. 3931 (May 1, 1970), 559; "Sex Discrimination: Campuses Face Contract Loss over HEW Demands," *Science* 170, no. 3960 (November 20, 1970), 834; "HEW Acts to Check Sex Discrimination," *Harvard Crimson*, January 8, 1971; Lyndon B. Johnson, Executive Order 11246, "Equal Employment Opportunity," 30 *Federal Register* 12319, 12935, 3 *Code of Federal Regulations* (September 24, 1965): 339; Lyndon B. Johnson, Executive Order 11375, amendment to Executive Order 11246, 32 *Federal Register* 14303, 3 *Code of Federal Regulations* (October 13, 1967): 684.

<sup>95</sup> Morse interview, 2008, 142.

professional” but “just a housewife”—Sandler began researching to see what the law said about the way she had been treated.<sup>96</sup>

The problem she quickly found was that sex discrimination against women students, faculty, and administrators was perfectly legal in the United States in 1969. The Fourteenth Amendment’s provision of equal protection under the law would not be judged to include women for two more years. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 exempted professional and executive women, including women faculty and administrators. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was no help either; the protections of Title VI applied to race but not sex, while Title VII’s ban on employment discrimination exempted educational institutions. What legislation does not attempt, however, can sometimes be achieved through executive order, and there in Executive Order 11246 Bernice Sandler had her answer. “It was a real ‘Eureka’ moment,” she recalls.<sup>97</sup>

Sandler had recently joined the Women’s Equity Action League (WEAL), an organization founded in the fall of 1968 by a group of women lawyers who split off from NOW and positioned themselves as a more conservative version of women’s activism that focused solely on employment, education, and taxation and left such issues as abortion rights to others. Sandler shared her findings on Order 11246 with WEAL, and quickly became the chair, and indeed the only member, of WEAL’s Federal Action

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<sup>96</sup> *Science*, May 1970, 559; Sandler, 476; Johnson, Executive Order 11246; Johnson, Executive Order 11375; Sandler, 474-475.

<sup>97</sup> *Reed v. Reed*, 404 US 71 (1971); Heather Sigworth, “Issues in Nepotism Rules,” in Furniss and Graham, 113-114; Sandler, 475.

Contract Compliance Committee. As *Science* magazine observed in November 1970, the ability of Executive Order 11246 to fight gender discrimination was “largely ignored and still would be, but for the efforts of Bernice Sandler.”<sup>98</sup>

In addition to WEAL, however, Sandler had three critical allies. Vincent Macaluso, Federal Contract Compliance Director at the Department of Labor, secretly coached her on how to file complaints, and provided the key piece of advice that each complaint should be copied to the college or university’s congressional delegation with a request that they ask the secretaries of Labor and HEW to update them on progress in resolving the complaint. Armed with this knowledge, Sandler allied with women on campuses across the country, telling them about Executive Order 11246 and offering to help file complaints. Lastly, Sandler received key support from Democratic members of Congress who served on WEAL’s advisory board, particularly Representatives Martha Griffiths of Detroit, and Edith Green of Portland, Oregon.<sup>99</sup>

By December 1970, when the University of Michigan news hit the press, Sandler had helped file sex discrimination complaints not just at Michigan but at two hundred US campuses, including Boston University, Brandeis, Harvard, MIT, Rutgers, Smith, and the Universities of North Carolina, California, and New York—both the city and the state.<sup>100</sup>

Yale was not yet on the list, but on January 29, 1971, that changed.

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<sup>98</sup> Rosen, 83; Sandler, 475; *Science*, November 1970, 834.

<sup>99</sup> Sandler, 476-477; *Science*, November 1970, 834; *Science*, May 1970, 560-561.

<sup>100</sup> *Science*, November 1970, 834; *Science*, May 1970, 559.



Secretary of Labor James Hodgson received two letters from New Haven that day: one from Arlyce Currie on behalf of Yale's blue-collar women workers, and one from Marcia Keller on behalf of Yale's faculty and professional women.<sup>101</sup> Both letters alleged rampant gender discrimination at Yale; both requested an immediate investigation to determine if Yale was violating Executive Order 11246; and both asked that "all current contract negotiations be immediately suspended until such time as all inequities were corrected." The cc's were in order as well: HEW Secretary Elliot Richardson, Yale's congressional delegation—Senator Lowell Weicker, Senator Abraham Ribicoff, Representative Robert Giaimo—and Dr. Bernice Sandler, WEAL.

Two days later, HEW received a third discrimination complaint against Yale, this one from Sandler herself. Using figures taken directly from Wasserman's December 1970 coeducation report, Sandler focused her letter on the lack of women faculty. "Out of a faculty of 839, only TWO women (.002 of 1%) have tenure, despite the fact that women . . . comprise 27% of all graduates students." With so many of its own graduates on the job market, Sandler continued, "surely Yale cannot claim a shortage of qualified women!"<sup>102</sup> While Sandler's data focused on faculty, her request for an HEW compliance review included Yale's admissions and financial aid discrimination, as well as graduate student

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<sup>101</sup> Marcia L. Keller to James Hodgson, January 29, 1971, in *Sex Discrimination at Yale*; Arlyce Currie to James Hodgson, ca January 29, 1971, in *Sex Discrimination at Yale*, May 10, 1971; "HEW to Examine Sex Discrimination," *YDN*, April 15, 1970.

<sup>102</sup> Sandler to Elliot Richardson, February 1, 1971, in author's possession with thanks to Margie Ferguson, underline and capitalization in original; Wasserman, Coeducation Report 1970, 28.

job placement and hiring, faculty promotion policies, and salary inequities for both faculty and staff.

All through the spring of 1971, the pressure for change in Yale's policies and practices towards women continued to rise. In March, three members of the Yale Graduate Women's Alliance, in preparation for the HEW investigation, produced a thirty-two page statistical report on Yale's hiring and promotion discrimination. Margie Ferguson, in her first year as a doctoral student in Comparative Literature, was one of the authors. "There was a sense that the Federal Government was going to be a really important partner," she explained. Their involvement gave legitimacy to the women activists, making it harder to dismiss them as "the local whiners who couldn't really just get on with their work and wait for change to happen in its natural way . . . It was exciting."<sup>103</sup> The Sisterhood made ready for the HEW visit as well, and engaged the attention of the entire campus by circulating a petition that called on Yale to "form a strong affirmative action program for the total elimination of all discriminatory practices in education (i.e. admissions, financial aid) and employment (i.e., hiring, promotions, salaries)." In two days, 1,973 students signed it.<sup>104</sup>

On April 16, two HEW staff members, one man and one woman, arrived at Yale to meet with women involved in the gender discrimination complaint. The meeting was

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<sup>103</sup> Lenore Weitzman, Frances Pitlick, and Margie Ferguson, *Women on the Yale Faculty* (New Haven: Yale Faculty and Professional Women's Forum, March 2, 1971), ERIC ED056636; Ferguson interview, 2017.

<sup>104</sup> Herman and Gilmore, "Undergraduate Women at Yale," in *Sex Discrimination at Yale*, May 10, 1971.

significant for activists at Yale, and significant for women nationally because, for the first time, women used the phrase “sexual harassment” to describe some of what they were experiencing from professors at Yale. The phrase was so new that the *Yale Daily News* put it in quotation marks, and the HEW team said that sexual harassment was a ‘new idea’ to them. It would take another nine years for sexual harassment to be judged a form of sex discrimination.<sup>105</sup>

A month after the visit by HEW staff, a coalition of Yale women’s groups produced an eighty-two-page report, “Sex Discrimination at Yale: A Document of Indictment.” The signatories demonstrated the extent to which women’s activism at Yale had grown. In May 1969 there had been no women’s groups at Yale. The May 1971 “Document of Indictment” was signed by seven: the undergraduate Yale Sisterhood, the Graduate Women’s Alliance, the Yale Law Women’s Alliance; the Yale Medical Women’s Association, the Yale Public Health Women, and the two women’s groups that had filed the original complaint, the Yale Faculty and Professional Women’s Forum and the Yale Non-faculty Action Committee.<sup>106</sup>

The report documented gender discrimination in every facet of the university—admissions, hiring, promotion, job referrals, Mory’s, sexual harassment—and was sent not just to HEW but to Brewster, Wasserman, Provost Charlie Taylor, incoming Dean

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<sup>105</sup> Jim Liebman, “Women Meet HEW Examiners; Rally to Protest Yale Sexism,” *YDN*, April 18, 1971, box 15, folder 301, RU52A. Rosen states that the first use of the term “sexual harassment” was at Cornell in 1975 (page 187), but this use at Yale predates Cornell’s by four years. Yale women repeated the phrase, along with examples, in *Sex Discrimination at Yale*, May 10, 1971.

<sup>106</sup> Cover memo, *Sex Discrimination at Yale*, May 10, 1971.

Horace Taft, and every Department Chairman and Residential college dean and master at Yale. There was no ignoring it. As the women stated in their cover memo, “It is our intention to provide source material for the work that lies ahead in transforming the rhetoric of equality for women into reality at Yale.”<sup>107</sup>

On June 10, Brewster met with representatives of the seven women’s groups to discuss the report. Once again, the momentum for change came crashing to a halt. Neither the overwhelming evidence of gender discrimination at Yale nor the women’s advocacy for “including members of minority groups in greater numbers in every level of the university” swayed Brewster. The administration would take no action. The following week, the women who were at the June 10 meeting sent Brewster a letter that radiated shock and disappointment. “Given your long voiced commitment to human rights and to the rectification of social inequities, we cannot understand your apparent indifference, nor accept your failure to take a comparable stand on the issue of women’s rights,” they wrote. “We urge you to reconsider the stand you have taken and provide leadership for the Yale community.”<sup>108</sup>

### **Tampering with Title IX**

In one simple sentence, Title IX prohibits the gender discrimination that was rampant in US colleges and universities in the early years of coeducation at Yale.

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Women's Groups to Kingman Brewster, June 15, 1971, box 1, folder 9, RU821B.

No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program receiving Federal financial assistance.<sup>109</sup>

The 575 women undergraduates who arrived at Yale in 1969 were never protected by Title IX, however. The law did not take effect until July 21, 1975,<sup>110</sup> after all but a few of them had graduated. But their time at Yale included the two years that it took to get the law passed, and the Yale administration's efforts during that period to ensure that Title IX did not prevent Yale from continuing to discriminate against women applicants to Yale College.

The work that resulted in Title IX began in June 1970, a few weeks after Yale's May Day crisis. Edith Green had been a member of the House of Representatives for fifteen years by then, and chaired the Special Subcommittee on Education of the House Education and Labor Committee. Green's chairmanship gave her the power to sponsor legislation and hold hearings, and on June 17, she began seven days of hearings on discrimination against women. "Let us not deceive ourselves," she told those in the hearing room. "Our educational institutions have proven to be no bastions of democracy."<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Education Amendments of 1972, Public Law 92-318, *US Statutes at Large* 86 (June 23, 1972): 235, codified at *US Code* 20, 1681-1688.

<sup>110</sup> "Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance," 40 *Federal Register* 24128 (1975), 34 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 106.

<sup>111</sup> US Congress, House, History, Art, and Archives, "Edith Starrett Green, 1910-1987," *Women in Congress*, accessed March 27, 2018 from <http://history.house.gov/People/Detail/14080>; US Congress, House, *Discrimination Against Women: Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Education and Labor*, 91<sup>st</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Part 1: June 17, 19, 26, 29, 30, 1970

The hearings tied to section 805 of House Resolution 16098, through which Green sought to close the multiple loopholes that left women in higher education without legal protection against gender discrimination. By the time Green's subcommittee hearings concluded on July 31, they had produced 1,261 pages of testimony on the widespread inequity faced by women, from admissions and financial aid to hiring, promotion, and pay. Nothing like it had ever been assembled or published before. Notably absent from those 1,261 pages, however, were the voices of those who were doing the discriminating. Green's office had reached out to the American Council on Education (ACE), which monitored all legislation impacting colleges and universities and represented nearly every college president in the country, but the ACE lobbyist declined to testify, saying that there was "no sex discrimination in higher education," and "even if there was, it wasn't a problem."<sup>112</sup>

Although Section 805 failed to pass, the hearing testimony became the first legislative step in the passage of Title IX. On September 30, 1971, the House Education and Labor Committee voted out a new bill, the Higher Education Act of 1971, which included language barring federal funding to any college or university whose admissions policies discriminated against women students. The legislation classed schools into three groups. Those that were single sex, like Smith and Dartmouth, could stay that way and still receive federal funding; those that were newly coeducational, like Yale and

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(Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1970), 1-616 and Part 2: July 1, 31, 1970 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1971), 617-1261.

<sup>112</sup> US House of Representatives, *Discrimination*, Part 1, 1; Sandler, 477-478.

Princeton, had seven years to remove quotas limiting the number of women students; and those that were already coeducational, like Stanford and Michigan, needed to eliminate such quotas at once.<sup>113</sup> Yale may have missed Edith Green's 1970 sex discrimination hearings, but this time it was paying attention.

Federal funding was big money to Yale, as Giamatti had pointed out. During the previous school year, Yale's operating budget had relied on \$37 million in federal dollars, \$6 million more than its endowment income that year.<sup>114</sup> The university supported the Higher Education Act of 1971, which included unrestricted federal grants to colleges and universities, and Yale did not oppose the language barring gender discrimination in its employment practices or the admissions policies in its medical or law schools.<sup>115</sup> If the language on sex discrimination in undergraduate admissions remained in the bill, however, Yale would have no choice but to end its quota on women students. The freedom to turn down qualified women applicants was a cause that Yale was willing to fight for.

Kingman Brewster was on sabbatical in England that fall, but Alfred B. Fitt was on the job. Fitt was Brewster's adviser on governmental affairs, responsible for Yale's contacts with local, state, and federal government. As an undergraduate at Yale, Fitt had

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<sup>113</sup> Iram Valentin, "Title IX: A Brief History," *Holy Cross Journal of Law and Public Policy* 2 (1997): 125; David Rosenbaum, "No Strings Funds for Colleges are Backed by House Committee," *NYT*, October 1, 1971; Michael Spencer, "Legislation May Prohibit Sex Bias in Admissions," *YDN*, October 21, 1971.

<sup>114</sup> John Ecklund, "Yale's Financial Status," *YDN*, November 23, 1971. Ecklund was the Treasurer of Yale.

<sup>115</sup> Alfred Fitt, Yale University, to the Honorable John Erlenborn, October 28, 1971, *Congressional Record*, 92<sup>nd</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, vol. 117, pt. 29, Extensions of Remarks, November 1, 1971: 38640.

been three years behind Brewster, but the two men first met in December 1968, when Fitt, then in the Department of the Army, was working with Ivy League colleges over ROTC issues. Fitt was shocked at how quickly Brewster proffered a job offer. At the end of their first conversation, Brewster turned to Fitt and said, “Maybe you ought to come up to Yale, and we can figure out something for you to do there.” Fitt arrived at Yale in the summer of 1969 with the title “Special Adviser” and an office right next to Brewster’s. When asked once who Al Fitt was, Hester Eisenstein, one of the few women on Yale’s faculty, identified him simply as “one of Kingman’s lackeys.”<sup>116</sup>

The *New York Times* article on the Higher Education Act of 1971 and its proposed anti-discrimination language came out on November 1, and Fitt sent off a letter in protest to Representative Green, who had sponsored the language. Green wrote back. Yale was perfectly free to keep discriminating against women applicants, she explained, but the federal government had no business subsidizing such practices with taxpayer dollars. Al Fitt, however, was not one to give up easily. By October 21, he was publicly framing the proposed legislation as a matter of governmental intrusion. The Senate version of the bill contained no anti-discrimination language, but the House version did, and Fitt was “offended” by it, he told the *Yale Daily News*. “It’s a question of the wisdom of the University versus the wisdom of Congress, and I would rather trust Yale.”<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Scott Herhold, “A Talk With President Brewster,” *YAM*, March 1972, 30-31; Wasserman interview, 2007, 65; Fitt interview, 1991, 6-7, 13; Wei Mintz interview, 2016; Eisenstein interview, 1971, 45.

