

Interview with Anne Fausto-Sterling, Nancy Duke Lewis Professor at Brown University

Interviewer: Nancy L. Buc

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**Nancy L. Buc:** Ok, we're doing an oral history this afternoon of Anne Fausto-Sterling, the Nancy Duke Lewis professor at Brown University, who was at Brown—on the faculty at Brown—from before the Lamphere case started, and is still. And I'd like to start this interview asking you, I know you got your Ph. D from Brown; in what year?

**Anne Fausto-Sterling:** 1970.

**Buc:** 1970?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah.

**Buc:** And started on the faculty here immediately after that?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Well, I did a year of post-doc, so I guess technically it was '72 maybe that I actually was hired on the faculty.

**Buc:** There weren't many women here at the time. How did you get your job? Were you a beneficiary of the "old boys" network?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I was a beneficiary, I think, of being... a couple of things; of being married to someone on the faculty in the same division of Biomed, who they wanted to keep. And, oddly enough, I mean, it was a time of expansion for the pre-medical school—for the medical master's program that it was. And we had a Dean, Pierre Galletti, who, you know, had—I think of him as kind of having this Swiss, practical mind. And so, they advertised a position that I competed for, and in the end they—I was sort of tied with Sue Gerbi, who they ultimately hired. But they also knew it was a real problem if I didn't get a job because of my husband. And so, Pierre said—but they couldn't bear to hire someone who was already there—I mean that's that, you know, you always want to bring in the person from outside. That's one of the things about academia and Susan had, you know, really good credentials and was up-and-coming, obviously. So, but Pierre said, "Well, we'll hire Susan and I think, you know, we should not let Anne go to waste, so let's make another position for her," and so they did two hires.

**Buc:** Both women?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Both women.

**Buc:** And was your career [short pause] routine? I don't mean routine in the sense that you weren't distinguished, but that you got your contract renewed, and you got tenure without regard for the fact that you were female? Which didn't seem to be all that common at Brown.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Well, I would say yes and no. In that there were other things going on with me besides being female, like the fact that I was activist, the fact that I was developing women's studies at Brown, that I was doing things outside of the department box almost immediately. So I participated in the first Women's Studies program, which I now know from yesterday's exhibit was—I mean the first Women's Studies course, I helped develop it. That was 1973, I was untenured at that point. And I became involved in feminist politics in the Rhode Island community. And then of course was applying it to Brown as well.

So, by the time I came up for tenure, I guess that decision was based pretty much on my science work. And then, but, by the time I was ready to be promoted to full professor I had this whole other academic track I was doing. I'd published a book that was on feminism and biology, and I was doing a whole other kind of scholarship in addition, still, to my biology—I hadn't stopped doing lab work yet. And the department was willing, but kind of baffled as to what to do. They weren't mean about it, I have to say, but they were like: "We can't read your book, how do we know what it means?" Which is, you know, just silly because of course they could have read it.

But so they developed a whole kind of *ad hoc* procedure where they brought in three faculty members from the humanities to evaluate that side of my work. And I had to get twice as many outside letters, because they felt they'd need to get all these letters from biologists, then all these letters from other people about the book. And the funny thing is that there was—the letter writers crossed over completely. So there were biologists who wrote about the importance of the book, and there were [5:00] the people they thought would write about the book who wrote about my biology.

**Buc:** [Laughter]

**Fausto-Sterling:** So that people outside could see the connection, but my department was—I say not in a mean way—but they were freaked out about it. And so that whole process—instead of six letters I had fifteen letters, and this extra committee, and—but it went through.

**Buc:** I want to come back to what prompted your activism, but what you've just said is intriguing in light—and I'm going to skip ahead here to the Lamphere case—because one of the big issues for her was that her scholarship had shifted, at least in part, from Navajo Indians to women.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yep.

**Buc:** And that shift was clearly—well, let me ask you—that seemed to be one of the key factors in—

**Fausto-Sterling:** It was a key factor, and it was happening to women in many departments, not only at Brown but across the country. As women—female scholars began to include women as a subject of study, their colleagues couldn't believe it. And they couldn't see that it was a serious subject of study. So we got everything under the sun from people: "It's a fad," "It's a passing fancy," "It's not important," "It's not real scholarship." And I just, I made a list looking over these documents that you sent me of the things—the phrases, the catchphrases—which were code-words for, "she works on women, she's a feminist, don't promote her," were, you know, first of all, they always went and said, "Well, the teaching isn't good." And I have more to say about that teaching image in a minute. And then, but the real code words were, "it's too ideological," "theoretically weak"—

**Buc:** "Theoretically weak?"

**Fausto-Sterling:** "Theoretically weak." Any time I hear that, boy, I get alert because then I know someone's covering something that they don't like that's political. So those two phrases plus the attack on the teaching. And the attack on the teaching—I've seen Louise teach. I know what she's like, she's very laid-back, she's very not in-your-face, she says what's on her mind but in a very low-key, you know, maybe somewhat rambling way. It is not the image—and I fought an internal self-image battle myself—the image of the college professor in the corduroy suit with the patches on the elbows and smoking the pipe. That's what, in those days, that's what a college professor was supposed to look like. You know, we couldn't do that. We just weren't that, for all sorts of reasons. So, the notion of developing a good teaching style that was not that accepted sort of authority from the front of the room, laid-back, you know, suave, sophisticated, somewhat impoverished man that was the sort of pop culture image of teaching. Well, none of the women fit that image, and they were often—I mean Helen Cserr was attacked, criticized for her teaching. Louise was. Again, it was a whole way in which the academy could bring women in but they couldn't quite cope with having women there. [8:25]

**Buc:** But surely there's this enormous irony that the division of biomedicine—the biomedical division—could cope with your moving into feminist studies, and the social sciences couldn't?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, well, I—it is an irony, but I also think its something about... it's something about being a scientist that says, "Well, if we can get data on this, we can deal with it."

**Buc:** And the data were the peer-reviews of your work? [9:00]

**Fausto-Sterling:** The data were the peer reviews, “If we don’t know about it, I mean we’re not experts so we can’t judge it. So, but you know, she says we have to review it and that seems fair because she’s been doing it.” So, I mean, I could have had a science department, I think, that wasn’t nice about it, and just said, “Well, she’s no longer doing science.” And today that would happen. I don’t think today if I were me with that same division coming up in my department... would not get tenure. I think the University has conscripted its intellectual breadth in terrifying ways to me.

**Buc:** Huh, that’s interesting. Alright, let’s go back now. You said immediately that you were active in feminist politics—or politically active in feminist issues almost from the time you started teaching, or maybe even before that.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Oh, before that, yeah.

**Buc:** Had you been active while you were a Ph.D. student?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yes, I was active in the anti-war movement, I was active in [10:00] graduate student groups on campus. There was another little pamphlet from I think 1971 called “The Women’s Caucus of the New University Conference,” that was an organization, a left-wing organization on campus and nationwide that I was involved with that was anti-war. And, you know, there was all those movements at that point to sort of expose the college corporations for being businessmen, crony friends of the Vietnamese, you know, only out for money, that kind of thing. Which was certainly oversimplified, but on the other hand it was true that there was very little diversity on the corporations in those times, and they were mostly business and bankers. They did have financial interests in the status quo. So there was the whole thing of that organization, of trying to locate the mission of universities in conversation with national policy, which was policies—we were opposing the war in particular. And with being part of an ideological component of our society, and trying to identify what that was, talk about it, bring it out into the open, criticize it, hopefully change it.

