

Interview with Martha Naomi Gardner, class of 1988

Interviewer: Karen Lamoree

Interview date: August 16, 1988

Transcribed by: Rebecca Forman, class of 2016 and Abigail Ettelman, MA 2014

Karen Lamoree: [00:00:00] 88. Why don't we start out, Martha, talking about how the speakout came about.

Martha Gardner: It was in the spring of nineteen eighty...eighty-five, I think, my sophomore year. And it began because a lot of, it connected to a lot of fraternity incidents during Spring Weekend. There were three... I think it was three third-world women, specifically I talked to Yuko Uchikawa, that, right after—it was the Sunday of Spring Weekend and she was upset because of... There were two specific incidents that were the most major. One was um with Theta Delta Chi. They had this – God, I should've thought about this one more clearly before I came. They had this um event in which they were supposedly raising money for a charity. I think it might have even been Sojourner House or something like that. But the way they were doing it was by, they had rating cards holding up, they were actually scoring cards but when women walked by they were rating them. And that happened to one of the women, I can't remember specifically what happened, but it happened to one of the women in a negative, very harassing way. Along with that, there were t-shirts that your, um, with the toad on it, the toad is from...Do you know the fraternity?

Lamoree: Deke, is it Deke or Delta?

Gardner: It isn't Delta. Maybe Kappa, Kappa, Kappa... No, that's the sorority. I like the sorority. That's not what I'm thinking of. Oh, I can't remember the name of the fraternity.

Lamoree: Well, we can find out easy enough.

Gardner: It didn't get kicked off. It's the one that didn't get kicked off. But um they had this toad in front and the big tradition supposedly is that every time the toad gets painted, a virgin is no longer a virgin because of happenings inside the fraternity house. And um ironically even the toad itself was stolen from a playground in the Providence area. And they had it outside their fraternity house. So anyway, the t-shirts were a picture of the toad with this woman in a bikini holding a paintbrush with the paint can next to her, and it says under her—under the toad, "Another one for the toad." So those t-shirts obviously were pretty upsetting and brought on a lot of upset on people. Other incidents had happened that weekend too. There was just a lot of harassment—pretty blatant harassment—and every time people walked through Wriston, the fraternity area, lots of stuff was happening. People were upset. What happened connected to that was these women, three Third World women, um, Laura Hankins, Val Hudson, Yuko Uchikawa, were upset about this and they brought their feelings to a meeting Sunday night of this week, of the week right after Spring Weekend. It was like the Sunday of Spring weekend...to a women's, a women's meeting. This meeting had been organized and had

been ongoing weekly of people from different kind of left activist groups at Brown. Women who were involved in them and felt sexism within them with people who had—I was one of the people who done the CIA arrest. That was part of it, you know, just the consensus process during the CIA arrest, political stuff had um caused people to be upset and feel like if the women met and talked, it would help them figure out what happens within mixed gender protest that's upsetting for women and oppressive for women. So we'd been meeting already, so these three women brought their concerns to that Sunday night meeting and a lot of people started talking about how, yeah, there was a lot of harassment at Brown right now and it was upsetting. And um ... and also it, and we were talking about how yes, it was definitely fraternities who brought it together and centralized it, but it wasn't just fraternities, in general, harassment is pervasive societal specifically Brown-wide, we wouldn't want to just say it was fraternities, we would want to focus on what fraternities had been doing. Um, so people were upset enough to immediately say, "Let's do something, let's have some kind of action about this." And I can't remember if it was that night or the next night, that the actual time and actual exactly what would happen got scheduled, but people immediately started tossing around ideas of how what people really needed to hear was personal accounts of what people had experienced—what women had experienced and what had upset them in a personal way instead of just general statistical way. Feeling like that would get rid of some of the defensiveness and would give women some, an outlet for their upset about these incidents. So basically I guess, how many people were at that meeting? I guess it was like between twenty and thirty, it wasn't that big a meeting. We were up in um Faunce House in, I think, it was like the [Sisbes?] office or something like that, the second floor of Faunce, one of the student offices. And people said, "Well let's have a meeting tomorrow night, and um, people, keep this quiet, let's try—maybe see if we can make this a confidential, quiet surprise kind of action. We don't want to tell everyone about it. [00:05:00] But tell your friends, tell your women friends who might be interested in doing something about it." The next meeting was the next night, and there were loads of people there, I can't remember how many exactly at that meeting, but maybe like seventy, there were a lot right away. And that meeting, I think we planned the um, we planned to do the speakout which was scheduled for that Thursday, immediately that Thursday, and decided we organized it to be—all of this was done by consensus—and it was a very ad hoc, bringing a lot of women together kind of thing. It brought together Third World women, lesbians, white women, lots of different people who didn't necessarily always work together, feel that great about working together, it had a lot to do with just a moment of people realizing that they were upset and they could bring those concerns together. And not that they were all the same, but that, um, but they'd had some experiences that um connected, you know. So, that was an exciting part of it, sorry, that's digression, so back to that Monday night meeting, we decided on the, um, to do it Thursday, and that we would have...we were, you know, lots of decisions, you know, where would it be, were we going to keep it under wraps until it happened, um, would only women be able to be involved in it, you know, how much would we want to organize, how much do we want to be spontaneous, all those questions were coming up and being dealt with in the consensus process. It took days and days to organize all of that, but the first things, thing we organized was that it would be Thursday and it would be at noon and it would be at Wriston. And that we would have some kind of procession

around campus, silent procession leading to Wriston. So there were lots of preparations to do, what was legal, what could, how could, how could we have a speaker on Wriston in an appropriate, um, Brown, in an appropriate Brown way without breaking Brown code. Because we didn't want to break Brown code, we decided it was, there were good times to do that, but this one we wanted to do as a surprise but legally.

Lamoree: So when you say these decisions were made was it this group of seventy people that were making decisions all together?

Gardner: What happened was at that meeting, yeah. All the decisions had to be made by the whole group, we work in a-

Lamoree: So did you vote or?

Gardner: No, it was consensus.

Lamoree: You just realized what the majority opinion was?

Gardner: Not even just realizing, it was...we would come up with ok, this looks like what we might want to do, um, I have a good example from the last meeting of this, but something like this looks like something we want—what we want to do, looks like we probably want to have it on Wriston, um, after people had suggested that and we'd been talking about it for a while and then it would be “does anyone object to having it at Wriston,” and if anyone objected then that wasn't the decision yet. We had to talk it through and figure if that was ok until it was okay with everyone, or at least okay enough for no one to object then you could move forward.

Lamoree: Did people object to having it on Wriston?

Gardner: I don't remember people objecting. I was just trying to pull some like consensus idea out of the way. A decision that people object...we spent so much time on this, and the last meeting before Thursday...the Wednesday night meeting...there were a hundred women at that meeting and I was facilitating which means not leading the meeting but guiding, like calling on people, making sure...

Lamoree: A moderator.

Gardner: Yeah, basically a moderator. Um, there—and that meeting went on until three in the morning or something, it was really just because we had to get everything done, it was the next day. But we spent up to an hour and a half, I think even possibly even longer, on a decision as to whether or not we would stand on the grass in Wriston. Because what was going on is that Wriston trashes their grass in the middle of their green every Spring Weekend, you know, it just gets torn up. And then for Commencement, of course, they want to have nice grass on this part of campus so it was, at this point, it had been refertilized, reseeded, and it was, there was a little yellow, you know, rope around, you know a little fence, around the whole green, part of it. The issue was, ok, we're going

to be speaking from one of the porches of Wayland – I always forget which is west or east, the one, the one further away from the green, that one, south or north.

Lamoree: That would be south.

Gardner: That porch. And to have a whole group of people together that would be, you know, the issue was they would be separated if we weren't standing on the grass, you know, we'd have to go kind of in a U around the grass. And, um, but peop—so we were like “well then we should stand on the grass,” people were like—almost everyone in the room, I would say like ninety people in the room were like, “Let's just stand on the grass, what's the big deal, it's not a huge issue, you know, people walk on the grass sometimes even when there's a rope around it,” you know, whatever. But then other people, I think I might've been one of them, but I wasn't speaking that much because I was moderating, but a couple people were like, “But that's breaking regulation and we're trying to do this clean, you know, we're trying to make it completely not something that people can question on those kinds of grounds, um that we're hurting Wriston by doing this, you know, in a physical way.” So it was just like—and there were a lot of frustration and people were like, [00:10:00] “Why are we spending an hour and a half deciding this, why is it taking - ?” You know, the whole process took an incredibly long time, but I think in the end... I can't remember what I was going to say...

Lamoree: You were talking about it took a long time...