<sup>117</sup> Spencer, *YDN*, October 21, 1971.



Yale had used its muscle in the past to keep the government from interfering with its penchant for skewing the admissions process to favor white, Protestant men. Between 1949 and 1957, the university succeeded on five separate occasions in defeating a proposed Connecticut law, the Fair Educational Practices Act, which would have stopped Yale from turning away qualified black and Jewish students. After seeing a study by the Connecticut State Inter-Racial Commission that showed the widespread pattern of admissions discrimination in Connecticut's private colleges, Connecticut Governor Chester Bowles lent his support to the proposed law. Yale issued a statement saying the law was unnecessary; Connecticut's private colleges had no record of prejudice.<sup>118</sup>

The facts spoke otherwise. In the twenty-one years between 1924 and 1945, only seven black students graduated from Yale, and when the numbers of Jewish applicants to Yale rose above 10 percent in the early 1920s, Yale responded by denying financial aid to Jews and replacing an admissions policy that had long been based on academic merit with one that considered "qualities of personality and character," traits that, like the leadership criteria used fifty years later against women, Yale judged present in its traditional white, male, Protestant students and absent in others. The strategy worked. By the time Connecticut began considering anti-discrimination legislation in 1949, Yale had kept its percentage of Jewish students to its 10 percent quota for twenty-five years. After five failed attempts at stopping Yale's discrimination against Jews and blacks, the Connecticut legislature finally gave up in 1957. By 1961, Yale had the lowest percentage

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<sup>118</sup> Karabel, 211-212.

of Jewish students of any Ivy League college, 12 percent compared to Harvard's 21 percent, Penn's 25 percent, and Columbia's 45 percent. That same year, it enrolled six black students in an entering class of 1,000.<sup>119</sup>

In 1962, Yale's new rabbi, Richard J. Israel, spoke to Yale Chaplain William Sloan Coffin about what was going on in the admissions office, and Coffin went to President A. Whitney Griswold to protest. Griswold listened, and approved a policy that called for the removal of "economic, social, religious, or racial barriers to the fulfillment of . . . the democratic ideal of equal opportunity." The following year, the percentage of Jewish students rose from 12 to 16 percent, but there it rested until Brewster, who found discrimination against both blacks and Jews repugnant, became president in 1964. In 1966, the percentage of Jewish freshmen jumped to 30 percent, and the number of black freshmen rose to thirty-five.<sup>120</sup> But Yale had no intention of ending its quota against women. The Higher Education Act of 1971 needed an amendment.

The House began debate on the proposed legislation on October 27. As part of the discussion, Republican Representative John Erlenborn of Illinois announced his intention to amend the law to exempt undergraduate admissions policies from the ban on sex discrimination, since such intrusion "would create a serious threat to the autonomy of our institutions of higher education." That same day the Association of American Universities (AAU) met to discuss the bill. The group was smaller than ACE and

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<sup>119</sup> Karabel, 379, 112-115, 212; Dan Oren, *Joining the Club: A History of Jews and Yale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 196.

<sup>120</sup> Karabel, 330-331, 364, 381-385.

represented forty-four college and university presidents, about half of them elite private institutions like Yale and Harvard, and about half major public universities such as the Wisconsin and North Carolina. According to AAU Secretary Charles Kidd, at their October 27 meeting, the AAU's forty-four presidents, every one of them a man, stressed their opposition to the prohibition of gender discrimination in undergraduate admissions, and their judgment that the law "would tend to reduce the diversity which is a uniquely valuable characteristic of the American system of higher education."<sup>121</sup>

Over the next week, five colleges—Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, Smith, and Yale—were so disturbed by the law's anti-discrimination provisions that they wrote to Congress themselves. The letters repeated the same talking points: the Higher Education Act of 1971 would impinge on colleges' autonomy, destroy the diversity that defined US higher education, and erode alumni giving, a final point that was offered without a single piece of evidence. Dartmouth President John Kemeny went so far as to argue that "some students do best in an environment . . . where students of their own sex are a distinct majority of the college population," omitting any observation about the outcomes of students who were, as a result, a distinct minority. Smith seemed a curious participant given that the law did not impact its all-women's status, but Smith's president, Thomas

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<sup>121</sup> Higher Education Act of 1971, H. Res. 661, 92nd Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record*, vol. 117, pt. 29 (October 27, 1971): 37765; John Erlenborn of Illinois, speaking against Title X of the Higher Education Act, H. Res. 661, 92nd Cong., 1st sess., November 1, 1971, *Congressional Record*, v. 117, pt. 29, 38639; Kidd to Erlenborn, 92nd Cong., 1st sess., October 29, 1971, *Congressional Record*, v. 117, pt. 29, 38641.

Mendenhall, argued against the bill on the grounds that Smith's enrollment would decline once the quotas that limited women students' other choices were removed.<sup>122</sup>

Alfred Fitt's letter to Congressman Erlenborn was one of the first to arrive. In it, Fitt repeated his earlier argument to Edith Green: the legislation's anti-discrimination language was unacceptable since it would bar Yale "from exercising its own judgment and deciding its own pace" regarding female quotas in undergraduate admissions. The seven years allotted by the bill for ending gender quotas was apparently not long enough. But what was most galling to Yale sophomore Phyllis Orrick, who wrote a column on Fitt's letter in the *Yale Daily News*, was the "paternalizing and complacent" sentence with which Fitt closed his letter to Erlenborn: "Many women are understandably impatient, but impatience alone cannot teach the proper remedy."<sup>123</sup>

Public opinion, however, was shifting. On November 29, Carnegie Corporation President Alan Pifer, in a speech to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, pointed out that "higher education is very much on the defensive right now over the question of discrimination against women." Pifer was no outsider to the world of Kingman Brewster. He had gone to Harvard, and he used the right language in referring to the spate of Executive Order 11246 complaints: "Militant women's groups have arisen

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<sup>122</sup> Kemeny to the Honorable Claiborne Pell et al., October 27, 1971; Charles Daly, Harvard University, to Erlenborn, November 1, 1971; Robert Goheen, Princeton University, to Erlenborn, October 28, 1971; Mendenhall to Edward Kennedy, ca November 1, 1971; Fitt to Erlenborn, October 28. All citations from *Congressional Record*, 92nd Cong., 1st sess., vol. 117, pt. 29, 38639-38641.

<sup>123</sup> Fitt to Erlenborn, October 28; Phyllis Orrick, "Whither Coeducation?" op-ed, *YDN*, December 14, 1971, box 1, folder 5, RU821B.

both nationally and locally on many campuses that are bringing charges against particular institutions.” Pifer sympathized with how men like Brewster must feel: “Many men are bewildered by the suddenness with which the issue has arisen and find themselves rather offended at standing accused of an injustice they do not feel they have committed.” But then he said something that was well ahead of Yale’s stance on women. “It seems to me this issue comes down basically to a matter of human justice. I hope all of you here will agree with me that until we have righted the wrong done to women in our society, the promise of American democracy will remain unfulfilled.”<sup>124</sup>

As Fitt was working to stop congressional legislation from meddling in Yale’s admissions discrimination, the attention to these practices brought by the Executive Order 11246 complaint continued to grow. HEW investigators visited Yale seeking data and explanations on five separate occasions between September 1971 and March 1972.<sup>125</sup> But even as the pressure grew at Yale grew, Sandler and others began to question the ultimate efficacy of the executive order strategy. By January 1972, Executive Order 11246 complaints had been filed at 260 campuses, and an HEW staff member reported that agency investigators were finding evidence of sex discrimination “at virtually every campus we visit.” Enforcement was difficult, though. HEW depended on the universities themselves for the data needed to show unfair practices towards women, and as Columbia

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<sup>124</sup> Alan Pifer, "Women in Higher Education," speech to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, November 29, 1971, Miami, Florida, ERIC ED058844, 2, 44-45

<sup>125</sup> Gay Miller, "Mintz Will Survey Hiring of Women as Yale's New Associate Provost," *YDN*, June 26, 1972.

University had demonstrated for the previous three years, all you had to do when the investigators showed up was fail to provide the data they had asked for.<sup>126</sup>

A second problem was that HEW lacked the staff to do its job. With seventeen employees in Washington and ninety-six investigators spread out over nine regional offices, HEW was charged with enforcing anti-discrimination requirements at 2,300 colleges and universities, more than 6,000 hospitals, and hundreds of HEW-funded construction projects. In New England, the regional office had six people to ensure compliance not just at Yale, but at hundreds of universities and hospitals across six states. To make things worse, in the fall of 1971, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance instructed all agencies, including HEW, to focus limited staff on investigating federally funded construction projects, raising questions about the federal government's commitment to equity on college campuses. "Some officials are willing to admit, privately, that, in the silent language in which bureaucrat and policy-maker often communicate," reported *Science* magazine, the staffing levels and priorities signaled that eliminating gender discrimination in higher education was not "so important anyway." Bernice Sandler put it more bluntly: "They just don't enforce the order."<sup>127</sup>

As of January 1972, HEW had not canceled a single federal contract with a US college or university, nor even begun the due process hearings required to do so. The Michigan action came through HEW's placing a hold on the signing of new contracts, the

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<sup>126</sup> "University Women's Rights: Whose Feet Are Dragging?" *Science* 175, no. 4018 (January 14, 1972): 151-154.

<sup>127</sup> *Science*, January 1972, 152-153.

only action it could take quickly. Eleven of the 260 campuses with Order 11246 complaints had suffered this penalty, with just five where funds had actually been delayed: Harvard, Michigan, Columbia, Cornell, and Duke. As *Science* magazine concluded, “Contract compliance is proving a clumsy mechanism for women’s groups anxious to make rapid changes at their universities.”<sup>128</sup> If the women at Yale sought help from the federal government in ending gender discrimination in admissions, they would have to look to Congress.

The Higher Education Act of 1971, and with it Edith Green’s accompanying anti-discrimination measures, failed to pass in the first session of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Congress, but three months later Congress took up the matter of sex discrimination again, and this time Edith Green was successful. On March 24, 1972, Congress amended the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to remove the exemption of educational institutions from Title VII’s prohibition against gender discrimination in employment. On June 23, Congress passed the Education Amendments of 1972, which extended the Equal Pay Act of 1963 to include college faculty and administrators and, through Title IX, banned gender discrimination in all federally assisted education programs.<sup>129</sup>

Only one item on Edith Green’s list was left out. Title IX begins with its one elegantly worded sentence, but then includes a list of institutions that are exempt from its gender discrimination penalties. The Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, fraternities, sororities,

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<sup>128</sup> *Science*, January 1972, 152, 154.

<sup>129</sup> Robert Semple, “President Signs School Aid Bill,” *NYT*, June 24, 1972; Sigworth, 113-114.

existing single-sex colleges—none of them had to change. But the very first exemption in Title IX goes as follows:

In regard to admissions to educational institutions, this section shall apply only to institutions of vocational education, professional education, and graduate higher education, and to *public* institutions of undergraduate higher education.

In other words, private institutions of undergraduate higher education, Yale for example, were exempt from Title IX’s prohibition of gender discrimination in admissions. Bernice Sandler, whom Edith Green had hired as a staff member of the Special Subcommittee on Education, remembers what happened. “Dartmouth, Princeton, Yale and Harvard as well as some women’s colleges recognized the Title IX implications for admissions to their institutions and were able to get a narrowly-worded exemption for private undergraduate admissions.”<sup>130</sup> If Yale wanted to keep the gender quota through which it excluded qualified women applicants, the federal government was not going to stand in the way.

### **One Fundamental Victory: 1971-1972**

#### **A Chorus for Change**

On November 3, 1971, a week after Al Fitt wrote his letter to Congress, five members of Yale’s admissions committee wrote a letter of a different sort. This one went to Provost Charlie Taylor, Yale’s acting president during Brewster’s London sabbatical. The letter conveyed the same anguish over Yale’s gender discrimination as the March

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<sup>130</sup> “Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972,” accessed January 27, 2018 from <https://www.justice.gov/crt/title-ix-education-amendments-1972>, italics added by author; *Science*, November 1970, 834; Sandler, 477-478.



1970 letters by Professors Keith Thomas and Paula Johnson, but this time Thomas and Johnson were joined by three other admissions committee members: Davenport Dean Robert Chambers, German Professor Steven Scher, and Assistant Dean Elisabeth Thomas.<sup>131</sup> The last name was the one that bore notice. Residential college deans were junior appointments; the faculty was large enough to span multiple views; but Thomas was one of the top six people in the Yale College Dean's office. Her title had weight, and moreover, she did not make a habit of taking public stands.

Like Wasserman, Thomas had been hired following Yale's decision to admit women undergraduates. Both women were the first, and only, women administrators in their respective departments: Thomas in the Yale College Dean's office, Wasserman in the President's office. Both had degrees from Harvard and came to their jobs with administrative experience rare for women in those days.<sup>132</sup> But Thomas was younger than Wasserman, thirty-three to Wasserman's forty-six, and she approached the perpetual challenge of how to respond to inequities at Yale differently than Wasserman did. Their spring 1970 approach to Mory's provides an example.

Mory's, recall, was both the favored venue for Yale faculty and administrative meetings and a club that banned women from the main dining room at lunch, when all the meetings took place. Wasserman approached the problem head on, and sent a letter to every member of the Yale faculty asking them to stop patronizing Mory's. "It seems to

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<sup>131</sup> "Admissions Group Protests Present Sex Quotas," *YAM*, January 1972, 31. Elisabeth Thomas and Keith Thomas were unrelated.

<sup>132</sup> Thomas Peterson interview, 2016; Wilkinson interview, 2016; Wasserman interview, 1992.

me inappropriate to conduct university business in a facility from which some members of the university community are arbitrarily excluded.” Sociology Department Chair Burton Clark wrote right back, expressing shock that Mory’s continued its ban on women, and pledging to stop conducting departmental business at Mory’s. History Department Chair George Pierson, however, pushed back: “I wonder whether it is altogether ‘appropriate’ for you to adopt some of the language of the more aggressive women of the Liberation persuasion.”<sup>133</sup>

Betsy Thomas used a different approach. The executive board of the university bookstore, the Yale Co-op, had traditionally met at Mory’s, and when they elected Thomas as their first woman board member they paid Mory’s the extra fee required to rent a private upstairs room, thus enabling Thomas to join them for lunch without violating Mory’s “no women in the main dining room” rule. But Thomas had a different idea about how the Co-op Board should deal with Mory’s. When it came time for her to order her meal, she simply declined to do so. “I decided I wasn’t going to eat if the meeting was at Mory’s,” she explains. “Eventually, they got the point.” The Co-op executive board thus became one of the first groups at Yale to boycott Mory’s over its anti-woman policy.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Coeducation Committee minutes, March 18, 1970, box 1, folder 1, RU575; Wasserman to “Faculty Member,” June 1970, box 1, folder 11, RU821B; Clark to Wasserman, June 11, 1970, box 1, folder 11, RU821B; Pierson to Wasserman, July 1, 1970, box 1, folder 11, RU821B.

<sup>134</sup> “Yale Co-Op Elects,” *YDN*, November 10, 1969; Wasserman interview, 2007, 97; Thomas Peterson interview, 2016; Thomas Peterson interview, 2017; Renan, 241-246.

Signing a public letter to the Yale provost, however, was a different matter, and the November 3 admissions committee letter was no mild statement. The group called Yale's gender quotas "deeply disturbing . . . demoralizing . . . painful . . . injurious. . . anguishing," and told the provost that the quotas "seriously weaken(ed) Yale's commitment to coeducation and to quality." Still, Thomas was unsure. "How assertive can you be without losing credibility?" she wondered. "That was something that I was struggling with a lot."<sup>135</sup> But there was her name, along with the others, at the bottom of the letter.