**Buc:** This isn’t strictly relevant but I heard yesterday you were at Wisconsin, had you been a member of SDS?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I was not a member of SDS. SDS was forming, so I left Wisconsin in ’65, and I think SDS was just forming in Michigan maybe within a year or two after that, so.

**Buc:** I can see from the documents that the earliest sort of formal involvement for you on the faculty was that committee on women faculty.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah.

**Buc:** Can you talk a little bit about its formation? Did you found it?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I did not.

**Buc:** Did you cause it to be founded?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I don't think I did. And you know, to tell you the truth, Nancy, when I looked at all those documents I had forgotten that I'd done that so early on. I mean, I remember being active about it, but all those memos, I thought: "God, was I a pain in the ass!" No wonder they [laughter] people today still sometimes say: "You're friends with her? She's scary!" But actually most of those guys are dead now, so [laughter].

**Buc:** [Laughter] But the committee on women faculty—

**Fausto-Sterling:** So the committee on women faculty. I can't remember exactly when it was formed, but I don't think I was... I think it existed before me, because I have this memory that Laura Durand was involved. Although Laura Durand may have been on the AAUP Committee on Women—the status of women.

**Buc:** Well, Louise Lamphere was on that AAUP committee, I don't think you were.

**Fausto-Sterling:** No, I wasn't and I think Laura may have been. Laura was one of the early people who did, who struggled—as you saw that I did from that correspondence—to get any information, any data.

**Buc:** And Mildred Widgoff?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Widgoff. So Mildred, it's interesting, I was trying to figure that out. There was one document where she was listed as professor of physics.

**Buc:** She was.

**Fausto-Sterling:** But when we first started she wasn't, because there were still—she was married to someone on the faculty. And so certainly when I was, in 1970, Mildred was still a side-appointment. A lecturer or something like that.

**Buc:** She was, and then at some point they decided—

**Fausto-Sterling:** During the middle of the suit.

**Buc:** —to do the right thing.

**Fausto-Sterling:** During the middle of the suit there were a number of people like that whose situation they fixed. Mildred, Annette Coleman. So they were trying to, I think, finally see if they could do enough things to take the heat off a little bit.

**Buc:** And that first—all of that correspondence from committee on women faculty fascinates me because you obviously had mastered that “academic speak.” And then every once in a while you’d throw in a sentence that was in regular English and often funny. But you dealt with the numbers of women on the faculty, as a—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right. So this was a huge struggle in those days. You know, reasoning that if we just had the data, they themselves would make the situation so clear that there would be nothing to argue against. So we needed and couldn’t get data on turnover, so they’d say, “Well, we have all these junior women; they’re just coming through the pipeline.” We knew from personal tallies that they weren’t going through the pipeline, they were turning over without tenure. And so there was a real revolving door for junior women, and no women were getting tenure. But we needed the data to prove that. And in the end, for many years [15:00] the only way we got data was—so in... I’m trying to think when this would have been. Sometime during the time that that Jackie Mattfeld was here, she hired Karen Romer.

And first of all Karen caused a scandal because she arrived at the Dean’s meeting pregnant, and they’d never had a pregnant Dean sitting in—but she, Karen, said the old guys there were just trying not to look at her, and you know they were just so embarrassed. And they... [pause] But Karen had a secretary, and what Karen did was not—I mean, this wasn’t public but it sure doesn’t matter now I don’t think— was she had her secretary call every department. And often it would be secretary to secretary, and hand-collect those data for us. And that’s often how we could make our tallies. And once a year she’d try, she’d help us update it.

**Buc:** Well, it wasn’t too long after that that the assorted federal laws required Brown to have that information, but not then I think.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right, not then.

**Buc:** Not yet.

**Fausto-Sterling:** And, even once they required Brown to have it Brown didn't collect it very diligently and didn't easily share it with us. So I, I mean, it could have been six or seven years of every year—maybe even ten—saying “Hey, you got the list yet? Hey, can we see it? Hey, we need it to have this discussion.” And, you know, as far as Brown was concerned, that wasn't a high enough priority. And I was fascinated to see in the documents how—which I don't think I was aware of at the time—how under pressure Brown was from the Feds.

**Buc:** Right.

**Fausto-Sterling:** So, I mean had we known that we maybe could have mounted a better, even a...[laughter]

**Buc:** They don't seem to have taken that pressure too seriously, though.

**Fausto-Sterling:** They didn't take any of it seriously. I mean, this is the part that's still evident from these documents is that they—it took losing in court and being under a court order for fifteen years before they took seriously that they had a responsibility to the rest of the world. And nothing short of that did it. [17:18]

**Buc:** Let's go back to that course on Women's—did you call it a course on Women's Studies, or what did you call it?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I think we... Oh, what was it called? It was... You know it was that syllabus that was downstairs yesterday

**Buc:** Yes, we have the syllabus in—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, so the title's on the syllabus. I can't quite remember what it was called.

**Buc:** But Louise worked on that?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, Louise, the people—

**Buc:** Who else? Do you remember?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I may be leaving some people out, and again the main names are on there. But certainly me, Louise, Mari Jo Buhle...

**Buc:** I think she maybe hadn't quite—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Maybe she hadn't quite—first time—I can't quite remember. Again, the names of the people I noticed are on the syllabus, so.

**Buc:** Right. And did you have any trouble getting that course approved to be taught?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Again, I can't remember the process for that at all.

**Buc:** I mean, in a way it's sort of funny because it's an interdisciplinary course that anticipates Browns greatness, but—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, I don't think there were a lot of rules for— I think we just did it. I don't, I can't remember, we must have done something because it got into the course catalogue and stuff.

**Buc:** Yeah, people got credit for taking it.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, so we must have gotten approval from somewhere, and I don't recall, [18:35]

**Buc:** Yeah, ok. And when did you meet Louise?

**Fausto-Sterling:** [Pause] I don't—when did she—do you know when she came to campus? I can't remember.

**Buc:** '69, I think, or '70.

**Fausto-Sterling:** '69. So I'm sure we met in this organization, the University Conference. And we—but, so, I suspect that I met her within the year of her coming here.

**Buc:** And before—the decision to deny her tenure was in 1974.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right.

**Buc:** Did she see it coming?

**Fausto-Sterling:** No. She did not see it coming. She was sure she was doing well. She was, she had gotten—you know, people said nice things to her, she had gotten positive feedback. She had her—I don't think they even did teaching evaluations in any formal sense back then. I mean, to move your mind back to the period when there was no process, [laughter] *none*. So the teaching

evaluations would be, you know, Leis or Hicks stop by and listens to a class, or a student complains, or, you know, there was no formal, systematic collection of data. Nothing.