Gardner: Okay, okay so it was like almost completely everyone was like “Let's just stand on the grass.” But there were like two people that just didn't want to stand on the grass. They were like, “Come on, we can't stand on the grass, it breaks the rules.” And in the end, we went the other way and people were finally like wanted to make, part, I mean, consensus, I mean, it isn't like ideal, consensus isn't always “everyone feels wonderful about this decision,” sometimes it's “I feel okay enough about the decision and I want to move on enough to not want to deal with this anymore.” And that was part of it. But people finally agreed, “Okay we won't stand on the grass. We'll stand on a U around it and hopefully there will be a lot of people and, you know, try to work so a lot of people are all together. But we won't stand on the grass.” I mean, so we decided that... But but going back to how the decisions were made in general, along with using consensus we also picked – not really a steering committee, but like eight people to come up to work separately from the whole group. Because it's just not efficient to always work in a group, and come up with proposals of the demands we would ask for that day.

Lamoree: Who were the eight people?

Gardner: Um, I can't remember exactly who they all were. We were making sure we had Third World representation, lesbian representation, etc. And I know... Ellen Neuger was on it, Rinku Sen, I think Laura Higgins, Jennifer Resnick, I can't remember if Juliet Brodie was—I think Juliet Brodie was. I can't remember.

Lamoree: So did the group as a whole choose these eight women?

Gardner: It wasn't, um, some of it was just who would volunteer, some of it was just making sure we had representation of the groups that might have some concerns and stuff. Um, I was going to be on it but then I wasn't because at the—during all of this I had just gotten over – I wasn't really even over mono yet, and I was exhausted and I was really involved in the process. But you know, it was just like—people were just like, “Martha, you are always campus lesbian, let's just have someone else do this one.” [Laughter] You know that was basically how it worked, so Ellen and Jennifer then said that they would. So I wasn't on the steering committee, but they came up with the demands, which I think there were there were demands to the Brown University administration, there were demands to the fraternities, and then there was just an appeal. Not even an appeal, but just a comment kind of to the Brown women in general. Um, the... so they came up with those and after they'd come up with them generally, we went over them in the group. It wasn't like they decided on them, they just came up with what they thought was important and then the group decided on whether or not they agreed with them and they decided um... and they tried to figure out whether or not that it included everything that they wanted. So that, that took a long time, you know. And I have a list of the demands.

Lamoree: Oh, good. So the demands, were they...part of it originally, like at the first meeting, is that how people were talking about it?

Gardner: People were upset and they wanted things to change. They didn't really materialize into demands maybe until the next meeting. We were like, “Well, what do we specifically want to change? What can institutionally change? What is just adding to the mess?” Stuff like that. It was things like having the escort service go longer, having campus lighting be better, having, you know, lots of coverage, things like that. Having the...there wasn't at that point a security map out, because they had taken it down. I think it was because it was like unsightly for the public to see like where assault happened, it needs to be marked on this map, and now they'd taken it down because bad tours went through, bad PR. Yeah.

Lamoree: Right, so freshman and their parents -

Gardner: So it was, get that back up and it was put in—put in a paper, uh, police reports, one of the newspapers, stuff like that. That was for the university. For the fraternities, it was to kick Theta Delta Chi and Phi Delt—Pi Phi, it's Wriston, that one, both of them off campus for different incidents that they'd done. It was to get rid of the toad. Things like that. To get rid of the t-shirts. So we came up with these lists of these demands, and one of them was to get the sexual orientation clause added to the non-discrimination policy.

Lamoree: Right.

Gardner: Different things to specific concerns saying that they all fell under this, you know, we can't separate these concerns. So they came up with those, and then we haggled over them in a big process. Another part of it was that we had kind of

peacekeepers...assigned. [00:15:00] And we went through a non-violence training the morning of, of the Thursday, who kind of, kind of stayed around the periphery of the crowd during the speakout making sure, you know, dispelling a sense of any like possible violence between fraternity members and people in the group. You know, just stuff like that, making sure everything was okay. We all had pads to write down if any harassment happened at those, you know, because it was perfect opportunity to...

Lamoree: So who taught these women the non-violent techniques?

Gardner: There were a couple women from the group who'd gone through non-violence training before and they would talk through, you know, what they knew about non-violence training.

Lamoree: Mmm hmm.

Gardner: We didn't get anyone outside to come in, but I mean, let's see, Donna Rae Warren was one of them, she was really involved in all of this, um...

Lamoree: So you met Sunday night, Monday night...

Gardner: I think we met every night.

Lamoree: Tuesday, Wednesday.

Gardner: Yeah, I think we met every night. And the last meeting went until like three in the morning and then we got up bright and early to go to the non-violence training if we were doing that and there were like twenty or thirty women who were trained—do the non-violence training. And we all had, we wore white armbands and in general people were wearing kind of a rose, a red rose because [inaudible].

Lamoree: Okay so the morning, so why don't you describe, you went to the non-violence training and then what happened?

Gardner: Oh, well one thing I forgot to mention is it's been confidential through the whole thing. You know, supposedly, you're only talking to the people who you know will be supportive and to get them there where the place we were going to have it on Wriston, it's also Wriston Green also has the Ratty, the main cafeteria at Brown, at the bottom of it. And we were going to be doing it at noon and so it was like prime traffic area so we knew that a lot of people would just see it. But um it was just tell your friends who you trust who you think would want to come and be involved in this procession to the main green, we were going all around campus, walking all around campus. We decided to keep that silent, the whole march silent. There were a lot of decisions to make, but we decided to keep that silent and I think walk in twos or fours, I can't remember, and it started at Pembroke, we met outside Alumnae Hall. And only women could be involved in that and that was a problem to a certain extent because of course people had male friends too and some male friends, men got told, and...so we had them, the men,

stand on the green and hold up their, I think, hands in solidarity as we walked through the green and then... I can't remember. No, they didn't tag onto the march but they then went over to Wriston and were there when we got there.

Lamoree: So you started at Alumnae Hall and then did you walk down the middle of the street or on the sidewalk or?

Gardner: We organized...first we organized, everyone got armbands on everyone and we started walking, it was silent and um it was kind of like a snake. We had a path specifically chosen, but it was kind of snaking all around campus. Through the green, then down to Thayer again kind of past where [inaudible]. And around, through the lower Wriston part, and back up to the top of Wriston, past the Ratty, at the top of Wriston. And then it was break the silence, breaking the silence was kind of the theme of the whole thing. And everyone kind of yelled, or made whatever noise they wanted to to break the, scream, yell, to break the silence, all these voices yelling. And when we first got there...the other thing about this day was it was a horrible day. The weather was completely gross, it was drizzling, it was freezing cold. It was like one of the worst days, you know, and we were all like, "This is going to ruin it." You know, "What's going to happen with this weather, you know, it's outside." And we got there and the PA system wasn't working. I know Kathy Hathaway was helping with the PA system. And that and we had decided on a couple like administrative speaker types—Barbara Tannenbaum spoke, Toby Simon spoke. We decided that Heather Findlay, who was Political Taskforce Organ...Coordinator a couple years ago at the Women's Center. Either this was the year she was, or the year before she was... No, this was the year that she was, and she was going to be the MC and moderator of the thing, and then beyond that, like, we had like between ten and twenty people chosen that said they would definitely speak out. The whole idea was, I mean, I guess I haven't even talked about this yet, but the whole idea was that we would just have people getting up and telling an incident in their life, you know basically and I was one of the first ten or twenty. We didn't know if the ball would get rolling or not, but the idea was these like administrative type people would talk, and then Heather would say—we would talk about how we wanted anyone, any women who wanted to share an incident of harassment and how this was affecting her to please come up, and then to have like fifteen people who said that they would talk [00:20:00] talk. And then from there like we would be recording a list, people kind of coming next to the stage saying that they would talk, and Heather was making sure that they would, that they could go. Yeah, that was the idea.

Lamoree: So...you...how many people showed up?

Gardner: For the walk?

Lamoree: Mmm hmm.

Gardner: Maybe a hundred. You know, it was quite a few, considering it was completely word of mouth. I think it might've even been more than a hundred. It's so funny, it feels far away now, which is...maybe two hundred.

Lamoree: So you go into Wriston, from –

Gardner: So we're walking into Wriston, from lower Wriston basically. From that little gate across from the Beef N Bun into Wriston, then up through lower Wriston, up past the Ratty, up to the top of Wriston, near where [inaudible].

Lamoree: And then you, you, a bunch of you screamed?

Gardner: Yeah.

Lamoree: And...