The admissions committee letter made an impact. Three weeks later, Yale Chaplain William Sloan Coffin, known for his stands against the Vietnam War and racial injustice, used his weekly sermon to protest Yale's gender discrimination. "The morality of justice" required that Yale adopt "a fifty-fifty ratio between men and women," Coffin bellowed from the Battel Chapel pulpit, and he left no doubt as to the impetus of his sermon. "It is time to give visible faculty and student support to those five people on the admissions committee who recently objected to the quota system." The Yale College Council responded to Coffin's call the next night, and wrote the provost asking for an explanation of an admissions policy that was both "unfair and discriminating." Taylor wrote back with the response that had been the company line since Brewster first voiced it in December 1970: Yale could not possibly take up the question of the quota on women

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<sup>135</sup> *YAM*, January 1972, 31; Thomas Peterson interview, 2016.

before first considering “the maximum desirable enrollment on campus at any one time, the length of the course of study, and other issues.”<sup>136</sup>

One might have expected the Sisterhood to jump into the fray at that point, but the group was on hold. Judy Berkan had graduated. Kit McClure’s rock band had gotten a contract with Rounder Records. Betsy Hartmann was in India as part of Yale’s five-year B.A. program. Barbara Deinhardt was getting ready to head to Europe to conduct a study sponsored by the Ford Foundation. Betty Spahn was a senior, writing her thesis and letting herself focus for the first time on just being a student.<sup>137</sup> The Sisterhood would raise its voice once last time at Yale, but not until the spring of 1972.

In the meantime, there seemed to be no one to take up the cause of Yale’s women undergraduates. The word on campus was that activism was dead. “The ills of society somehow don’t seem quite as dire as they once did,” wrote junior Craig Johnson in a November *Yale Daily News* column, and the following week another student seconded that observation. Yalies have become “passive, apathetic individuals searching for chairs

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<sup>136</sup> Marc Charney, “Rev. William Sloane Coffin Dies at 81; Fought for Civil Rights and Against a War,” obituary, *NYT*, April 13, 2006; William Sloane Coffin, “Whom the Lord Loves He Chastens,” sermon, November 21, 1971, in Yale University Ad Hoc Committee on Coeducation, “Report for Full Coeducation,” January 24, 1972, Appendix C, box 1, folder 5, RU821B; William Fowler, Acting Chairman Yale College Council, to Charles Taylor, December 1, 1971, box 32, folder 1006, RU821A; *YAM*, January 1972, 31.

<sup>137</sup> Berkan interview, 2017; Chicago Women’s Liberation Rock Band and New Haven Women’s Liberation Rock Band, *Mountain Moving Day*, recorded 1972, Rounder Records, vinyl; Hartmann interview, 2017; Deinhardt interview, 2017; Spahn interview, 2017.

in the Cross Campus Library,” wrote Philip St. George.<sup>138</sup> But neither Johnson nor St. George, apparently, was aware of everything that was going on at Yale.

In November 1971, three friends—two men, one woman—began talking together about Yale’s ongoing discrimination against women applicants.<sup>139</sup> None of them had been involved in activism on the issue before. Up to that point, the pressure for greater equity for women had come largely from those who stood at the margins of Yale: the Sisterhood, Elga Wasserman, the small group of women who dared sign their names to the documents sent to HEW. But those on the edge created a solid space in the middle from which others could act.

Wasserman understood the value of that role, which the New Haven Women’s Liberation group, far more radical than she was, played for her. “I found it useful to have that group pushing for what I wanted,” she explained. “And here I was. I could keep my safe middle ground.”<sup>140</sup> Similarly, the Sisterhood both pushed the need for change when others were not yet ready to speak, and created a middle ground that cast other students as a reasonable alternative to their more radical stance. In the third year of coeducation, Yale students once again organized to protest Yale’s gender bias in admissions and all the

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<sup>138</sup> Craig Johnson, op-ed, "Beyond Activism: The New Mood at Yale," *YDN*, November 12, 1971; Philip St. Georges, op-ed, "Student Activism: The Luxury of Apathy," *YDN*, November 17, 1971.

<sup>139</sup> Ad Hoc Committee on Coeducation to "The Readers of this Packet," cover memo, January 24, 1972, box 32, folder 1006, RU821A.

<sup>140</sup> Wasserman interview, 2007, 64.

assumptions about women that lay behind it. This time however, the strategies chosen, and the students taking the lead, were different.

By December 1970, the Ad Hoc Committee on Coeducation was meeting weekly about how to overturn Yale's discriminatory admissions policy, and when Brewster returned from his London sabbatical the next month, they were ready. On January 24, the start of the spring semester, every Yale faculty member received an information packet from the Ad Hoc Committee on Coeducation. The report was sober in tone, a term paper complete with table of contents and appendices. "Full and equal coeducation at Yale is an idea whose time is now," the document began. "Both common sense and overwhelming student sentiment support the enactment of this idea." The committee sought to dispel the various myths, some voiced, others not, that had blocked progress towards change. "We have information which strongly suggests . . . that women alumnae can and do make significant financial contributions to their alma maters, that both married women and mothers are active participants in the career world, that open admissions will not turn Yale into a woman's school."<sup>141</sup>

Despite its "just the facts" approach, the Ad Hoc Committee's report did not fail to include the more fiery statements of others. The letter from the five admissions committee members was Appendix B. Coffin's sermon on the immorality of Yale's policy was Appendix C. Phyllis Orrick's scathing *Yale Daily News* column on Al Fitt's

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<sup>141</sup> Ad Hoc Committee on Coeducation, "Postulated Strategy," ca January 1972, box 32, folder 1006, RU821A; Ad Hoc Committee, cover memo; Ad Hoc Committee on Coeducation, "Report for Full Coeducation," January 24, 1972, box 1, folder 5, RU821B.

letter to Congress was Appendix E. The voices pushing for change at Yale had grown to a chorus.

The January 24 report was the first step in a daily drumroll of pressure targeted at Brewster.<sup>142</sup> Every day he would hear from a new group expressing their opposition to the current policy. February 1 was the Deacons of Battel Chapel; February 2, the Spanish Students of Yale; February 3, the Woman's Center. The relentless push of the Ad Hoc Committee was accompanied by a cheekier poster campaign, and one of the posters mad it onto the front page of the *Yale Daily News*. It began with a statement made in 1970 by US Vice President Spiro Agnew, when he suggested that Yale's trustees might do well to replace Brewster as president:

I do not feel that the students of  
Yale University can get a  
fair impression of their country.

The poster went on from there:

Maybe Spiro was right.  
After all Kingman,  
Half the people out there are WOMEN.<sup>143</sup>

The *News* signaled its approval with a caption pointing out that actually, "Biologists tell us that more than half the people out there are women."

Other students sought to broaden the campaign by meeting personally with faculty members and alumni. On February 3, seventy-five students gathered in one of the

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<sup>142</sup> Ad Hoc Committee on Coeducation, "Postulated Strategy," ca January 1972.

<sup>143</sup> "Scientific Fact," caption and photograph, *YDN*, February 1, 1971; Prudence Lieb and Andy Irving, "Postering," letter to the editor, *YDN*, February 4, 1972.

residential college common rooms to brainstorm possible strategies. Everyone agreed that Yale students were unanimous in their opposition to the gender quota, but those in the room wanted nothing to do with the strategies of earlier activists, and declared that “coercive radical tactics advocated two years ago would no longer be acceptable.” Instead, they would discuss the need for change over dinner with the faculty fellows in their residential college, and consider issuing an invitation to meet alumni at the New York Yale Club.<sup>144</sup> Further pressure, however, proved unnecessary. The strategy had already worked.

On February 14, Brewster issued a statement: “I intend to ask the Corporation to reconsider the policies which govern the admission of men and women and to act on the matter no later than its November, 1972 meeting.”<sup>145</sup> It was not action, but the promise of action, nine months hence. The Ad Hoc Committee on Coeducation had sought to obtain a Corporation vote overturning Yale’s current policy no later than March 1972, in time to affect the admission of the Class of 1976. Brewster’s delay made that impossible, but his answer would have to do. At least Yale’s gender quota was finally up for discussion.

### **The Myth of Alumni Opposition**

The story of coeducation at America’s elite universities is sometimes told as one of conservative alumni fighting to hold back a progressive administration that was ready

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<sup>144</sup> Steve Hiller, "Students Organize Drive; Full Coeducation is Goal," *YDN*, February 4, 1972.

<sup>145</sup> Brewster, statement, February 14, 1972, box 4, folder 82, RU52A; Orrick, *YDN*, December 14, 1971.



for change. Harvard economists Claudia Goldin and Lawrence Katz argue that “by the 1960s the only force holding coeducation in check was alumni (and alumnae) support for retaining the prior gender identity of the school,” and both the *Yale Alumni Magazine* and historian Nancy Malkiel have placed the blame for Yale’s four years of gender quotas on the alumni.<sup>146</sup> What happened at Yale, however, does not fit that story.

You could always find some guy in the Class of 1926 who was willing to go on camera saying that he opposed coeducation, and alumni in that category did not shy from making their views clear to any woman student they happened to meet.<sup>147</sup> Moreover, Brewster, like Dartmouth President John Kemeny, pushed the idea that alumni wrath prevented a more equitable arrangement for women students. A “very practical consideration” guided whether Yale could move to sex-blind admissions, Brewster told a group of women undergraduates in the spring of 1970. “To what extent do we have an obligation not to shrink men’s enrollment in Yale in order to maintain the loyalty and continuity of those alumni who have been loyal to us in terms of support, all of whom were men up to now?”<sup>148</sup>

The following fall, Brewster repeated this argument in his meeting with the Coeducation Committee. As Wasserman recounts, “there were long discussions about how the alumni giving was going to go,” and Brewster raised the fear of declining alumni

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<sup>146</sup> Goldin and Katz, 25; “Women at Yale,” *YAM*, September/October 2009; Malkiel, 275-280.

<sup>147</sup> *Coeducation*, 1970; Spahn interview, 2017.

<sup>148</sup> Kemeny to Pell et al., October 27, 1971; *Coeducation*, 1970.

contributions again in his December 1970 presentation to the Corporation.<sup>149</sup> Throughout, however, Brewster provided no evidence that alumni anger had hurt alumni giving, or that alumni opposed lifting the cap on women students. The statements were cached instead in the language of assumption.

Alumni donations to Yale, in fact, increased following the start of coeducation. In 1969-1970, the first year of coeducation, alumni gifts surpassed all previous records. In the second year of coeducation, the Yale Alumni Fund hit yet a new high, with donations totaling 5 percent more than in 1969-1970. By the third year, a report commissioned by Dartmouth College and conducted with the full support of the Yale administration concluded that there was no evidence to support the idea that coeducation had hurt Yale alumni giving. Wasserman, who spoke with alumni groups around the country as part of her role, also reported that alumni were supportive of Yale's decision to go coed. Many of them, as it turned out, had daughters.<sup>150</sup>

Yale did have many disgruntled alumni in 1972, but it was not coeducation that had them upset. Rather, Yale's alumni were angry because of their belief that Yale had radically reduced the admissions preference for alumni children and graduates of private schools, an anger made manifest in an alumni report issued in 1967, two years before the first woman undergraduate ever set foot at Yale.<sup>151</sup> As evidenced by letters sent to J.

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<sup>149</sup> Wasserman interview, 1992, 34; Brewster, "Memorandum," December 11, 1970, RU19-II.

<sup>150</sup> Joseph Treaster, "Donating to Yale at Record Level," *NYT*, July 26, 1970; Ecklund, *YDN*, November 23, 1971; Dartmouth, 1971, II-10; Wasserman interview, 2007, 64.

Richardson Dilworth, chair of the Corporation's Admissions Committee, alumni quickly absorbed the given of women students while still nursing their grievance over the reduction of preference for alumni children and prep school kids.

Cyril Moore, Yale Class of 1929, informed Dilworth that he would not donate to Yale again until "Yale sons and daughters represent 25% of an entering class." Burnett Bartley, Class of 1949 and the father of "a couple of super little daughters," wrote Dilworth, "Are you going to thumb your noses at alumni parents who have sons and daughters who more than meet the median academic requirements?" Other alumni argued directly for an increase in the numbers of women. Richard Besse, Class of 1949 and Chair of the Syracuse Alumni Schools Committee, wrote Dilworth that Yale should have "a higher proportion of women, at least 40%." David Grimes, Class of 1945, told the *Yale Daily News* that Yale "should have the most qualified students," and then added, "Now I don't know what that has to do with sex." Anthony Lord, Class of 1927, concurred. In regards to having equal numbers of men and women students, he told the *News*, it was about time that "Yale got on with it."<sup>152</sup>

The first and only organized alumni opposition to coeducation did not occur until 1972, and involved a short-lived, right wing group that called itself Lux et Veritas, Inc, or LEVI. LEVI was founded in 1970 in the wake of the May Day Crisis, and had been

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<sup>151</sup> Karabel, 638, footnote 94.

<sup>152</sup> Moore to Dilworth, December 4, 1972, box 13, folder 265, RU52A; Bartley to Dilworth, December 8, 1972, box 13, folder 265, RU52A; Besse to Dilworth, December 10, 1972, box 13, folder 265, RU52A; Bradley Graham, "Brewster Awaits 'Old Blues' Views," *YDN*, November 3, 1972.

pounding Yale for two years on other issues—the problem of student strikes and campus disruption, the importance of “character” as a criteria in selecting Yale students, the need to start a conservative lecture series—before it brought up the topic of coeducation. In the summer of 1972, however, LEVI issued a coeducation report recommending that Yale emulate Harvard and place its women in a separate institution like Radcliffe. The report received little attention, as the campus had already dispersed for the summer. After some brief correspondence with Chauncey, who told LEVI that the report was “incompetent . . . irresponsible and shamefully misleading,” LEVI dropped the coeducation issue and turned its energies to a new report, this one bemoaning the declining admissions preference for alumni children and the rising percentages of blacks and Jews.<sup>153</sup>

In the end, perhaps the most convincing evidence that the vast majority of Yale’s alumni had no problem with coeducation came from Kingman Brewster himself. In contrast to his public statements, Brewster wrote privately that only about one sixth of Yale’s alumni were “outraged” over coeducation, and even they “were more grumbling than boisterous.” In a November 1972 letter to Amherst President John Ward, Brewster assuaged Ward’s concerns that Amherst risked alienating alumni by deciding to admit

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<sup>153</sup> Lux et Veritas to Brewster, November 5, 1970, Louis Loeb et al. to Kingman Brewster, November 5, 1970, box 15, folder 301, RU52A, Accession 1977-A-008; Lux et Veritas, “Journal Number Two,” ca. October 1971, box 15, folder 301, RU52A; Lux et Veritas, “Coeducation at Yale,” ca. June 1972; Chauncey to Edward Young, June 23, 1972, box 13, folder 265, RU52A; Chauncey to John Wilbur, June 27, 1972, box 13, folder 265, RU52A; Lux et Veritas, “A Report on Yale Admissions 1950-1972,” Fall 1972, box 13, folder 264, RU52A.

women students. The alumni response, Brewster explained, “is almost uniform approval, varying from rising enthusiasm to acquiescence.”<sup>154</sup>

### **The End of Gender Quotas at Yale**

By the fall of 1972, Brewster’s leadership at Yale was flagging. “Where has all the luster gone?” asked *Yale Daily News* columnist Chet Cobb of Brewster’s once shiny crown, and those who were close to Brewster saw the tarnish as well. Jonathan Fanton, who had taken Chauncey’s old job as Brewster’s top aide, felt Brewster was never quite the same after his sabbatical—worn out by the criticism of those who thought he had let campus radicals get the best of him over May Day, and worn out too by eight years as Yale’s president. Brewster’s friend John Blum agreed. “By 1972, more or less, he knew it himself, he felt it himself. He was tired.”<sup>155</sup>

Nobody talked about Brewster as a possible US senator or US president any more. Brewster seemed to be stumbling enough as president of Yale. In September 1972, a budget debacle raised questions of competence even by Brewster’s longtime admirer, *Time* magazine. Yale had had budget trouble for a while by then, five deficit budgets in a row, with a \$7 million hit on Yale’s rainy day fund as a result. But on September 11, 1972 Brewster found himself writing an embarrassing memo to the Corporation. The \$5.7 million deficit predicted just months earlier for the 1971-72 year turned out in fact to be

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<sup>154</sup> Brewster to Ward, November 17, 1972, box 258, folder 1, RU11-II.

