A "Quiet Activist" During The Second-Wave Feminist Movement: Katharine Rea A Historical Case Study

Sara R. Kaiser

University of Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd

Part of the Higher Education Commons

Recommended Citation
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd/1041

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.
A “QUIET ACTIVIST” DURING THE SECOND-WAVE FEMINIST MOVEMENT:
KATHARINE REA A HISTORICAL CASE STUDY

A Dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the department of Leadership and Counselor Education
The University of Mississippi

By

SARA R. KAISER

August 2013
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this historical case study dissertation is to discover the story of Dr. Katharine Rea in her role as dean of women and later faculty member in the higher education and student personnel program at the University of Mississippi. As the dean of women in the 1960s Rea was responsible for the well-being and quality of the educational experience of the women students at UM. Rea pursued leadership opportunities for the women students through academic honor societies, and student government. Moreover, Rea served as a faculty member in the School of Education for ten years teaching courses in higher education and student personnel services, including a course focused on women college students, Student Personnel Work with Women. Rea also served the University community through her leadership with the American Association of University Professors and her service on the Faculty Senate. In an effort to improve the racial tensions on campus the Faculty Senate, in which Rea served, moved to study racial tensions on campus and worked to improve the educational experience for Black students in the early 1970s. Furthermore, this study examined Rea’s work as a feminist through her involvement with the American Association of University Women and the League of Women Voters in the state of Mississippi. Rea balanced the conservative campus and community with modern intellect and dialog. As a modern southern woman, Rea took advantage of her career opportunities to travel to new places, meet new people, and discuss new ideas.
DEDICATION

For Mom and Dad
## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAUP</td>
<td>American Association of University Professors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAUW</td>
<td>American Association of University Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>American Council on Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWS</td>
<td>Associated Women Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACA</td>
<td>Association of Collegiate Alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERA</td>
<td>Equal Rights Amendment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LWV</td>
<td>League of Women Voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NADWC</td>
<td>National Association of Deans of Women and Counselors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NADWAC</td>
<td>National Association of Deans of Women, Administrators, and Counselors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAWE</td>
<td>National Association of Women in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEA</td>
<td>National Education Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOW</td>
<td>National Organization for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ole Miss</td>
<td>The University of Mississippi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACW</td>
<td>Southern Association of College Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UM</td>
<td>The University of Mississippi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGSW</td>
<td>Women’s Student Government Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To say “thank you” to all of my family, friends, and mentors who helped make this dream a reality does not begin to express my gratitude. Thank you, to my parents, Mark and Denise, for your encouragement and support as I pursued my doctorate. You both have always encouraged your children to take risks and pursue happiness, and I am forever grateful. Thank you to my sister, Beth, and brother, Sam, for the texts, phone calls, and funny emails. Your witty banter kept me afloat. To my Grandparents, Duaine and Nona Kaiser, and Donald and Leola Strom, thank you for the cards and encouragement. To all of the friends who served as precious cheerleaders and sounding boards, especially Melissa and Brian Dingmann and their three children, Guthrie, Merran, and Elsa. To Dr. Rand Rasmussen, Dr. Kevin Thompson, Dr. Margaret Healy, and Dr. Jeff Sun, thank you for your mentorship. Thank you to “the crew” for your friendship, laughs, and company.

To my dissertation committee, Dr. Timothy Letzring, Dr. Kerry Brian Melear, and Dr. Susan McClelland, thank you for your flexibility and mentorship. Finally, to my advisor, dissertation chair, and supervisor, Dr. Amy Wells Dolan, thank you. You made this journey possible. I am a stronger writer and scholar because of your mentorship. More importantly, I am a better person from your guidance.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ...................................................................................................................... ii
DEDICATION ................................................................................................................... iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.............................................................................................. iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................. v
CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION.................................................................................... 1
  Purpose Statement .................................................................................................. 2
  History of Women in U.S. Higher Education ......................................................... 2
  History of Deans of Women ...................................................................................... 4
  The University of Mississippi Opens its Doors to Women ........................................ 6
  Second-Wave Feminist Movement .......................................................................... 7
  Research Questions ................................................................................................. 9
  Overview of the Methods......................................................................................... 10
  Significance of the Study ....................................................................................... 11
  Terms and Definitions ............................................................................................ 12
  Procedures of the Study ......................................................................................... 14
  Inquiry ...................................................................................................................... 15
  Researcher Background ......................................................................................... 16
  Methods of Inquiry ................................................................................................. 17
    Oral History Interviews ....................................................................................... 19
    Archival Document Analysis ............................................................................... 22
    Review of the Literature ...................................................................................... 24
    Evaluation of Sources .......................................................................................... 25
    Analysis ................................................................................................................ 26
Summary ................................................................................................................................. 28
Limitations and Delimitations .............................................................................................. 28
Organization of the Report ..................................................................................................... 30
Review of the Literature ......................................................................................................... 31
The First Women in Coeducational Higher Education .......................................................... 33
The First Deans of Women ....................................................................................................... 36
The Progression of the Position ............................................................................................... 43
  Developing Legitimacy and Professionalism ........................................................................ 44
Professional Organizations ...................................................................................................... 45
  Association of Collegiate Alumni ......................................................................................... 45
  American Association of University Women ........................................................................ 47
  National Association of Deans of Women .......................................................................... 48
  Training for Deans of Women ............................................................................................. 50
The Development of Student Personnel ................................................................................. 52
  Student Personnel Point of View of 1937 .......................................................................... 53
  Student Personnel Point of View of 1949 .......................................................................... 55
Deans of Men and the Student Personnel Movement .............................................................. 57
Women in Higher Education in the 1950s – 1970s .............................................................. 59
  The Slow Elimination of the Deans of Women .................................................................. 61
Deans of Women from Other Colleges and Universities ....................................................... 65
  Women Deans at Historically Black Colleges and Universities ......................................... 69
Second-Wave Feminist Movement .......................................................................................... 71
Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 74

