

Transcript – Arlene Gorton, Class of 1952

Interviewee: Arlene Gorton '52
Interviewer: Jane Lancaster
Interview Date: May 18, 2010
Interview Location: Warwick, RI
Length: 59:16

Jane Lancaster: Okay. It is May 18, 2010, this is Jane Lancaster and I am going to talk to Arlene Gorton in her den.

Arlene Gorton: There we go.

JL: There we go. I want to talk to you really about women's sports at Pembroke and then at Brown.

AG: Okay.

JL: And there's two parts to this. You were a student at Pembroke in the '50s.

AG: '48 to '52.

JL: '48 to '52. And then you worked for nearly 40 years running women's sports.

AG: Well, I was running it from '61 until the Pembroke merger –

JL: Yeah.

AG: – and then with the Pembroke merger I lost the final word, so I became – instead of being the Director of Physical Education and Athletics at Pembroke College, which was the women's program, I became an assistant athletic director and then an associate. But I also did have the rank of faculty member.

JL: Okay.

AG: So that gave me considerable clout –

JL: Good.

AG: – especially during Title IX case.

JL: Title IX is a big thing we need to talk about.

AG: Okay.

JL: But, shall we just start from the beginning?

AG: Sure.

JL: When you were a student at Pembroke, what was women's sport like then?

AG: Well, it was under the leadership of Bessie Rudd, and she was a dynamic figure. She was there from '30 to '61. Sometimes I say I replaced, but nobody ever replaced Bessie. She was a very powerful person.

JL: Yeah.

AG: Strongly opinionated but deeply committed to the value of sport for women. And what is interesting about her is that she believed in a triangle where at the base of the triangle was the recreational and the instructional program, then the intramural program, which was the next level up, which was the internal competition, and then the intercollegiate program. And there were not a lot of women's intercollegiate programs at that time. A lot of the women trained in physical education who were the leaders were very disillusioned with what they saw as the intensity of competition in the men's programs, so they veered away from it. For example, Smith did not

have a competitive sport program. They would do international competitive swimming, but they didn't have a competitive sport program. And Bessie Rudd believed very, very, very strongly in a competitive sport program. And she adopted the philosophy, which was part of the national group, of a sport for every woman and every woman for a sport. And when she said every woman for a sport, she meant every woman, whether you liked it not. At Pembroke that was part of her legacy. People would say to me when I had gone back, oh, you replaced Bessie. Bessie hated me. She didn't hate you, you just didn't like sports. So she wouldn't let you out of it. But anyway, there was a four-year physical education requirement and if you did very well for three-and-a-half years you got exonerated from the last half year. So that was kind of the philosophy.

JL: And one of them was a swimming test.

AG: Absolutely.

JL: But you didn't have a pool.

AG: Well, there was the Brown pool.

JL: You were using that?

AG: Well, for the swim test.

JL: Oh.

AG: We could use it for the swim test. But back when I was a student we actually – actually when we were students I think we also used the – I think we mostly used the Plantations Club pool there because one of my favorite stories is that black women were excluded from the Plantations Club and nobody at Pembroke challenged it. Nor did they challenge that we could use – the women could use the Colgate Hoyt Pool on the Brown campus. We paid the same tuition. We were Brown students, but we could not swim in that hallowed pool.

Now when I returned to Brown in '61 to take over for when Bessie Rudd retired, the women were not permitted to use the rec pool during recreation. And when I asked Joe Watmough, who was the men's swim coach, why, he said because they are doing rec swim, because they didn't wear suits. So I told him one week hence the women were going to show up for rec swim and as I've said before, the men could wear suits or not as they wished. And it was something as stupid as that that deprived women of our free access to the athletic facilities on the Brown campus.

JL: So not wearing suits is that the men could swim in the nude if they wanted?

AG: Yes. Yes. So now this day and age the women would still have been happy to go and not wear suits, but regardless the men found suits. And the interesting point with Coach Watmough was that his point was that the faculty did not wear suits. So I suggested to him that maybe faculty men could afford a suit. They weren't having any women faculty.

As a matter of fact I would not have returned to Brown had I not been given a faculty appointment. Not because I'm on an ego trip but because I believe it reflected the commitment that I expected the university to make to sport in education. The men – the competitive program was really the highlight of the men's program and for me, coming under Bessie Rudd, going through Brown, going on to do graduate work, it was sport in education. So I wanted that – I would not have come without a faculty appointment. And that turned out to be a very wise decision on my part because that faculty appointment gave me access to other experiences as a Brown employee that I would not have had, had I not been a faculty member. Like I chaired the Louise Lamphere ad hoc review committee. The committee that reviewed her – you know it was a time when there weren't a lot of women, there was a fight over women and I was probably the most non-threatening woman faculty member at the time. You know and they looked at Anne Fausto-Sterling or people like that, I was probably the most neutral so I was acceptable to both sides. But that gave me access to an interesting kind of faculty experience. I also subsequently went on to be the first woman I think to head the Faculty Policy Group.

So that I was fortunate to have a variety of different experiences and actually I needed them because when the merger came and I lost my authority, I was able to relocate my emphasis

into on-campus faculty affairs where I could also fight for women. So it opened up a broader experience for me that I probably would not have had without that faculty appointment.

JL: So you were faculty with tenure by the time –?

AG: I was – I did not have tenure when I arrived.

JL: No.

AG: But I ultimately became a physical [inaudible] with tenure.

JL: So therefore, you're a full professor?

AG: Yes.

JL: So at the merger they could not fire you?

AG: Right. There was no eagerness to fire me. You know I – but I became an assistant athletic director.

JL: Yeah.

AG: And that meant I didn't make the final decision. And it's not a power structure, but until women are athletic directors I don't think women will have equal access to sport. And I will say that to my dying day. You know 40 years ago – so there was the merger. At that point I lost the authority in sport. There still is not the woman who has the final word in sport at Brown. There is no female athletic director.