<sup>155</sup> Chet Cobb, "The Yale Administration: Where Has All the Luster Gone?" op-ed, *YDN*, October 6, 1972; Fanton interview, 1992, 18-19; Blum interview, March 1992, 74.

just \$1 million. Some of the difference was attributable to cost cutting, *Time* observed, but “there also must have been a fairly stunning miscalculation.” Brewster stated the problem himself. When financial forecasts and budget calculations prove unreliable, he wrote, they undermine “the community’s confidence in the credibility and competence of the administration.”<sup>156</sup>

Those who remembered Brewster’s claims that coeducation would cost Yale \$30 million had grounds to be skeptical of his credibility as well. The advent of undergraduate women had in fact added more than \$2 million to Yale’s operating revenues in its first two years of coeducation. When *Lux et Veritas*, relying on Brewster’s predictions, had argued that coeducation hurt Yale’s finances, Chauncey immediately disputed the charge. “The facts are that coeducation has in fact helped Yale financially,” he wrote Yale alumnus John Castles. “Any person could quickly compute that the additional tuition income has not been offset by increased expenditures.”<sup>157</sup>

In the fall of 1972, then, Brewster was no longer the sure-footed leader he once had been and Yale was no longer a leader when it came to coeducation. Although none of Yale’s peers had yet reached parity between men and women undergraduates, Brown, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, Wesleyan, and Williams had all increased their percentage of women undergraduates well beyond the 20 percent cap still in place at Yale. Within

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<sup>156</sup> "God and Mammon at Yale," *Time*, September 25, 1972, 78; John Geesman, "Deficit of \$5.7 Million Predicted by Ecklund," *YDN*, November 23, 1971; Ecklund, *YDN*, November 23, 1971; John Geesman, "Administration Reveals Huge Error in Projections of 1971-72 Deficit," *YDN*, September 11, 1972, 1; "Yale's '72 Deficit Wide of Forecast," *NYT*, September 13, 1972.

<sup>157</sup> Dartmouth report, II-8-9; Chauncey to John Castles III, July 19, 1972, box 13, folder 265, RU52A.

the Ivy League, only Dartmouth had a lower percentage of women undergraduates, but then Dartmouth was in its first year of coeducation in 1972, not like Yale in its fourth.<sup>158</sup>

Nationally, views on women had left Yale behind as well. The American Council on Education, which had declined Edith Green's offer to testify in 1970 because there was "no sex discrimination in higher education," now had an Office of Women in Higher Education, and in October hosted a conference on advancing equity for women students, faculty, and staff. More than 1,500 people attended, and none could have missed the dig at Kingman Brewster in Barnard President Margaret Peterson's keynote address. "Nothing much has been heard recently from those persons who formerly could be counted on to speak out on important issues in higher education—to lead. . . Yale apologizes for a smaller deficit than anticipated. But is that intellectual leadership?"<sup>159</sup>

Brewster thus limped, rather than strode, into the fourth year of coeducation. Eight months had passed since his February 1972 statement that he would "recommend a policy on the admission of women and men to Yale College," yet Brewster announced on October 12 that he had not yet had time "to put his own thoughts in order" on the matter. When he finally issued a statement the following week, he took no stand on Yale's gender quotas, but instead laid out the pros and cons for various admissions policy options. The *Yale Weekly Bulletin and Calendar* printed Brewster's statement in full so

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<sup>158</sup> "Freshman Classes Fall 1972," box 32, folder 1006, RU821A.

<sup>159</sup> Sandler, 477; W. Todd Furniss and Patricia A. Graham, eds., *Women in Higher Education*, papers given at October 1972 ACE conference (Washington DC: American Council on Education, 1974), xi; Martha E. Peterson, "Women, Autonomy, and Accountability in Higher Education," in Furniss and Graham, 5.

that all could have access to it, but there was nothing there that anyone had not heard before. Brewster raised the issue of alumni support, still with no evidence to back his claim. He brought up the leadership question, warning that a different admissions policy might affect “Yale’s impact, through its college graduates, on the quality and direction of the society.”<sup>160</sup> But the conversation had moved well past Kingman Brewster by then, enough so that the final push to abolish Yale’s gender quotas seemed almost an anti-climax, a choreographed performance to which everyone knew the ending.

On October 30, Brewster and other top administrators attended evening listening sessions to hear student views, and five Corporation members repeated the exercise the following week. The banner headline in the *Yale Daily News* the following day captured a result that was a surprise to no one: "Students to Trustees: More Women Now."

Another petition began making the rounds. Over the past three years, Yale students had signed their names to three different petitions calling for gender-blind admissions: 1,900 signatures on the March 1970 petition following the alumni lunch protest; 1,930 signatures on the Yale Sisterhood’s December 1970 petition; and 1,973 signatures on the Yale Sisterhood’s April 1971 petition, which called for the end of all sex discrimination at Yale. On November 10, the Yale College Council presented Brewster with a fourth and final petition for sex-blind admissions, this one with 3,106 signatures.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Kingman Brewster, "Background Memorandum on Coeducation Admissions Policy," October 18, 1972, box 258, folder 1, RU11-II; Bradley Graham, "Trustees to Eye Cooper Study," *YDN*, October 13, 1972.

<sup>161</sup> Schedule for College Discussions of Coeducation, box 3, folder 45, RU95B; Bradley Graham, "Students, Trustees to Rap on Sex Policy," *YDN*, November 9, 1972; Robert Sullwold, "Students to



Notably absent from the campus-wide discussion was Yale's faculty. Dean Horace Taft did not even put the topic on the faculty meeting agenda until November 30, eight days before the Corporation was scheduled to vote, and then the faculty postponed their discussion for yet another week. They would decide on November 8, the day before the Corporation met. By the time the faculty voted to support sex blind admissions,<sup>162</sup> the action was so meaningless that the *Yale Daily News* did not even bother to report it.

The newly formed Association of Yale Alumni did weigh in, and were more vocal in their support of coeducation than the faculty. AYA Chairman Fred Rose, whose daughter was in the class of 1972, told the *News*, "Everybody agrees that coeducation is the best thing that has happened to Yale in a long time." The AYA held its first meeting on November 3, and on December 2, after surveying Yale's 90,000 alumni, delivered its unanimous recommendation: Yale should drop the thousand-man quota and work towards a sixty-forty ratio of men to women. "It is believed that such would be the result of a policy of admissions without regard to sex, which some members of the AYA Board of Governors would favor as an expressed principle."<sup>163</sup> The AYA statement was not quite a gender-blind recommendation, but given Yale's all-men status just four years earlier, it came pretty close.

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Trustees: More Women Now," *YDN*, November 10, 1972; Treaster, *NYT*, April 14, 1970; Bulkeley, *YDN*, December 14, 1970; Herman and Gilmore, *Sex Discrimination at Yale*, May 10, 1971; Bradley Graham, "Trustees Postpone Decision," *YDN*, November 13, 1972.

<sup>162</sup> Chris Buckley, "Faculty Postpones Coeducation Decision," *YDN*, December 1, 1972; Yale University News Bureau, Press Release #129, December 10, 1972, box 258, folder 1, RU11-II.

<sup>163</sup> Royster interview, 2017; John Yandell, "AYA: Plasma for Blues," *YDN*, November 17, 1972; Cottie Davison to Members of the Corporation, December 4, 1972, box 258, folder 1, RU11-II.

The following week, the Yale Corporation voted to abolish the gender quota that had shaped the first four years of coeducation at Yale. The announcement came with a simple statement from Yale's trustees. "We believe that the gender of the applicant should not be the deciding factor in a candidate's admission."<sup>164</sup> Within five years, the percentage of women at Yale more than doubled to 46 percent.<sup>165</sup> This first, fundamental victory ended a policy that had forced admissions officers to turn down women candidates more qualified than the men who were accepted, placed women at a disadvantage by unnecessarily saddling them with the burden of token numbers, and served as a potent symbol that Yale valued men students more than women. Yet it did not benefit women equally, a function of the intersection of race, class, and gender.

While overall the number of first year women nearly doubled, from 230 in 1969 to 452 in 1973, the number of black women remained roughly the same.<sup>166</sup> The problem was not the numbers of black women admitted—Yale increased the number of black women freshmen accepted from 35 in 1969 to 68 in 1973—but the sharp decline in Yale's financial aid package, which disproportionately affected students of color. Between the 1971-72 and 1973-74 school years, Yale nearly tripled the amount that financial aid students had to contribute from loans or jobs, making their financial aid package the worst in the Ivy League. Black students responded in kind, with only 40

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<sup>164</sup> Robert Sullwold, "Trustees Eliminate Sex Quota," *YDN*, December 11, 1972.

<sup>165</sup> Karabel, 426.

<sup>166</sup> Office of Undergraduate Admissions, August 27, 1970; Marc Morgenstern, "Most Coed Class Settles into Relaxed Old Campus," *YDN*, September 5, 1973.

percent accepting the offer of admission in 1973 compared with 60 percent in 1969.<sup>167</sup>

As a result, the number of black freshmen declined from 96 in 1969 to 70 in 1973. Thus while one barrier to black women undergraduates admission was removed—their gender—another was erected in its place, their class.

### **Endings: Spring 1973**

#### **Dismissal**

We saw her as our ally.

—Judy Berkan, Class of 1971

She was the most senior woman that we knew. She was our go-to person, and she did anything and everything that she could for us. So she was, as a role model, the most important female figure in our lives here.

—Connie Royster, Class of 1972

She was great . . . She was really committed. She fought the good fight.

—Barbara Deinhardt, Class of 1973

She went to bat for us over and over again, and we just really loved her.

—Kate Field, Class of 1975

She was really important to a lot of people.

—Elisabeth Thomas, Assistant Dean, 1969-1975<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Steven Hiller, "How Black Students Arrived at Yale," *YDN*, September 25, 1973; John Curley, "Yale Lags in Attracting Minority Students," *YDN*, November 2, 1973.

<sup>168</sup> Berkan interview, 2017; Royster interview, 2016; Deinhardt interview, 2017; Field interview, 2017; Thomas Peterson interview, 2016.

The *Yale Daily News* ran the story on the front page. “Elga Wasserman is no longer in the Yale administration, but through no choice of her own.” It was February 21, 1973, just under four years since Wasserman became the highest-ranking woman in the Brewster administration, the person responsible for leading Yale’s transition to coeducation. The message of Wasserman’s departure is clear, wrote the Yale Faculty and Professional Women’s Forum in an outraged letter to the editor: “To be outspoken is to be damned at Yale. Elga’s fate is an object lesson to those of us who want to keep our jobs here.”<sup>169</sup>

The Yale Sisterhood was back in full force to protest Wasserman’s departure. They circulated a petition and tried to schedule a meeting with Brewster. After two weeks of being ignored, and with the end of the semester fast approaching, the students held a sit-in in the office of Jonathan Fanton, the Brewster adviser who had been giving them the run around. Fanton was indignant. The women were “rude . . . They assumed bad will on our part. Obviously the President will meet with anyone he can fit in his busy schedule.” The Sisterhood got their meeting—right in the middle of exam period, when the *News* had stopped regular publication.<sup>170</sup>

The meeting did not go well. On the topic of the status of women students, Brewster told the Sisterhood that the ratio of men to women undergraduates that year was

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<sup>169</sup> “Wasserman Loses Position,” *YDN*, February 21, 1973, box 1, folder 3, RU821B; Yale Faculty and Professional Women’s Forum, “Wasserman,” letter to the editor, *YDN*, March 6, 1973.

<sup>170</sup> Gay Miller, “Women Miss Wasserman,” *YDN*, April 13, 1973; “Sisterhood Storms Office: Meeting with Brewster Set,” *YDN*, May 3, 1973.

“about two to one,” when in fact it was four to one. On the closing of the Coeducation Office, he said “We would be in a happier situation if students were treated as human beings—not as male or female.” On Elga Wasserman, Brewster told them, “I resent the fact that a deliberate misimpression has been created and not corrected that she was not offered positions.” The students wanted to know as well why Yale’s affirmative action plan, submitted the month before, contained no goals or timetable to prod or even track progress towards increasing the percentage of women faculty. Brewster replied, “The best that you can do is to bring to the attention of certain departments that they should widen their field of eligible applicants.” Brewster closed the meeting by repeating the trust issue raised earlier by Fanton: “I ask you to believe in my good faith but you obviously don’t. I share your concerns and your objectives.”<sup>171</sup>

The Sisterhood press release that followed seethed with frustration. Brewster “failed to comprehend our point—that without university policies, personnel and procedures that seek to eliminate the problems we outlined, Yale’s inherent sexism and discrimination against anyone who is not male and white will continue.” And Brewster’s “good faith” plea had not gone over well. “We cannot rely on his goodwill but must judge by the experience of four years of inaction.”<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Documentation of this meeting includes a transcript made by Brewster’s office and a *Yale Daily News* article written by a reporter who was at the meeting. See Transcript, May 16, 1973, box 258, folder 2, RU11-II; Kim Rosenfeld, “Yale Sisterhood Sees Brewster about Grievance,” *YDN*, May 21, 1973. For the 1972 ratio between men and women, see Arnstein, Coeducation Report 1973, Appendix VI, Table 1.

<sup>172</sup> Statement by the Yale Sisterhood, May 16, 1973, box 1, folder 3, RU821B.

It was May by then. The path to Elga Wasserman's dismissal from Yale, however, began long before this final showdown. Two years earlier, after Brewster had denied Wasserman's May 1969, May 1970, and March 1971 requests that she be given a recognized position within the Yale hierarchy,<sup>173</sup> the Greene committee issued a report calling for the creation of an amply staffed and financed Office of Opportunity for Women led by a newly created associate provost, a woman associate provost.<sup>174</sup> The job had Wasserman's name all over it, and given Yale's smooth transition to coeducation, praised by both Brewster and an outside evaluation,<sup>175</sup> Wasserman had no reason to believe that the new position would not be hers. She had only to look at the career paths of Yale's male administrators to see how things worked.

Inky Clark had moved from Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions to residential college dean to Dean of Admissions. John Wilkinson had risen from residential college dean to Assistant Dean to Associate Dean. Sam Chauncey went from Brewster's Special Assistant to University Secretary, the third highest-ranking position at Yale, with a stop in between as Director of University Admissions.<sup>176</sup> And unlike Wasserman, none of those men held a PhD. Wasserman had been Yale Graduate School

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<sup>173</sup> Wasserman to Brewster, May 12, 1969; Wasserman to Brewster, May 11, 1970; Wasserman to Brewster, March 12, 1971.

<sup>174</sup> Greene Report, 8.

<sup>175</sup> Brewster, October 18, 1972, RU11-II, 3; Dartmouth, 1971, II-1 to II-10.

<sup>176</sup> Clark interview, April 1993; "Yale Hierarchy," *YDN*, September 16, 1968; Wilkinson interview, 1992; "HEW," *YDN*, April 15, 1970.

Assistant Dean and Special Assistant to Brewster. The associate provost position was the obvious next step.

The 1971 Greene Report had urged that Brewster create the new associate provost position in time for the 1971-72 academic year, but Brewster did not act on the recommendation and then left for his London sabbatical. When he returned in January 1972, his discussions with Wasserman about her role at Yale began anew. Wasserman had already agreed that the Coeducation Office should be phased out and the Special Assistant position ended. The office had never had any authority, and as Special Assistant Wasserman had continued to be excluded from policy decisions affecting women at Yale, including the HEW investigation and all conversations about affirmative action.<sup>177</sup> With Coeducation Office gone, Wasserman assumed she would move into the associate provost position. And that was where she miscalculated.