**Buc:** And how about people's scholarship, did they do any formal—?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Well, I was wondering that when I read this, because there was not reference to outside, external letters, so I don't know if they— [20:00]

**Buc:** There were some later. At some point Louise gave—Lamphere gave Leis a list of—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Was that in the second review? The court-ordered review? Or did they—

**Buc:** No, no. We'll come to that.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Or was it before that?

**Buc:** This was during—this was before that.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Okay, so I just, I don't—

**Buc:** It wasn't—as far as I can see, it wasn't part of the process leading up to whether she should get tenure.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right. I mean it's so formalized now, and I would say, on the whole for the better.

**Buc:** Well, yes, it's an outgrowth very much of the decree.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yes, it is an outgrowth of the decree. I mean, it changed the culture in a big way. So I think every department had their own process. And I've probably said this to you before, and I think it's worth repeating, is that this lack of structure and the lack of rules, it worked terribly against women. But it also worked against men who didn't fit the groove. So if you have a guy who didn't like to go out drinking with the boys, you know, a gay man in the closet who wasn't going to joke about people's boobs, you know, they didn't fit in. They could end up having something similar happen to them.

**Buc:** Yeah, and we just don't happen to know who they were.

**Fausto-Sterling:** We don't know who they were, but I'm—I think—

**Buc:** You may know who they were but they weren't recorded.

**Fausto-Sterling:** I don't particularly, but they aren't recorded and they aren't in a protected group in the same way. But it's just to say that having proper procedures and process is good for everybody. [21:30]

**Buc:** Do you know of any other women before Lamphere who were probably treated similarly and denied tenure and simply walked away?

**Fausto-Sterling:** There were women, and I—honest to God, I can't remember. I mean, every year there were a handful of women who didn't get tenure and left. They got jobs elsewhere; they walked away. And there were some... I noticed and then I remembered that there were other things going on nationally, there were other cases nationally.

**Buc:** Yes, there were.

**Fausto-Sterling:** And not all of which were won. I noticed that there was a letter from Phil—some correspondence from Phil Lieberman, a little bit—

**Buc:** Yes, with him and Don Hornig, President Hornig.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah. So Phil's wife was fired from—I don't know if it was UConn or some university in Connecticut—and never got back into it. And she sued and lost.

**Buc:** Interesting.

**Fausto-Sterling:** And she never got— she was in English—she never got back into academia. And I think was kind of a lost soul.

**Buc:** Interesting, because I read that correspondence—

**Fausto-Sterling:** And you were like, "what?"

**Buc:** Well, with great interest, though, because—

**Fausto-Sterling:** But it wasn't—so it wasn't coming from nowhere. [laughter]

**Buc:** Okay.

**Fausto-Sterling:** And she was around in that time and she'd sometimes talk with us. I felt so badly for her because she clearly was, had been defeated, and felt kind of haunted. [23:00]

**Buc:** So, Lamphere was denied tenure in 1974 in the spring.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yep.

**Buc:** May of '74.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right.

**Buc:** What [pause]—And the letter that she got, she heard it first orally from the department chairman, Philip Leis.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Uh huh. [negative]

**Buc:** And then there's a letter.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Mhmm. [affirmative]

**Buc:** And the letter uses terms like “theoretically weak.”

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right.

**Buc:** “Poor scholarship.” But what did you know from her or otherwise about what constituted the discrimination?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Well, we always believed that it was sort of *prima facie* discriminatory not to take the work on women seriously. And it was pretty clear that that was what was “theoretically weak.”

**Buc:** Yeah.

**Fausto-Sterling:** In their eyes. So people—women, any people but in this period it was women—who were doing, introducing gender into their scholarship in one way or another were getting into trouble because it wasn't the mainstream of the profession. And it was very early days in feminism, so all of the men were just freaked out about it in one way or another. I mean, I had colleagues who would just sort of walk into my lab and start challenging me about this or that, or, “I just did this, do you think that's sexist?” And, you know, “What's wrong with you?” You know, just really kind of aggressive. Forty years later there's a very different sense of it. But

the guys in those early days were, I mean, we were being very militant and they were very threatened. So it was a kind of a perfect storm, I guess.

**Buc:** Part of the reason I'm asking the question is because at the time that—in that May of 1974 [25:00] timeframe—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Mhmm.

**Buc:** The only thing—the only document, apparently, that you saw, any of you saw, she saw, was that one letter—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah.

**Buc:** From Leis that said it was theoretically weak.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right.

**Buc:** A lot of the documents that I've now shown you didn't turn up until later.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right.

**Buc:** In the litigation.

**Fausto-Sterling:** That's right, that's right. But you know we weren't working on document, we were working on our gut sense, both of watching a pattern of the revolving door. So we were watching women not get tenure year after year, and watching that number stand still—that number of four or 5, whatever it was, with tenure. And so you had that, and then you have your buddy who you've been working with, teaching with, you know how their mind works, you know they've come out with a book that's of great importance to you and to a whole new field, which is the edited volume with...

**Buc:** *Women, Culture...*

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah. You know, critical book at a critical time. And then— and you know how colleagues around the university are reacting to this whole move towards Women's Studies, how negatively they're reacting to it. And you just, you know, the pieces in our minds completely added up. That there was no other good explanation.

**Buc:** Well, let me ask you a related question. In scholarship generally, since it's progressive, I mean in any field new stuff builds on old stuff—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Mhmm.

**Buc:** This question of what the tenured faculty think is suitable, is quality, must come up across the board whether there's discrimination or not. That old scholarship resists new scholarship?

**Fausto-Sterling:** It does, it does. That's really true. But when it's an entire class of human beings that's sort of is exclusively doing that work. So, the women faculty were all—not all, but many of us—were very excited by this new scholarship movement and we were throwing our hats in the ring and doing it. So, if you—and we were doing it obviously because it affected us and we were women, not just because we thought, “Well, that's women's work,” but because it clearly was speaking to our lives. So it was a whole particular class of people. And so you're right, you could read it this other way. But the *de facto* result is you're discriminating a whole—you're ending up refusing tenure to an entire class of people because they're working on something that they have deemed important.

**Buc:** Part of the reason I ask—some of the documents that I saw in Biomed about other promotions, not women. There was one candidate for promotion in Biomed who, where the paper surrounding it, one whole faction said, “He's wrong about this compound, the authoritative view is this.” And another faction said, “No, no he's right, this is the new way to go.”

**Fausto-Sterling:** Mhmm.

**Buc:** And that had no gender or racial component—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right, that certainly happens.

**Buc:** It's just new scholarship or old scholarship.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Of course, that happens. Absolutely.

**Buc:** What do you think that the administration thought about all this? The process went on for about a year before she filed suit, and we'll come back to the Gorton report. But did the faculty, did the administration take her allegations seriously?

**Fausto-Sterling:** No.

**Buc:** Did they view it as compartmentalized and “that's just anthropology”? Did they—

**Fausto-Sterling:** I don't think they took it seriously. They just thought, you know, "we're good people, we have common sense, we know what we're doing, we do not discriminate, this woman's crazy."

**Buc:** And was any—was any of it, was Leis well-liked on the faculty—was the department chair well liked on the faculty? Was part of it, you know, "Good ol' Phil"?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I think he was. I mean he, you know, he sort of slowly rehabilitated himself over the years.

**Buc:** Oh yes, he did.

**Fausto-Sterling:** And so he obviously—I could never see it—but he obviously had a personality that people responded positively to.