JL: Are there others at other colleges?

AG: Yep. Yep. Yep. And it will come. But it's been – I applied for the position three times. The first time I applied because it was open. The second time I really thought I would get it and the third time I did it to be a pain in the ass. That was what I sort of fell into as my role at Brown – mix up the pot.

JL: And why do you think you didn't get it?

AG: Well, the first time there was an article in the *Brown Daily Herald* – in the *Providence Journal* – that said that I was a very – the head of the Brown Football Association – I think it was the first time, not the second time – said I was a very nice girl. Notice I'm emphasizing girl, but I knew nothing about football. Now I didn't know that as an athletic director. But I think I also had been identified as a supporter of women and I think I made a lot of people nervous. And I was outspoken, I was not political, I said what I thought and that can be very threatening at Brown. Yeah, but probably I didn't have the right qualifications either.

JL: Okay. So under which regime was this, this first time you applied? Who was president at that time?

AG: The first time I applied I think it was – that's a good question. Now, Bob Seiple was appointed athletic director and I don't remember what – that was before '71, so it was probably under Barnaby I don't remember when Barnaby was president. And I don't remember when he left. The second time I know it was under Howard Swearer because he called me in and he really was a strong supporter of mine, but couldn't make that move. There were too many vested interests, and he told me that. And the third time it was I guess Gregorian. I think I've served under five or six presidents. So – I think that's the way it went.

JL: So it would have been Keeney and –

AG: It would have been Keeney and Heffner and then Hornig and then Swearer and Gregorian and now Ruth.

JL: And when did you – and Gee.

AG: Oh, Gee, yes, you're right, Gee. Gee and then Ruth.

JL: But have you – you've retired now?

AG: I retired in '68. So I retired when –

JL: In '68?

AG: No, in '98.

JL: '98.

AG: I'm sorry. In '98, when Ruth was just –

JL: Okay.

AG: – emerging on the scene. Gee was sort of still there I think. Gosh, he was amazing. His wife was amazing. I'm sure you've heard lots of stories about –

JL: I have. I never met the lady.

AG: But I will not – my mother always said if you can't say anything nice, be quiet. So I'm – she was – my problem with Gee is that he was a – he believed in athletics as a power structure and so – but he really did not support women in it – in the power structure.

I remember when he was appointed president, he talked about – he told a story of his first wife and cancer. And then I heard him give the same story again in the first faculty – in his first faculty meeting and he cried at the same point. And I lost – my relationship with him was not very – I like people to say what they think and be who they are. And I don't think President Gee

was the right person for Brown, but obviously the Corporation did. And he's gone on to greater things, back to his roots.

JL: Yep. Yeah. So –

AG: So when I first went back – when I was a student at Brown we had – we had varsity programs but they were called clubs. Now they weren't called clubs in the same connotation of what a club is now.

JL: Okay.

AG: That came up in the Title IX case. They were called clubs because the women physical educators did not like the term varsity sport, so they called them clubs. But we had try outs and we had – teams were selected and we had a schedule and we had coaches and we had great experiences, so I think when I went back to Brown – when I went to Brown as a student I played on the softball club, I played on badminton club, but – and these were varsities. So I did a lot of sports. Sometimes I'm amazed that I graduated, but I did.

JL: So there were quite a few of these sports available, weren't there?

AG: Oh, yes, a lot. From '48 to '52, I think I counted like 13 or 14 club teams that Bessie Rudd had in there. I mean she just was very, very strong on that varsity experience.

JL: And so you competed with women from other colleges and universities?

AG: We did. We competed with – the ones that had them, we competed with Radcliffe, we competed with the University of Rhode Island, Tufts. We competed with the University of Connecticut. Smith and Wellesley did not have teams so we obviously didn't compete – Jackson, we competed with them.

JL: Who's – where's Jackson?

AG: Jackson was the women's part of Tufts I think.

JL: Oh.

AG: I think that was the women's part of Tufts. So there were – you know there were a number of women [inaudible]. We probably had about eight or ten contests during our season. Not anything like the intensity that it is now, there's no question about that. So –

JL: And what facilities did you have in those days?

AG: Funny you should ask. Well, we didn't have the pool.

JL: Oh, right.

AG: We had Sayles Gym, which is a 40 by 80, and that remained the women's gym. It was built in 1906 as you probably know and it had – until it was redone and named Smith-Buonanno Hall. Well it was closed about four or five years before that happened. But we had Sayles Gym, 40 by 80.

JL: Is that small for a gym?

AG: Oh, very small.

JL: Yeah.

AG: Very, very, very small. We had – and it was all-purpose. I mean I played badminton and we had one singles badminton court in the gym. That's all we could get in, so you played the singles and then you set it up for doubles and you could do three doubles in competition. So badminton was like an all-afternoon occasion. We had the Pembroke field and we used that for our instructional program as well as our varsity program. So until the merger those were our

facilities. And then we moved over to Aldrich-Dexter and squared up some facilities there. And we had – the tennis courts were behind one of the dormitories. We had two Pembroke tennis courts.

JL: I was just going to ask where the tennis courts were.

AG: Yeah. We had two Pembroke tennis courts. They were behind like Miller Hall, over in that area. And then we got to use the swimming pool when the men didn't want it. So then in, I think '61, when I came back or '62, when Meehan was built, we had a very good men's ice hockey team and it was a popular activity, like you had to almost get in line the night before to get tickets even as students. So then the women wanted to start a team and they did. And we used the Meehan on Sunday nights after 11:00, even after the peewees. The outside peewee groups got priority over the women. And until the merger we had no leverage. So, you know the merger gave us leverage of comparisons and we gradually eked our way in.