The problem was her tenacity on behalf of women at Yale. Wasserman “would get her teeth into a particular idea about something and she couldn’t let it go,” said Chauncey. “I think that was her way of saying, ‘Look, we’re not going to let any of these issues slide under the table.’ So it was a good thing, but it was annoying.” Wilkinson, who also worked closely with Wasserman, felt she had a “difficult relationship” with many of the male administrators, but “maybe that’s exactly the kind of person you need in that position at that time of the institution . . . She was tenacious in her advocacy of

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<sup>177</sup> Wasserman interview, 2007, 70; Wasserman to file, May 1972, RU821B; Wasserman to Brewster, February 13, 1973, box 3, folder 1, RU821B; "Wasserman," *YDN*, February 21, 1973, box 1, folder 3, RU821B; Greene Report, 9.

women, and their rights, and being treated well. And in some ways she was the ideal person for the position, because she never took no or maybe as an answer.”<sup>178</sup>

Brewster noticed as well. “I don’t think I’d ever call Elga a feminist in an intellectual sense, but she grated on him,” said Chauncey, “and I think he didn’t want to have a Gloria Steinem hanging around.” Wasserman herself was aware of the tension. The women students “wanted more women here, they wanted more women faculty. And it’s on those issues, which are much harder issues, that Brewster and I didn’t see eye to eye.”<sup>179</sup>

In June 1972 came the announcement: Yale had created a new associate provost job, and Brewster had given it to someone other than Elga Wasserman. Jacqueline Wei Mintz had been surprised when Brewster’s adviser, Henry Broude, first began talking with her about the job. “Elga should have gotten the position because she was the most qualified and she had had the experience. She had the national reputation and presence,” Mintz explained. But when Mintz asked Broude why Wasserman wasn’t being offered the position, Broude made clear that “they were looking for somebody instead of Elga . . . Because she was such a strong advocate for women, she ruffled feathers.”<sup>180</sup>

A few months later, Wasserman left on a planned year-long leave, her first in ten years. In the fall she conducted research in Europe on the position of women. In January

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<sup>178</sup> Chauncey interview, 2016; Wilkinson interview, 2016.

<sup>179</sup> Chauncey interview, 2016; Wasserman interview, 2007, 30.

<sup>180</sup> Wasserman memo to file, ca May 22 1973, box 3, folder 1, RU821B; Wei Mintz interview, 2008, 64-65.



she returned to New Haven and began an eight-month stint as staff member to the newly created Carnegie Commission on Children, chaired by Yale psychology professor Ken Keniston. Before she left for Europe, Wasserman told Brewster of her interest in an Associate Dean position, and while she was gone three Associate Dean positions became available for the 1973-74 academic year: a new Associate Dean for career counseling, a new Associate Dean to oversee the Executive Committee, and an Acting Associate Dean while John Wilkinson went on leave.<sup>181</sup> But all three spots went to others, and Wasserman was left with nothing.

In her discussion of Elga Wasserman's effectiveness, Malkiel criticizes Wasserman's "tone— in which a woman without formal administrative portfolio lectured senior colleagues about how to do business," thus implying that Wasserman's departure was attributable, at least in part, to her own failings.<sup>182</sup> The pattern of dismissing or demoting women administrators at Yale however, speaks otherwise. In the fourth year of coeducation, Assistant Dean Betsy Thomas was moved to the role of residential college dean,<sup>183</sup> a position John Wilkinson had held before becoming Assistant Dean, not after. The residential college dean role was also one that Wilkinson and Inky Clark had both held as inexperienced young men in their twenties, not, as Thomas was, an experienced administrator in her thirties. Thomas continued to do projects as a part-time Assistant

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<sup>181</sup> "Wasserman," *YDN*, February 21, 1973; Wasserman interview, 2007, 70; Wilkinson interview, 2016; Yale College Dean's Office, "Annual Report," August 31, 1973, box 8, folder 52, RU52B, 11.

<sup>182</sup> Malkiel, 279.

<sup>183</sup> Thomas Peterson interview, 2016.

Dean, but lost her office next to Dean Taft's and instead was given a shared space in the back.

Jackie Mintz, who was given the Associate Provost job Wasserman had wanted, resigned after four years when three actions made clear that the administration was actively working to curtail her effectiveness. Her title was changed from Associate Provost to Associate Provost for Affirmative Action, making it a smaller "woman's job". A man was appointed to the newly created position of Associate Provost for Personnel, thus usurping major areas of her work, and Mintz was shut out of a critical budget and policy group of which she had once been a member.<sup>184</sup>

Finally, Brewster's choice to fill Wasserman's role as Special Assistant in 1972-73, when she was on leave, demonstrates the type of woman he preferred in such positions. Mary Arnstein was known for her community service. She had never held paid employment before being hired for the role. She did not hold a chemistry PhD from Harvard. Arnstein's appointment, explained Brenda Jubin, then a residential college dean at Yale, "was a joke. It was as simple as that. She was no one to ever advocate for women." Sam Chauncey spoke less strongly, but to equal effect. "Mary was anything but a feminist . . . I don't think Mary accomplished a great deal, but she kept the job warm."<sup>185</sup> The job was terminated the next year, along with Wasserman's employment by Yale.

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<sup>184</sup> Jacqueline Wei Mintz to Kingman Brewster and Hanna Gray, January 9, 1976, box 359, folder 6, RU11, Series III; Wei Mintz interview, 2008, 99

<sup>185</sup> Jubin interview, 2017; Chauncey interview, 2016.

Elga Wasserman met with Brewster one last time on February 8, 1973, when he explained that he saw no position at Yale for her the following year. A few days later Wasserman followed up with a letter. There was nothing left to do but say goodbye. “I enjoyed the past ten years of administration work at Yale,” she ended, “and I leave my present post with considerable regret.”<sup>186</sup>

## **Graduation**

On June 4, 1973, Yale’s newest graduates donned cap and gown and marched together into the Old Campus to participate in the university’s commencement ceremonies. Rain had fallen throughout the morning, but the sun broke through to cheers of both graduates and guests, and Brewster, in full academic regalia, stepped to the podium to deliver his annual baccalaureate address. *The New York Times* was back to document the historic moment, for this was Yale’s first graduating class ever to have included women students for all four years.<sup>187</sup>

Despite the multiple challenges they faced, the women who entered Yale as freshmen in 1969 graduated at the same rate as their male classmates, with 81 percent of the women graduating within four years, 89 percent within six.<sup>188</sup> (See Table 1.) The

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<sup>186</sup> Wasserman to Brewster, February 13, 1973, RU821B.

<sup>187</sup> Knight, *NYT*, June 3, 1973.

<sup>188</sup> Author Database; see Appendix B for methodology. Yale’s public data for students in the Class of 1973 does not disaggregate by gender, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic class, nor include the numbers of students who graduated after five or six years. See Yale Office of Institutional Research Report 73R019,

graduation rates of black students were lower than those of other groups, indicating that these students did not receive the support they needed to graduate at the same rate as their peers. These rates reflected economic differences as well, however, since the majority of black students qualified as economically disadvantaged, compared with 4 percent of white students.<sup>189</sup> Data reflecting small numbers should be interpreted with caution.

**Table 1. Graduation Rates of Students in the Class of 1973**

Group	Total in 1969		Graduated by 1973 (4 years)		Graduated by 1975 (6 years)	
	#	% of total	#	%Grad	#	%Grad
All Undergraduates	1254	100%	1006	80%	1101	88%
All Men	820	82%	820	80%	898	88%
All Women	230	18%	186	81%	203	89%
Black Men	71	6%	49	74%	52	79%
White Men	926	74%	747	80%	820	88%
Black Women	25	2%	18	72%	20	80%
White Women	198	16%	160	81%	174	88%
Asian Americans <sup>a</sup>	18	1%	15	83%	17	94%
Latinx <sup>a</sup>	16	1%	14	88%	15	94%
Private Boarding School	198	16%	135	69%	161	82%
Private Day School	162	13%	128	81%	142	89%
Public High School	794	64%	657	83%	708	89%
Religious High School	96	8%	77	80%	82	85%

*Source:* Author database. See Appendix B for methodology.

*Note:* Table includes only students who matriculated as freshmen in 1969, and excludes transfers and students who matriculated at Yale in other years.

<sup>a</sup> The one Latina woman graduated in 1973. Three of the five Asian American women graduated by 1973, one graduated in 1975, and one did not graduate from Yale.

“Attendance Patterns and Graduation Credits for the Yale College Class of 1973,” Appendix A, box 2 folder 31, RU173.

<sup>189</sup> Burr and Noble, April 15, 1970.

My use of high school as a measure of socioeconomic class is an admittedly blunt tool, although more salient in 1970's Yale, which placed more stress on the type of high school a student attended than most of us do today. Nonetheless, this preliminary look highlights one surprising finding: the comparatively low graduation rate of the wealthiest students, the ones who came to Yale from boarding school. Given the favored status accorded to these students by the Yale admissions office, the statistic is all the more notable. Elite boarding schools Phillips Academy Andover and Phillips Exeter Academy sent more students to Yale in 1969 than did any other high school, yet the graduation rates of these fifty-one students were lower than those of their black men and women classmates, the most economically disadvantaged students at Yale.

Like graduation rates, post-graduation plans and long-term career goals for Yale's 1973 graduates are most notable for the lack of difference between men and women, particularly given the wide gender disparities that still existed in the society at large. (See Tables 2 and 3.) The portion of men and women students who sought a career in law, for example, was nearly identical at a time when women represented only 3 percent of US lawyers.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> *Time*, August 31, 1970, 17.

**Table 2. Post-Graduation Plans of Graduating Seniors, May 1973**

	Men	Women
Business School	3%	0%
Law School	10%	10%
Medical School	12%	13%
Other Professional School	3%	6%
Graduate School	13%	11%
Work	15%	23%
Other	8%	6%
Undecided	36%	31%
TOTAL	100%	100%

*Source:* Yale University Office of Institutional Research, "The Yale College Class of 1973: Its Postgraduation Plans," September 12, 1973, box 2, folder 31, RU173, Table 3. The survey, conducted in May 1972, was returned by 79 percent of graduating women and 79 percent of graduating men.

*Note:* Data does not include breakouts by race and ethnicity for either Table 2 or 3.

**Table 3. Long Range Career Plans of Graduating Seniors, May 1973**

	Men	Women
Arts, Applied Arts, Planning, Design	16%	14%
Business and Finance	8%	3%
Education	11%	13%
Law	21%	20%
Medicine	17%	18%
Other Health	4%	7%
Other	6%	9%
Undecided	17%	16%
TOTAL	100%	100%

*Source:* Yale University, September 1973, Table 8.

Before heading off to law school, employment, or points uncertain, Yale's women graduates had one last event to attend. Following the graduation ceremony, Brewster hosted a reception for graduates and their parents. A staff member stood by his side and

whispered the name of each approaching student so that Brewster could greet them by name. When it came to Barbara Deinhardt's turn, however, Brewster needed no coaching. Of all the students whose hands Brewster shook that day, none had been more dedicated to the work of the Yale Sisterhood than Deinhardt, who was one of the students at the meeting three weeks earlier. "Oh Barbara," Brewster called to her. "I haven't seen you since our last confrontation!" Deinhardt's parents, who had travelled from their home in Columbus, Ohio to witness their daughter's graduation from Yale, Phi Beta Kappa no less, did not know whether to be embarrassed or proud.<sup>191</sup>

The Yale Sisterhood disbanded after Deinhardt graduated in 1973, but the fundamental change that they and other activists achieved gave future women students a gift that later generations may not have even realized they had received. Activism by Yale women, and the need for it, continues today. It all began, however, with those first women undergraduates. As their efforts made clear, the quest for equity did not end with Yale's decision to admit women undergraduates, but began there.

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<sup>191</sup> Deinhardt interview, 2017; Transcript, May 16, 1973, RU11-II; Martin Griffin, Secretary, Phi Beta Kappa of Connecticut, to Residential College Deans, June 5, 1973, box 8, folder 102, Undergraduate Affairs, Yale College, Records of Marnesba Hill as Dean of Student Affairs, RU95, YUA, Accession 1976-A-007 (hereafter cited as RU95A).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION, 1968-2018

#### **The Historiography of Change**

This study provides a richly detailed portrait of a fundamental change at one US institution: Yale University's transition from an all-men's to a coed college. My account, and its answer to the central question of how change happens in higher education, differs markedly in some areas from the findings of earlier scholars. This difference matters. As education researchers Rubén Donato and Marvin Lazerson observe, the decisions we make today "rest on assumptions about the past; they rest on the stories people believe about the past."<sup>1</sup> How we understand this crucial history of the early years of undergraduate coeducation is thus foundation on which current action, or inaction, towards greater equity for women in higher education is based.

This dissertation supports two key findings of earlier studies: the institutional self-interest that fueled the decision to admit women undergraduates and the multiple challenges faced by token women. My contribution has been to add depth and detail to topics covered more broadly by others and to address some topics not previously covered

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<sup>1</sup> Rubén Donato and Marvin Lazerson, Marvin, "New Directions in American Educational History: Problems and Prospects," *Educational Researcher* 29, no. 8 (November 2000): 10.



at all. I provide for the first time a comparison of the experiences and activism of black and white women students in a predominantly white college, a description of the sexual harassment and assault experienced at an elite college in the early 1970s, a joint portrait of women administrators and students at a newly coeducational institution, and 1970s student outcome data broken out by race, class, and gender.

This study also disputes a number of dominant narratives about this history. I demonstrate the critical role played by Yale's men students in bringing coeducation to Yale, thus broadening the scope of youth movement impact and placing the impetus for coeducation in the context of the youth movement rather than the women's movement. I contest the myth of alumni opposition to coeducation, and show that the greatest opposition to equity for women came instead from Yale's president and trustees. I document how women students, absent as powerful figures in youth movement history, played a key role in pushing change at Yale. I show how women administrators, missing from standard social movement depictions of change, created power to advance equity despite efforts to undermine them. I chronicle the key role played by the federal government and the broader women's movement in advancing change for women at Yale, and conversely the ways that Yale used its power to attempt to slow progress for women. I challenge, through multiple sources of evidence, the idea that access alone brought equity for women.

A key aspect of these findings was my effort to strengthen the methodology and evidence on which previous studies were based. I studied one institution in depth so as to

address the full complexity of this history and accurately depict the mechanisms of power and change. I used theory to challenge my own biases and assumptions and thus strengthen the fit between evidence and narrative. I expanded my sources to include perspectives absent from earlier histories, most notably those of women. I detailed my methodology so that readers could better evaluate the credibility of the final narrative.

Yale provided an extreme case to probe the discrimination against women that permeated higher education and US society in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Extremes like Yale can shine a bright light on practices and beliefs that may be present but less pronounced at other institutions. Future research on the advance of the women's movement might examine cases at the other end of the spectrum—colleges that had long been coed and/or occupied the lower end of the higher education hierarchy—or those that might be viewed as more typical of this era. Other fields into which women advanced in this era, most notably politics and business, may benefit from a second look given the age of the initial research on women's experiences.

Within my own study, this dissertation only scratched the surface of several other topics worthy of deeper exploration: a failed effort at change, most notably the attempt to increase the numbers of women faculty and administrators; the intersection of the start of coeducation, the end of parietals, and sexual harassment and assault; and the experiences and activism of women administrators in the 1970s, particularly women administrators of color. Lastly, the interdisciplinary aspects of this study's methodology—the use of theory to both challenge and make more transparent the historian's analysis, greater explication

of methodology, more attention to practical implications—might be applied to a wide range of historical inquiry.

## **Practical Implications**

### **Agents of Change**

In seeking to understand change towards greater equity in higher education, a first question is: Who are the agents of change? During the early years of undergraduate coeducation at Yale, six groups were critical to advancing change for women: feminist activists, the more moderate center of the student body, the handful of women with positional power, men allies at Yale, the federal government, and the broader women's movement. I take each in turn.