Gardner: And then it was, it was Heather was introducing the day and Barbara Tannenbaum and Toby Simon were speaking. At that point we didn't have them up on the porch. It was just down like in the front of Wriston. We didn't have them on the porch and the microphone wasn't working [Laughter] so it was like nothing was going to work, you know, we can't hear anyone speak, this is just going to fall apart. And, you know, peacekeepers were around, and some of the fraternity guys were like, "What is going on?" You know, it wasn't like well received right away. And uh, God, I think it was like...I think they stood on chairs, Toby and Barbara stood on chairs, and Toby was holding her son, Ben, Benjamin, her youngest son, talking about how she want, how raising a son is hard and how, you know, just talking about how male, men get raised and stuff like that and talking about that in terms of [inaudible].

Lamoree: Mhm.

Gardner: Barbara Tannenbaum talking about how it was so important to her that a day like this was happening when she felt like she was always trying to deal with rape and harassment on campus, and people don't always listen or seem to notice and it's so important that women are getting together and showing how much this has to do with and how big this issue was even going on at the time. It was very important to them and they spoke first. And then, I can't remember exactly when the microphone started working, but pretty soon the microphone started working [Laughter]. And um we had someone holding an umbrella for the speaker a lot of the time, people switching off holding the umbrella for the speaker. Um, I wish I could remember who spoke first, but I was one of the first, maybe one of the twelve speakers. And I talked about harassment I had gotten written on my door that year. I had a "Closets Are for Clothes" sign on my dorm room door, I was living in West Quad, I was a Woman Peer Counselor, and someone had written on it, "Rot in hell, you dyke and I'm going come back and rape you because I know you need to be satisfied, you smegma queen."

Lamoree: Wow.

Gardner: Yeah, that's the wording. I've said it enough times to remember it [Laughter]. And so that had been...that was a little while ago but, and it had happened during spring

break, and um I talked about how that was rather upsetting. And I remember there were some fraternity guys that when I was talking about lesbian/gay stuff kind of off to the right who like jeered, you know, which was really, you know, that but all those women there, it was like this complete juxtaposition right in front of me. So that went on. But as the first twelve people spoke, people started piling up, and uh... we expected it to last for an hour and it lasted until five or five-thirty. People just.... And I stayed the whole time, I didn't necessarily—I didn't plan to spend my afternoon there, and it was just this feeling of people realizing how huge this all was, you know, and Third World women talking about their experiences and how they were different, but related, and how sometimes they got delegitimized in the community because people were always, because racism needs to dealt with and so sometimes the sexism stuff kind of fell behind. And how they—I mean, I want to make sure, you know, it wasn't like everyone was like, "We're all women, we're all the same," but it was like we've all experienced some violence and harassment in this society.

Lamoree: There's a commonality in and amongst all of our diversity.

Gardner: Yeah, yeah. So it just, it just went on and on. People were crying. People were realizing they had been raped and they hadn't ever realized that they had been raped. There were sorority women or women that were Wriston women realizing, "Hey, what you're saying relates to what happens to me," and you know, on and on and on for five hours.

Lamoree: And was – were the people who were there for that five hours, were they just the original one hundred women?

Gardner: Mm-mm. A lot of people joined in. There were some, there were supportive men. We kind of originally kind of planned to have the women at front and then the men wherever in the back, you know, [00:25:00] but it kind of got mixed and um which is fine, I guess. But we still tried to like keep the peace, and quell, dispelling any incidents from happening. We'd also like gotten permission to speak. We'd quietly gotten permission, not really publicizing that we were having a speaking thing, but we got permission to be on the green. Um, I wish I could be more specific. There, um, after the five hour...no one really wanted it to end, and it was getting late, people were tired. We ended up having a cool off break down session afterwards in Faunce, Flora Keshgagian, the women's chaplain, and Barbara Tannenbaum, I think, yeah, were there running that. So like I would say thirty women went to that after the speakout, and more people disclosing things that they hadn't really thought about before. A couple women I think, yeah, a couple women realizing that they'd been raped. It was quite serious stuff, talking about that. Lots of different like specific stories that really keyed into other people's experiences, but I can't, God... I'm not going to remember the specifics. And it was just something that since then people who weren't there, it's really hard to explain to them how important it was. It was something unequal I think in my experiences here.

Lamoree: So, there were more people than the original hundred women? And so they heard about it because...

Gardner: Well, some of them were walking by. I mean, it was, we were –

Lamoree: At lunchtime, right.

Gardner: Yeah, it was lunchtime. It was also a microphone, so if you were in the area, you could hear what was going on. Some people had heard about it, hadn't been able to come to it at noon, you know, were coming to check what was going on. Some people had classes and did leave. It wasn't like everyone stayed for the five hours. Although I think it was either reading period or near reading period. Um...so, you know, or so some people would leave and they would tell their friends and their friends would come. So there were people that didn't know about it or didn't realize what a big deal it was when it happened and really regretted missing it. I remember Mary Renda, who was Staff Coordinator at Sarah Doyle Women's Center that year, she um she didn't go and she was just like, "You guys didn't tell me about it." You know, it was just like, well it was quiet, you know, you know.

Lamoree: Did the media show up?

Gardner: Um, some did. I th...I can't remember who put...I guess we must have called the media. I guess it was in the *Providence Journal*. I don't think...It wasn't really televised. Talk about it on TV didn't really happen till later. It happened when fraternity stuff, later this spring, it just, fraternity stuff exploded, when fraternities actually did get kicked off, and the fraternities ended up raising this huge protest about that, hanging an effigy. Have you heard about this?

Lamoree: I have, but.

Gardner: Yeah, okay, sorry. That hanging an effigy outside. I think it was out of a, of a model by the neck who was Heather Findlay, basically supposed to be, you know, an effigy, because, basically blaming the women for getting kicked off.

Lamoree: So the speakout happens, and then you have the cooling off...

Gardner: Well, the cooling off, it wasn't...oh... and the cooling, yeah.

Lamoree: And then, after that, obviously, you have this list of demands that you were presenting. Were they formally presented to anyone?

Gardner: Yeah, I think it was the committee that brought them...brought them to Dean Widmer or President Swearer or both...probably both. Um and just asked, "Could these happen?" And some of them happened, and some of them just weren't happening. The sexual orientation clause wasn't happening, you know. The, I don't think the map went up right away, like ...some stuff was really slow, and some stuff they said, "Yeah, that makes sense." You know, escort did expand. There are some more lights around campus.

Lamoree: So was it something you presented the demands, and then did the committee or whomever have to keep going back to push on it?

Gardner: We ended up going back to push some that spring. And then there was a group of people who said they'd continue to meet over the summer. And I was in that. I was here for the summer. And I mean, the day, just got that energy to continue to go. Some people who weren't involved originally were like trying to figure out how to get involved now and coming to those meetings, um, but it's funny. I mean, looking back on it and talking about it with people the next year, it kind of—we met with Swearer once that summer. I was one of the people that met with him that summer to talk about the demands. But it dispelled. I mean, it was a moment. It was a moment and it kind of needed to be at that moment. And [00:30:00] we did get something out of continuing to push the demands a little, but everyone was always kind of like, "Well, why isn't this the same?" And it wasn't the same because it wasn't the moment anymore, it needed to be that coming together and expressing this, and then people needed to disperse again. It really, it was like that.

Lamoree: Well I imagine that it must've been emotionally traumatic for a lot of the people that were there. It would be difficult to maintain that.

Gardner: But to also, to kind of – but there was a real desire to maintain it too. It was like finding a supportive group who understood what you were saying, you know, people were understanding what you were saying and wanting it to be there. And it like not always—that feeling wasn't always there. There was a meeting at Sarah Doyle Women's Center, one of the staff meetings the next fall, in which um people talked about, talked about the speakout. It kind of brought back the feeling of the speakout again. People were disclosing incidents again, and it just, in that room, at that time, the feeling was there for a little while. But in general, you know, you just can't, you can't, it doesn't happen all the time. People have their shells up, you know, you need to. And so, but on the other hand, it was like, "Well, why isn't it happening? Why can't we just always be like this in this way?" But we did meet – I mean, I'm jumping around – we did meet with Swearer in the summer and talk through some of the demands, but it's just, it was weird. You know, we did get some of the stuff from them. But I think the effect more than the demands was on the campus. That next year, more people came to the women's center. That next year...