The same with – the women wanted to do crew, but when I first called Vic Michaelson, the men's crew coach, to say the women would love to do crew, could we come down and use the tank. We weren't asking to go out because the men brought their own shells. Well, he yelled and screamed for at least a good half hour, but ultimately it happened and he wasn't our strongest advocate, but it did help that he did have daughters who became interested in crew, but the women changed in the steam room. I mean it was really terrible.

We did synchronized swim. I coached synchronized swim and we did three shows at Colgate Hoyt Pool and we did a show in – it was in February like, and one night we went in for our show and there was that much snow on the deck – we were in the old pool. And we did a thing from the Beatles and I'd found some kids who would do volunteer lighting. Well, they had these metal balcony railings and on the Beatle thing, they started screaming and I thought something had gone wrong. I thought somebody got electrocuted. Well, it was just part of the Beatle thing that they did that we hadn't run through in dress rehearsal. But I aged 100 years on that one. But the facilities were pretty awful, but we did it. I mean, you know that's what you did. You wanted to do it, you were pleased to have it and so we were hardly prima donnas at that time when I came back. We just wanted to keep programs going and we took what we got.

JL: So the hockey team and the crew, this initiative came from some of the students?

AG: Yep. Yep.

JL: So you didn't wake up one morning and say I must have an ice hockey team.

AG: No. The kids came in and said we want to have an ice hockey team and I said okay, let's see what we need to do. We need to get the facility, we need to find somebody who would do it, we need to find the equipment. And as long as we took Sunday night at 11:00 and – almost for the, you know the crew was so much that bad too. But we were able to get it.

A lot of my contemporaries in coaching ended up in athletic administration – women, were horrified. I got these letters, how could you possibly start a women's ice hockey team. They're women, they will get hit with the puck, they will be disfigured, you know. Well, the old battle that came from the guys is that the women can't do these sports because they might injure their reproductive organs. Now, I'm not going say the obvious, of where women's reproductive organs and men's reproductive organs are, but that didn't go very well in the battle.

But the hardest part was finding equipment in ice hockey. And we started by using the junior stuff, which was really small for the big girls. And it was a struggle. We sold candy bars

–

JL: Because very few women played ice hockey in those days.

AG: Right. The only ones who played, played with their brothers, you know on the outdoor pond. But we had a couple of gals who had come down from Canada where they were playing hockey and we had to go to Canada to find competition except for club teams like in Massachusetts and they came out of city clubs and things like that. Like [inaudible] teams.

JL: So there were already some teams in Canada?

AG: In Canada. Yeah. McGill had them, Loyola had them, so we would sell candy bars, get the money – got to sell a lot of candy bars to get a bus to go to Canada.

JL: So was Brown or Pembroke giving any money towards this?

AG: No.

JL: Not at all?

AG: No. My budget for intercollegiate sports when I first took over the Pembroke program, when we had about 11 programs, was \$2,000 total.

JL: That's not a lot.

AG: So we did a lot of – I mean even for the soccer team and things like that, we would sell candy and they would just all help. That was part of – you know you want to play sports, it's a privilege to play and so you got to help like a family, pick up the budget.

And until we could make a comparison with the men's team, I didn't have any hard figures. I tried them, I would float some of these thoughts past Rosemary Pierrel when she was the dean – Nancy Duke Lewis died just as I was – just before I got back. And I was devastated on that because I had her as a dean when I was a student. I really came back because of her.

But Rosemary Pierrel was not really into the sport program. She's a very nice person and she did what she could, but she just wasn't [committed?], so we had no money. We had absolutely no money.

When Title IX came on the scene in 1972, I think after my pushing and yelling and screaming and jumping up and down, they finally created a study committee. And interestingly enough, Rita Michaelson, whom you may know, she was on that – she may even have chaired that committee and I think they recommended a budget supplement for us so we got to name a part time basketball coach – women's basketball coach. We got money to pay her.

JL: So up until then you couldn't pay your coaches?

AG: Our coaches came from our physical education teachers. We had four physical education teachers and they did all the coaching. They drove the kids – we drove – you know we drove in our cars, we took our cars. And it reached a point where I finally decided we couldn't go by bonded carrier, we couldn't go because that we needed to – so I could make the argument of safety, but there was no budget comparisons until Title IX came down. And then you know how long it took to get the Title IX enforced. So it's been a long battle.

I think the merger – people say well, you were there for the merger, what do you think about it? And I say well, I think it was good for – and I'm looking from the point of view of sport. I think it was good from the point of view of sport that we could make comparisons, but I think the loss of women's autonomy and leadership roles in power was devastating.

And just as a woman feeling about Brown. And, you know I think there were benefits and there were gains. But I think if you look at the merger you can see the women clearly were eked out of the leadership roles. There is no question about that.

JL: Yeah.

AG: Yeah. So, you go be an assistant dean, [inaudible] the dean.

JL: Well, that's why I asked about your tenure status because some of those administrators who weren't faculty lost their jobs, right?

AG: Yep. Absolutely. Absolutely. Yep. A number of my friends lost their jobs because they just did not have any kind of protection. I had protection there was no question about that. And it served me in good stead when the Title IX case was on Beverly Ledbetter, and there was a sequence that led up to this told me that I should not go to court. And I went down to every hearing. And I told her I was attending a faculty meeting when I was going.

JL: Why did she not want you to go there?

AG: They were terrified that the plaintiff's lawyers would grab us and put us on the stand. Now I had been deposed, I had been subpoenaed by Brown and deposed, which insulted me, but I understand. You got to be sure. I can be a loose cannon.

JL: No way.

AG: Yeah, definitely. But the head football coach came down to one of the hearings and I think actually it was John Taylor who came over – I was standing, talking to him and told him that the lawyers thought that he should leave because they hadn't deposed him. They didn't know what he would say, and they didn't want to put him on the stand. They didn't want any surprises. And I understand, Brown wanted to win this case. So they did what they thought was necessary.