**Buc:** Did you know that in 2011 he published an article in the faculty bulletin on being a departmental chair? And in the course of this article he essentially said that they had made a mistake on the scholarship, on Lamphere's scholarship. [30:00]

**Fausto-Sterling:** No, you know, I missed that.

**Buc:** That they were wrong.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Huh. [surprise]

**Buc:** But he laid it on the teaching.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right. [laughter]

**Buc:** Do you think that—

**Fausto-Sterling:** And who else—this is the other thing, men never get fired because they're bad teachers.

**Buc:** A good point.

**Fausto-Sterling:** So, you know, and that's another thing that was a red flag to us, even back then. I mean, I have colleagues who basically we stopped letting them teach because they were so terrible. I won't mention names, but they still got promoted because they were good researchers, so.

**Buc:** So the women faculty essentially rallied around Louise?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, and I have to say, because there were so few of us we had been meeting together for years, you know, just informally. We'd have all five of us [laughter], you know, would have lunch together.

**Buc:** And be accused of fomenting conspiracies.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yes. If we met in the Faculty Club, again, it freaked the guys out. They'd stop by and say, "Are you plotting against us?" And we'd say "Oh no no no no." But we were. [Laughter]

**Buc:** That happened in law firms too, I used to take us to Schrafts on purpose just as sort of a joke about women meeting. [Laughter] I want to come back to this question of what the administration knew. Do you think they ever read any of the documents? Do you think they ever inquired into what had actually happened? Or did they just fall into a reflexive "Peer review has to be peer review"?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I think it was totally reflexive, especially in those early days. Again, now I think a provost in a controversial case will actually look at the documents and think it through for himself. But, Merton Stoltz, oh my God. I mean, he—[laughter]—he just couldn't imagine. I mean, it was so "good ol' boy" in those days. I'm sure that—I'd be surprised if they really had looked at the stuff, I think it was really reflexive in those early days.

**Buc:** And the anthropology department and Leis were quite skillful, I think, in raising the peer review issue immediately. So that when they finally got around to having the faculty review by the Gorton committee, the issue had been bifurcated into "merit"—in quotes.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right.

**Buc:** Which was not before the committee—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right.

**Buc:** And procedural—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right. So that's a standard thing that universities do, and has always been true for the Brown faculty grievance things. So you've never been able to grieve the merit decision. That's never been true.

**Buc:** Even when the discrimination is embedded—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yes, even when.

**Buc:** In the merits?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Even when. That's always been true. The only way to grieve that is to go to court.

**Buc:** And do you think they ever understood—

**Fausto-Sterling:** And that's still true, by the way.

**Buc:** It is still true, yes. Do you think they ever understood that court would be different? That the merit having the discrimination embedded in it would be a court issue?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Apparently they did not understand this. And it kind of astonished us at this time, and still does. And they had this old-time, downtown law firm. I mean, until Swearer came in and got some decent lawyers in for Brown's side—I mean, whatever the law firm was that he hired to do that—

**Buc:** Well, let me push you on that a little bit because there are minutes of faculty meetings where the lawyers are asked, or President Hornig or Provost Stoltz were asked, "Well, can we settle this case?" And the law firm that you're—I don't make the same assumption you do. This is your oral history, but—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right.

**Buc:** The lawyer said—

**Fausto-Sterling:** This is how it appeared to me, I will say.

**Buc:** Yeah, sure. The lawyer said "yes." There's one wonderful one where the lawyer said, "Yes, if we settle this case now before the class is certified, we can settle with Lamphere; you'd have to give her tenure."

**Fausto-Sterling:** I read that, I looked at that document, yeah—

**Buc:** "And if you wait until after the class is certified—

**Fausto-Sterling:** It's over.

**Buc:** "The court is going to—and we lose, the court is going to put itself right in the middle of Brown's procedures—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right.

**Buc:** "Up one side and down the other." And I wondered when I read that whether the lawyer had seen some of these documents and talked to some of these people—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Well, it's a good question—

**Buc:** And saw it coming—

**Fausto-Sterling:** And I don't know the answer to that. I mean, it can, it may be true that the—and I have no way of knowing this—that the law firm strongly advised Hornig and Stoltz and those guys to take a different course than they did, [35:00] and they just didn't listen to their own lawyers. That could be absolutely true, I wouldn't know that.

**Buc:** Because the sequence of events was that when the Hicks-Leis correspondence was finally produced in full in December of '76—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yes.

**Buc:** Judge Pettine subsequently ruled that he wasn't going to hold Professor Leis in contempt because the documents had been produced.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right.

**Buc:** But he issued a very stiff opinion...

**Fausto-Sterling:** I remember that.

**Buc:** And the settlement discussions began a month later.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yep, that's right, that's right. But by then Howard was—

**Buc:** Yes, he was.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Was there and I think Howard coming in as a new president, he had nothing to—you know, no honor to uphold. It was a different administration by then, and I have to believe that various people were saying to him, “Get rid of this thing. Do something about it.”

**Buc:** It’s interesting, though, because Howard Swearer—who succeeded Hornig as President of Brown which I’m putting here for the record—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right, for the record.

**Buc:** I think was widely assumed to be much more sympathetic to women faculty. And yet, he is the one who fought bitterly on the hospital-based faculty—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yes.

**Buc:** Which came up later, if you remember.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yes, that’s right, that’s right.

**Buc:** And didn’t seem to do anything about the Ann Seidman case—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right, that’s right.

**Buc:** Which went on for ten years—at least.

**Fausto-Sterling:** That was a bitter case also, yeah.

**Buc:** And so I’m—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, I mean I... [sigh] Howard was nicer to people in general. [laughter]

**Buc:** Yes, right, it’s true.

**Fausto-Sterling:** I mean, Hornig didn’t have much of a personality. And certainly Stoltz and Maeder, I mean, they were just so arrogant and so dismissive of anybody who wasn’t as tall and heavy as they were. They were big, physically big men.

**Buc:** Yes, they were.

**Fausto-Sterling:** So maybe, maybe just dealing with someone who was nice and polite and at least had a surface level of respect for you—I believe he was respectful. But I think that he was a

president and he thought that there were Brown's interests to uphold. And getting sucked into the hospital morass from his point of view was already a nightmare. Just in terms of—I mean, there were all sorts of struggles about what was the status of hospital-based faculty, and did they have tenure, and didn't they have tenure, when we couldn't control what they did. There was a whole set of issues there that he was already—in his lap—and probably looked like a nightmare to add women into it. And it would have been difficult. It would have been wonderful, but it would have—

**Buc:** Well, but it ultimately came down to a very simple issue, which is that part of it which Brown controlled was subject to the decree and the rest of it wasn't, which... But you were very involved in that?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I was very involved in that, and the Seidman thing was—again I feel like once Howard had settled... I mean, I never knew this directly from him, but people said that he took an enormous amount of flak from the other Ivies for settling it. And so it may be that given that amount of flak he felt he couldn't give in again on something like the Seidman case. That may be why he dug his heels in on that. [38:40]

**Buc:** Let's go back to '74, '75, and the period when Lamphere protested to, tried to protest to Jacquelyn Mattfeld, who was the Dean of Academic Affairs and, if we can say so, the token woman in Brown's administration. And Mattfeld—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Hired, again, just in the same period when they thought, "Oh, we'd better get some window dressing in."