CHAPTER II – KATHARINE REA: DEAN OF WOMEN ......................................................... 76
The New Dean of Women ....................................................................................................... 79
More than a Pretty Face .......................................................................................................... 83
Campus Boom ......................................................................................................................... 88
The 1960s Arrive ..................................................................................................................... 91
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961-1962</td>
<td>A Campus Forever Changed (1962)</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panty Raids</td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A New Year: 1963-1964</td>
<td></td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-1965</td>
<td>Women’s Dress Code is Not Up for Debate</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Black Women Enroll: 1965</td>
<td></td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-1967</td>
<td>Ten Years of Service</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of Women Deans</td>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III – LIFE AS A FACULTY MEMBER</td>
<td></td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Association of University Professors and Katharine Rea</td>
<td></td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Affairs Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Association Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Education: Higher Education and Student Personnel Department</td>
<td></td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission on the Status of Women</td>
<td></td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Centers Fill the Void</td>
<td></td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katharine Rea in the Classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER IV – REA’S LEGACY: WOMEN’S ACTIVISM</td>
<td></td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katharine Rea and the AAUW</td>
<td></td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi League of Women Voters</td>
<td></td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impromptu League Presidency</td>
<td></td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER V – CONCLUSION</td>
<td></td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td></td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Comments</td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................................................... 252
APPENDICES ............................................................................................................................... 261
APPENDIX A ................................................................................................................................. 262
APPENDIX B ................................................................................................................................. 264
APPENDIX C ................................................................................................................................. 266
VITA ............................................................................................................................................... 268
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Colleges and universities across the country were experiencing great transformation in the 1960s, including an increase in student enrollment and access to higher education, a blossoming federal grant program for new research, and the expansion of graduate programs.\(^1\) Furthermore, many institutions contemplated racial desegregation in the 1960s. Other collegiate models were embraced in the 1960s that encouraged student interaction with the faculty, a change from the large “multiversity”\(^2\) created following World War II.\(^3\)

Women students were an integral part of the collegiate experience in the 1960s. Student protests and racial integration on campuses in the South changed the dynamic of the collegiate environment.\(^4\) Furthermore, the second-wave feminist movement, a period of women’s activism that began in the late 1960s and concluded in the mid-1970s, and the publishing of *The Feminine Mystique*, by Betty Friedan in 1963, brought women’s issues to the forefront in higher education. The University of Mississippi (UM/Ole Miss), like many institutions during the late 1950s and 1960s, experienced many changes including the integration of the campus in 1962 by James


Meredith.⁵ Although the integration of the University of Mississippi is one of the most famous events in the University’s storied history, the experience of women students in that era is less known and understood.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this historical case study dissertation is to discover the story of Dr. Katharine Rea in her role as dean of women and later faculty member in the higher education and student personnel program in the UM community. Rea, a native of Meridian, Mississippi began her role as dean of women in 1957 replacing Estella Hefley, a 20 year veteran dean of women at the University of Mississippi. Through this study, I examined the role Dr. Katharine Rea played in the experiences of women students at UM in the 1960s during her tenure as dean of women. Furthermore, this study seeks to understand her role as a quiet activist before and during the second-wave feminist movement in the university community. Moreover, this study seeks to understand the impact Dr. Katharine Rea had as a dean of women and faculty member in education on the UM community.

**History of Women in U.S. Higher Education**

Early American higher education did not welcome women. The founding of colonial colleges, beginning with Harvard College in 1636, brought educational opportunities for men to the U.S. but it was not until the 1800s that women began to see doors open to higher education.⁶ In the 1800s, although admitted to institutions such as Otterbein College and Berea College, two of the first coeducational institutions in the country, women college students faced barriers in

---


their newfound collegiate educational experiences. Their course of study was limited and women were not welcome to join clubs and organizations already established by the male students; therefore, women were forced to form their own extracurricular opportunities. At coeducational institutions, women had fewer options than men in their course selection; it was not uncommon for women to outnumber men in liberal arts courses, an occurrence characterized as the feminization of liberal arts courses. Thus, when more women enrolled in particular classes than men, the class had less value.

Many institutions across the Midwestern U.S. were the first to operate coeducational institutions, including Oberlin College in Ohio, when it became the first coeducational institution in 1837. The first public institution to be coeducational was The State University of Iowa (University of Iowa) when it began admitting both men and women in 1865. By 1900 more than 70 percent of institutions accepted both men and women. Although women gained admission to institutions, they were stifled by a limited curriculum, living opportunities, and habitually suffered the “hostilities of a gender-biased education.”

Coeducational opportunities were limited for most women. There was an option, for some women, to attend private women’s only institutions in the U.S. The Seven Sisters Colleges, private women’s colleges mainly in New England, provided educational

---

7 Thelin, A History.
10 McCandless, The Past in the Present.
11 Ibid.
13 The Seven Sisters Colleges included: Mount Holyoke Seminary (later College), Vassar College, Wellesley College, Smith College, Radcliffe College, Bryn Mawr College, and Barnard College.
opportunities for women. Other women’s only colleges developed across the South following the opening of the private women’s colleges in New England.

From the beginning of higher education in the U.S. until the end of World War II, attending college was rare for both men and women. As historians like John Thelin, Amy McCandless, and Barbara Soloman explained, although women were admitted to colleges and universities, it did not mean they were treated as equals among the men. Frequently, there were no housing options for women students on campus. For many women, not having the opportunity to live on campus meant they could not attend college. As more institutions began providing living spaces for women in the late 1800s, institutions began hiring supervisors, or deans of women, to watch over the women students.

**History of Deans of Women**

College campuses did not readily welcome women students, and often the women students had to overcome negative stereotypes. When women entered higher education, many administrators and community leaders believed they would need special services. Deans of women were hired to deliver these services to women students and monitor their behavior, a difficult task because the position as dean of women endured its own challenges.

---


Jana Nidiffer argued, the deans advocated more for opportunities for the women rather than supervising their behavior. Deans of women fought for space for women to have on campus to meet in small groups, exercise, and study.

The University of Chicago hired the first dean of women, Alice Freeman Palmer, in 1892. Many of the early deans of women were hired to be deans and pursued teaching roles on campus. For example, Alice Freeman Palmer accepted dual roles at the University of Chicago when she accepted a faculty position in history and the position as dean of women. Soon after deans were hired, the women worked to legitimize their profession through developing professional organizations and standards of practice including the Association of Collegiate Alumnae and the National Association of Deans of Women.

At the end of World War II, the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act (GI Bill) precipitated a large increase in the number of men who attended college and the student personnel movement began to unfold. By the 1960s, many institutions eliminated the positions of dean of women


21 Nidiffer, “From Matron to Maven.”
24 Nidiffer, “Matron to Maven.”
and dean of men in favor of one position, the dean of students. Furthermore, the role of *in loco parentis* diminished, furthering the student personnel movement.27

The University of Mississippi Opens its Doors to Women

Women were admitted to institutions for a variety of reasons. In 1882, the University of Mississippi opened its doors to women and 11 women enrolled that first year.28 Although women were admitted, according to UM historian David Sansing women were not allowed to “dine in the boardinghouses or live on campus, except in the home of a faculty member.”29 Shortly thereafter, the first woman professor, Sarah McGee Isom, was hired to teach elocution and speech.30 Women at UM were permitted to enroll only in liberal arts programs and not vocational or preparatory courses.31

In 1903, the first dormitory, Ricks Hall, was built for women students32 and it housed approximately 40 coeds.33 That same year, the first dean of women at UM, Eula Deaton, was hired. Several other deans of women served the UM women students throughout the next five decades. The longest serving dean of women, Estella Hefley, worked more than 20 years at UM. When Hefley was first hired in 1933, University Chancellor Alfred Hume outlined three primary duties for her to meet: 1) overseeing the “social life of the girls,” 2) ensuring the girls’ physical

---

29 Sansing, *The University of Mississippi*, 137.
30 Allen Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi: Its First Hundred Years*, 2nd ed. (Hattiesburg, MS: University & College Press of Mississippi, 1971); Sansing, *The University of Mississippi*.
31 McCandless, *The Past in the Present*.
32 Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi*;
33 James B. Lloyd, *The University of Mississippi: The Formative Years 1848-1906*. (The University of Mississippi, University, MS, 1979), UM.
health and well-being, and 3) supporting the girls’ academic and intellectual interests. Upon Hefley’s retirement in 1957, Dr. Katharine Rea assumed the position of dean of women at UM.