I think during the Title IX case, I really – that was part of my hate relationship with Brown because I didn't like the way the university treated the department. They absolutely polarized the department. They didn't talk to us, they didn't tell us anything, nobody knew what was going on. And most of the coaches were not supposed to go there unless they were subpoenaed to testify. And when they were subpoenaed to testify, they were terrified.

Jackie Court, who was the gymnastics coach, a lot of people were afraid to talk with her in the halls of Pizzitola. Because they didn't know if they should be seen talking to her. I mean it was that kind of environment. It was very, very, very oppressive.

JL: Because gymnastics was one of the programs that was supposed to be cut, right?

AG: Yep. Yep. Gymnastics and volleyball. And the environment in the department was very polarizing, very, very – I think Brown just handled it so badly.

JL: So was the polarization between the people supporting men's teams, or –? Where was the dispute?

AG: The polarization came when the people weren't sure that – between what was the university position and the coaches who were coaching women's teams. That was the polarization. There was just a very – people were terrified of their job. They were afraid if they spoke out in favor of

Title IX or in favor of the plaintiffs, they would lose their job. Now you can say that that's the perception, but it was an omnipresent perception and if it's the perception then it's something you have to pay attention to. And the university never paid any attention to it. The university wanted to win its case and it did everything it could to isolate out everybody. Now, I had tenure so I – you know I didn't have to worry. That's why I – I had to speak because I was the only one who was free to speak.

JL: Yeah.

AG: Now, when you're on the court – when you're in the stands and you've been subpoenaed, you better speak the truth. But there were coaches who were close to having nervous breakdowns because they had been subpoenaed to testify and every coach of every women's program was subpoenaed to testify.

JL: And what did you say in your deposition?

AG: I said that there was – I had been talking about the inequalities for a long, long time. Gregorian said in faculty meetings that no one – someone raised the question about the Brown Title IX case and one of the faculty members, he said well, no one told him. Well, he was lying. So I moved and he said well, maybe – I might have mentioned something. I mean I was constantly speaking out about the inequities of it, but it was – I was very disappointed in the Title IX case, I'm bombing all over the place, but in the faculty – the faculty did not take a strong position and didn't raise questions about what was going on. And I thought they would have. A few did. Howard Chudacoff did and a couple – Phil Bray did, a couple of faculty members, but most – I mean and I understand they had their own issues, their own promotions, their own publications and so forth. But I really looked to the faculty to be advocates for students. That's what I really felt.

And even the women's groups, Elizabeth Weed was a notable exception, but there wasn't a lot of support from the women's groups. But on the other hand they were worried about abortion and equal pay and sport to them was irrelevant. Well, it's part of the total scene of the treatment of women that never got carried across. So those were places where we didn't get the

support that we could have, should have, might have, and probably I could have done more for. So it was not a pleasant time to be at Brown.

JL: How long did it go on?

AG: The case was filed in '91 and settled in '97. And what was saved – let's see, when they decided to cut, and then they decided no, they're not going to cut, they're going to reduce to club status two men's teams and two women's teams. The saving in the budget I think was \$64,000 for the women and \$17,000 for the men. But the men's water polo coach was piggybacked on the men's swim coach and the Smiths had given the swim team this RV van that the water polo team got to use. The women never got to use it.

So, you know what did it cost? \$76,000, something like that and the rumor is that it cost Brown in excess of \$2 million. So I looked through every budget I could find. I've never seen that figure anywhere. I have no idea where they hid it, but I know that it probably cost about \$2 million because I've talked to the plaintiff's lawyers. So I know what was coming down from their bills and, you know we had this great big hot shot from Chicago and we had a battery of our own lawyers and so – now why the Title IX case?

JL: Why?

AG: Why?

JL: You tell me.

AG: Well, I have no proof. I think it came out of Gregorian's ego. So when Gregorian – Swearer and Gregorian were sharing the podium at opening convocation and Gregorian scolded Swearer for signing the consent decree in the Louise Lamphere case. Well, let me tell you, if he hadn't signed it Brown would have been up the ying-yang in muck. Believe me.

JL: But I'm surprised that he would publicly scold him.

AG: Well, he just said that Brown is a private institution and we should not submit ourselves to the decision of the courts. And I would agree with that except when we're breaking the law. But I think then when the Title IX case came down and there was a question of a lawsuit, Gregorian was in stone; no we don't go there. I also think that Beverly Ledbetter had had experiences at the University of Oklahoma, or wherever she came from and I think she was not happy about the courts being involved in university affairs. So I think that – I say, and I have no proof of this, that I think it was Gregorian's ego. That's my answer to it. So you can see why I'm not a popular person at Brown. I mean it made no sense at all.

I understand Brown has to be able to do what it thinks is right and in the best interest of the university and there were some high placed lawyers I guess on the Boston Circuit Court, it was rumored that they thought the case was worthy of a try. And of course the lawyer that Brown hired wanted to go to the Supreme Court so he wanted to try our case. So all the factors were pressing against and poor little volleyball and gymnastics kids, you know stuck in the muck and the mire along with the coaches.

JL: So did you know the young women who filed this suit?

AG: Oh, yeah. Sure. Oh, yeah. No, I was very active in the women's programs. I went to almost all of the games of women's teams. Certainly home games. And I would travel with a team on the bus occasionally too. I mean I'd go with swimming to one place and field hockey to another and up to Cornell and stuff like that. So I – yeah, I knew the women who filed the suits, their parents had talked to me.

When I was subpoenaed it became clear that I never gave the plaintiffs any secret information. The only thing I did was point out to Lynette Labinger – I sent her a copy of the *Brown Daily Herald* article about volleyball, something in there that I thought was interesting. But I was very, very conscious of my responsibility to the university. I was outspoken, but I did not understand why the case was being filed, but I never gave away information that would have been –

JL: Did somebody suggest you had?