**Activist women students.** Beginning in the first year of undergraduate coeducation, white women students organized themselves into women's groups at the college, graduate school, and law school: the Yale Sisterhood, the Yale Graduate Women's Alliance, and the Yale Law Women's Association. Black women organized as part of the Black Student Alliance at Yale. All of these women were on the edges of Yale. Graduate school women were "below the undergraduate women and below both undergraduate and graduate student men" and black women described themselves as "the bottom of the totem pole." Sisterhood members were often seen by their peers as outside the mainstream. Virginia Dominguez, Class of 1973, recalled that "there were women in our class who might have been 'radical feminist' in belief and in spirit . . . I

know there were a few I thought were a bit rough—I thought ‘unlike me’—at the time.” Even Elga Wasserman looked askance at the women undergraduates whom she considered radical. Yale “brought out a very radical attitude in a small minority of women students. No question about that,” she explained to an interviewer in 1992. “Most people handled it well and went about their business. Some people became very radicalized.”<sup>2</sup>

It is precisely that position at the edge, however, that enabled women activists to see what others did not. I write in my introduction about the value of the outsider as a source of historical evidence. Institutions similarly are in debt to outsiders as a key source of change. “Living as we did—on the edge—we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside in and from the inside out . . . we understood both,” writes author bell hooks of the experience of black women.<sup>3</sup> The women activists at Yale, both black and white, occupied a similar spot at the edge, although the importance of this position was not necessarily understood at the time. Susanne Wofford, Class of 1973, once saw her feminist classmates as extremists, but her view changed after she graduated. “What I now think is that those people who are extremists are in fact making possibilities for people who may reject that [approach].”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ferguson interview, 2017; Daniels interview, 2016; “Scholar,” in Geismar, Rice, and Winant, 33; Wasserman interview, 1992, 43.

<sup>3</sup> bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), vii. See also Collins, S14-S32.

<sup>4</sup> Wofford interview, 1990.

**The undergraduate student body.** The effectiveness of Yale's feminist activists in ending the gender quota increased markedly because of the support of the broad center of the student body. Brewster, for example, dismissed the students who protested at the 1970 alumni lunch as a "much too small band of women undergraduates," but faced with seventeen hundred signatures on a student petition three days later, he could no longer ignore the issue. "Numbers are powerful," observed Sisterhood member Patty Mintz, and that crucial power is one element that distinguishes students from both faculty and administration.<sup>5</sup> The students who, year after year, signed their names to petitions calling for the abolition of Yale's gender quotas lent volume to the voice of change. For Yale's feminist activists, the most critical constituency to impact may thus not have been the Brewster administration, but their more centrist classmates.

The Yale student body was important not solely because of its numbers, but also because of its critical role as mediators to change. Social movement scholar Kelly Moore points out that such groups or individuals are more influential on those in positional power because they have been legitimized by the institution and can translate the claims of activist outsiders in a way that the institution can understand.<sup>6</sup> Brewster may have been unable to listen when the Sisterhood spoke, but he did read the editorial page of the *Yale Daily News*, of which he himself had once been chairman. By the spring of 1972, when

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<sup>5</sup> Mintz interview, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Kelly Moore, "Political Protest and Institutional Change: The Anti-Vietnam War Movement and American Science," in *How Social Movements Matter*, eds. Marco Giugni, Doug McAdam and Charles Tilly (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 104.

student opposition to Yale's gender quota pushed Brewster to reconsider Yale's policy, the final wave of activism came from the political center of the student body, not the edge, and the group used arguments that appealed to Yale's institutional self-interest rather than emphasizing the equity claim pushed by women activists.<sup>7</sup>

**Women with structural power.** Elga Wasserman, Betsy Thomas, and the few other women who held structural leadership roles at Yale during the early 1970s provided a third source of activism for change. Although Wasserman did not attain the position she sought at Yale, the students were not aware that she lacked authority, and her presence in that visible role provided a source of inspiration and reassurance.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Wasserman was effective in using the toehold she had been given as a place from which to win grants, issue reports, and connect with others who had the structural power she lacked. As Betsy Thomas showed, one's position need not be at the top to create opportunity for change. Even Paula Johnson, an untenured assistant professor, was able to use her admissions committee position to give authority to the claim that Yale was discriminating against women applicants. These women insiders were not free to use the confrontational strategies possible for the Yale Sisterhood and BSAY, as such tactics risked alienating those in power.<sup>9</sup> Yet as the fates of women administrators at Yale show, Yale had little tolerance even for nonconfrontational advocacy of women's issues.

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<sup>7</sup> Ad Hoc Committee, 1972 report.

<sup>8</sup> Bernick interview, 2016; Royster interview, 2016; Wells interview, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Meyerson and Scully, 587.

**Men as allies.** Yale's men administrators were not homogeneous in their attitudes towards women, and those who supported Yale women were a fourth source of change towards greater equity. Like the more centrist student body, these men were able to lend legitimacy as mediators to change, and several of them had power enough to act directly. Had Graduate Dean John Perry Miller, for example, not violated Yale hiring norms by appointing Wasserman as Assistant Dean in 1962, she would have lacked the credentials and experience to lead Yale's transition to coeducation in 1969. Once Wasserman was tapped for this role, Chauncey provided welcome guidance. Dean of Undergraduate Affairs John Wilkinson won widespread praise from women for his support and, through some creative overcrowding, increased the number of women who entered in 1971 and 1972 by nearly 20 percent despite the continuation of Yale's thousand-man quota. Wilkinson also helped fund the Women's Center furnishings and Vera Wells' December 1970 Conference on the Black Woman.<sup>10</sup>

**The federal government.** A fifth agent of change at Yale between 1969 and 1973 was the federal government. Even though HEW did not enforce Executive Order 11246 as Bernice Sandler would have liked and Congress backed down on Title IX language regarding undergraduate admissions at private colleges, the involvement of the government pushed universities to focus on equity for women. "The higher education community seemed unable to recognize and take action in correcting injustices until

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<sup>10</sup> Charles Cuneo, "Yale Plans Increase in Freshman Women," *YDN*, April 16, 1971; John Wilkinson to Sam Chauncey, March 9, 1972, box 1, folder 8, RU821A; Deinhardt interview, 2017; Vera Wells to Elting Morison, memorandum, December 3, 1970, box 19, folder 889, RU821A.

forced to do so by HEW,” observed Barnard President Martha Peterson in 1972, an opinion also voiced by Brown University Associate Provost Jacquelyn Mattfeld. Those at Yale knew the need for outside pressure as well. Even Al Fitt observed that “a prod from Uncle Sam” might be required to move Yale towards change.<sup>11</sup>

The involvement of HEW at Yale was also important in encouraging women’s agency. The Executive Order 11246 complaint prompted women activists to compile data documenting inequity, an activity they may have judged pointless had Yale’s administration remained the only audience. The HEW complaint also gave women in different corners of the Yale community the impetus to meet and work with one another, and a resulting sense that they were not as small a minority as they had thought. “It was exciting that so many different sectors of Yale women were coming together in order to present to HEW,” recalled Women’s Graduate Alliance member Margie Ferguson. “It made us feel that, perhaps, although we were all minorities numerically in our respective spaces, when we got together it looked like there were a lot of angry women.”<sup>12</sup>

**The US women’s movement.** In their examination of the intersection of organizational and social movement theory, Klaus Weber and Brayden King identify three ways in which social movements impact organizations.<sup>13</sup> The first is by changing the policies and regulations that shape the organization’s external environment, an impact

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<sup>11</sup> Peterson, 7; Jacqueline Mattfeld, “Many Are Called, But Few Are Chosen,” in Furniss and Graham, 124; Phyllis Orrick, “U.S. Order Attacks Sex Bias in University Hiring Policy,” *YDN*, January 25, 1972.

<sup>12</sup> Ferguson interview, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Weber and King, 497.



evident at Yale through the Executive Order 11246 complaint and demands by HEW for an affirmative action plan. The second is by causing “cultural change in public understandings and sentiments,” and here too we see the effect of the women’s movement at Yale. For women in the Sisterhood, the women’s movement provided a model for an organizational structure, a method of consciousness-raising, and a literature to support the new questions that arose. Sisterhood members can describe the exact moment and setting when they first read a seminal work—Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* or Kate Millet’s *Sexual Politics*—and the Sisterhood held discussions not just on women’s personal experiences, but on the feminist literature they read as a group.<sup>14</sup>

The cultural shifts were equally important with those at the center. One can trace the change in *Yale Daily News* editorials from arguing for a more equal male-female ratio because it was natural to arguing for this outcome because it was just. The American Council on Education moved from declaring there was no gender discrimination in higher education in 1970 to hosting a major conference on it in 1972, a shift that in turn moved the views of conservatives like Brewster to the margin of public opinion.

Lastly, Weber and King describe how outsider activist groups influence organizational change through such direct strategies as organizing boycotts or filing lawsuits.<sup>15</sup> Here the parallel with Yale is less clear, as the line between organizational

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<sup>14</sup> Berkan interview, 2017; Hartmann interview, 2017; Mintz interview, 2017; Rudavsky interview, 2017; Millet; Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Constance Borde and Sheila Malovny-Chevalier, trans. (1949. Reprint, New York: Vintage, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Weber and King, 497.

insider and outsider was more permeable. Bernice Sandler, for example, might clearly be classed as an outsider at Yale, but she filed her sex discrimination complaint with HEW only after Yale women had filed their own, and included data supplied by Wasserman's coeducation report. The New Haven Women's Liberation Group, while not directly affiliated with Yale, had many Yale women as members, and they in turn made sure that the Yale Women's Center provided a home for the New Haven group as well. What one sees then is a not a one-way relationship of outsider activists influencing Yale, but a relationship of mutual support which helped bring change both at Yale and beyond.

### **Strategies of Change**

What steps did change agents take that advanced social justice for women? A number of strategies emerged in the preceding discussion: allying with those in the center, using arguments that appeal to organizational self-interest, leveraging the power of structural positions within the hierarchy, making use of existing anti-discrimination regulations, and adopting the language and ideology of broader social movements. This section explores three other strategies used by women at Yale: collective action, social nonmovements, and breaking the rules.

**Collective action.** The power of the Yale Sisterhood derived from ending members' isolation from other women. Through consciousness-raising they provided support to one another and identified patterns of practice at Yale that kept them as outsiders. Through collective action they challenged some of Yale's most discriminatory

practices and policies. Through direct action they started women's studies courses and created a guide to women's resources at Yale, "SHE". Collective action was also key to the effectiveness of black students at Yale, whose numbers were even smaller than those of the women. By 1969, the BSAY had successfully pressured the administration to increase the numbers of black students at Yale, establish the Afro-American Cultural Center, and institute a black studies major. Following the advent of coeducation, black women undergraduates worked through the BSAY to support black students overall and outside of the BSAY on the initiatives that related specifically to black women.

Social movement theory argues that activists are rational actors who assess the likelihood of success and decide whether or not to engage in activism accordingly. By this rubric, Yale's women activists should never have attempted change in the first place. They lacked many of the key resources for collective action—funding, strong pre-existing friendships, pre-existing organizational structures, and experience as activists—and they lacked many elements of collective identity that in turn support a collective push for change.<sup>16</sup>

The category "woman" encompassed students who came from different parts of the country, from different social classes, and from different races and ethnicities. It included students who differed by academic interest, year at Yale, and residential college assignment. Yet they shared one thing in common: the experience of being one of the first women undergraduates at Yale. "Yale made me a feminist," said student Betty

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<sup>16</sup> Staggenborg, 19-23; Taylor and Whittier, 105.

Spahn, and for some women undergraduates, that commonality was enough. Perhaps the Sisterhood was motivated by the necessity of attempting change rather than the rationality of it. There was no time to wait until conditions improved: the women would have graduated by then. And so they began the effort that, contrary to what social movement theorists would have predicted, helped start the path to change at Yale.

**Social nonmovements.** My study has focused on individuals like Wasserman and Brewster who held structural power and on groups like the Sisterhood who created power through working together. Middle East scholar Asef Bayat, however, points to a third potent source of change, “social nonmovements”: the collective impact of noncollective actors.<sup>17</sup> Bayat cites as example the decisions of individual Muslim women to stop wearing their veil when out in public, an action that when repeated hundreds of times erodes the gender norms that dictate what women can and cannot wear. We can quickly see parallels at Yale.

Through their daily actions, whether playing field hockey in the middle of the Old Campus or going out together in a group of women friends on a Saturday night, Yale’s first women undergraduates began to shift the norm of what it meant to be woman at Yale, and in so doing changed what it meant to be a man, as activities that were once the sole domain of men became the prerogative of all genders. “A large number of people acting in common has the effect of normalizing and legitimizing those acts that are

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<sup>17</sup> Bayat, 14.

otherwise deemed illegitimate,” explains Bayat,<sup>18</sup> and even though women undergraduates were vastly outnumbered by men, there were still 575 of them, attending class each day, eating in the dining halls, raising their hands to ask questions at the end of lectures. “I think the biggest changes in Yale were just people being there and living day-to-day,” observed Yale undergraduate Deb Tedford of her women classmates.<sup>19</sup> This is the aspect of change captured by Bayat’s social nonmovement theory.

In her study of women in the military and the church Mary Katzenstein found that feminist activists proved to be “less law-breaking than norm-breaking . . . [they] challenged, discomfited, and provoked, unleashing a wholesale disturbance of long-settled assumptions, rules, and practices.” This redefining of institutional norms marks the difference between first order change, an adjustment to the status quo, and second order change, which impacts “underlying values, assumptions, structures, processes, and culture.”<sup>20</sup> At Yale, women students who may not even have considered themselves feminists accomplished this fundamental change by engaging in activities and entering spaces where women had long been forbidden, thus creating the collective impact of noncollective actors.

Traditional social movement theorists, who assume a context in which visible political performances are possible, have overlooked this type of activism. Yet the

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<sup>18</sup> Bayat, 20.

<sup>19</sup> Tedford interview, 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Katzenstein, 7; Adrianna Kezar, *How Colleges Change: Understanding, Leading, and Enacting Change* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 49.

exclusion of women and people of color from certain spaces and activities in turn provides a source of power that leaders of traditional social movements, typically white men, lack: the power to be where you are not allowed. The presence of white men in any space or activity at Yale was unremarkable, but women could create headlines simply by sitting down at a table at Mory's. Here the position of strength belongs to those traditionally viewed as powerless, and those in authority are left in the position of weakness, trying to halt the breaking of norms by diverse, noncollective actors. Bayat explains the difference between social movements and social nonmovements as the difference between a politics of protest and a politics of action.<sup>21</sup> At Yale, both were necessary.

**Breaking the rules.** Related to the power of social nonmovements is the value of breaking the rules. Women activists were criticized for ignoring how things were done at Yale. They interrupted an alumni lunch, walked into a Yale Corporation meeting without being invited, and staged a sit-in when their requests for a meeting with Brewster were ignored. Yet women's violation of institutional norms was not wrong, as Yale would have had them believe, but astute. "In the war of un-equals, the weak will certainly lose if they follow the same rules of the game as those of the powerful," observes Bayat. "To win an unequal battle, the underdog has no choice but to creatively play different, more flexible, and constantly changing games." Yale's rules, like those of other institutions, were designed to support the smooth operation of the institution, not provide

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<sup>21</sup> Bayat, 4-5, 14-19.

opportunities for challenge.<sup>22</sup> But those rules only benefit those in power if people are willing to follow them.

A key rule broken by women at Yale was the rule of silence. Women may have sensed, for example, the lack of women faculty, but it was not until Elga Wasserman put the numbers in a campus-wide report that the problem was quantified and made public. Within the Yale Sisterhood, Betty Spahn experienced a sense of power and freedom after women spoke their stories about being ignored in the classroom and saw the pattern of their treatment of Yale. “It wasn’t us,” she realized. “It was them.”<sup>23</sup> As the current #metoo movement shows, breaking the norm of silence continues to be a key strategy for women today.

One important aspect of the rule-breaking strategy is that it need not be done collectively to be effective. Neither social movement theory nor Bayat’s social nonmovement theory address situations when there are too few individuals to act collectively, but Debra Meyerson describes this category of change agents as “tempered radicals,” a term that captures the tension in their situation as both organizational insiders and outsiders. Tempered radicals “identify with and are committed to their organizations, and are also committed to a cause, community, or ideology that is fundamentally different from, and possibly at odds with the dominant culture of the organization.”<sup>24</sup> Such

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<sup>22</sup> Bayat, 22; Polletta, 177.

<sup>23</sup> Spahn interview, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Meyerson and Scully, 586.

was the case of many of the women administrators and faculty at Yale in 1970 and the men who took risks as their allies.