### **[End of Part 1]**

Gardner: Just really moved by it, you know I went back to my, as I said I was a WPC, and I went back to my dorm and everyone just wanted to talk about it. And, I mean it was hard. People were so angry, but also just so upset and crying that day when they were talking. It wasn't, you couldn't just say, no, lesbian man-hating or whatever about these women, because they were sitting there and they were crying, or they were your friends, or they were lots of stuff like that and that affected men a lot too, you know, and they'd realize some stuff, and needed to talk about it, you know, so that, that night is how I remember going back to my dorm and I was just like, "Sorry, I can't talk now," and I went over to a friend's at the Grad Center and um stayed there that night and just talked

about you know my experiences with that. Like reviewing all the different, you know, things people had said during the day, things I hadn't known, you know, I mean it was, that night, you know it was just like having to just continue to just realize, and then, after that, deal with these people who were just experiencing it for the first time and realizing it for the first time, including men who were doing that. A lot of that just kept going on that whole year. The next year, um there was more receptiveness, and I think there still is on the campus, to outreach. There's a, the Sarah Doyle Women's Center has an outreach now that goes in and talks about feminism and stuff like that to fraternities and stuff like that and people, people were moved by the speakout and referred back to it, um, and it affected people in ways that just... If the demands had been without the speakout, people would just like categorize them like they always do, you know.

Lamoree: Right. So what happened with the fraternities that led up to them hanging Heather?

Gardner: Well it was the University kicked them out, off. Well they kicked off Thete and then put Phi Delt on probation.

Lamoree: Was this as a result of the speakout or as a result of several other things?

Gardner: Dean Widmer would say not a result of the speakout at all. And that I think to a great extent it wasn't a result of the speakout at all. They were like damaging furniture, there was, I think that were like drug...drugs, a lot of drugs like going through the fraternity, stuff like that. Other reasons to not like these fraternities too much. But some of it was the harassment. And I would, I mean certainly the speakout didn't help keep them on campus, you know. But I think the administration definitely would say it wasn't the speakout itself. And it certainly wasn't just the speakout... but that was the most vocal loud thing that had been on campus in protest with the fraternities. And it was these women, why were these women doing it, doing this to us. You know, we haven't you know done anything really to you, you know, it's just all this stuff [inaudible]. So um it was just complete upset with, with...the women who had done this, you know, and it got, you know, I mean, that week walking through Wriston was completely scary. It was just, it was incredible, like at night, it was just all these people out yelling, you know. It was incredible and there were things that happened like empty...empty kegs getting thrown at trees, and they were called "dyke trees" or something like that [Laughter]. I remember that, like stupid stuff. And the effigy. And um, just lots of incredibly harassing stuff to women happened. And the horrible thing is that Thete's still is, Thete isn't university sanctioned anymore, but they're still around. Um [inaudible] The other, oh, Thete did something the year before that, or the beginning of that year, the same year, they had an invitation to a heterosexual party, it was like a fraternity guy standing, looking muscular with this woman kind of hanging on him, oh, I forgot what it said. Well, I can't remember what it said. I'll have to ask a friend because they'll know. I mean, I'm the one that usually tells the story so it's kind of funny, but basically it was just like if you're heterosexual, you can come to this party it was put... it said something about faggot or something really down on gays and lesbians and the university was upset about that, and it was another like incident.

Lamoree: A nail in the coffin.

Gardner: Coffins...that was also...They buried...they like they had this whole funeral ceremony on the fraternity green because they didn't like getting kicked off. And speakers talking about getting kicked off and how horrible it was that they were getting kicked off. And they had a protest at Swearer's house, like they all went in the middle of the night.

Lamoree: Oh yeah, I heard about that.

Gardner: At Swearer's house. Like lots of stuff and it was like this protest. You know, it became the fraternities doing this protest for getting kicked off, you know. It was really weird. [00:05:00] And at that point actually though, TVs were taking notice of all of this stuff. I think it was then that I got...I and like a group of six women at someone's house, the TV camera [inaudible] came over and were asking us about harassment through fraternities and stuff.

Lamoree: Was this channel ten, or you know, local news?

Gardner: It was local news, and I just can't remember which. I think it might've been six, but I don't remember. I didn't see it. I was living in a dorm, didn't own a TV, didn't think about it really, you know. [Laughter] So.

Lamoree: Why don't we talk about now the...your evolution since you came to Brown, which was in '83.

Gardner: I came in '83-'84. I'm graduating in '88, but it's my fifth year...I came from North Dakota to Brown, and had just been, I guess, a big...The two things that are important I think connected all this stuff is that I'd just been becoming out to myself in my first relationship with a woman. And also, I mean I don't think it was real conscious, I'd always kind of been interested in women's issues and equal rights and stuff like that but it hadn't ever been something I was really active in in high school. I came here, didn't really talk about the former, about the lesbian stuff with anyone at first. I didn't know how to handle it. And I remember the summer before I came I told a friend that I would never be involved in like, like she went to Oberlin and she was saying, "Well, I know some good groups at my school and that'll probably be a good thing for you when you get there since it's hard here, it's kind of isolated here." And I was like, "That isn't how I'll handle it. It'll be a private part of my life and that's it." And it's really funny to look back on now. Um, but anyway...so I wasn't talking about that at first. It was uncomfortable, didn't really know how to handle it, wasn't sure how my roommate would feel about it. During orientation week there's an activities night, it's in the auditorium and all the different groups have tables there and the Women's Center had a table and I signed, I signed that along with signing like half of the other things there. You know, you don't know what you want to be involved in and everyone just signs everything. But they called me back from Sarah Doyle and said that there... I guess, I

guess they must've called and said there was a training session to be a staffer. But I thought it was just like, uh, like a, you know, reception for people who might be interested. So I remember meandering in like half an hour late and it was a training session and I missed the first half hour of training, and realized it was training and realized what I was there to do was to learn how to be a staffer. And I did, like, I went through the next two hours of training, I think it was. And signed up for a staff to slot, um, a slot to staff. And it's funny to look back on now, because now the training goes for three nights and I really wish it had then because I was left not really knowing a lot of what I was doing, you know. You're basically—what a staffer is at the Women's Center is basically the receptionist. You are the person introducing the resources to people who are walking in, telling people what meetings are going on, what the Director was doing, or answering the Director and the Coordinator's phone calls. I mean there's a lot of responsibility of giving referrals to women in the community and women at Brown for gynecologists, for daycares, for lots of different things. Um, and, but so I just went through this two-hours training and next thing I knew I was on the desk. But I mean it ended up working out and there were a lot of people there to support you. It's just I think the training's better now, is basically what I'm saying [Laughter]. And um I also decided to go on the retreat that year, which was, going to the training and getting, going to the retreat that year it became...I've been involved in the Women's Center ever since. Usually pretty actively. And that's not usually how people go through it at Brown. It seems like a lot of people go through like two years of hearing about the Women's Center, it's like negative, like, "They're radical there, they're anti-male there," something like that. And I just missed that, you know, I just happened to get involved really early and meet lots of really neat people and see all these resources and have been there ever since. So that was my beginning and at that point I was um...I was a debater in high school so I've always been pretty comfortable talking among groups, but on the other hand I was from North Dakota and I was kind of, I was relatively quiet in a social way even though in group meetings I was pretty vocal. I was very un-stereotypical looking. I had hair down my back and all that kind of stuff. So that was the first thing, and I met, so I got supportive feelings about lesbian/gay stuff from the Women's Center, and ended up coming out to a friend I was making who um was bisexual. Who...look...she told me later was completely floored when I told her I was involved with this woman back home and all that, but um [00:10:00], you know, just found support there for that too. So that was the beginning. And by the next year, my sophomore year, I coordinated lesbian/gay dorm outreach, which was, and my sophomore year was the first year it really existed. The year before, the only dorm it went to actually was mine. Someone else, Jen Voycheck [?] was the organizer. Jen and... I feel horrible because I feel like I'm forgetting another instrumental organizer and their name should be recorded, but I can't remember right now. But Jen Voycheck was the person who thought of it and other people were involved in the spring of my freshman year of getting it to be a program. And um the next year I got the mailing list, and so co-coordinator [inaudible] chose me to be involved in that.

Lamoree: What happens with outreach? Describe what happens.

Gardner: Okay, it goes...it goes mostly to freshmen units and also to places like fraternities or anywhere where there's a group that meets can have, or even if they can organize a group to meet can have the dorm outreach come. Or have an outreach come to them. And usually three lesbians and three gay men go to do outreach, and at the beginning we just introduce ourselves. Just usually just say our names and what year we are, maybe our major kind of to make us more human— Brown students to other Brown students. And then break up into small groups—three small groups. The group that we talk to can range from like fifteen people to like forty, it really does range. But you break up into three small groups with a man and a woman facilitating each small group and in those groups...it's...the man and the woman who are facilitating don't really talk. They listen to other people talk about their views of lesbian and gay issues. Usually we use -

Lamoree: So what do you say? How do you start it off?