AG: Well, the university subpoenaed me to find out what I had done. Yeah, I got a subpoena, I had to go down to Michaelson's office and testified what I had given, and those were questions, what have you given the plaintiff's lawyers? What have you given the plaintiffs? What have you given – I hadn't given anybody anything.

JL: This was when Michaelson was attorney general was it? Or what was he doing at this time?

AG: He was no longer attorney general, he was an attorney.

JL: Okay.

AG: Because he was – he was one of the lead attorneys – he had been attorney general –

JL: Yeah.

AG: – but he was one of the lead attorneys for the [inaudible].

JL: So he was just part of the case at this point?

AG: He was part of the Brown case, right.

JL: Yeah, working for the Brown people?

AG: Working for Brown. Yep. Now, I don't know if you've ever talked to Lynette Labinger.

JL: No.

AG: Do you know her at all?

JL: No.

AG: She's spectacular. Just in the interest of – I think the Brown Title IX case is a supreme case in equity for women. Certainly equity for women in sport – not only at Brown, but you know I was sitting in court listening to all this testimony and Harvard and Princeton and Yale and Dartmouth were pouring money into their women's programs. And we were busy selling candy bars to play our competitors. But Lynette Labinger was a remarkable lawyer. I constantly say, and I said it at several Brown occasions, that she has done more for women in sport than anybody I know.

JL: Is she in Rhode Island?

AG: Providence on Wickenden Street.

JL: Oh.

AG: L-a-b-i-n-g-e-r.

JL: I've seen the name then, yes.

AG: Yeah. She's a Smith graduate.

JL: Yeah.

AG: But we won't hold that against her. I told her. She's a brilliant woman and I just was so impressed with her. I mean I think she's a remarkable person. She's done a lot of pro bono work, but she got paid on this one. Paid well for the trial lawyers, but I'm surprised that your paths haven't crossed.

JL: Not yet. So who was supporting the plaintiffs?

AG: Well –

JL: Because it must have been an expensive outing for them.

AG: Well, Labinger and trial lawyers got paid by Brown.

JL: But who was helping pay for the fees for the young women?

AG: The young women's fees? What young women's fees?

JL: The ones who were challenging Brown over Title IX.

AG: Oh, it was just the lawyer's fees. I mean they didn't have any fees other than that. The women were still students, so they didn't have any fees.

JL: No, but who was paying the lawyers for them?

AG: Lynette Labinger and trial lawyers were the lawyers for the plaintiffs.

JL: For the young women?

AG: Yeah.

JL: Yeah. Okay.

AG: They're the –

JL: But I'm just saying, is the parents that were paying this?

AG: Well, their parents were, I'm sure giving money that would cover Xeroxing fees and so forth. But if the plaintiff's lawyers got \$2 million or a million five or something like that at the end, that's where the money came from.

JL: I see. Yeah.

AG: Because Brown had to pay the plaintiff's fees and its own lawyers' fees. It was a very expensive case. I lost my mind.

JL: Talking of Gregorian, he vacated the consent decree?

AG: Well, it was arranged that after a certain period of time, if Brown did X, Y or Z, they could petition the court to have it vacated. But I think Brown still has to report annually to Lynette Labinger. Now, I don't know all those fine points because those are points that go on between lawyers and the university, but that's my understanding, that Brown still has to report its numbers to Lynette Labinger. But it was written into the agreement that if after – I don't know whether it was ten years or what it was – after a certain period of time Brown could petition to have the Consent Decree vacated.

JL: So shall we go back to – you said you were on – what was it? The Lamphere Ad Hoc Committee. Exactly what was that?

AG: Well, first of all it was in the faculty rules that if a faculty member felt grieved, they could request the faculty policy group to form an ad hoc committee that would hold hearings as to whether or not there was substance to the grievance. So on this committee, there was Walter Feldman, Ed Bishop, Fred Bishop in the Math Department, Susanne Woods, who isn't here anymore and one other person and me. And we held hearings. We asked Jackie Mattfield, who was the provost, to testify. We asked the department chairs to testify. And as a result of this we recommended to President – the committee that I was on, recommended to the trustees – we submitted a report to the trustees saying that there was substantive issues that we thought that should be – her case should be reheard.

The corporation refused to accept the petition. But they gave it to Swearer to deal with it. And Swearer asked our committee – Howard asked our committee to monitor and to conduct the tenure review using outside resource people. And so we did that. To the best of my knowledge that's the only time that an outside group has made a faculty tenure decision. And as a result of

the recommendations that came in from these outside referees we recommended to President Swearer that Louise be granted tenure and that there be, I think a financial settlement with Claude Carey and the women in bio. medic. I can't remember these people, it's terrible.

So, you know it was a unique position for me because I am a non-academic. Although I had a faculty appointment and I was right at the core of this situation, you know here we're bringing in the president of the university, we're bringing in the provost of the university, the chairman of the Anthropology Department, the chairman of the Russian Studies Department, to testify before us and writing reports. So it was really a very different experience needless to say.

JL: Was this after the court case or before?

AG: This was – the court case had been filed. The Lamphere court case had been filed and rather than going to trial Howard decided to go forth and try to do outside settlement and that's where the consent decree came from and the recommendations towards Louise. Now you know that Louise has left a –

JL: Yeah.

AG: – a significant sum of money to the university. So I laugh all the time over that. I think that's really great. But I recommended her for an honorary degree, but I don't think the university has the balls to do that.

JL: Not quite.

AG: But you can see where I get into trouble. But anyway, so I was at that case and then just when the Title IX case came down I just thought I cannot believe that in my history at Brown there've been two significant court cases that I know of. And I've been involved in the middle in them.

JL: Yeah.

AG: So – both of them.

JL: And both of them to do with the position of women.