**Second-Wave Feminist Movement**

The first-wave of the feminist movement in the U.S. was known as the women’s suffrage movement, which took place in the mid-1800s with the “Declaration of Sentiments” and denounced the negative treatment of women in the U.S. and provided a list of resolutions including the inclusion of women in higher education and the right to vote. During the first-wave feminist movement women advocated for the right to vote and the right to run for public office. The first-wave feminist movement reached its pinnacle achievement when women secured the right to vote in 1920 with the passage of the 19th amendment. After the ratification of the 19th amendment, giving women the right to vote, the National American Women’s Suffrage Association was no longer the beacon activism for women’s rights.

Katharine Rea assumed the position as dean of women in 1957, during a time historian Linda Eisenmann described as “a time of quiet activism.” Women’s activism in the post-World War II era “appeared as a series of individualized recommendations” rather than the boisterous overtones more commonly associated with the second-wave feminist movement. By the mid-1960s the quiet advocacy and individualized focus was pushed aside for a new women’s liberation. The second-wave feminist movement raised consciousness of the oppression of

---

34 Alfred Hume, letter to Estella G. Hefley, 25 July 1944, Chancellors’ Papers/General, box 141, folder 10, Archives and Special Collections, J.D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi, University, Mississippi (hereafter designated UM).
35 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1957-1958, UM.
women in the hopes of creating social change for women and bringing liberation. In her feminist critique, Weiler suggested that the goal of the second-wave feminist movement to liberate women was difficult to achieve as each woman had a unique background. For example, a woman may be privileged in one aspect of her life, yet oppressed in another. In the 1960s, the number of women in the labor force made a strong comeback, especially after the decline of women in the workforce immediately following the end of World War II. The increase of women in the labor force was one of the leading factors in the resurgence of the women’s movement. Rupp and Taylor found most women participating in the women’s rights movement were White, upper class to upper-middle class, and generally had a college degree. Women were influential in creating civic organizations and volunteer opportunities outside the home. Women commonly found the balance between duties in the home and their new volunteer projects difficult. According to Eisenmann “achieving the proper combination of domesticity and civic activism provoked considerable tension.” However, involvement in civic organizations gave women the opportunity to develop “independence and leadership skills.”

Nonetheless, not all women and women’s organizations considered themselves to be feminist organizations. Rupp and Taylor outlined three criteria that helped delineate those groups that were a part of the women’s rights movement and those that were not. First, the organization needed to make a commitment to work for women’s rights. Second, the group had to work in collaboration with others to reach the common goal. Third and finally, the organization should

---

40 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 138.
affiliate with the National Women’s Party, even if only on a small scale as the National
Women’s Party was identified as the “feminist center of the women’s rights movement.”\textsuperscript{45}

conversation around women’s roles in the home and in society. Friedan defined the feminine
mystique as “the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfillment of their
own femininity.”\textsuperscript{46} The book stirred much debate across the U.S., but other feminist authors and
critics argued \textit{The Feminine Mystique} should be read by women everywhere. For example, one
reviewer, Jessie Bernard, a sociologist and feminist scholar, proclaimed the book’s higher value.

Bernard wrote

\begin{quote}
This book should be on the reading list of every course on marriage and/or the family. Every college senior woman should be required to read it. It has some defects, but on the whole it offers a salutary and much needed shock to those who have, unwittingly perhaps, encouraged women to surrender their claims to identity as human beings, instead of assuring them that it is quite possible to be warmly individual human beings as well as loving wives and mothers.\textsuperscript{47}
\end{quote}

\textbf{Research Questions}

The changes in the 1960s at UM are documented primarily through research on the
historic racial integration of the campus in 1962; thus, the story of women students and women
administrators is largely left out of the literature. This dissertation seeks to fill gaps in the
literature on the experience of women students at UM using the professional work of Dean
Katharine Rea as a lens for exploration. To describe the role of Dean Rea on campus and her
involvement with the second-wave feminist movement, I sought to understand the following
research questions for this study:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{45} Rupp and Taylor, \textit{Survival in the Doldrums}, 45.
\textsuperscript{47} Jessie Bernard, [Review of the book \textit{The Feminine Mystique}, by B. Friedan], \textit{Marriage and Family Living} 25
no. 3 (1963): 381.
\end{flushright}
1. Who was Katharine Rea?

2. What is her story with the UM community?

**Overview of the Methods**

I began conducting archival research at UM on Katharine Rea in 2011 during a class project. To learn more about her experiences at UM, I obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to interview former students, colleagues, and family members. The project received “exempt” status from the IRB and I interviewed 16 former students and family members. Given that I found the research and Rea’s work to be interesting and significant in the history of the University of Mississippi, and women’s higher education, I continued with this research as a dissertation project, and presented my proposal to my dissertation committee. After obtaining the committee’s approval I requested an amendment to the current IRB approved project. After obtaining new IRB approval to conduct oral history interviews with alumna, faculty colleagues, and family members of Katharine Rea, this qualitative case study utilized the following methods for study.

Utilizing the collaborative work of Gasman on historical research to frame the research methods, this dissertation used three main threads of research techniques including conducting oral history interviews, analyzing archival documents, and utilizing the literature review to support the scholarship of this work. Often archival searches and documents can “prove valuable not only because of what can be learned directly from them but also as stimulus for paths of inquiry that can be pursued only through direct observation and interviewing.”

---

48 Research is granted exempt status by an IRB committee member if the research involves very minimal or no risk to the participant. Researchers must engage in ethical practices that minimize risk to participants.


Interviews were conducted using a “semi-structured” interview style and interview participants’ words were recorded or extensive notes were taken throughout the interview.\(^{51}\) If the interview was rich in description the interview was transcribed verbatim. I worked closely with the alumni office on the UM campus to identify women alumna who were on campus in the 1960s to contact for potential interviews. Additionally, snowball sampling occurred resulting in 35 interviews varying in formality and length.

**Significance of the Study**

Although there is a significant amount of literature on the position of deans of women, most of the literature focused on the early to mid-1900s. Literature is missing after the 1950s with the exception of scholarship that discussed the disappearance of the position.\(^{52}\) This study adds to the literature by demonstrating a career progression of one dean of women at a large, public, southern university, to a higher education faculty role and discusses her influence on the women’s movement at that institution.