Gardner: Well I don't know if they're following the exact same formula anymore because I haven't really been involved in it this year. But the standard formula in the past was to hand out pens and two pieces of paper to each person. And on the first piece of paper they had to write down a negative image they had had or they heard of a lesbian or a gay man—it could be a stereotype. We had them write it down because we...they wrote them down, we mixed them up, we handed them back out. So no one had to claim their answer. We were trying to...we were trying to get to the negative stuff and people were afraid to say the negative stuff in the room with people [inaudible]. So we had them write them...and even when they write them down sometimes they don't want to...so we were saying "you don't have to believe it, it can be a stereotype, you know." So a negative image and also a positive image. That was the set. So they wrote them both down, we mixed them up, handed them back out, and people would say them and we'd talk about them. And usually things like effeminate man and anti-male women and uh AIDS now is coming up, like, stuff like that would come up. Instead of us interjecting, "Well that's wrong." That wasn't it. It was more to see how other people in the room feel about it.

Lamoree: And then how do you respond?

Gardner: And usually—actually the purpose of that is often like the negative image comes up, usually someone in the group besides the facilitators would defend lesbian/gay stuff. They'd say, "Well that's silly, you know, if promiscuous gay men [inaudible], well sometimes straight people are promiscuous too." It's important that we aren't the people that say it, but that their peers are who say it. Sorry.

Lamoree: No, that's the question I was asking.

Gardner: So that was a real important thing. Even, even if...even if while I was doing training, even if something really bad comes up like someone says it's just in the Bible, not just in the Bible, but just something basically saying it's wrong and bad. Instead of one of us saying, "That's not true," always wait a couple seconds and hope that someone else in the room – more than a couple seconds – wait for someone to get uncomfortable enough to actually say something. And usually I mean Brown people, certainly there are

some people who are really bad, but at least some people vocally will say, "Lesbian/gay stuff isn't that bad." So that's the first part, you know, negative and positive images. And on the other, I said there were two pieces of paper before. The other piece of paper was just to write down any questions they had to ask us about being lesbian or gay or how it is for us. They could also in a large group just ask the questions, but oftentimes if they write them down and they don't have to raise their hands and ask something they might be embarrassed to ask about. So we'd have them write those down and then we'd go back to the large group and kind of be a panel, with three gay men and three lesbians. And usually one person kind of be leading the group, kind of picking through the questions. And the questions range from "How do your parents feel about it?" "What's the group like at Brown?" like "How do you deal with the explanation to them?" I think the most common question is "How do you know?" And that's pretty...you know, people questioning and not knowing their own sexuality at that point and it's like how do you know, you know. Am I, you know, kind of that feeling or that fear, is there. And it's also, I think the hardest question to answer because it's not like, it's not like if your right pinkie is this long, you're lesbian or gay [Laughter]. You know, you can't just define it. It's just something that you... Or like "what exactly is attraction" is another one [00:15:00] that's just like. Usually we turn that one around, or usually I turn that around and say, "Well, how do you know if you're straight, that you're attracted to the opposite sex?" You know. "Explain attraction." You know, I mean, stuff like that would be responses, just trying to make them think.

Lamoree: So is that the only thing you did as the lesbian collective person?

Gardner: Well that was lesbian/gay dorm outreach. As coordinator of that... actually I was co-coordinator. I started just being the coordinator but Christopher Jarvinen that year became co-coordinator with me, and the next year Melissa Navaro and I did it. And then, yeah, whatever, you know, so that was one involvement. I also was involved in other aspects of lesbian gay stuff. I'm trying to remember what. Well my freshman year was, my freshman year was the year there was the big campaign for lesbian/gay – for sexual orientation to be added to the non-discrimination clause. And I wasn't like one the figureheads of that, but I was one of the workers at the tables, you know, and stuff like that. We had a petition just asking the student body to sign this, um, and more than half...it was...I mean, the figures that come out afterwards and what I usually talk about at this point was that more than half the student body signed that. The faculty endorsed it. We had lots of different student groups like the Association of Fraternity Presidents endorsed it, the um...

Lamoree: That's amazing.

Gardner: I mean like it was, it was, covering everywhere. Everywhere was, we were going everywhere to get the endorsement to make it as broad-based as possible and then bringing that to the President that spring...and it felt like, well, it felt like a victory that spring. It was like we really did all this, we really showed them they should be in. We didn't get an answer, we didn't get an answer, didn't get an answer through the summer, didn't get an answer. In September, we didn't get an answer, and it was always with

requesting the answer. And finally Howard Swearer, before he left for, I think, I think it was Asia...I'm never sure when I say this that I'm right, but basically like stuck in the mail as he was leaving for Asia his response, which was that it wouldn't [inaudible] in the next month. And he didn't get back until finals of that semester, so it was, it was like harder to have a protest.

Lamoree: Right. I wonder what happened to the petition.

Gardner: You mean just archivally?

Lamoree: Yeah.

Gardner: I'm sure we have a copy in our records, I bet it's in the LGSA office. If it's not, Stephen Beck would know, Stephen Beck might know. He isn't here right now but people know him. And Mark Rumble [?] was a big, active organizer.

Lamoree: Because we have a couple of petitions in the archives that are really great. You know they're great exhibit material you know because they're just like the Louise Lamphere. We have an inch-worths of petitions for her and it's just nice to have, you know-

Gardner: Record of those signs-

Lamoree: The petition that was actually there. Um you know and you put in the exhibit and you show this stack of petitions and for the alumnae to come back and they see this and they realize, "Oh my God, you know, thousands of people signed this."

Gardner: Yeah, and especially with the lesbian/gay, I don't know about the others because I wasn't involved in getting them signed, but with this one, it was standing at a table in the post office and saying, "Would you sign this?" And people, it's an issue that makes people like sometimes just not want to deal or be embarrassed to deal so, a lot, I mean it's this looking through people that just happens. Like somehow just not seeing me even though I'm talking right to you, that happens. Or sometimes saying [inaudible] so, you know, it wasn't the easiest thing to be working on. Although, you know, we ended up getting a broad base of support, it wasn't like people ran up saying "I want to sign this." This year, it's better. I mean, people seem to be wearing pink triangles who aren't lesbian/gay because [inaudible] -

Lamoree: I saw the pink triangles.

Gardner: But it wasn't as, it wasn't as much like that... [inaudible].

Lamoree: So did any negative effects happen with the petition drive? Like were there nasty letters in the BDH or anything like that?

Gardner: Not as many, not really. It was mostly positive. And I know there were some negative incidents, but I'm not thinking of them right now. I know in the past, like a friend of mine, Heidi Brown, a couple years ago, a couple years before that, the year before that, ran for UCS, and um she ran on an openly gay ticket and she ended up having to unplug her phone, because she'd get so many harassing phone calls at night. Like stuff like that. So, that was big too. It's so funny, lots of things happened.

Lamoree: So how does one become a Woman's Peer Counselor?

Gardner: That um, the first year of that program was, was my freshman year. And um it originated, the connection seems pretty clear between that and the prior incidences. That and the escort service and the staff assistant women's concerns seem to have come, [00:20:00] because of or at least time-wise right after the prior incidences. And um, it was a program, there were already Minority Peer Counselors and that model, or that idea, was kind of followed in getting the WPCs organized. Robin Rose was the coordinator of the program, and there was...

Lamoree: Was she a student, or?

Gardner: No, she works at Psych Services.

Lamoree: Oh, okay.

Gardner: She was uh... I can't remember her job title, but she's a psychologist. She's very active in different women's issues. And all sorts of stuff... [inaudible] being in charge of Women Peer Counselors. So she's the person who ended up organizing and being in charge of women's, staff assistant woman's concerns also became connected. But you got a thing in your box asking you to apply to be a Woman's Peer Counselor. And I also applied to be a resident counselor that year, and kind of juggled back and forth between which I would want to do. On my application for Woman Peer Counselor, I came out too, I was out. So we'd get interviewed. The group was kept pretty small. This year, it's at its biggest—I think it has like twenty. My year, it was like fifteen. It's kept small on purpose, so we can get together and kind of be supportive of each other, and then disperse around campus. Unlike the other counseling programs, it's not just for freshmen or first year students. It's also for, um, some people live in upper-class dorms, and the outreach programs are targeted at least to try to reach more people than first year students. First year students are the best organized to do that kind of stuff for it and a lot of it still goes on with first year students units, but you know [inaudible]. And we deal, the training's incredible for it; there's an intense week right before school starts where we go through sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual violence, racism, lesbian/gay issues, sometimes eating concerns — eating concerns is always included in some ways in the program, but I can't remember if it was in the training session.

Lamoree: And the training sessions are run by Psych Services?

Gardner: Robin Rose is the organizer of the whole thing altogether, but like Barbara Tannenbaum who's like a big advocate for that stuff, I guess rape stuff [Laughter], is a theater arts professor, and she does that training. Toby Simon does just a general sexuality training, and she's in um, health education. Different—different arms of the university come together...