AG: Yep.

JL: Yeah.

AG: Yeah. Well when I became a tenured faculty member at Brown, I think there were only five tenured faculty women.

JL: Right.

AG: You know? Now one of the things – and this is – I'm going to take advantage of your presence just to say one of the things that I think has been lost is the fact that Bessie Rudd was a tenured faculty member. She may have been the first tenured faculty member, but she has not been recognized at that. And that has bothered me. As a matter of fact, what has happened to Bessie Rudd's legacy and what has happened to – you know Marjorie Smith? The –

JL: The swim –?

AG: Yeah. Well, she was the director of physical education, although they called it physical culture at Pembroke from '25 – '21 to '26 or something like that until she married Stan. And then she came back and they gave the money for the Smith Swim Center which has disappeared. You know? Now the name is put over on the old Sayles Gym, which is a part of the legacy of the women at Brown. And I don't like the way Brown is retaining the legacy of women. I'm happy about Pembroke Hall but –

JL: Is Linda Smith Buonanno, their daughter?

AG: Yeah.

JL: Oh, I didn't know that.

AG: Yep. Well, she's not the Smith, she's the Buonanno of Buonanno-Smith Hall, but no, no –

JL: No, she's not related – okay.

AG: – she's not related to Stan Smith. They had no children.

JL: Okay.

AG: But they were great supporters of women's crew, Stan supported men's swimming, both giving money to women's sports, you know but their name is lost. Bessie Rudd's name is a plaque somewhere and I don't even know where. I think maybe on Howard Terrace, but this was a woman who was so significant, a part of the history of sport for women at Pembroke then. But I would like her to be – if she were – I would like her at least to be acknowledged as one of the early, if not the first tenured faculty members at Brown because she was tenured.

JL: All right.

AG: She's a full professor. That's why I like to be in the mailing. I insist that they do Professor Emerita. I don't take Professor Emeritus, I write them back and tell them I'm not male. I have female characteristics and that means that it ends with an a. It is not Alumni Hall. I don't know why we have to fight these battles. You think it's gone, it's gone.

JL: Now, were you always a feisty feminist fighter? Or did this develop?

AG: I don't think so. Well, I wanted to play – I don't think lots of people have heard this story, but I wanted to play – when I was growing up I was a great Boston Red Sox baseball fan. I wanted to play with Ted Williams. Now he was an outfielder, and I rearranged the outfield in my name. And my dad told me once that I could never play with the Red Sox. I mean he used

to take me out and play catch and so forth and I found I couldn't play, not because I didn't have the ability, which I'm sure I didn't, but because I'm female. So that was the beginning I think of when I got really irritated. And it's just as we went along I saw the injustices and I don't have a lot of patience so I speak out if I see something I don't think is fair, you know. You don't have to agree with me, but I want to be heard.

JL: Right.

AG: One of my favorite stories is when Andy Geiger was the athletic director and he called together the joint. It was the first time that I had been invited to the Athletic Advisory Committee, which are alums. And the chairman – we were sitting out at Marvel Gym and the chairman was sitting there smoking a cigar and he started the meeting by saying well, gentlemen. And I looked around and I thought I'm the only female here. So the next time I came back to the meeting, the next month at the meeting I had the most flowery—which is not me—portfolio and he well, gentlemen – I shoved out into the middle of the table. I never had to deal with that again. I didn't stop getting invited until Dave Roach became the athletic director, then he didn't like me. I was too confrontational for him. So I didn't get included in this big power structure after all that. But that's fine.

JL: Did you have some part in the Sports Foundation?

AG: Well, I was there for the initial meetings. But it was a struggle to get it going. But that really came out of the alums, you know it came out of Joukowsky and Dick Carolan and people like that who wanted the Sports Foundation. And once it became clear that it wouldn't survive with the Development Office – although that battle I think is still going on. The Sports Foundation is suspect of the Development Office, but they're trying to marry them together a little bit more. But I mean I wasn't intimately involved in that other than to ask them for money. So – anyway, that's it.

JL: So you've got the Title IX fight done and settled. Did things change after that for –

AG: For women?

JL: – women?

AG: Well, we still don't – have not had a woman athletic director, so was there change? Yes. As a result of Title IX there was more money given, there was more sensitivity to the women's programs. There was – yeah, you know I think things have changed. I think that as the money becomes more scarce that we probably are drifting back. The women's philosophy is lost and what is now – the battle that I see now taking place is that the emphasis is on the varsity programs and which varsities. You know my feeling was that if you had 15 kids in your family, they all got some of the pie. But now the feeling is you're going to have five important ones and the rest are irrelevant. And that I think is such a tragedy. And we'll see that battle going on I'm sure.

JL: So you're saying the emphasis is too much on the varsity teams?

AG: Well, the emphasis is too much on the varsity teams and which varsity teams. Do you use the one – for example, they say we can't keep 15 women's varsity teams and 15 men's. I say why not. You know cut out some of the other expenses, get rid of Sports Information and stuff like that, but that doesn't go over very well with the school.

JL: What is Sports Information?

AG: Yeah, right. What is it?

JL: What is it?

AG: Well, it's the publicity arm of the Athletic Department, you know. They write these little media guides and they trot around and, you know – but what we see is now that some of the sports are becoming more important.

Well, it used to be oh, well, we'll concentrate on the sports that make money. No sport at Brown makes money. Sport as a business is not at all a part of success at Brown. If it were, then all the people involved in the program should be fired because they're not making money; they're costing a lot of money.

So then what sports do you decide to split? Those at the medium [inaudible]? I mean well, maybe the kids want them. You know maybe there's a history of women's ice hockey. Maybe there's a history of gymnastics for women at Brown. What sports do you keep? I say that we all eat hamburger instead of some having steak and some having hamburger. My nephew from California said, Auntie Arlene, I like hamburger. I said yeah, but the difference is that you ask for it.