Additionally, historical works by Sansing and Cabaniss explored the history of UM, however they largely neglected the role of female students, faculty, and administrators.\(^{53}\) For ten years, Dean Katharine Rea served women students as the dean of women. During her tenure as dean of women, the university was racially integrated by James Meredith in 1962. Historians, including Nadine Cohodas, Charles Eagles, and Frank Lambert, provided a minimal account of the involvement of women employees and women students during the civil rights movement at

---


\(^{53}\) Sansing, The University of Mississippi.; Cabaniss, The University of Mississippi.
This study adds to the literature on the civil rights movement highlighting the involvement of women students and administrators.

After Rea resigned as the dean of women she became a faculty member in the School of Education at UM, where she taught in the higher education and student personnel graduate program. Furthermore, Rea taught one of the first courses focused on women in higher education at UM. This work adds to the knowledge and history of women’s education at UM, along with cultivating further knowledge behind the founding of the Sarah Isom Women’s Center which opened at UM in the early 1980s. Finally, this case study contributes to the national conversation of the impact of women’s centers and women’s studies programs on college campuses.

**Terms and Definitions**

This study focuses largely on the position of dean of women. A dean of women was a woman hired to supervise and support women students on college campuses, especially at coeducational institutions. The deans of women were common on most coeducational institutions from the late 1800s with the hiring of Alice Freeman Palmer at the University of Chicago, to the 1960s. In this dissertation, I utilized the lower case spelling of dean of women when discussing the profession or a generalized position, but will capitalize the spelling, *Dean of Women*, when writing a specific and proper title of an individual.

Specifically, this dissertation examines the influence and experiences of Katharine Rea, Dean of Women at the University of Mississippi. The University of Mississippi is commonly known as *Ole Miss*, especially on the campus and in the South. Generally, I will use “UM” as the

---


abbreviation for the University of Mississippi; however campus documents and interview participants may refer to the university as *Ole Miss*. For example, the campus yearbook is known as the *Ole Miss Yearbook*.

In many archival documents, interviews, and early publications regarding women students, the term “coed” or “college coed” were used to describe women students. In the 1960s the term was considered proper in most university publications at UM; thus, I will utilize that term when describing social and educational experiences of women students from that time. The term “girl” was also written in many of the archival experiences when describing women college students. “Girl” may be used in a direct quote from a document or interview.

In many publications, archival documents, and interviews the term “dorm,” “dormitory,” or “residence hall” are interchangeable. The most common term used in the 1950s through the 1970s to describe an on-campus building where students kept living quarters, where they usually shared a small room with at least one other student, was called a “dorm” or “dormitory”; thus, those terms were utilized most frequently in this study.

The first-wave of the feminist movement in the U.S. is also known as the women’s suffrage movement that took place from the mid-1800s until 1920. During the first-wave women advocated for the right to vote and run for public office. After the ratification of the 19th amendment in the year 1920, giving women the right to vote, women’s activism was stifled.56

The second-wave feminist movement, and women’s liberation movement, was used to discuss the late 1960s until the early 1980s when women’s groups advocated for women’s rights. Often, women’s groups fought for liberation and equality, particularly equality in the workforce. Women fought for equal pay for equal work. Furthermore, women advocated for the

---

establishment of childcare centers. Lack of proper childcare often prevented women from finding employment. The late-1960s to the mid-1970s were the most active years of the second-wave feminist movement in the U.S. Both terms, second-wave feminist movement, and women’s liberation, are used interchangeably by researchers to describe the work by women for equal rights in the 1960s and 1970s. As a result of the second-wave feminist movement, terms like “Equal pay for equal work; Affirmative action; Title IX; The politics of housework; The glass ceiling…Date rape; Roe v Wade,” have become commonly known terms in education and gender studies fields. I utilized the term second-wave feminist movement to describe a time in U.S. history as well as an agenda of activists, mainly female activists, who worked for women’s equality.

Procedures of the Study

This section clarifies the qualitative method of inquiry for the study. In seeking to discover the role Katharine Rea played in the experiences of women students at UM in the 1960s as the dean of women, developing an understanding of her role as a quiet activist during the second wave-feminist movement in the university community, and finally discovering her impact on women’s studies and the development of the women’s center at UM, this dissertation utilized the following research methods. First, I discussed the tradition of historical inquiry especially as it relates to the study of higher education. Next, I outlined the methodology for collecting sources including an archival search and oral history interviews. Finally, a description of the procedures for the review, evaluation of the sources, and analysis is discussed.

---

57 Ibid., 57-67.
Inquiry

Telling the story of a person’s experiences is history.59 According to Rousmaniere history is divided into four themes including “intellectual, political, social, and cultural.”60 (p. This dissertation utilizes social history as a main focal area, with cultural history as a secondary focus. Social history focuses on social groups and individuals, and cultural history examines how a group makes “a shared system of meaning.”61 Interpretation is a part of historical research, but as Creswell and Gall, Gall, and Borg illustrated, a constructivist paradigm seeks to find understanding from individual experiences.62 In qualitative research the constructivist worldview seeks to understand “the specific contexts in which people live and work…to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants.”63

Additionally, this study involves one woman, Katharine Rea, during a specific time period; thus, the work utilizes a case study analysis approach. Case studies focus on a particular time period and activity, event, or individual.64 This study focuses on historical data as Katharine Rea passed away in 2005. According to Yin a case study approach to research is appropriate when the subject is focused on a contemporary issue.65 Although much of the research in this study includes historical data and oral history interviews, the progression of Katharine Rea’s career, and the emergence and development of women’s studies courses at UM from her

61 Ibid., 45.
63 Creswell, Research Design, 8.
64 Ibid.
advocacy create a contemporary component to this study. Questions remain regarding the role of women’s studies courses on college campuses and the necessary support of women students; thus, I utilized both a historical and case study approach to this research.

**Researcher Background**

Moreover, in historical research and qualitative research, I, the researcher, am the instrument used in the study. My personal experiences, values, assumptions and biases must be identified to provide a background and context to how I make meaning of the information in this study. I am a native Minnesotan, fondly known among my classmates as a “Yankee.” My first semester in graduate school brought me to the library archives at UM where I found the Katharine Rea collection and became fascinated with her work as a dean of women, and the 1960s. The collection of Katharine Rea is very small compared to her predecessor, Dean Estella Hefley. I was curious, how a female administrator on a southern campus in the 1960s, who was present and active during the racial integration of the campus could only have a small collection of materials. That curiosity, led to a historical research project that I have continued studying throughout my graduate program.

The interest in the second-wave feminist movement, including the development of civic organizations like the National Organization for Women (NOW), grew as I continued to research Katharine Rea. Studying the second-wave feminist movement in a southern context is of great personal interest. As a researcher of history, feminist movements, and Katharine Rea, I must remain cognizant of my assumptions. As an outsider of southern traditions, I may misinterpret or not understand common sayings, slang words, or traditions of southerners. I will need to ask

---

questions for clarification. My knowledge of southern places and culture is limited so my research utilizes literature review to further enhance those pieces of the study.