Keith Thomas was an untenured assistant professor, yet still he wrote the first letter to Brewster documenting the admissions discrimination caused by Yale's thousand-man quota. Betsy Thomas' refusal to eat her meal at Mory's must have been extremely uncomfortable, but she did it anyway. As shown by the dismissive response of their boss, Yale College Dean Georges May, residential college deans Paul Magee and Robert Wilhelm risked their standing by their 1970 letter criticizing the inclusion in Yale's freshman orientation book of an essay rating the women at nearby colleges.<sup>25</sup> Over time, such individual acts of protest, like the norm-changing actions of noncollective actors, helped push Yale closer to equity.

### **Impediments to Equity**

What stands in the way of progress towards greater equity for women in higher education? One challenge is that each of the strategies to effect change has weaknesses. Success, like that achieved in the effort to end Yale's thousand-men quota, is never a given. Breaking the rules carries risks. Individuals burn out or are coopted. Willing allies are not always present. Students cannot always prioritize activism; their primary job at college, after all, is to get their degree. Women with positional power are not always

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<sup>25</sup> Thomas Peterson interview, 2016; Thomas to Brewster, 1970; Judith Berkan et al. to Kingman Brewster, June 5, 1970, box 24, folder 927, RU821A; Georges May to Pete Magee, June 22, 1970, box 24, folder 927, RU821A.



activists for equity. Collective action is more complicated than acting alone.<sup>26</sup> Social nonmovements are less successful when a degree of equity, no matter how small, has already been attained, since the presence of the outsider group is less of a shock.

The most fundamental obstacle to equity, however, is that those tasked with institutional leadership have not made it a priority and, as was the case at Yale, have sometimes stood in its way. Indeed, none of the strategies detailed above would be necessary were this not the case. During the initial years of coeducation, the Brewster administration actively blocked greater equity for women students and administrators by failing to hire and support women administrators, by sidestepping the equity mandates of a presidential executive order, and by using Yale's influence to alter legislation that would have forced Yale to end its gender quotas or forgo the federal funding that had become crucial to its operating budget. The most effective strategy used by the Brewster administration and Yale Corporation to block change for greater equity, however, was the strategy of inaction. If the goal is protection of the status quo, the best move by those in power is no move at all.

In the first year of coeducation, pressured by the February 1970 alumni lunch protest and a student petition calling for the end of Yale's gender quotas, Brewster placed Yale's admissions policy on the March agenda of the Yale Corporation. The trustees considered the arguments for ending the discrimination against women applicants and

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<sup>26</sup> Polletta, 177; Meyerson and Scully, 590; Debra E. Meyerson, *Rocking the Boat: How to Effect Change Without Making Trouble* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2008), 121-138; Adrianna Kezar and Jaime Lester, *Enhancing Campus Capacity for Leadership: An Examination of Grassroots Leaders in Higher Education* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 123.

then voted to leave Yale's policy unchanged. That May, the University Coeducation Committee added its voice to those calling for Yale to end its adherence to the thousand-men quota. Brewster took five months to respond to their recommendation, and, after finally rejecting it, erected a new roadblock to increasing the number of women: the need to reexamine Yale's entire approach to undergraduate education.

In the second year of coeducation, pushed by activism by the Yale Sisterhood and a second student petition, Brewster again agreed to put Yale's policy on the Corporation agenda. Again Yale's trustees voted to leave the policy unchanged. That January, women activists at Yale filed a sex discrimination complaint against Yale with the federal government. The effort peaked with the April visit of federal investigators and the May publication of "Sex Discrimination at Yale: A Document of Indictment." Brewster met with delegates from Yale's women's groups in June, and told them he saw no reason for change.

In the third year of coeducation, pressure for change continued to mount, with a widely-publicized letter from five admissions committee members describing the discrimination against qualified women candidates, a new student group pushing to end the gender quotas, and involvement in the change effort by a broader swath at Yale, including Yale's influential chaplain. In February, Brewster announced that he would once more put the issue before the Yale Corporation—nine months hence.

The intransigence of Yale's president and trustees can be explained by many reasons: a blindness to the possibility that women could attain the same type of leadership

positions that Yale prized for its men, a comfort with the all-men character of Yale, Brewster's desire not to renege on his public statements that coeducation would not impact the number of Yale's men graduates, a failure to see equity for women as necessary or even desirable. Underneath all of this, however, lies the breathtaking insularity that defined the leadership of 1969 Yale and blinded them to ways of seeing other than those they had always known.

As shown by Tables 4 and 5 on the following page, all but one of Yale's fifteen trustees and ten top administrators in 1969 had attended college at Yale. Most had preceded that men-only education with similar isolation from women peers in high school. The trustees' insularity abated somewhat over the course of the first four years of coeducation, with Yale's first black trustee, Leon Higginbotham, elected in June 1970 and its first two women trustees, Marian Wright Edelman and Hanna Gray, in June 1971. The Brewster administration, however, became even more homogeneous, with Yale College Dean Georges May, the only non-Yale graduate in the group, replaced in 1971 by Horace Taft, Yale Class of 1950.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> "First Black Named University Trustee," *YDN*, Summer 1970; "New Trustees Include 'Firsts'," *YDN*, June 30, 1971; "Taft to Welcome Faculty Tomorrow," *YDN*, September 30, 1971.

**Table 4. Yale Trustees, 1969-1970, and College Attended**

	Role	College Attended
Frederick B. Adams, Jr.	Successor Trustee	Yale Class of 1932
Edwin F. Blair	Successor Trustee	Yale Class of 1924
Kingman Brewster, Jr.	Presiding Officer	Yale Class of 1941
William P. Bundy	Successor Trustee	Yale Class of 1939
J. Richardson Dilworth	Successor Trustee	Yale Class of 1938
Caryl P. Haskins	Successor Trustee	Yale Class of 1930
William Horowitz	Alumni Fellow	Yale Class of 1929
Harold Howe II	Successor Trustee	Yale Class of 1940
John V. Lindsay	Alumni Fellow	Yale Class of 1953
William McChesney Martin, Jr.	Successor Trustee	Yale Class of 1929
Right Rev. Paul Moore, Jr.	Successor Trustee	Yale Class of 1941
Spencer D. Moseley	Alumni Fellow	Yale Class of 1942
William W. Scranton	Alumni Fellow	Yale Class of 1939
Cyrus R. Vance	Alumni Fellow	Yale Class of 1939
Arthur K. Watson	Alumni Fellow	Yale Class of 1942

*Source:* Yale University, "Former Trustees;" Kabaservice; individual obituaries.

*Note:* Alumni Fellows were elected by Yale alumni, Successor Trustees by the current Successor Trustees.

**Table 5. Top Yale Administrators, 1969-1970, and College Attended**

	Role	College Attended
Kingman Brewster, Jr.	President	Yale Class of 1941
Henry "Sam" Chauncey, Jr.	Top Brewster adviser	Yale Class of 1957
R. Inslee "Inky" Clark	Dean of Admissions	Yale Class of 1957
John Ecklund	Treasurer	Yale Class of 1938
Jack Embersits	Chief Business Officer	Yale Class of 1957
Alfred Fitt	Government Liaison	Yale Class of 1944
Reuben Holden	Secretary	Yale Class of 1940
Georges May	Dean of Yale College	University of Paris
Charles Taylor	Provost	Yale Class of 1950
John Wilkinson	Undergraduate Dean	Yale Class of 1960

*Source:* Yale Daily News; individual obituaries.

Insularity like the type seen at Yale is a particular vulnerability of the elite, who can assume they have nothing to learn from those not of their ilk. Yale's first women undergraduates understood otherwise. "Our fresh perspective gives us the potential for being the greatest impetus towards change," wrote Yale Junior Ellen Schwartz in the spring of 1970.<sup>28</sup> Yale's appointed leaders lacked such perspective, however, and thus were handicapped in their ability to lead.

### Epilogue

"Why has institutional change been so slow?" asks higher education scholar Shaun Harper of the progress towards racial justice on US college campuses.<sup>29</sup> The same question can be posed for women. Fifty years have passed since Yale decided to admit its first women undergraduates, yet the gap between access and equity for women persists. Women represent just 25 percent of tenured faculty at Yale today, 30 percent of the faculty as a whole. Of the twelve highest-ranking administrators at Yale, three are women.<sup>30</sup> Since 1701, Yale's trustees have never found a woman or person of color they deemed qualified enough to serve as the university's president.

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<sup>28</sup> Ellen Schwartz, "Coeducation" [Letter to the editor], *YDN*, March 6, 1970.

<sup>29</sup> Shaun R. Harper, "Am I my Brother's Teacher? Black Undergraduates, Racial Socialization, and Peer Pedagogies in Predominantly White Postsecondary Contexts," *Review of Research in Education* 37, no. 1 (March 2013): 207.

<sup>30</sup> Yale Office of Institutional Research (Yale OIR), "Tenured and Term Faculty by Gender, 2015-2016," accessed February 9, 2018 from [https://oir.yale.edu/sites/default/files/w056\\_fac\\_u\\_tenterm\\_gen\\_0.pdf](https://oir.yale.edu/sites/default/files/w056_fac_u_tenterm_gen_0.pdf); Yale OIR, "Yale Facts and Statistics," November 22, 2017, accessed February 9, 2018 from [https://oir.yale.edu/sites/default/files/factsheet\\_2016-17.pdf](https://oir.yale.edu/sites/default/files/factsheet_2016-17.pdf). Yale Data is for the Faculty of Arts and

Change towards greater equity for women at Yale has continued since 1973, but always as a result of activism by women. In 1976, the Yale women's crew team, denied basic facilities, staged a naked protest in the athletic director's office, an event dubbed "the Boston Tea Party of Title IX" by ESPN. In 1977, women graduates of Yale Law School worked with the Undergraduate Women's Caucus to file *Alexander vs. Yale*, which in 1980 established that sexual harassment was a form of sex discrimination, and thus against the law. In 1989 Professors Nancy Cott and Margaret Homans sent Yale President Benno Schmidt a letter signed by forty professors urging parity between men and women faculty members. After two years of inaction, Schmidt received another letter from women faculty, this time suggesting that Yale double its percentage of tenured women professors from the 9 percent at which it then stood, twenty years after the start of undergraduate coeducation. In 2011, sixteen Yale students and alumni filed a Title IX complaint after Yale took no disciplinary action against a gang of fraternity brothers who stood outside the freshman dorms chanting, "No means yes! Yes means anal!"<sup>31</sup>

Looking more broadly, few could argue that gender equity has been achieved in US higher education as a whole. Although women today gain college degrees at a higher rate than men, male students earn more than twice as many degrees in the lucrative

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Sciences and the most recent available on Yale's website. The twelve top-ranked individuals are the eleven officers of the University and the Dean of Yale College.

<sup>31</sup> Steve Wulf, "Title IX: 37 Words that Changed Everything," ESPN, April 29, 2012, accessed February 11, 2018 from <http://www.espn.com>; Davis; Olivarius; Micole Sudberg, "Coeducation at Yale: A Brief Chronology," in Donadio, 71; Gavan Gideon and Caroline Tan, "Department of Education Ends Title IX Investigation," *YDN*, June 15, 2012.

science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, and women with bachelor's degrees earn just seventy-four cents on the dollar to their male classmates. En route to that degree, one in five women undergraduates is sexually assaulted. Gender inequity also pervades faculty and leadership in higher education, with women representing only 26 percent of college and university presidents and 32 percent of full professors. Full-time women faculty members can expect a paycheck 83 percent the size of their male colleagues', effectively creating an annual \$15,000 gender bonus for men.<sup>32</sup> We are not yet finished with the need to achieve change towards greater equity in higher education.

“Why has institutional change been so slow?” Fifty years after the start of second wave feminism, the question presses as hard as ever. Perhaps there is hope in history. Historical inquiry, observes education historian Linda Eisenmann, offers the potential to “reorient our understanding” of vital questions in the present.<sup>33</sup> By offering a new narrative of the history of the early years of undergraduate coeducation, I have sought to provide the reorientation that Eisenmann suggests, and with it the clear understanding of our past that is the first step towards bringing greater equity for women today.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> USDOE, NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics*, December 2016, Tables 315.20, 316.10; 318.45, accessed December 23, 2017 from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current\\_tables.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current_tables.asp); White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, *Not Alone*, April 2014, accessed December 23, 2017 from <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/page/file/905942/download>; American Association of University Women [AAUW], *The Simple Truth About The Gender Pay Gap* (Washington, DC: AAUW, 2017), 14, accessed December 23, 2017 from <http://www.aauw.org>; Lucie Lapovsky, “Why So Few Women College Presidents?” *Forbes*, April 13, 2014, accessed December 23, 2017 from [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com).

<sup>33</sup> Linda Eisenmann, “Integrating Disciplinary Perspectives into Higher Education Research: The Example of History,” *The Journal of Higher Education* 75, no. 1 (January/February 2004): 12.

<sup>34</sup> Kezar, 32-33, 99-100.

APPENDIX A: US COLLEGES THAT WENT COED BETWEEN 1969 AND 1976

College	Year	Source
Air Force Academy	1976	“Two Defense Bills Signed by Ford,” <i>NYT</i> , Oct 9, 1976.
Amherst	1975	Amherst College, see below.
Boston College	1970	Goldin and Katz, 30.
Bowdoin	1971	Bowdoin College, see below.
Brown	1971	Goldin and Katz, 30; <i>Harvard Crimson</i> , Oct 4, 1974.
Caltech	1970	California Institute of Technology, see below.
Claremont McKenna	1976	Claremont McKenna College, see below.
Coast Guard Acad.	1976	“Two Defense Bills Signed by Ford,” <i>NYT</i> , Oct 9, 1976.
Colgate	1970	Colgate University, see below.
Dartmouth	1972	Goldin and Katz, 30; <i>Harvard Crimson</i> , Oct 4, 1974
Davidson	1972	Davidson College, see below.
Duke	1972	Duke University, see below.
Fordham	1974	Fordham University, see below.
Georgetown	1969	Poulson, 226; trustees voted August 1968, before Yale.
Harvard	1975	Horowitz, 2012.
Holy Cross	1972	College of the Holy Cross, see below.
Johns Hopkins	1972	Goldin and Katz, 30.
Kenyon	1972	Kenyon College, see below.
Lafayette	1970	Lafayette College, see below.
Lehigh	1971	Goldin and Katz, 30.
Naval Academy	1976	“Two Defense Bills Signed by Ford,” <i>NYT</i> , Oct 9, 1976
Notre Dame	1972	Goldin and Katz, 30.
Princeton	1969	Synnott, 114; trustees voted January 1969, after Yale.
Rutgers	1972	Poulson, 225.
Sewanee	1969	Univ of the South/Sewanee; date of trustee vote unclear.
Trinity	1969	Knapp and Knapp, 376; trustees voted Jan 1969, after Yale.
Union	1970	Union College, see below.
Univ of Pennsylvania	1975	<i>Harvard Crimson</i> , Oct 4, 1974.
Univ of Virginia	1970	Goldin and Katz, 30.
Wash. and Jefferson	1970	Washington and Jefferson College, see below.
Wesleyan	1970	Wesleyan University, see below.
West Point	1976	“Two Defense Bills Signed by Ford,” <i>NYT</i> , Oct 9, 1976.
Williams	1971	Williams College, see below.
Yale	1969	Borders, <i>NYT</i> , November 15, 1968.

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*Note:* The date listed is the one when women were first allowed to enroll at the school that the men attended. Prior to coeducation, a number of colleges such as Harvard and



Brown created separate sister schools known as coordinate colleges, “but always with the understanding that men’s needs came first.”<sup>1</sup> While women typically attended classes with the men, they were not allowed to enroll in the men’s school and generally lived on separate campuses with separate dining facilities, gyms, and extracurricular activities.

*Elite colleges that admitted their first women undergraduates after 1976*: Columbia (1983), Hamilton (1978), Haverford (1980), Tufts (1980), Tulane (2006), and Washington and Lee (1985). Citations are listed below save for Hamilton (Miller-Bernal, 253) and Columbia (Goldin and Katz, 30).