But anyway, that's what I see happening. You know sport is changing and I'm anachronistic in terms of my philosophy because I believe in sport in education and I don't believe in charging people to use the pool. We don't charge people to use the library. It's part of our educational process and I think that they – you know a healthy constituency – when I first started offering classes in – instructional classes for faculty, I had some kids come and say they don't pay tuition. And I said no, but they really subsidized your tuition a lot with their salaries. So, you know we're part of the community.

So, that's just a philosophy, sport in education, sport as a business, which philosophy do you – sport as entertainment, you know. There are some who say that sport as entertainment and on the Brown campus it's just non-existent. But if you get 200 people at a football game, is that great? So you have to decide what your philosophy is.

These are hard times, I mean obviously the money is very tight and how are you going to spend it. The instructional program and the intramural programs I think are still going. And mostly the students will not let the university throw them aside. They'll bounce around if they don't have access to the weight machines or the facilities – or the pool, as well they should.

JL: So do Brown coaches actively recruit –

AG: Oh, yes.

JL: – people for their team?

AG: Oh, my, yes. We spend a lot of money on recruiting. If you ask the teams to talk about their recruiting business, their recruiting expenses – we spend a lot of money. Now, football and men-to-men's basketball, men-to-men's hockey, men-to-men's soccer spend more than squash for example. But yes, the coaches actively recruit.

And the coaches can tell the admissions office who are the good athletes. It doesn't mean they make the decisions because they don't. There are some people who say well, a good football player will get in even though his GPA is not as good as the number one kid in our school. Everybody has somebody or something going for them at Brown. But I think athletics is a part of the admission criteria.

The president doesn't like to go to an alumni meeting if the teams have lost, you know. I said to Howard, do they give more money? He'd say no, but it's a lot more fun to go when the team has won. That's what he used to tell me. Okay, Coach. So yeah, the coaches recruit vigorously. Brown spends a lot of money on recruiting of athletes.

JL: And do they give athletic scholarships?

AG: No. All financial aid is based on need. There is no question about that whatsoever. You know my niece lives in California and she said – now she went to Cornell so she knows too – she said my next-door neighbor told me their son just got an athletic scholarship to Brown. I said there's no such thing. Parents will say that. They may qualify on the basis of need.

And the good part about the Ivies is if you get financial aid and you're an athlete, you do not have to continue on the team. Whereas if you're going to the University of Rhode Island and you get an athletic scholarship, if you're not on the team you lose that money. So I believe in the Ivy philosophy.

JL: So that's true of all the Ivies, is it?

AG: Uh-huh.

JL: Did the Ivy label come in while you were a student?

AG: The Ivy label came in in 1952 or 1954.

JL: Okay.

AG: That was formed only for athletics.

JL: Right.

AG: That was the whole purpose of it was the athletics. Now, in 1974, I think it was – we had the merger in '71, we had Title IX in '72, and '74 the Ivy schools rotated their chairmanship based on alphabet. So when it came around to Brown being the president's school, the meeting in '74 was at Brown and I told Andy Geiger that I was going to invite the women from the Ivies. And we initiated – formalized Ivy competition among the women. Now, what is interesting is that the men met at Newport and the women met at the Brown campus. But the men invited us to lunch. I always use that as my –

JL: Why? Why did they meet separately?

AG: Well, ultimately they came together. Well, the women didn't want to give up the leadership to the men either.

JL: All right.

AG: You know the women said if you have an athletic director and you're an assistant or associate athletic director, you know that the more you're in the meeting together, the less power you're going to have. I mean the handwriting was clearly on the wall and we didn't want to give up our power. But we had to ultimately. But in any case – so that's when the Ivy for women started, in '74. And Brown played an instrumental part in that.

JL: So is that an actual label of an organization or –?

AG: The Ivy Group?

JL: The women's Ivy Group?

AG: No. It's all the Ivy Group. It's the men's program and the women's programs.

JL: Yeah.

AG: Yeah. And they've paralleled – coming out of the Ivy office they've paralleled a lot of the recognitions and awards finally. But until we have at Brown a women's athletic – an athletic director who's a woman I don't think we'll have equality for women in sport. And if we don't, I'll come back from my grave and haunt them until we do.

JL: You've been doing it from Warwick anyway.

AG: Well, no, I've pretty much tuned out.

JL: All right. What do you think is perhaps your most important contribution or legacy or whatever you want to call it, to Brown?

AG: Stirring the pot. Raising the questions. You know my mode of operation is not necessarily the one that accomplishes the most because it can be very antagonizing, it can be very threatening, it can be very annoying. You know they used to say to me there you go again. And my answer was if you go, I don't have to go. And it's now time for others to go. I mean I look forward to Carolyn Norris and Digit Murphy –

JL: Who are these women?

AG: Well, these are coaches. Carolyn Norris, she's an associate athletic director now, but she was our field hockey, lacrosse coach and Digit Murphy who is the women's ice hockey coach to, you know leading the battle. It's their turn now.

JL: But it's still a battle.

AG: It's still a battle. It will always be a battle because women will never be totally accepted. What gets the attention in sport is what fills the arena. Football they think fills the arena. Men's basketball fills the arena because television sells it.

Television was selling the women's, and the AIAW, which was the women's – NCAA is the National Collegiate Athletic Association, that was the men's. The women went to the NCAA and said take our women's programs – championships, and they said no way. So we formed our own group. We formed the AIAW and for about eight, ten years it offered women's championships, it was getting television and so forth. And there was a difference.

The women originally said that there should be no on the road recruiting. Well, that got blasted down because the men were going on the road recruiting and the women were not, and so the women students saying well, we want athletic scholarships, you know. If the men get athletic scholarships, we should have athletic scholarships.