Furthermore, my career and educational background is in student affairs. For six years I worked at an institution of higher education in the enrollment management division and in student affairs. My work focused on academically at-risk students and retention efforts. When working in student affairs I was a member of professional organizations including the American Association of College Personnel Administrators, and the National Association of Orientation Directors. Those professional experiences, networking opportunities, and educational background, will shape my values of the profession and the contribution of women in the field.

Methods of Inquiry

This historical case study utilizes the collaborative work of Gasman to frame the research methods. The three major components of the qualitative method of inquiry included conducting oral history interviews, interpreting archival research, and utilizing the literature review to form the scholarship of this work. Works of historical research do not have a standard format for reporting. Researchers can present their work in a chronological fashion, or according to the various themes uncovered in the study. Although this study focuses on a time period from 1957 to 1979, this study will blend the thematic and chronological approaches based on the time period and questions asked of my interview participants. Most importantly, my interpretations of the primary and secondary sources are discussed along with the interpretations and comparisons of other historians who have studied similar phenomenon.

---

68 Gall, Gall, and Borg, *Educational Research.*
Primary sources in historical research are records that were produced by a person who was a witness or participant in the researched event.\textsuperscript{69} Primary sources can consist of people, documents, records, and relics.\textsuperscript{70} In this study I interviewed family members of Katharine Rea, colleagues, fellow activists, and friends to learn about Rea’s life and involvement in the UM community. Additionally, I examined meeting minutes from various organizations and official university reports. In literature, the person who conducted the study or generated the ideas is the primary literature source. Literature that summarizes original thoughts, ideas, or findings of someone else’s work is a secondary source.\textsuperscript{71}

The use of secondary sources in historical research may include the account of events by individuals who were not present during the event. A common secondary source is the review of the literature on an event or topic. For this dissertation, the use of literature will be a major component of the research materials, including utilizing studies from other historians who have studied deans of women. Bibliographies and historical encyclopedias are secondary sources common in historical research studies.\textsuperscript{72} According to Rousmaniere, secondary sources “often interpret the primary sources.”\textsuperscript{73} For this study, newspaper accounts of events from \textit{The Mississippian}, the daily student newspaper at UM, and local newspapers from the Oxford, Mississippi and surrounding communities were used to verify historical events, accounts, and stories.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Gall, Gall, and Borg, \textit{Educational Research}.
\textsuperscript{73} Rousmaniere, “Historical Research,” 46.
Oral History Interviews

In historical research two major sources are used, primary and secondary. I conducted extensive oral history interviews as a source to gather understanding, and interpret experiences of students at the UM during the late 1950s to the late 1960s. In this dissertation, I interviewed 35 former students, friends, faculty, family, and former colleagues of Katharine Rea and gathered a first-hand account of her work.

I incorporated the six characteristics of oral history interviews described by Denzin and Lincoln to frame my interview procedures.74 The first characteristic is that an oral history interview is just that, an interview. There are questions asked by an interviewer and answered by an interviewee. Moreover, oral history interviews have a storytelling quality, it is important to create dialog between the interviewer and interviewee. The three main and open-ended questions for the interviews are: 1) How did you know Katharine Rea?; 2) What memories or stories do you recall of Katharine Rea?; and 3) How would you describe Katharine Rea’s work with women students during her time as Dean of Women or in her role as a faculty member? Additional follow-up questions were asked depending upon the interview participant. In this historical case study it is important the interviewee is given the opportunity to share their memories, stories, and experiences of Katharine Rea and UM.

The second characteristic described by Denzin and Lincoln is the interview should be recorded.75 After receiving verbal consent from interview participants, the interview was recorded with a digital recorder and saved on a private computer, if possible. If the interviewee declined the use of a recording device, I conducted the interview for information and prospective future sources of data and took notes of the conversation with the interview participant.

75 Ibid.
Interviews that provided a rich, thick description Katharine Rea, a UM event, or participant experience were transcribed verbatim. Extensive notes were taken during participant interviews, regardless if the interview was recorded. Notes from every interview were kept in a file cabinet.

Third, although oral history interviews are seeking to gain knowledge and understanding of a previous event or person, the interviewer must have an understanding of the event and the interviewee’s relationship to that event.76 To ensure I was prepared for each individual interview, when possible, I reviewed the Ole Miss Yearbook or other archival documents for each interview participant to understand in what clubs and activities the former student participated at UM. A comprehensive review of UM history, especially the period from the 1960s through 1980, was conducted prior to the interview phase.

The fourth, and arguably one of the most important characteristics of an oral history interview outlined by Denzin and Lincoln is the understanding that the interviewee is relying on memory and the interview is subjective.77 To help interview participants start the conversation, lead-in interview questions including undergraduate major, and campus activity involvement, were asked if appropriate. Furthermore, the triangulation of data, as discussed later in this section was an important piece in this dissertation.

Fifth, the interview “is an inquiry in depth” and seeks a thick description of the events, person, or subject in question.78 I worked to ensure the interview participants were comfortable in the interview setting by conducting the interview in person, if possible. Moreover, if it was feasible, the interview was conducted in a location chosen by the interviewee. I asked open ended questions of the participants and allow ample time for the interview. Furthermore, after the

76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid., 452.
initial interview was completed, I followed-up with each participation with a personal thank you card and/or email.

Finally, for the interview to qualify as an oral history interview, Denzin and Lincoln argued the interview must be of spoken word.\textsuperscript{79} Information can be lost through notes and technology so hearing the spoken word of participants is important. To ensure the full understanding of the interview, I conducted each interview, and conduct follow-up interviews via telephone, or in person when possible.

I selected participants in this study for oral history interviews in the following ways. First, using archival institutional data to collect names of women who were involved in campus activities from 1957, the first year Katharine Rea served as dean of women, to 1979, the year Rea retired as a faculty member. Archival institutional data includes women inductees into the Ole Miss Hall of Fame, former executive officers of the Associated Women’s Students organization, officers of campus sororities, and executive members of campus clubs and organizations. The names of these women students were gathered by using \textit{Ole Miss Yearbook} as a source. Once the names of potential oral history interview participants are gathered using institutional archives, I collaborated with the Office of Alumni Affairs at UM to contact former students for interviews.\textsuperscript{80} The letter requesting an interview demonstrates how I approached potential participants.

The women who agreed to participate in an oral interview were asked if they know other women alumni, former faculty, or friends of Katharine Rea who may wish to participate in this study. This technique is known as snowball sampling and generated numerous interview

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} See Appendix A for invitation to participate in interviews.
participants.\textsuperscript{81} It was common for an individual to be suggested several times throughout the oral history interview process. Though a search of the institutional archives including the \textit{Ole Miss Yearbook}, campus newspaper \textit{The Mississippian}, and other reports, I attempted to contact faculty and staff who were employed at UM during Dean Rea’s employment. Again, snowball sampling was a part of the interview process to reach as many potential participants as possible for this study.