**Buc:** Well, was an outgrowth of the merger of Brown, of the College and Pembroke College.

**Fausto-Sterling:** That's right.

**Buc:** And they seem to have made her life very difficult.

**Fausto-Sterling:** They did, they made her life miserable. Because I... Again, I leafed through those documents—I just skimmed through them—but the letter from Stoltz where he said, "Affirmative action? Here, you take it. It's all on you now. Whatever happens for good or bad, it's your fault." Pretty much was the tone of the letter. And yet she couldn't move without them saying it, saying yes or no, and so.

**Buc:** So Lamphere, having been unable to get Mattfeld even to talk to her, wrote a letter to President Hornig, which, as you may know, didn't get answered, ever. [40:00] A year later at the meeting of the committee he apologized to her for not ever answering her letter. But somehow

then there was enough protest that the faculty set up its grievance procedure. Which I think had been in existence but never used for anything.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Mhmm. Right, right.

**Buc:** Were you involved at all in structuring that?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I don't think that I was. I don't think that I was. [pause] Louise pushed on every door, on every sort of legal internal channel, obviously before she filed the suit. And I also can't remember at what point she first consulted... got legal advice.

**Buc:** Well, before the Gorton committee, because the Gorton committee—her lawyer appeared with her.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Okay, so the lawyer probably said you have to, probably advised her that you have to exhaust every internal remedy before you can go to court.

**Buc:** And do you remember that you presented a statement at the Gorton committee?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Only because I just saw it, but—

**Buc:** On the statistics at Brown, which were horrible, although probably not worse than anybody else's.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right. Yeah, those pathetic statistics that we had to spend half of each year, you know, wresting out of the hands of the administration because they didn't want us to have the number—or, I don't know if they didn't want us to have them or if it was just like, "This isn't important enough to spend time right now on."

**Buc:** I can't answer that.

**Fausto-Sterling:** I know, I can't either, but.

**Buc:** Alright, but so the Gorton committee makes its report. They find a variety of procedural infirmities. Proudly announce that they don't deal with—quote—"merit" because they weren't supposed to. And also say that they found no evidence of discrimination, which I'm fascinated by because they weren't ever asked that question. So it's been a mystery to me how they could say they found no evidence when nobody presented any because that was outside their—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, and you know—And the primary at that time, without the Hicks-Leis correspondence the primary evidence was in the merit part of it because those things were so tied together.

**Buc:** Filed suit in 1975, right after the Gorton committee report came out.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Mhmm. Yep.

**Buc:** The Gorton committee report was submitted to the corporation, which essentially backed it in the sense of adopting its recommendations. The department declined to re-review the matter. And then it winds up in this committee, the academic council, which consisted of Hornig, Galletti, Mattfeld, and Stoltz, who—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Said “feh!” [laughter]

**Buc:** Right. Were you involved at all in working with the lawyers in the drafting of the complaint? Did they consult you?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I don’t think I was. I mean, I would talk these things over. I mean, Louise—you may know—lived in a collective house on Hope Street, she and a group of other faculty, graduate students, they had a big duplex. And Nelson and I had—my ex-husband—had dinner with them once a week, or we had them all over. So we ate collectively with them once a week. And so there was lots of informal conversation, gossip, you know, strategizing, that just went on over the dinner table. Plus there were other people there who contributed. So I can’t say that I ever talked formally to those lawyers. I don’t think that I did, at that point.

**Buc:** And, as the case went on were you one of the people who was helping the lawyers review the materials that they got in discovery from Brown, and from the department, and from Stoltz and Leis?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Again, I don’t think I did. I think some of the people that were, who were Louise’s housemates did. I don’t recall.

**Buc:** I don’t think you were either, but—

**Fausto-Sterling:** I don’t think I did, I don’t think at that point I was doing that level of analysis.

**Buc:** But were you among the people who every time Brown would file a piece of paper in the case would read it and say, “Look at that!”

**Fausto-Sterling:** I mean, yes, [45:00] because again all through these informal channels stuff would come up that—at dinner Louise would say, “You can’t believe what I read today from the discovery,” and, you know, “So-and-so did so-and-so.” And so, yeah, I had kind of a running narrative of it in this very informal, selective way.

**Buc:** And then, we’ve talked about this a little bit, but why do you think Brown settled? What was it that finally prompted them—well the court decided in the summer of ’76 that it was a class-action. So let’s talk about one aspect of that, which is that that made the entire faculty subject to discovery. And they started getting document requests and they started going nuts.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right, that’s right. And they had people—specific women—joining into the class from, you know... There was Helen Cserr, **and** Claude Carey, and Pat Russian. Were there some others? I can’t...

**Buc:** No, those were the named—

**Fausto-Sterling:** The named ones?

**Buc:** The named members of the class.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Plus, they did—the class was huge and it included people who had been at Brown but left, and people who had been, had applied for jobs at Brown and never hired. I mean, it was this huge, broad class that was certified.

**Buc:** Well, in addition it meant that the plaintiffs could take discovery of every department and every faculty member, which hadn’t been—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Absolutely. So there was at some point in there, they switched legal firms, and I don’t remember exactly when. Or they added in a legal firm. They added in a legal firm. They were like labor lawyers from Boston. And my impression was that those lawyers looked at it and said, “You’re going to lose. Big. Settle the damn thing.” And said, you know, some, it... To us, it was very tied to bringing in the hot-shot lawyers from Boston who said, “You guys are in big trouble and you don’t even know it. And if you don’t do something about it now it’s going to just get worse.”

**Buc:** I was serving on the corporation during that period.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Uh huh. So you had your own perspective on it.

**Buc:** Well my perspective is that—what I now think must have been the time that the Hicks-Leis correspondence in its un-redacted form was turned over—that the chancellor of the university corporation, Charlie Tillinghast, convened a meeting of this committee of which I was a member, since I guess they figured I had to be there. And said, “We’ve found a smoking gun; we have to settle.” And the smoking gun must have been that correspondence. I don’t know that, but that has to have been the case.

**Fausto-Sterling:** It seems plausible. Yeah, it seems likely.

**Buc:** And then, as I said, barely a month after Judge Pettine castigated Brown and Professor Leis, the settlement discussions began. And were you a part of the framing of the decree?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I was, I think. I mean, I certainly worked long and hard with Louise. I mean, I certainly wasn’t the only one, but we really worked hard on what we thought the elements of the decree ought to be.

**Buc:** Because the decree is quite sweeping. I mean, nobody else signed a decree like that.

**Fausto-Sterling:** It’s very sweeping. That’s right.

**Buc:** Which is a measure of how much the lawyers must have thought, because Brown could not have—the plaintiffs could not have won any more had they litigated the case and won.

**Fausto-Sterling:** No, that’s right, It just, in a way, it helped Brown save face. They only paid out a cash settlement to Pat, I think.

**Buc:** Well, they later paid out a few more hundred thousand dollars to various other people.

**Fausto-Sterling:** And they paid out a lot of money in legal fees, which sweetly has come back—I mean, whatever money Louise got out of that, she must have gotten back-salary or something. Because, you know, she invested that money and came back and donated it to Brown. In a wonderful, I love the ironic symmetry of that move that she did.