Lamoree: So they all come in?

Gardner: Yeah, and Beth Zwick now does the sexual harassment part of the training, which they're used to [?] at Sarah Doyle. You know, so the different people come to different trainings of people—of the, of the WPCs and also the we have instilled one-on-one mock counseling sessions. The program is both one-on-one counseling in the dorms and also programming on different issues.

Lamoree: So you're accepted, you go through the interview, and they decide whether they want you or not, and then are you placed into a dorm or do you have a choice, or?

Gardner: It's kind of a...it's kind of a lottery system with the upperclass people getting to choose where they want to live first and then the, like the people who are going to be seniors get to choose first, then the juniors, then the sophomores...

Lamoree: Are you paid in any way for it, or?

Gardner: Never have been. I think there might be something in the past—in the future, or next year even with that, but never. In the Resident Counseling Program, if you're a second year resident counselor, you get some kind of stipend. With WPCs, I was one for two and a half years and I never got a cent.

Lamoree: Okay, so you're put in the dorm and then how are the dorm residents—are they notified in some way that there's a WPC there?

Gardner: Well, supposedly, supposedly all the counseling systems work together, but um, and it's a lot better now than it used to be. In the past when WPCs were kind of new, it wasn't as—the relationships between resident counselors and WPCs weren't as clear, weren't as good, you know. And there's also just on the administrative level, there's always been confusion because Resident Counselors and Minority Peer Counselors are part of the Deans of the College office, the academic office. And WPCs, although they're very comparable in most ways, are part, officially, of the Dean of the Student Life office. So like when they were coming out with the advising posters, you know saying these are all the resources or whatever, there wasn't, the WPCs weren't on the posters at first, which made absolutely no sense. But there was some rationale about us not getting academic counseling training or something like that, which I mean is like a two-hour session for the Resident Counselors. I mean, it's just silly. Um, but some of the units, especially when I was first starting, had like the WPCs really had to work to be noticed, you know, or the Resident Counselors wouldn't think of inviting them to their meetings or you know stuff like that. My units, I always pretty had...I always got along with the

Resident Counselors, and was, [00:25:00] I kind of chose to be a part of my unit pretty intimately.

Lamoree: So you would go to an RC meeting and you'd introduce yourself?

Gardner: Mmm hmm. Well not just to RC meetings, but just to unit meetings, you know I'd introduce myself. It's hard when there's only fifteen on the whole campus and there are I don't know how many RCs but there are a lot of RCs. And supposedly I was in charge of, I think there were only two of us in Keeney Quad, which is huge, and so, and supposedly I was in charge of half of Keeney Quad, but really I only, I did outreach programs to more, but I...I really knew my unit better than anyone else.

Lamoree: So what did you do in terms of outreach? Did you go into the other units and have a session on something, or?

Gardner: More it would be postering like the quad and saying, you know, "There's going to be a program on eating concerns run by the Woman Peer Counselors." Or, at the beginning of the year, the unit meeting—you know, I would go to the unit meetings, and meet and say "this is who I am, come talk to me if you want to." There were posters about Woman Peer Counselors around campus with our names and our room numbers listed.

Lamoree: So individual people would come, would that mostly be women that-?

Gardner: Um, it depends on the—I guess for me, probably if I were to write down numbers, it would be mostly women, but it isn't that men didn't come talk to me [inaudible]. And it isn't always people just with problems, also friends of people—concerned friends would come and ask like how they should problem solve. It was basically—the things we did were problem solving and um, and referral. A lot of times, it's a lot less threatening for someone to come to speak here and talk to them about something that they might not have called harassment but after they talk to me, they would probably call it harassment [other people in the recording speaking]. So, you know, just the idea of peer counseling, I think is really important or whatever. And the, and the group relationship between all the other WPCs was just really centrally important to me. You know, that brought, you know I got to talk about these things that were hard with this group and get ideas about how I should deal with things and stuff like that. So I did, I did it for two years. I was one in Keeney Quad one year, and one in Hope College my junior year, only for half a year because I had to go take some time off. And also the issue of lesbian/gay stuff with that was interesting, because I didn't come out to my—neither time did I come out to my units right away. I waited because I wanted to make sure they felt comfortable with me, comfortable enough to come talk to me.

Lamoree: Right.

Gardner: And that I was a friendly person before I came out, but it was ironic, because I was also both years coordinating outreach [Laughter]. So you know, I'd be out to the rest of the college, but not to...

Lamoree: But to your unit...

Gardner: Yeah, and it was always a surprise to them. You know, it was surprising. But, I think it worked well. It was surprising, but they knew me well enough to not reject me afterward. That's always a hard issue though because it ended up, I mean I got into some uncomfortable conversations. Like, you know, with people saying "How's dating at Brown?" or "Do you have a boyfriend? or something like that. And at that point I didn't want to tell them, but lying is something I don't like doing either. I would just say, "No, I don't have a boyfriend." [Laughter] Things like that. Different people have chosen different things, and I think that that's very valid. Different things at different times.

Lamoree: Okay.

### [End of Part Two]

Lamoree: [00:00:00] This is Martha Gardner's second [inaudible]. Why don't we continue talking about [inaudible].

Gardner: Frustration in women, and lesbians, and gays actually around campus before the speakout was this invitation that went out to, on peoples' boxes. It was a party invitation—party invitations just get taped on peoples' boxes. And uh, Thete... Theta Delta Chi, one of the fraternities that the women ended up recommending get thrown off, had this invitation that on the front had the picture of a big jock holding a, holding a keg. Not a keg, but a mug of beer with this woman kind of looking dotingly up at him and it said 'heterosexual party' on the front and on the inside it said, "Tired of fucking assholes? Come straight to Thete." So it was pretty clear, um... [Laughter] clear um harassment and um, so that was, that happened quite a bit earlier in the year. I'm trying to remember, let's see...

Lamoree: And this was 1985?

Gardner: Yeah, it was '85. I guess it was only in March, I thought it was in the fall, but it was in March, and then the rest of it happened Spring Weekend. You know, the specific incidents of women getting rated and all of that. So this happened earlier but it was, you know, just another, another like...

Lamoree: Nail in the coffin?

Gardner: Yeah, it wasn't the straw that broke the camel's back, it was before that, but it was one that came up when people started realizing that Theta continued to do things. That was that.

Lamoree: Weren't you talking about how they had hung somebody in effigy or something?

Gardner: Right, that was after the speakout when the fraternities actually... They got kicked off and Phi Delt got put on probation. There was that whole thing with the fraternities uprising and being really upset and marching to Howard Swearer's house at midnight and um complaining about what had happened to them and blaming it on... what happened was that they blamed it on the women's speakout. They said that it was the women saying they got thrown off... asking for them to be thrown off. And that being the reason that they did. The university always denied that and said that that had nothing to do with it. It had to do with them possibly selling drugs within, I mean, some the incidents contributed to it, but it wasn't the women, but it was the incidents. You know and that was what the university claimed, but the fraternities felt differently and so they hung in effigy Heather, it was a dummy, it was a model doll, I think around her neck, naked, in effigy. It was supposed to be Heather Findlay, who was head of the Women's Political Task Force. And one of the articles that I brought in is an editorial that she had in the *Brown Daily Herald* like two days before the actual speakout. One of our strategies was for her to just put this out and complain about this so the reaction came before we actually had the speakout. And just walking through fraternity area after... after the speakout during this um uprising it was incre... it was the worse... it was the most blatantly homophobic and sexist time, you know they were doing things like, I didn't see this, but some incident of throwing empty kegs I guess against trees and calling them dyke trees. And um like lots of stuff like that and just like whoever walked by was getting very harassed. So it was pretty incredible. A lot of the articles actually that I brought in had to do with the fraternity stuff. They had a ceremonial funeral I guess, like symbolically protesting that the fraternities were being thrown off. There were these two coffins on fraternity park. ... I have a *Providence Journal* article about the funeral.

Lamoree: What do you see now looking back on this, three years later? What do you see as the effect, was there a long-term effect of the speakout?

Gardner: People, even freshmen or first year students this year, hear about it. They hear what happened to it. And that's one... I mean that's one that continues to live and people realize what happened. Another... I don't know how much... I think it's still going on. But the initial reaction the year after was fraternities were listening. Individuals and them were having sexism workshops, requesting them. I really think it did open up... and part of that was just the... it was a surprise and it was a real personal thing. Anyone [00:05:00] who walked by couldn't just say these are these angry men-hating women, it was women talking about their experiences and that was much more personal... [Couldn't get upset, in some way?]. I mean, they did, some of them did, but it was harder...

Lamoree: How did the Woman's Peer Counseling system come about?