*Sources*: See bibliography for secondary sources, footnote two for the full *Harvard Crimson* citation,<sup>2</sup> and footnote three for campus sources.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Linda Eisenmann, “Freedom to be Womanly: The Separate Culture of the Woman’s College,” in *Search for Equity: Women at Brown University, 1891-1991*, Polly Welts Kaufman ed. (Hanover, NH: Brown University Press, 1991), 55.

<sup>2</sup> “A Survey of Co-education in the Ivies,” *Harvard Crimson*, October 4, 1974, <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/1974/10/4/a-survey-of-co-education-in-the/?page=1>.

<sup>3</sup> All webpages were accessed February 21, 2018. **Amherst**: “Coeducation: 25 years,” <https://www.amherst.edu/library/archives/exhibitions/coed25>; **Bowdoin**: “Bowdoin: 1794 to the present,” <http://www.bowdoin.edu/about/history/index.shtml>; **California Institute of Technology**: “Fast Facts about Caltech History,” <http://archives.caltech.edu/about/fastfacts.html>; **Claremont McKenna**, “History of the College,” <http://www.cmc.edu/about/history-of-the-college>; **Colgate**: “Gloria Berger, ’74, Helps Graduates Look Back on the First Coed Class,” May 18, 2014, <http://news.colgate.edu/2014/05/gloria-borger-74-p10-of-cnn-helps-graduates-look-back-at-first-coed-class-and-look-ahead.html/>; **Davidson**: “Prof. Bob Ruth,” May 1, 2015, <https://www.davidson.edu/news/news-stories/150501-bob-ruth-to-retire> (not an error; website obscures history as men’s institution, which is referenced in this article); **Duke**: “A Brief Narrative History,” <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/uarchives/history/articles/narrative-history>; **Fordham**: “When Women Came to Rose Hill,” *Fordham News*, November 14, 2014, <https://news.fordham.edu/fordham-magazine/when-women-came-to-rose-hill/>; **Haverford**: “History: College Goes Coed,” <https://www.haverford.edu/about>; **Holy Cross**: “Coeducation Anniversary Celebration,” February 1, 2013, <https://news.holycross.edu/blog/2013/02/01/yearlong-coeducation-anniversary-celebration-continues-at-holy-cross/>; **Kenyon**: “The Women’s Coordinate College at Kenyon,” <http://classprojects.kenyon.edu/wmns/Wmns81/Coordinateframe.htm> and <http://classprojects.kenyon.edu/wmns/Wmns81/Traditionframe.htm>; **Lafayette**: “History of Coeducation,” <https://sites.lafayette.edu/coeducation/>; **Sewanee**: “Sewanee History,” <http://www.sewanee.edu/about/university-history/>; **Tufts**: “Tufts Student Life: Our History,” <http://students.tufts.edu/our-history>; **Tulane**: “Tulane University Timeline,” <http://tulane.edu/about/history-and-traditions/timeline>; **Union**: “History and Traditions,” <https://www.union.edu/about/history/>; **Washington and Jefferson**: “History of Washington and Jefferson College,” <http://wiki.washjeff.edu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=57878214>; **Washington and Lee**: “A Brief History,” <https://www.wlu.edu/about-wandl/history-and-traditions/a-brief-history>; **Wesleyan**: “A Brief History,” <http://www.wesleyan.edu/about/history.html>; **Williams**: “Women at Williams,” *Williams Magazine*, Summer 2015, 6, <https://magazine.williams.edu/files/archive/2015-summer.pdf>.

## APPENDIX B: DATABASE METHODOLOGY

The first group of women undergraduates at Yale included 230 first-year students and 345 sophomore and junior transfer students. Because the older students began their college education elsewhere, thus clouding comparisons, I chose to focus my database solely on the women and men who entered in 1969 as the Class of 1973. Development of the database was done in partnership with my invaluable research assistant Amanda Miller. We followed a standard cohort approach to calculating graduation rates by identifying each student who matriculated at Yale in 1969, and then determining whether he or she had graduated from Yale at any point between 1971 and 1975.

### **Identifying the Students Who Matriculated in 1969**

The Yale Banner, a student organization, produced an annual directory of first-year students based on information received from the Yale College Dean's Office and the students themselves.<sup>4</sup> We used this directory to create a record for each student in a simple Excel database. Only the researcher team had access to the data. This process produced a database with a total of 1,259 students—230 women and 1,029 men—who matriculated in September 1969 as members of the Class of 1973. We then checked the accuracy of these totals by comparing them with aggregate numbers from the Yale Office

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<sup>4</sup> Isaac A. Yedid, Yale Banner Publications Business Manager, to Class of 1973, April 9, 1969, box 8, folder 1044, RU 575; *The Old Campus: Class of 1973*.

of Institutional Research (OIR).<sup>5</sup> Our totals tied out exactly with Yale's. A second check on the 1969 database came from the Yale Athletic Department's September 24, 1969 list of Yale freshmen, a roster compiled to help the department check which freshmen had complied with the physical fitness exam requirement and which had not.<sup>6</sup> Again, the comparison confirmed the accuracy of our database. I subsequently removed from the database five men who had matriculated in earlier classes at Yale and then been readmitted as members of the Class of 1973 after dropping out or taking leaves.<sup>7</sup> My totals for students who matriculated as freshmen in 1969 were thus 230 women and 1,024 men, five less than Yale's total.

### **Determining Graduation Rates**

We repeated the process used to identify students who matriculated in 1969 to create a new file, students who graduated from Yale in 1973, this time using the 1973 student yearbook as our source. We next matched the records in the 1969 matriculants file with those in the 1973 graduates file, using name, gender, and residential college. Of the 1,254 students who began in 1969, we matched 971 with a 1973 yearbook entry. For the 283 students who remained, we repeated the process with the 1971 and 1972

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<sup>5</sup> Yale Office of Institutional Research (OIR), "Milestones in the Education of Women at Yale," Table A-9, in *A Yale Book of Numbers, 1976-2000* (New Haven: Yale University, 2001), accessed February 23, 2018 from <https://oir.yale.edu/yale-book-numbers-1976-2000-update-pierson-book-oir>; Yale OIR Report 73R019, "Yale College Class of 1973," RU173.

<sup>6</sup> Ed Blesh to John Wilkinson, memorandum, September 24, 1969, box 8 folder 1042, RU575.

<sup>7</sup> Elisabeth Thomas to Erwin Blesh, memorandum, October 1, 1969, box 8 folder 1042, RU575.

yearbooks.<sup>8</sup> Particular care was needed with the women students, as some had married and changed their last names.

This process produced a total of 1,002 students who had matriculated in 1969 and graduated by 1973. Yale's Office of Institutional Research puts the total at 1,009, seven students more than my total, but when I added back in four of the five members of earlier classes I had removed earlier (one did not graduate by 1973), my total reached 1,006—within three students, or 0.3 percent, of Yale's total.

With the 252 students who had not graduated by 1973, we repeated the process with the 1974 and 1975 yearbooks, producing the final figures included in Chapter 4.

### **Determining Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class**

We used student name, photograph, and roommates (women were housed together in groups of four) to identify gender. The number of women identified in this way matched the 230 in Yale's records.

To identify individual students of color, we used self-identification as much as possible: students' yearbook listing of membership in the Black Student Alliance at Yale, the Black Pre-Med Society, the Asian American Student Association (AASA), Boricus Unidas, and Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan. A 1970 AASA membership list

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<sup>8</sup> *The 1971 Yale Banner*. New Haven, CT: Yale Banner Publications, 1971; *The 1972 Yale Banner*. New Haven, CT: Yale Banner Publications, 1972; *The 1973 Yale Banner*. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1973; *The 1974 Yale Banner*. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1974; *The 1975 Yale Banner*. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1975.

was also helpful.<sup>9</sup> Not all students of color joined these groups. We also used last names for Asian American and Latinx students and, for students of color not identified through other means, freshmen directory and yearbook photographs, an uncomfortable process for two white women given the history of whites deciding who was a person of color and who was not. Our numbers for African American students tied out with those of the Yale College Admissions Office: 25 black women and 71 black men in the Class of 1973. Yale did not keep records on Asian American or Latinx students until the Class of 1975.<sup>10</sup>

Lastly, I used high school as a proxy for socioeconomic class given the lack of other data and the salience of this measure at 1969 Yale, where students often described class in terms of public versus private high school.<sup>11</sup> We classed every high school into one of four categories—public, private day, boarding, or religious—and then added a field to each student record for high school type. As noted in Chapter Four, this produced a blunt measure of socioeconomic class. Further refinement would begin by dividing the public high school group into subcategories based on the income level of the surrounding community.

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<sup>9</sup> Asian American Students Association, mailing list, May 14, 1970, box 1, folder 4, RU 1046, Records of the Asian American Students Alliance, YUL.

<sup>10</sup> Office of Undergraduate Admissions, September 25, 1972.

<sup>11</sup> “Male Enrollment,” editorial, *YDN*, 1970

APPENDIX C: ORAL HISTORIES BY GENDER, RACE, AND ROLE

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Interviewer, Date</b>
Jane Anderson <sup>a</sup>	W	White	Class of 1973	Author, 2016
Joni Barnett	W	White	Athletic Admin	Pimsleur, 1990
Judith Berkan	W	White	Class of 1971	Author, 2017
Deborah Bernick	W	White	Class of 1972	Author, 2016
Linda Bishop	W	White	Class of 1973	Pimsleur, 1990
John Blum	M	White	Faculty Member	Kabaservice, 1992
Christine Chase <sup>a</sup>	W	White	Graduate Student	Author, 2017
Henry “Sam” Chauncey	M	White	Brewster Adviser	Author, 2014, ’16, ’17
Russell Inslee Clark, Jr.	M	White	Admissions Dean	Kabaservice, 1993
Shirley Daniels	W	Black	Class of 1972	Author, 2017
Linda Darling	W	Black <sup>b</sup>	Class of 1973	Pimsleur, 1990
Barbara Deinhardt	W	White	Class of 1973	Author, 2017
Kate Driscoll Coon	W	White	Class of 1973	Author, 2017
Hester Eisenstein	W	White	Faculty Member	Krieger, 1971
Kai Erikson	M	White	Res.College Master	Kabaservice, 1992
Jonathan Fanton	M	White	Brewster Adviser	Kabaservice, 1992
William Farley	M	Black	Class of 1972	Kabaservice, 1991
Margie Ferguson	W	White	Graduate Student	Author, 2017
Kate Field	W	White	Class of 1973/75	Author, 2017
Alfred Fitt	M	White	Brewster Adviser	Kabaservice, 1991
Connie Gersick	W	White	Wasserman Aide	Author, 2016
Hanna Holbern Gray	W	White	Trustee	Kabaservice, 1991
Betsy Hartmann	W	White	Class of 1973	Author, 2017
Katharine Jelly	W	White	Class of 1971	Author, 2017
Brenda Jubin	W	White	Res. College Dean	Author, 2017
Charles Lindblom	M	White	Faculty Member	Kabaservice, 1991
Denise Maillet Main	W	White	Class of 1972	Author, 2017
Georges May	M	White	Yale College Dean	Kabaservice, 1991
Kit McClure	W	White	Class of 1973	Author, 2017
Lawrie Mifflin	W	White	Class of 1973	Pimsleur, 1990 Author, 2017
Patty Mintz	W	White	Class of 1973	Author, 2017

*Continued on next page*

<sup>a</sup> pseudonym

<sup>b</sup> My efforts to contact this student were unsuccessful; my understanding from other sources is that her self-identity shifted from white to black over her time at Yale.

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Interviewer, Date</b>
Charlotte Morse	W	White	Faculty Member	Minnis, 2008
Rebecca Newman	W	White	Class of 1973	Author, 2017
Diane Polan	W	White	Class of 1973	Pimsleur, 1990
Emma Reiss <sup>a</sup>	W	White	Class of 1973	Author, 2017
Edna Rostow	W	White	Wasserman friend	Kabaservice, 1992
Constance Royster	W	Black	Class of 1972	Author, 2016, 2017
Dahlia Rudavsky	W	White	Class of 1973	Author, 2017
Marie Rudden	W	White	Class of 1973	Author, 2017
Cynthia Russett	W	White	Faculty Member	Pimsleur, 1990
Lorna Sarrel	W	White	Yale Social Worker	Author, 2016
Philip Sarrel	M	White	Yale Gynecologist	Author, 2016
Kurt Schmoke	M	Black	Class of 1971	Manville, 1971
Kurt Schmoke	M	Black	Class of 1971	Author, 2016
Darial Sneed	W	Black	Class of 1973	Pimsleur, 1990
Aviam Soifer	M	White	Class of 1969	Kabaservice, 1991
Amy Solomon	W	White	Class of 1973	Pimsleur, 1990
Elizabeth Spahn	W	White	Class of 1972	Author, 2017
Carol Storey-Johnson	W	Black	Class of 1973	Author, 2017
Charles Taylor	M	White	Provost	Kabaservice, 1992
Deborah Tedford	W	White	Class of 1972	Author, 2016
Lydia Temoshok	W	White	Class of 1972	Author, 2017
Elisabeth Thomas Peterson	W	White	Assistant Dean	Author, 2016, 2017
Christine Traut	W	White	Class of 1973	Pimsleur, 1990
John Trinkhaus	M	White	Res.College Master	Kabaservice, 1992
Elga Wasserman	W	White	Coeducation Admn	Pimsleur, 1990 Kabaservice, 1992 Minnis, 2007
Jacqueline Wei Mintz	W	Asian	Associate Provost	Minnis, 2008 Author, 2016
Vera Wells	W	Black	Class of 1971	Author, 2016
John Wilkinson	M	White	Undergrad. Dean	Kabaservice, 1992 Author, 2016, 2017
Susanne Wofford	W	White	Class of 1973	Pimsleur, 1990

*Sources for interviewers other than author:* Kabaservice interviews, transcripts, RU217, Yale Archives; Krieger and Manville interviews, transcripts, RU86B, Yale Archives; Minnis interviews, transcripts, RU1051, Yale Archives; Pimsleur interviews, DVDs, Boola Boola Archive Project, Yale Film Center.

*Note:* Students represent a range of academic majors and extracurricular pursuits. All twelve residential colleges are represented in interviews.

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I recruited participants by sending an email or letter that included information about both me and my research project. Prior to the interview, I sent the participant the “informed consent” form approved by the University of Massachusetts Internal Review Board. I discussed this document with each individual before they signed it, and did not begin the interview without informed consent. Interviewees had the option to use their real name or a pseudonym; thirty-one of the thirty-four opted to use their real name. Interviewees were also given the option to have their transcript donated to an appropriate archive following the project, and the vast majority chose this option. Two interviewees asked that I send out questions in advance and so I did. I did not send advance questions to any others, although I often sent out any documents authored by or written about the interviewee prior to the interview.

I used a semi-structured interview approach, with open-ended questions and the flexibility to let the conversation’s sequence be directed by the participant. One married couple, both of whom were interview candidates, asked to be interviewed together; all others were interviewed solo. I conducted a second interview with four of the individuals, and sent follow-up questions by email with another half dozen. I asked participants about the early years of undergraduate coeducation at Yale, with a focus on their perspectives and experiences. My questions shifted over the course of the study as my knowledge about my subject increased. I used broad questions in interviews conducted in the early



stages of my research. In later interviews, I often sought to fill in gaps about specific events or issues and to test my emerging narrative.

All interviews were transcribed following completion. I did some of the transcriptions myself and paid a transcription service for others, with funds generously provided by a UMass Boston Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant and the Zelda Gamson fellowship of the UMass Boston Higher Education Doctoral Program. I sent each interviewee their transcript and gave each of them the opportunity to make edits before the final transcript was completed. The only substantive changes made, sometimes at my request and sometimes at the interviewee's, were edits to mask the identity of those discussed in the interview.

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Margie Ferguson, Davis, CA, February 22, 2017.

Kate Field, by telephone, November 15, 2017.

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Elizabeth Hartmann, Boston, March 29, 2017.

Katherine Jelly, Winooski, VT, May 17, 2017.

Brenda Jubin, Bethany, CT, April 26, 2017.

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