The interviews with women alumni were conducted using a “semi-structured” type style as described by Kvale.\textsuperscript{82} As a semi-structured interview, there were specific questions each participant was asked, but the interview was flexible enough to allow the participant to share his or her stories, reflections, and attitudes about Dean Rea. In qualitative research the relationship is important between the instrument, me, and the participant. To begin the interview, general questions about the participant including hometown, major area of study in college, years of attendance at UM, and activity involvement were asked.\textsuperscript{83}

Each participant was asked to give verbal consent to have the interview digitally recorded and for the use, and direct quotation, of his or her words. After the interview is completed, the recording, if available, was saved to a computer using a secure, digital dropbox. Participants who are directly quoted or cited in the study were given the opportunity to review their words for tone and accuracy in the final document.

\textbf{Archival Document Analysis}

A second method of data collection was through examining institutional documents and records. The archival documents helped identify oral history participants, but more importantly,\textsuperscript{81} Creswell, \textit{Educational Research}; Gall, Gall, and Borg, \textit{Educational Research}; Patton, \textit{Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods}, 3rd ed.\textsuperscript{82} Kvale, “Doing Interviews.”\textsuperscript{83} See Appendix B for preliminary interview questions.
the archival documents were used to describe the events, people, and stories of the UM community. Patton stated archival searches and documents can be “valuable not only because of what can be learned directly from them but also as stimulus for paths of inquiry that can be pursued only through direct observation and interviewing.”

There is a small collection of Katharine Rea’s materials located in the J.D. Williams Archives and Special Collections on the campus of UM. Additionally, her last remaining sibling, Bud Rea of Jacksonville, FL has a few of her personal documents. Permission from Mr. Rea was granted to analyze the documents in his possession. Other primary documents analyzed included the Annual Report of the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi to the Board of Trustees which is held in the UM Archives and Special Collections. Other primary documents included the Ole Miss Yearbook, and the student newspaper The Mississippian, and the Associated Women Students Handbook. Finally, to understand the institutional culture, meeting minutes and other documents from the Student Personnel Division in the archives, the James Meredith Collection, and the Sarah Isom Center Collection were examined.

Finally, Katharine Rea was involved in several organizations in the Oxford and university community. The League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, and the American Association of University Professors are all organizations in which Rea held a leadership role. Each of those organizations have documents and materials at the UM Archives and Special Collections that were analyzed and included in this historical work.

According to Creswell documents, whether public or private, are advantageous to qualitative research. Personal journals, or diaries, or participants provide researchers accounts of events, stories, and history that may not be available through interviews. Newspaper stories,

---


23
meeting minutes, and other printed documents such as school yearbooks, provide researchers information about the studied phenomena.

However, documents can be difficult to obtain and locate. Archival documents can be difficult to authenticate or can have incomplete information. According to Gall et al., intentional documents are documents that were designed to serve as a way to record the past. An example of an intentional document includes a campus yearbook. An unpremeditated document is one that is not written with a historical purpose or intent, for example a memo to a colleague is considered unpremeditated. Both intentional and unpremeditated documents were utilized in this study.

**Review of the Literature**

A review of the literature was examined to show Dean Rea’s experiences as a dean of women at UM and a female faculty member “are in concordance with the existing research…or contradict existing research.” The areas of concentration for the literature review in this study focused on deans of women, the rise of the student personnel division and elimination of the position of deans of women, the development of women’s centers and women’s studies programs on college campuses, and the second-wave feminist movement. Drawing from the literature review, oral history interviews, and archival data allowed me to interpret the information around the case study of Katharine Rea. According to Rousmaniere there is not one answer based on the historical data, rather “history is interpretation of the past, drawing on available sources, and it is the historian who does the interpretation.”

---

86 Gall, Gall, and Borg, *Educational Research*.
88 Rousmaniere, “Historical Research,” 33.
Evaluation of Sources

To evaluate the sources used in this dissertation document analysis was completed. According to Gall et al. the ability of the researcher to analyze historical documents, and the ability to determine the authenticity of the sources during the study will ultimate determine the value of the work.\(^8^9\) The ability to critique sources and determine authenticity of the sources is called historical criticism.\(^9^0\) Document analysis has several components that can be challenging. According to Patton, gaining access to documents can be difficult and “linking documents with outer sources, including interviews” can be problematic.\(^9^1\)

Moreover, Charles cautioned a common threat to historical research is external criticism, or documents or participants that are providing false information.\(^9^2\) The second most common threat is internal criticism, or an unintentional inaccuracy in the source. Gall et al., warned that internal criticism is more difficult to assess because the researcher or historian must make a judgment call about the source.\(^9^3\) Personal documents and photographs from the Rea family were analyzed for authenticity. The family was open to sharing documents, stories, and artifacts from the life of Katharine Rea; it was important I evaluated if there were missing pieces of information. I analyzed the context of the written material carefully, including personal letters from Rea to family members, and to Rea from students, colleagues, and family members. Finally, the descriptions of events at UM and of Katharine Rea from former students were critically evaluated. I considered the materials that were not included in an archival collection or available from family. I was critical of the missing information to complete the case study.

Furthermore, the information gathered from oral history interviews was critically evaluated for

---

\(^8^9\) Gall, Gall, and Borg, *Educational Research.*

\(^9^0\) Ibid.


\(^9^2\) C. M. Charles, *Introduction to Educational Research.*

\(^9^3\) Gall, Gall, and Borg, *Educational Research.*
tone, collaboration or opposition to archival materials, and consistency with other interview participants stories.

**Analysis**

The three major components of data collection in this study included: archival document analysis, oral history interviews, and a comprehensive literature review. As each component compliments one another, all three were conducted simultaneously. To gather potential participants for the oral history interviews, a review of the archival documents was completed. To further understand what documents, artifacts, and materials needed examination, the literature review was conducted earlier in the process. I expected to review different archival documents following the oral history interviews, and I conducted follow-up interviews after further document collection and analysis.

To validate information, I utilized triangulation techniques. Triangulation, as described by Creswell, is using a variety of sources to verify information to build upon themes in the research.94 By working to achieve triangulation, the credibility of the work was enhanced. As Patton wrote, linking documents and archival material to interviews or other sources can help ensure accuracy and authenticity of the source.95

A large section of the data collection was focused on oral history interviews. After the interview was conducted the researcher determined, based on the thick description and significance of the interview, if the interview should be transcribed verbatim. As this dissertation was focused on the experience and work of one person, Katharine Rea, the interviews were examined to focus on stories, descriptions, or issues derived from the interviews to try and triangulate the information to achieve the highest level of accuracy.