Gardner: Um that um... part of this is just from what I've heard. My first year here, which was '83-'84, um, was the first year the Woman Peer Counseling was at Brown. And from what I've heard, they were one of the things that originated after the FIRE incidents.

That, the staff system for women's concerns position, and I think escorting, I think the escort system. I'm not sure about that, but it's always, it was three things, I forget which three, um, but, those were things that the women who spray painted "1 in 3 Women Are Raped" and went through all of that um —requested—well demanded, and got people to listen to that in the end. And so the counseling system emerged. The, it's first year, I think, it had twelve, maybe fourteen women in it and the purpose was to um, to um have an outlet for both to work on setting up programs and have women in dorms um to be peer counselors to talk about women's issues to both men and women, um about just sexuality concerns, sexual harassment, um, sexual assault, eating disorders, all those issues. Um, the exciting thing about the program that's been true from the beginning was the training is extensive and it's involved with different resource people on campus: Barbara Tannenbaum does the sexual assault training every year, Toby Simon does stuff about sexuality, you know, Robin Rose, who works in Psych Services, she's Assistant Director of Psych Services now, um, is the main person who organizes the program. So having that base of really intense training with I think now it's up to having twenty women, but it's only – it isn't, it isn't, as big as the Resident Counseling Program or even as the Minority Peer Counseling Program, and that's um intentional. It's kept small so women can work together and learn about things in a very small group. So, you go out and you'd be with in your dorm or you know in your freshman unit, but it wasn't just first year units. People also lived on upper, um, live on upperclassmates [?]. So you'd come together, and be able to get support for what you were doing in a way that doesn't work as well in a bigger, I mean, it has its costs and benefits. People complain about not having a WPC in each unit too, but if you did that then you'd lose the um individuality, the smallness of the program. But it has expanded, so. And so I was one my sophomore year and my junior year—well, I took time off so I guess my two junior years, [Laughter] I was one. [inaudible]

Lamoree: Now does the Sarah Doyle Center have anything to do with the women's peer?

Gardner: Well Beth Zwick and Mary Renda before her, who have been the coordinators of the Women's Center in its life – the WPC's life – are involved in the training. And beyond that, they're not directly connected but all the WPCs learn about the Women's Center and know that it's a resource that usually at least some of them are involved in the Women's Center. But it's kind of a separate commitment. When I was a Woman Peer Counselor, I also staffed at the Women's Center but it wasn't because I was a Woman Peer Counselor. You know, I attended some of the same issues of mine doing both, but it was a separate commitment.

Lamoree: How do they recruit Woman's Peer Counselors?

Gardner: Well, every woman, freshmen through junior, gets something in their box, so that's one way. A lot of, a lot of women do it because they know their own WPC so they think that looks like a neat thing [inaudible], so they end up doing it. Special recruitment or effort, you know, would have been affirmative action, making sure [inaudible]. But people get interested in it, we get [22? 42?] applicants every year. And there's some selection process like there is a [inaudible]. And some conflict like I remember, when I

applied, I wasn't sure if I wanted to be a Resident Counselor or a Woman Peer Counselor. It was a crisis deciding between which would be better to do, and um, I was afraid being a WPC, especially because that was early on in its existence would make me too much of a special interest instead of being able to [00:10:00] use my special interests in a more general public way. But I decided the training outweighed that, getting good training, working with a smaller group.

Lamoree: Now when you say um you wanted representation for the lesbian community, how would they determine, that they had indeed had representation, would it just be because they knew a person was, was lesbian or—did you have to write this down, or?

Gardner: Well, it certainly wasn't something they requested, yeah, that becomes really difficult. And when I applied, I was out on my application, and I actually—one of the questions on it was “what do you think would be one of the hard things about being a WPC?” And I said I was afraid I would be, would be enforcing a stereotypical image of women being issued in women's interests because -

Lamoree: Oh because they were lesbian?

Gardner: Being a lesbian, you know, that I would be reinforcing that, so I was a little worried about that and wasn't sure how I would handle coming out to my unit. So yeah, every year, it's been a real process and they don't, I mean, last year, two of the women were involved in LGSA who ended up being WPCs and that's a delicate thing, they don't always know. You're right. So that's a hard one. But at least like one, maybe, it's important to have someone that is out, I think in a WPC program. Every year, one of the training sessions is about sexual orientation, and...the way I—different people handle it differently. But the way I handled it was I came out in those when I was a WPC, I came out at that point, but other people didn't and came out later to WPCs, other people who didn't at all, or you know, so it's definitely a delicate issue and I handled that differently in my unit—the first year units I lived in, I didn't come out because I didn't want to alienate people who were supposed to come **to me** [?]. I think that was real delicate. Or I was, I was co-coordinating lesbian/gay outreach at the same time, which is the most out thing on campus, so I'd be doing that and I'd be going back to my unit and I wouldn't be out. There's a little, a little walking a line -

Lamoree: Split personality.

Gardner: And you know a dangerous line because it would be easy for a friend of someone in one unit to see me and then...but actually I surprised a lot of people when I came out in each unit.

Lamoree: And when you say you came out, how would you tell them?

Gardner: Well, the way I ended up doing it in both—except like maybe there was one individual in each unit that I came out before the formal coming out and the formal coming out was the form of having lesbian gay dorm outreach.

Lamoree: And you would be there and they would go, “A-ha.”

Gardner: Well, the first year, the first year I was WPC, let’s see, I lived in Keeney Quad and um I didn’t do that outreach. Other people came in and did it and I came out in my small group and I made it clear but I was part of the unit, I wasn’t part of the outreach. The second time, I did the outreach but people didn’t figure out that I was—that that meant I was lesbian for a while because they just thought that I was WPC and I was helping with this program and not that I was a lesbian until someone—there’s, we divided it—outreach was divided in two sections, our first section is, um, small groups people asking um having positive/negative um, the students instead, the freshman in that asked, answering questions, the questions being given providing positive and a negative image of a lesbian or a gay. And um the second part of the section is a large group with the lesbians and gays at the panel and them answering any questions they want to ask. So someone asked the question, “How did your parents react?” So I, I answered it, you know, now I was on the panel and I answered it and at that point, kind of, people in the room went, “Wait, she’s...” Yeah, yeah, it was this “oh.” Yeah, it was a funny thing and people up until that point, or some of them, and... although I thought I made it clear, I mean, I was surprised they were surprised at that point. But, for me, that worked well. I just felt like students who might’ve been freaked at the beginning when they were getting bombarded with all this information now had this image of who I was as a person and trusted me as a friend in that way, so they couldn’t just reject me since they found out I was lesbian. You know, they had to reconcile with that. And that may be more positive to start thinking [inaudible]. But then again it’s hard, I mean, I don’t know if I’d do that now, you know, in terms of where you’re at... Sometimes you need to come out for yourself.

Lamoree: Why don’t we jump to the CIA arrest.

Gardner: [Laughter] See, what year was that? My sophomore year. That was um in, that was in fall of ‘84. And there was a CIA recruiter was coming to campus. I can’t re—did we talk about this before?

Lamoree: Mm-mm.

Gardner: Okay. The CIA recruiter [00:15:00] was coming to campus, and there were meetings um to talk about how do we react about, what do we do. People were signing up for interviews; it was one of the career services spots. And um along with just doing interviews, there was going to be an information session with, with the CIA recruiter, just talked about what the CIA was like and why they might want a job with them like they do with all these other jobs too. And I wasn’t really involved in the original information sessions. I mean, I mean I was frustrated with the idea that the CIA was coming to recruit, but originally I wasn’t really active. Um...near—as the time became closer and closer, I heard about, what happened was there was a citizen’s arrest, we, people planned to do a citizen’s arrest for the CIA recruiter and the tactical logic behind it was that he would be soliciting people to um hold jobs that did illegal things. So, that is illegal so we