**Buc:** Right, proving that feminists do have a sense of humor.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yes [laughter].

**Buc:** The decree provided for tenure for all three of the women who were on a tenure-track; Lamphere, Cserr, and Carey. And payment in cash to Pat Russian of 30,000 dollars, which was a

lot of money in those days. And it also set up a procedure for Brown with the Affirmative Action Monitoring Committee, of which you were a member intermittently.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right. Yeah, but I was on that first iteration of it, which was when we spent a lot of time—primarily with Maurice—trying to move it off of paper and into a functioning process.

**Buc:** Well, one of the things that the AAMC had to do was review each [50:00] department's standards for teaching, and standards for tenure, and procedures for doing both—for evaluating.

**Fausto-Sterling:** That's right, right. So we got them all in. They were required to write them, and they submitted them all to us, and we read them all, and we debated them, and we sometimes spent—

**Buc:** That must have been an enormous amount of work.

**Fausto-Sterling:** It was huge, yeah, it was huge. And sometimes we'd send them back and say, you know, "This isn't specific enough," or "It's too specific," or, you know—And we tried to, we understood that they couldn't be identical because different, you know, you have literature departments where a book is the standard, and science departments where papers are a standard. But we, in each case we said, "You have to explain what you mean by 'excellent scholarship,'" and, you know, and there were rules set up for the outside letters, and all of those things. But no, it was a huge amount of work. Those, I don't—I recall many meetings and many discussions. And, you know, not nasty arguments in the committee. But real, you know, debates in the committees, back and forth. And it was, a committee had... [pause] had, sort of, more conservative—and I don't mean in the Republican sense—but just people who were more wanting to protect the university from too many rules, versus people like me, who wanted some rules, and wanted clarity.

**Buc:** Well, there's one faculty meeting later, or a faculty forum where somebody, I forget who, says, "Well, why do we need all these procedures?" And you say, "You have to have written procedures, because otherwise there's no fairness to it." I mean, that goes back to the point you made about pretext.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yes. Right, right.

**Buc:** When you look at how hard the AAMC had to work—there were 5 of you, right?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Mhmm.

**Buc:** And that... Two different things: one is that the AAMC was in existence in the form of, under the decree for, what twelve years, something like that?

**Fausto-Sterling:** It might have been as many as fifteen...

**Buc:** '78 through '92. So fourteen. Yeah, close to that.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Close to fifteen, yeah.

**Buc:** And five people at a time served on it, and you couldn't do it again right away. Which means that most, much of the faculty—not most, but many faculty members—had to serve on it.

**Fausto-Sterling:** You know, with time, it's interesting, because it moved with time out of the hands of the people who were, like me, extremely committed and had a history with the case, into a broader group of faculty. But I think that was also part of changing the institutional culture. It's that any faculty member, I think, who agreed to go onto it was making a commitment to try and do a good job. And so they had to figure out what that would mean, so they had to learn something about the decree, and they had—presumably then they were committed to the idea that Brown would follow these rules. So I think there was a really kind of nice educational process of faculty members who were maybe neutral to start with. I mean, there were certain faculty members we have labored long against letting onto the committee—I mean it was a vote. But—although I think Louise though had a voice in who went on it—

**Buc:** Yes, the plaintiffs had pick two—

**Fausto-Sterling:** The plaintiffs had pick two—

**Buc:** Faculty pick two, and the administration didn't get to pick, which always annoyed them, I think.

**Fausto-Sterling:** [Laughter] Poor things. Yeah.

**Buc:** And you also had to review on the AAMC the results of any search that didn't result in a woman. Is that about right, or...?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Well, we had to, we certainly had to review any denial of tenure to a woman.

**Buc:** Yes, but also searches—

**Fausto-Sterling:** In the searches, yeah. And what we tried to do with that, which was part of the long conversations with Maurice to try and make this work. But our point of view was that if it came to us after the choice had been made it was too late. And so although that's the way the wording was, we said, "Let us see how the search is going early on." Like, if there's a pool and there are no women in it, then that already is going to raise red flags. Can we go back and forth, and maybe we can help the department find real—I mean, some departments, I mean, there was certainly in those days legitimate searches in which women didn't turn up in the pool at the right level. That happened [55:00], that was par for the course. But, or if we went from the big pool—this was one statistic we asked for, and we finally did get it. From the big first, all-applicants. You know, there were a hundred applicants and there were thirty percent of them were women, but then in the final five there weren't any women, then we could ask at least for an explanation. And sometimes there was a reasonable explanation and sometimes there wasn't. So that was the kind of process that we, and I have to say Maurice agreed that it was better to have a process like that, where we could work with it as it was going on, rather than just have this thing in our laps at the end and it would be too late to do anything.

**Buc:** So some informal procedures grew up around the required procedures as well?

**Fausto-Sterling:** That's right. That seemed to be based on common sense. And you know, the administration, obviously, with Maurice personifying it, wanted to keep the university prerogative as much as possible. And, you know, that's kind of structurally his job. So—

**Buc:** Maurice is Maurice Glicksman? Who succeeded Matffeld as Dean of the Faculty, and then became the Provost after Stoltz.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yes, that's right. So he worked with us on—he was the, certainly for the Affirmative Action Monitoring Committee, he was the administrator that we did all of this early setting up of procedures and negotiating with.

**Buc:** And is it fair to say that with Glicksman, perhaps unlike Stoltz, it was—things got better? That he was willing to cooperate, or not?

**Fausto-Sterling:** He was. I mean, he was resistant, and—have you had long conversations with him?

**Buc:** Not yet, his oral history is going to be next week.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Okay. He's a naturally argumentative man.

**Buc:** I know him. I've known him for years, yes.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, but, I mean, so you know he's a talker, he argues. But he's also, I'd like to—and I'm saying this positively—he's an engineer. And what I found, at least, was that I could talk that talk with him as another scientist. I could let him run through all of the logical possibilities, which would drive some people crazy and would take a long time. He'd say, "If we do this, then this. And if we do this then—" And come back at him with my own logic, and if the logic began to make sense to him, he'd go with it.

**Buc:** Did he feel any need to defend the past? Did he feel any—

**Fausto-Sterling:** I don't think he was defending the past. I think he was defending the university against further intrusion from the court, and we were representatives of the court in that way. So I think his knee-jerk reaction always was, "You can't have any more than what's on the paper." And then we'd have to argue from that point, and say, and also he had a variety of issues around, you know, confidentiality and who could see what documents. Which are all, as I say, I think it was—he viewed that as part of his role as a university officer to take that stance. But it wasn't about defending... I mean, at some point the logic of it and the statistics of it he embraced. So, yeah, if there are ten percent graduates from schools that we believe in, Ph.D.'s in the pool, then we should be—then those are the numbers we should be striving for, because the women are clearly there and we should try and get them. So he had the—I've always thought of him this way—he had the logic of an engineer, of the mind of an engineer, which was a logic that one could work with, or I could certainly work with. It was exhausting. I'm sure he found me exhausting too, but I could—he could move off of dead center because he wasn't coming from some deeply irrational, arrogant place. And Stoltz was. [Laughter]

**Buc:** Glicksman is quoted in—wrote himself in some paper I read that that whole decree AAMC search process resulted in a much-improved faculty at Brown. Because all searches, resulting in both men and women, were better searches than they'd ever done before.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, no, I think that's absolutely true. And so he had the logic and the sort of honesty to see that and to embrace that at some level.