---


95 Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed.
To ensure credibility from the interviews, triangulation was utilized as well as member checking. Creswell and Gall et al. described member checking as the ability for participants to review statements and themes derived from their interviews.\footnote{Creswell, \textit{Research Design}; Gall, Gall, and Borg, \textit{Educational Research}.} I employed member checking techniques with my participants who were cited or directly quoted in the final document. Participants had the opportunity to review their stories, word choice, and reflections that were included in the final document. If necessary, participants added or removed information to clarify their stories.\footnote{See Appendix C.} If necessary, follow-up interviews were conducted with participants to allow them the opportunity to clarify any statements. The electronic interview files were kept electronically on a secured digital dropbox. Hard copies of any interview transcripts were kept in a file cabinet.

Finally, to ensure accuracy of the information I utilized an expert in the field to review information and themes from the interviews and history of UM. I asked Dr. Thomas (Sparky) Reardon to be the expert in the field for this dissertation. Dr. Reardon completed his historical dissertation on the dean of the student personnel division, Frank Moak, at UM in 2001. Dr. Reardon is knowledgeable about the history of the university, student affairs, and qualitative research methods. I believed Dr. Reardon was an objective expert in the field, and his background enhanced this research. I asked Dr. Reardon to review each stage of my data collection including suggestions on possible interview participants as he has vast knowledge of the history of UM and has many friends in the university community. I asked Dr. Reardon to review the analysis of the archival documents, and the review of the literature. Furthermore, Dr. Leigh McWhite from the J.D. Williams Archives and Special Collections at UM was asked to serve as an expert in the field. Dr. McWhite has a vast knowledge of the archival collections.
including the civil rights papers. Dr. McWhite reviewed the archival collections analyzed for this study. Moreover, Dr. McWhite suggested other collections and literature review material to analyze in this study.

Summary

This study on Katharine Rea focuses on a time period from 1957 to 1979. Through the use of oral history interviews, archival document analysis, and a review of the literature, I sought to answer two main research questions.

1. Who was Katharine Rea?
2. What is her story with the UM community?

The major focus of this work is a historical research study utilizing oral history interviews from former students, colleagues, and family members. Archival research and document analysis, and review of the literature enhanced this historical case study. In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument. I constantly examined my biases and assumptions about the time period, southern culture, and women in higher education. To ensure credibility of the archival research and themes from the oral history interviews, I triangulated the sources. Moreover, the oral history interview participants completed a member check of any quoted information in the final document. Finally, an expert in the field of historical research, and the history of UM, reviewed my data collection and oral history interview processes for accuracy.

Limitations and Delimitations

I anticipated several delimitations with this study. First, this study focuses on a 20 year time period. Events before Dean Rea arrived on campus may have shaped her decisions and viewpoints of the UM student experience. Although this study focuses on Katharine Rea, information revealed regarding previous deans that shaped Rea’s decisions, experiences, or the
impact of her role at UM were included in this study if the information was discovered through the research process. Furthermore, this study concluded after Dean Rea’s retirement in 1979. The institutional history following Dean Rea’s retirement is an area for future research. Second, although this study examined UM history during the 1960s, its primary focus was on the experience of Dean Rea and her influence on women students, not the integration of the campus.

There are several limitations to this study. Interviewing a variety of women students was important to gather an accurate portrayal of the campus, student experience, and interactions with Dean Rea. However, finding students from various backgrounds from the 1960s when Rea was the dean of women, and former students from her time as a faculty member in the 1970s, was somewhat difficult. A second limitation involved the accuracy of students’, relatives’, and former colleague’s memories and stories, especially considering 50 years has passed since Rea arrived on campus. Third, accuracy of archival documents including the student newspaper, and correspondence from Rea to other administrators did not always provide a complete description of the events or stories, or the documents may have been printed with inaccuracies. Ensuring accuracy and truthfulness of personal documents at times was difficult.

Although I was able to gather personal documents and correspondence from Dean Rea’s personal files and University files, it is not possible to corroborate these documents with Dean Rea as she passed away in 2005. Katharine Rea never married and had no children; subsequently, much of her personal effects were lost. The UM archives has a large amount of material from the 1960s; unfortunately, most of the material from that time period is focused on the civil rights movement and racial integration of the campus. Interviewing family members to develop a deeper understanding of Rea’s personal values was difficult as Rea has only one
surviving brother, Bud; however, Bud Rea spoke with me on several occasions throughout this study.

**Organization of the Report**

As I completed the research for this study, the emergent information shaped the organization of report. This first chapter introduces the UM Dean of Women from the 1960s, Katharine Rea, and identified the missing literature on the experiences of women students during her time as dean. This study seeks to understand her role as a dean of women and as an activist during the second-wave feminist movement, in the 1960s and 1970s, including her involvement with women’s rights organizations. From this inquiry, research questions were identified to foster understanding of Rea’s role as dean of women at UM, determine her role as a women’s advocate, and understand her impact on the university community following her retirement as a faculty member in 1979.

Furthermore, the first chapter includes a brief review of the literature on national issues from the 1960s and 1970s including the second-wave feminist movement, the development of the President’s Commission on the Status of Women, the publishing of *The Feminine Mystique* and the literature on former deans of women. Finally, the first chapter includes the research methodology.

The second chapter of the study describes Rea’s dean of women years at UM including her background, job duties, and her experiences at UM, her role as an administrator, and her mentorship of staff, and of students. The research focuses on her work with the National Association of Deans of Women and other professional associations. This scholarship seeks to understand her development as a feminist. Moreover, the second chapter characterizes her role
during the integration of the campus, especially in 1965 when the first Black women enrolled at UM.

The third chapter describes Rea’s work as a faculty member in the School of Education. Specifically, an examination of the courses she taught and her mentorship of graduate students. Furthermore, the chapter clarifies her role with the Black Affairs Committee on the Faculty Senate and her involvement with the American Association of University Professors. The fourth chapter studies Rea’s professional involvement with women’s organizations including the American Association of University Women and the Mississippi League of Women Voters.

Finally, the study concludes with a brief review of Katharine Rea’s professional experience at UM. Furthermore, the fifth chapter discusses Rea’s role as an activist during the second-wave feminist movement.

Review of the Literature

The first college campuses in the U.S. did not admit women students. In 1837, Oberlin College in Ohio became the first institution to become coeducational. Other all-male campuses continued to change their admission policies and began admitting women. Following the American Civil War, the University of Mississippi was left in a difficult financial situation and saw its enrollment plummet. The University of Mississippi was not the only campus in the South that struggled to survive at the end of the Civil War. Many institutions in the region “were all but destroyed, and their clientele and financial support lost.” The financial realities that faced southern institutions after the Civil War forced southern institutions to evaluate their missions and philosophies and adapt in order to survive. At UM, the decision on whether or not to

---

100 Ibid., 248.
admit women, in part to adapt to the new financial realities facing the institution, was decided in
the fall of 1882 as 11 female students enrolled. The women were not allowed to study in the
same rooms with the male students, could not live on campus, or eat in the campus dining
facility. Women at UM were permitted to enroll in liberal arts programs and not vocational, or
preparatory programs, or the law school.