Well that has sort of become what I see the problem with sport is that if the women want the men have, and it doesn't mean that what the men have is necessarily the best for sport. But, you know I'm tilting at windmills with that one. So I was sorry when the AIAW went down the tube, then it's fine the year there were three Ivy schools.

There was the chairman, the Head of Tournaments and then I was Ethics and Eligibility Chair, so we had three of the ten offices that – despite the fact we're so far out of touch with the other Division I schools, but the president wouldn't support it. You can't have them under two different rules. And I said fine. I said put the men under the AIAW and he laughed and he said come on, Coach. You know how that is. He said "I'd be ridden out of town." I said well, "I'd go with you."

But anyway – so I think that I've had a great career at Brown. It's over. I enjoyed not all of it, it's kind of a love-hate relationship. When Brown told me I couldn't bring in Eleanor Smeal to talk to my class, they weren't going to give me a classroom. Bob Reichley was the head

of everything and I wasn't getting a classroom. I threatened to go to Sheila Blumstein, the dean of the college and file a grievance because they were interfering with academic freedom. Now, that was the mindset of elements of Brown.

JL: So this isn't all that long ago, then?

AG: No. No. It was starting, you know right after the Title IX and they were afraid that she would come in and that she would get publicity and then the Title IX –

JL: – [inaudible] National Organization for Women those days?

AG: Yeah. Yeah. They were concerned that the Title IX case would come up and it would be bad publicity for Brown, you know. Just like when we had the prostitutes, do you remember that story?

JL: Uh-huh.

AG: Well, it's that same mentality of – you know you think of Brown as a great liberal institution, but I'll tell you, they don't fight fairly all the time.

JL: So did you get –

AG: Of course.

JL: – Eleanor Smeal to come?

AG: Of course.

JL: Because Sheila Blumstein overruled Bob Reichley?

AG: Well, I just said that I would go to her. I didn't even have to do that. But what was really interesting was that he then put the George Foreman lecture at the same time that Eleanor Smeal was lecturing. And George Foreman – do you know who George Foreman is?

JL: A boxer?

AG: He's a great big – yeah, wrestler – big – he filled Sayles Hall. We had about 45 people. So I lost. But I got her.

JL: Right.

AG: But I wanted her to come in and talk to my class.

JL: Yep.

AG: That's when I was doing gender issues in sport and trying to talk about how the women's groups really should pay attention to equity for women in sport too because although it doesn't seem to be as important and it isn't as fair as equal pay or abortion, it's a question of equity. Anyway.

JL: That question of equity. That's a good title for this. Is there anything else that I need to know?

AG: No. No, I gave you about 38 years in an hour-and-a-half. You don't know how dangerous that is for you.

JL: Well, I don't know. It's very interesting.

AG: Well, it's a different aspect of the university I'm sure.

JL: Yeah. Actually one last thing pops into my head, which is you've become very involved in the Pembroke Center?

AG: I'm involved in it. I keep trying to get off the committee because I don't feel I contribute because I don't go to the Memorial Day Weekend because that's a family weekend for us. But, yes, I'm involved in the Pembroke Center.

JL: You're one of the Associates?

AG: Uh-huh.

JL: You're on the Associates Board and have been for quite a while I think?

AG: Probably six years, something like that. Six or seven years. Well that, you know that fits right in with my interests obviously. And I guess the other thing though that I want to just say to you is that while I really tried to be a strong advocate for women, I've never been against the men in sport. I mean I have fought for men's programs too. But I don't think people trust me that I would do that. But I just believe that the issue is fairness and that's what I commit myself to is fairness. So some things are more fair than others.

JL: Well, yeah.

AG: So, anyway.

JL: Anyway, I think if you're tired, I'm full of information now –

AG: I'm sure you are.

JL: – and I will switch this machine off after thanking you very much for this.

AG: You're welcome. It's nice to talk with you.

[break — Arlene Gorton continued]

AG: — had invited me to attend her dance staff meeting, I was a representative of Athletics. And I think after my — happened, and she and I became very good friends. She actually was a good golfer, and she and I would go out at 7 o'clock in the morning, dressed like L.L. Bean, off to the golf course, and just, she was a very remarkable woman. She obviously was a power in the life of Howard Swearer. He was deeply committed to her, and her cancer was devastating to us, but I think that her legacy to Brown should not be lost. I don't know whether you're working on that, or on anything with it, but she was a remarkable human being. She brought a sense of human dignity and personal-ness to Brown and she believed deeply in the undergraduate curriculum and to me that's — she was the — in my experience at Brown, she was the major factor in what I think our university should be. Deeply committed to the undergraduate education with a strong set of personal ethics and just always trying to — I never heard her say a bad word about anybody. And I think she had a lot of reason to, some of the obnoxious faculty members she had yelling at her, but when she died, it was, I remember she was at Mass Gen with cancer and I would go up there and she knew she was going to die, they were going to shut off the machine, and she said, "You know, they said I should plan my memorial service, but suppose I plan my memorial service and nobody comes." [laughter] I said, "Hey, don't worry about people not coming, they'll be standing in the hallways." She was a very remarkable person, so somewhere in the historical perspective, I hope you come and find it.

JL: I'll probably talk to Becky Moore at least—

AG: — because she was her protégée, yep.

JL: And then see where that goes from there.

AG: Becky caught up with Harriet when they moved to the, the, the, the Sheridan Center, but, and I know that Sheila and Harriet weren't always the best of friends and were competitors

sometimes but Harriet was a very important influence at Brown. She brought a kind of strength and supreme dignity.

JL: Who else should I talk to, would you suggest?

AG: About Harriet?

JL: Or about anything.

AG: [laughter] I don't know.

JL: Or about Harriet.

AG: I don't even know anyone around who still knows her, or who worked with her. Well, Becky could probably point to...

JL: Okay, I should try and switch this thing off again.

--END--