**Buc:** Because that does coincide with the period in which [1:00:00] Brown's stature improved considerably, and some people—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Well, that's right, because you know the old method of old-boy hiring didn't lead to—I mean, Brown was a regional college under that old-boy method.

**Buc:** Of course the old-boy method was in force at places that were not regional colleges.

**Fausto-Sterling:** It was, but when your region is Rhode Island [laughter]. Well, really New England. I mean, so many of the faculty who I knew in that era came from somewhere in New England.

**Buc:** Interesting. Alright, so in about 1984 or so, Brown, the administration starts talking about lifting the decree. And so that was about six or so years after it had been in. Why do you think they wanted to get rid of it? Was it a question of the paperwork burden? Was it a question of the time and money it cost to go through all that? Or was it just a question of they hated being under a decree?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I think they hated being under decree, and I would bet that they got constant needling from their colleagues at other institutions.

**Buc:** It's interesting that you talk about other institutions, because some people have assumed that the needling was coming from the corporation, the Brown Corporation, which I don't remember particularly, but you've located it in a somewhat different place.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, what I heard from friends of mine who were in the administration was that, you know, at meetings of college presidents, the Ivies plus whatever that grouping of college presidents is, that they constantly gave Howard a hard time about having settled. Saying it put them in a terrible position and blah, blah, blah.

**Buc:** Why did it put them in a terrible position?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Well, because they figured it was just a matter of time, because someone did the same at their school—

**Buc:** Which assumes that they were discriminating also?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, well, which they were [laughter].

**Buc:** Well, [laughter] we want to get it out on... And do you think that the fact that the federal government was doing—was the federal government doing anything at any of these other schools that suggested to them that they might turn up in a case like this? Or was it the efforts of individuals?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Well, I mean, I guess that the federal government was sort of making the rounds at these schools in the same way that they were making the rounds at Brown. And there were cases everywhere. I mean there was the case at Harvard of Theda Skocpol who didn't get tenure and then did get tenure after a lot—she may have even sued, I can't remember. But there

were, you know, we heard of these stories just through the grapevine all the time. And so I think these were on the doorsteps of administrators all across the country.

**Buc:** Do you think the women faculty at other—

[Pause to change a cord]

**Buc:** Do you think that women faculty at other institutions were pushing their institutions to adopt procedural change that was decree-like, even if not under a decree? Did it set a precedent?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Oh, I think it did set a precedent, and I do think that women at other institutions were pressing. It was the same battle all across the country. We want numbers. Why are there so few women? What's your process? Why are you firing women who do Women's Studies? And the same code words, just, "It's theoretically weak, it's ideological, it's—"

**Buc:** Teaching?

**Fausto-Sterling:** And teaching. Bad teaching. Those came up over, and over, and over again. And women across the country were fighting the same battles, so when Louise won I think it was very important nationally.

**Buc:** Do we know of any institutions that took a look at that and decided that they'd better shape up? That this could happen to them?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I don't know of them, but, you know, Louise... I bet you there were and Louise might be able to cough some up for you.

**Buc:** Because as a lawyer I look at that, and I think, "What were these other general counsels doing to avoid this fate?"

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right, right. Well, I think... I don't know what other schools did. I mean, there are some that are, have remained difficult to this day. There are some schools that... [1:05:00] where presidential authority was used and just a lot of women suddenly got hired. But it's not clear about process. It's not clear how process started to change.

**Buc:** Was there a backlash on the Brown faculty of assuming that all the women who got hired were less qualified than the men?

**Fausto-Sterling:** There was some backlash. I think you heard muttering about affirmative action, and people being forced to, you know, make bad hires and things. There—it wasn't...

You'd hear people say things like that, and maybe in more informal settings, but you heard all of the... what I consider to be misunderstandings of affirmative action meaning inferior hiring. And, you know, since it was a new concept, again, nationally, it took people a long time to come to terms with it. And obviously as a nation we haven't come to terms with it. We've decided now that it wasn't—that it isn't the right way to keep going, so.

**Buc:** It's... different parts of it, of course. Some of the, I mean, the searches are still legitimate.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, and what I think is that at first a lot of faculty were very put out by having to go through all this stuff. And it still is, it is a huge amount of work now to do a search. And you've got, it takes, you have to have a dedicated assistant to keep track of all the numbers, and log all the applications, and do the report. And so in a way it's a kind of a pain in the butt. But I also think people on the whole think it's a necessary evil. And also would agree with the argument that it leads to a better search.

**Buc:** The administration starts in '84, and the faculty and the AAMC are unhappy about—

**Fausto-Sterling:** We really lobbied against vacating the decree at that point.

**Buc:** And why were you—why?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Because we didn't think we'd made enough progress. And I do remember being in court for that, because it went to court at one point.

**Buc:** It did. They finally moved in 1988 unilaterally to vacate the decree. And it had sort of two parts. One was how to calculate the attainment of the goals, and there was a big debate between Maurice Glicksman and Harold Ward about how to calculate it.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right, right. And I had argued constantly with Beverly Ledbetter during that time about what counted, and what didn't count, but—

**Buc:** And the other argument was essentially that they had met the goals and timetables that everybody had agreed on for '87, and therefore they were done. And the faculty—through the AAMC and otherwise—talked not about just those numbers, but full representation as against the pools. And the court accepted that and denied the motion to vacate unilaterally.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right, right. And then the other issue was you couldn't just vacate, because all of those procedures that we'd set up were not in the faculty rules. They were in an agreement between the AAMC, representing the court, and the administration. So when the agreement to vacate finally came, it then took three years of rewriting the faculty rules. And by that time, I

was involved with a group—I mean, when Louise finally, I think, said, “Yeah, we’re going to have to do this,” she asked me, Elizabeth Kirk, and Julie Stromberg to be the committee that negotiated this process.

**Buc:** You became the class representatives.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah. And we started out by meeting with Vartan, which was a real trial. Because for a long time—I don’t remember why we were negotiating this with Vartan at first, but—

**Buc:** Well, can I—let’s go back a little bit?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, okay.

**Buc:** The court denied Brown’s motion in 1988 and said, “Can you people settle this please? I’m getting sick of this too.” I’m paraphrasing an august, judicial—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Right, so maybe that’s how it happened, yeah.

**Buc:** And so you started out negotiating with Glicksman, and as you say it took years. And Gregorian didn’t arrive—

**Fausto-Sterling:** When did Gregorian arrive?

**Buc:** I think 1990 or ’91. And it got finally entered in ’92. He was unquestionably involved in the [1:10:00] end of it. He took credit for it in 1992, but one of my questions to you is was he really involved? Or do you think you’d gotten it mostly done?