should do a citizen's arrest of him as he was soliciting people. So that was the—instead of it being civil disobedience per se, it was more following law in a way that law isn't usually used, right? So I got, a friend of mine, Karen Kane and I both weren't so involved in the initial process, we heard about that the night of the CIA arrest, decided to do it. And so, we went into the information interview with all these other people who were going in. I think 67— between 57 and 67, I can't remember which – were in the room who were going to do the CIA arrest. A lot—I guess along with some people who didn't do the arrest, but who were just there for the CIA. I think that it wasn't that big a room. I mostly remember protestors being at the information session. It was at the basement of Pembroke Hall. Where you can—the windows where you can look in, so it's not a complete basement. There were people outside like holding signs, protesting too, and looking in the windows. And I was sitting on the desks and, I, we were going to – we had a specific time that we were going to do it. Like, I think it was like fifteen minutes after it started, we had watches synchronized, I don't know. We had a whole list of, um, we started saying we were doing citizen's arrest with him and then we went through the illegal things that the CIA had done, explaining why we were doing the citizen's arrest. We were all going to read it in unison, fifteen minutes in. Five minutes into his speech, I got a bloody nose [Laughter]. And it was just bleeding and I was like, "I can't leave the room because if I leave the room, I won't be able to say the citizen's arrest, but I have a bloody nose. What do I do?" You know, so I was like elbowing the person next to me like, "I have a bloody nose, do you have a Kleenex?" And, so it was funny, I had a friend, Ellen, outside who said she was looking in the window and it looked like some secret message was being passed like because I was elbowing the person next to me and people were like—across the room, someone had a Kleenex that they managed to get passed to me, like, during the ten minutes of this, I was holding my nose, you know, as it bled and no... someone thought, you know, that I was passing the word or whatever but it wasn't—because I wasn't, you know—I was just one of the people doing it, I hadn't been there... So then we stood up fifteen minutes through the speech and we read this citizen's arrest. Um, but of course what happened, instead of um, of course, you know it wasn't like the Providence police came and arrested him. We – the important thing about this was we were really trying to be accountable for our action. Accountability was a theme throughout this whole thing. We all wrote our names down as people who had done this citizen's arrest, along with like eight people outside of the room, who there hadn't been room for them to get in. They wrote their names down because they would have wanted to be a part of it, and they became this gray area during the whole trial and stuff like that, because they weren't in the room. They didn't actually do it but they would've wanted to if they could've been in the room, so -

Lamoree: The intent was there.

Gardner: Yeah, the intent was there, but the action wasn't. Um so, so you know there was a rally outside and afterwards, and our names were written down so that that went to, it went to the UCSA [University Council of Student Affairs].

Lamoree: So, who collected the, the list of names?

Gardner: Dean, I think Dean Robinson. One Dean was there and I think it was Dean Robinson.

Lamoree: And so he collected it and gave it to UCSA?

Gardner: Well, yeah, I think he's connected to UCSA so he had it, or he was then. Um and took it and those were the people that were you know charged with whatever. And um, so we, we then started our strategy of well how are we going to, you know, deal with this trial, this USCA trial.

Lamoree: Well, let's back up. So the names are given to UCSA? And then what's the next thing that you hear? Do you get a letter in your box saying that you are going to be charged with...

Gardner: I don't remember...before we—before anything more 'technical process-y' happened, we, we, um, you know, the Brown Daily Herald covered it and we were meeting to try to figure out what our strategy would be because it was obvious that the UCSA process would happen, [00:20:00] something would happen, some disciplinary process would happen. So there were a lot of late night meetings with all the CIA people, with the people that had done the CIA arrest and the support people. Um, consensus was used, it was consensus process, trying to figure out how we would handle the whole thing. So then I got really involved.

Lamoree: Now this group of people you're talking about, were they just a group of people who had gotten together over the CIA issue?

Gardner: Mhm, it was a real ad hoc group, I mean some people who had done things together in the past like a lot of people involved with disarmament stuff and things like that or Central America issues. Um, they weren't strangers, you know [Laughter]. But yeah, it was a group that had never come together before. It wasn't like it was a disarmament group that did this, it was an ad hoc kind of group coming together. And it was in a lot of ways similar to the speakout in that light. Um, so...

Lamoree: So you're meeting at night to reach a consensus about a strategy...

Gardner: Figuring out a strategy and different, yeah, different parts of it that we needed to figure out. I can't actually recall...the technical process, like what happened, I just know that, you know, the date was set for UCSA hearing and um, and we figured out that we wanted instead of all of us speaking at the hearing, we would have eight spokespeople and, um, we make sure it was gender parity. And, um, although gender issues in some ways were funny in this group. Like a part of, part of the beginning of the speakout group was women who felt like a lot of the peace organizing they were doing, there was male domination in the group and there was, you know so it's, it wasn't idyllic but there was, there was gender parity of the spokespeople. Julia Bruni, Lisa Krakow, Michael Stone, John Sterns [?] Well, there were eight of them um who would be the people who would actually speak at the hearing. John Stockwell, who was an ex-CIA agent who lives – God,

I can remember where he lives, but it wasn't near here, it was like Colorado or something like that. He wrote a book about illegal things that the CIA has done and we got him to come as a witness. We talked to lawyers, both lawyers in town and like lawyers who were fathers of people who had done this about like the legality of citizen's arrest and how that, how that corresponds to like disturbing the peace and whatever. The interesting part of the process was how does the university disciplinary procedure combine with Providence law or federal law or any other just kind of law, you know obviously, it became a conflict.

Lamoree: So what were you charged with? Disturbing...

Gardner: Um, yeah, disturbing a meeting basically. I don't think that was exactly what it was called but it was basically we disrupted something and we didn't allow it to continue, disrupting.

Lamoree: And...so the charging of disrupting a meeting, now, you know from their standpoint, it's already been proven that you disrupted a meeting.

Gardner: Right, so in that, and we weren't denying that we disrupted a meeting. But we were saying a citizen's arrest takes precedence over that if you were, you know, you wouldn't worry about disrupting a meeting, if someone, if the meeting was, you know if it was selling illegal drugs or something like that. You would do a citizen's arrest. You would say, "You shouldn't be doing this, this is illegal." This is a similar situation. That was the kind of argument we had. Oh, and during all of this, most of the time we had a post office table, which is a real common way of publicizing things around Brown, because we wanted it to be very much accessible, accountability kind of stuff. If people had questions, they could ask us those questions. And also to get people to support, you know, to have support people. But a lot of it was people challenging us and us explaining why we did it. Trying to have consistent, but personalized explanations, explaining, "No, this wasn't civil disobedience." We'd been trying to do it within, you know, we tried this the way it was organized, the PO table was big. Also there were a couple informational meetings or debates set up to talk about it [inaudible] ... with different, not just the spokespeople representing us at those meetings, like different people would be chosen each time to represent us because we were really trying to show that it wasn't just eight people and then their followers, it was much more a whole group working together. Along with the spokespeople and John Stockwell, and a lawyer from town, we also had three professors defending us: Joan Scott, and two male professors, two who I'm not as familiar with so I can't remember. One history professor that's still around, he's -  
[00:25:00]

Lamoree: Is it Bill McLoughlin?

Gardner: Yeah, McLoughlin. McLoughlin did it and then I can't remember the third. But they each read, you know, prepared different points during the trial. Statements explaining why they thought it was a justified thing to do, [inaudible], how we'd done it in a responsible way, it wasn't that we'd just like stood up and started yelling in a

meeting, that it was all very like systematic and there were reasons behind it, you know. So we had that kind of like institutionalized support.

Lamoree: Now where is this taking place? In Sayles?

Gardner: Um it took place, a big decision, well, there were two decisions made that were up to us. One was whether or not students, there are students that are on UCSA disciplinary board. You can request to have them on the board or not, making the final decision. And that was a tricky one to decide whether or not students should be part of the decision. And we decided not to have them be part of the decision and I can't remember why. Which is horrible because it was a big decision and in some ways it was like wait that isn't very, here you are students, why aren't you letting the students ... But there was a lot of feeling of bias and if it was a smaller group, maybe the bias wouldn't be as strong, you know, there was a lot of...so they ended up not being on it. The other decision was whether or not it would be a public hearing that people could come. And we decided that it would be public. And there were, I think like four hundred people there. It was in Alumnae Hall. Dean Widmer was the person that was presented for the university. And Vicky Baum was one of the few people who [inaudible] she would be. [Laughter] She would be one of the people ... um and she was [Inaudible] ... And I remember the night of...it went on forever, this hearing, I mean, you can imagine, I mean, we had all of the elaborate stuff set up, and you know, everyone's speaking, saying, you know, it just went on and on and I remember a suit basically [inaudible]. And it just went on. I think it was like until two or three in the morning or something. And it was snowing when we left. I remember these big, huge flakes and everyone went over to somebody's house to have a party. And after, but after the thing that I had left out was, after the concluding statements, we got a standing ovation from the audience and the people standing, and we just felt like we had won. We had made the case so completely clear why we had done this, the justifications for it. Um, but we, we, that isn't – in the end, we had a disciplinary mark. They said that we were [inaudible]. So, but, instead of getting suspended, we got a disciplinary mark on our record and we can have a specific letter that Joan Scott wrote us, explaining why it wasn't like, you know [inaudible] or something. No, it was like a specific event, but it's funny because it's the same kind of mark you would have if you had done something like harassment or something like that. So it's interesting. It's kind of a medal of honor in some ways to have this disciplinary mark on my record, but it's also ironic.

Lamoree: Mm hmm.

**[End of Interview]**