**Fausto-Sterling:** We did have... No, we had several meetings with him, and I honestly—I remember them being difficult because he just talked a lot and [laughter] and didn’t focus. And also that it would take a long time in between meetings. And I think finally—I think he wanted to be involved with it, but at some point it, what made sense was to have us do it with—

**Buc:** It looked like Tom Anton, and—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Tom Anton, and—

**Buc:** And Maurice.

**Fausto-Sterling:** And Maurice, but also Peter Richardson from the FEC, which was then, I guess, the FPG, whatever it was the—

**Buc:** But from the faculty.

**Fausto-Sterling:** From the faculty. But so we started then the hard job of trying to write this all down, these processes. And that was hard. Because, you know, I think—I don't know who would do initial drafts, whether it was—it might have been Peter, because he was kind of really into parliamentary stuff. And he'd write a version of it and we'd look at it and say, "No! It leaves—it doesn't have this tooth or that tooth anymore, or it leaves—" And so we had long, painful, from my point of view because it's niggling kind of work, to try and—

**Buc:** So you were all playing lawyer. [Laughter]

**Fausto-Sterling:** We were all playing lawyer without the training, except I think Peter had a little, Richardson had a little legal training. But, you know, a dancer, and a Beowulf expert, and me.

**Buc:** You should have called me. [Laughter]

**Fausto-Sterling:** We should've. But so, I just remember that as taking a long time—

**Buc:** It did; it took four years.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, and involving a lot of very careful reading and difficult arguing, and again not—I don't think it was hostile. But it was... we were trying to defend the rules in such a way that they continued to have teeth. Even though we knew at some level once it went away from the court we had to depend on there having been enough of a culture of change to make it continue to work, so.

**Buc:** And the class—the women faculty had a vote on this?

**Fausto-Sterling:** They had to vote on it, yes. But that was—I remember that meeting; that was interesting.

**Buc:** And first they made some suggestions to change the procedure, and you did that. The group of you. And then you put it out for a real vote, and there's one wonderful memo from you—there really wasn't email yet—saying "Vote! You've got to vote!" And there's some wonderful correspondence between you and a lot of people who said they weren't going to vote, for it.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Say that again?

**Buc:** There was some wonderful correspondence between you and some women on the faculty who said they weren't going to vote for it, in which you expressed essentially fifteen years of exasperation. [Laughter]

**Fausto-Sterling:** [Laughter] I can believe that.

**Buc:** And the faculty did finally vote yes. It got done.

**Fausto-Sterling:** The class voted, and the faculty voted on it, yes. Right.

**Buc:** And those procedures are still in the faculty rules?

**Fausto-Sterling:** They are.

**Buc:** Have they been changed at all? Do you know?

**Fausto-Sterling:** There has been some, there has been a little fiddling, I think, over the years, for one reason or another as structures change. Faculty structure itself changed. It ended up with two committees: the Committee on Women Faculty and the Affirmative Action Committee. At some point it became really unclear what the different roles of them—and so there have been some niggling back and forth, but I think they're essentially intact.

**Buc:** And where do you think Brown stands now? Are we better than other places on women faculty, worse, or the same, similar, comparable?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I think, you know, I guess I don't have the data to compare us to other universities. I think other schools—one way or another many of them have caught up with us. I think we probably are better than, we're probably better than Harvard, which I think just [laughter] remains its old self. But I don't know how the other Ivies are doing. I would think some of them not so well and some of them better than you might think.

**Buc:** Well, there was a time during the period when Brown was moving unilaterally to vacate the decree that we were way ahead of everybody else.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Way ahead, that's right, that's right. Because we were the only ones that were, you know, had a process. So yes, for a long time we were. I do think some schools have started to catch up, one way or another.

**Buc:** Well, we're collecting data, so we'll have it—

**Fausto-Sterling:** Oh, that will be really interesting to know. [1:15:00]

**Buc:** We'll have it for you by next winter. And so, what do you think in retrospect of all this? Was it worth it?

**Fausto-Sterling:** Oh absolutely worth it. It made just a huge change in the university, and I think, again I think nationally also. If Louise hadn't—well, for one thing if Louise hadn't filed suit, I don't think I would have ever gotten tenure. Within—I got tenure in I think '77. The year after she filed suit suddenly six people, six women got tenure. That wasn't an accident, when none had been getting tenure before. And then after that people came up and there was—

**Buc:** And there were also some senior hires. They hired Joan Scott—

**Fausto-Sterling:** They hired Joan Scott, they got off their duff and decided to refund the Nancy Duke Lewis Chair, and turn that into something, a way that you could get a woman's hire. They had just refused to fill that after Rosalie Colie died. And that was a way to get a senior—because of course we had such a dearth of senior tenured—of senior women. So, you know there are departments now that are half women or even majority women. There's still some departments that lag. But the whole change at the university has been huge with regard to women on the faculty, and it wouldn't have happened if Louise hadn't filed that suit.

**Buc:** And has the acceptance of the scholarship improved only because there are more women to appreciate it? Or because it has become somewhat more mainstream among men and women?

**Fausto-Sterling:** I think no, not only because there are more women. I think it has become more mainstream—it's really hard now to say that it's just a fad that'll die out in a couple years, because it's grown and become its own sort of academic, scholarly industry. And in some fields it really became the mainstream. So I think in fields like English and literature, and not entirely in history but it's become—you know, it became a pretty important national theme, you know, theme nationally in the historical scholarship. So in some areas it really is the mainstream, in a way.

**Buc:** There's a wonderful document that we've collected in which Brown—Howard Swearer is making a proposal to the Ford Foundation for that first grant that became the Pembroke Center Grant, in which he explains how important it is to study gender, in words that only five years before were essentially the words that the plaintiffs were using. And so we have that, at least, for Howard Swearer.

**Fausto-Sterling:** No, you do. And you know, I think—

**Buc:** And for Brown.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, I think that when Joan was hired, I mean, I think she's very skilled politically. I think she had a good relationship with Swearer. I think he was open to being educated on these topics—

**Buc:** Well, when you get 300,000 dollars from the Ford Foundation in the early '80s, you're looking good.

**Fausto-Sterling:** Yeah, that's right, It seems like chicken feed now, but in that time it wasn't. Yeah.

**Buc:** So, it was worth it and you—I'll say this because you probably won't—among your many contributions to Brown, that fifteen years, sixteen years, seventeen years of battling is one of your many contributions.

**Fausto-Sterling:** It was, and I think that it was worth it. I mean, I think that was—in a way, it was part of what we as a class had to do to make our lives livable and productive. Even though at any one moment it might feel like it was dragging you down because you were spending all this time doing this battle instead of, you know, for me counting my fruit flies or whatever else I might want to be doing. But it also gave us the strength to be in the university and to make the changes that then kept us going forward and gave us the collegueship and comradeship that are part of being in an institution like this.

**Buc:** Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you want to expound on or expatiate on?

**Fausto-Sterling:** [Long pause] I'm just looking at my notes. No, I think we covered all of those little, just the thoughts I had at the time, I mean, when I was just reviewing the documents you sent me. No, I just think it was a tremendously—in the [1:20:00] history of higher education in the United States, I think this case, this lawsuit, ranks right up there as being of major importance for—as a game-changer—for women in the academy, and more generally for good social policy in the academy.

**Buc:** Good. Thank you.

**Fausto-Sterling:** You're welcome.

[End of Interview]