Many of the first women college students in the late 1800s were stereotyped as
“mannish” and unattractive and some suspected that collegiate study would de-value women as
future wives and mothers. When women entered higher education, many administrators and
community leaders believed the women students would need special services, including
intellectual support, and supervision of the girls’ manners. Deans of women were hired to
provide services to women students and monitor their behavior; however, deans of women were
faced with their own barriers.

This review of the literature explores several themes in the history of the deans of
women. First, an exploration of the first women college students and the early deans of women
who were responsible for women student welfare is discussed. Second, the history of the
professional organizations associated with deans of women and their early research is
highlighted. Third, the role of the deans of men is discussed. Fourth, the effect World War II and
the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act had on coeducational campuses and the creation of the
student personnel movement is outlined. Fifth, research from other historians on select deans of

101 Sansing, The University of Mississippi.
102 McCandless, The Past in the Present; Sansing, The University of Mississippi.
103 Gordon, “The Gibson Girl Goes to College.”
104 Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean,”; Herdlein et al., “Deans of Women at Historically Black
Colleges and Universities,”; Herron, “True Spirit of Pioneer Traditions,”; Nidiffer, “From Matron to Maven.”;
Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”; Nidiffer, “Crumbs From the Boys Table.”; Nidiffer, “The First Deans of
Deans of Women Became Men.”
women throughout the country is studied. Sixth, the evolution and new support mechanisms for women students is explained including the development of women’s studies programs and women’s centers. Finally, the rise of the second-wave feminist movement and the effect the movement had on college campuses is examined.

The First Women in Coeducational Higher Education

In the late 19th century, college professors were poor and their profession was not as highly regarded as other careers such as physicians and lawyers. From the founding of Harvard University in 1636 to the end of World War II, college attendance was a rarity for both men and women, and not part of the mainstream population. Institutional choice was limited for women as most public institutions were male-only schools. Although there were concerns over the education of women, taxpayers continued to demand education for women. During and immediately following the Civil War, there were not enough male students to sustain campuses; therefore many institutions began admitting women to ease financial strains. By the late 1800s more institutions began opening their doors for admission of women students. Nidiffer argued the climate for women on college campuses was hostile, and women students were treated in a cold manner, often not welcomed, and historians often question the extent of their access.

The Morrill Act of 1862 supported existing agricultural-based institutions and created new state colleges focused on agriculture and science. Due to the support and development of these public institutions, women had more access to higher education because most of these land-grant institutions were coeducational. Moreover, the creation of the all-female Seven

---

105 Graham, “Expansion and Exclusion.”
106 Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”
Sisters Colleges of the 1870s increased access to higher education for women. Bashaw found it was unusual for women to attend college from 1860-1880 and those women who did attend college were in essence, choosing a degree over a family.

In the early 1900s institutional demographics were changing. According to McCandless by 1900, more than 70 percent of college campuses in the U.S. were coeducational. In part, greater financial resources were available to women students, thus access for women students increased from the 1870s-1910. Although more women were able to attend college, their scholarly ambitions were diminished.

Many were fearful of the consequences on society, and women, if women were to become college educated. There were early concerns that educated women would not be able to bear children because of the harm and stress on their brains. When a physician in the Harvard Medical School, Dr. Edward H. Clarke, published an article that described the limited ability of women’s brains to tolerate the mental stress of higher education, institutions like the University of Wisconsin reconsidered admitting women students.

According to Gordon and Bashaw, the early women students were admitted but not welcomed on coeducational college campuses and had their behavior monitored. Nidiffer argued the first women students from 1870-1880, had dual pressures to not only perform well academically, but to find a career suitable for their level of education. This proved difficult as women were very limited in their career prospects. Most women found they still needed to

---

109 Nidiffer, “Crumbs From the Boys Table.”
111 McCandless, The Past in the Present.
112 Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”
113 Herron, “True Spirit of Pioneer Traditions.” Nidiffer, “Crumbs From the Boys Table.”
114 Nidiffer, “Crumbs From the Boys Table.”
116 Nidiffer, “Crumbs From the Boys Table.”
choose between a career or marriage and family. As a result, many college graduates became mothers and did not have a career outside of the home.

Bashaw discussed access to college for women in the South, arguing that White women had more access to a variety of educational institutions.\textsuperscript{117} Many southern states could not afford dual systems of education for men and women; thus, many state land grant institutions became a popular option for women, especially because of institutional affordability compared to private institutions.\textsuperscript{118}

Similarly, in the South, though women were gaining more access to college campuses, fear was still evident. It was feared women would be a distraction for the male students. There was concern that women would overtake certain academic disciplines which would lower prestige of those programs and make them less desirable to male students resulting in a declining enrollment.\textsuperscript{119} Finally, many were concerned that women students would need protection because they were away from their parents for the first time. The deans of women were hired to “monitor and protect women students.”\textsuperscript{120} McCandless explained most southern women colleges were formed in the early 1900s to educate teachers and only one southern college for women, H. Sophie Newcomb, a memorial college for women in New Orleans, had an endowment in 1900.\textsuperscript{121} Some southern women’s colleges lacked college level rigor, but music and art became a prominent curriculum because they helped support the institution financially.\textsuperscript{122} The lack of academic rigor in some southern women’s colleges upheld the feminine stereotype that education

\begin{flushright}
\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{117} Bashaw, \textit{Stalwart Women}.
  \item \textsuperscript{118} Bashaw, \textit{Stalwart Women}.
  \item \textsuperscript{119} Ibid.; Nidiffer, “Crumbs From the Boys Table.”
  \item \textsuperscript{120} Bashaw, \textit{Stalwart Women}. 42.
  \item \textsuperscript{121} McCandless, \textit{The Past in the Present}.
  \item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{flushright}
in the South taught women about proper behavior and etiquette rather than educating women for leadership abilities.\textsuperscript{123}

Furthermore, Bashaw reasoned that whereas women gained admission access, there was still lack of space for women on campus. Facilities for women to use such as a gymnasium, and a place for recreation and socialization were lacking.\textsuperscript{124} To add to the difficulty, many institutions lacked of dormitories for women. For many women, not having a dormitory on campus meant they were unable to attend. Bashaw argued that instead of protection, women students really needed to be defended and the deans of women were going to defend women students and provide vision for colleges.\textsuperscript{125}

**The First Deans of Women**

Before the 1890s most Midwestern universities did not provide, or allow, housing for women students therefore, there was no need for a dean of women to supervise the activities.\textsuperscript{126} Horace Mann, President of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, wanted a boarding house for women as Antioch College was coeducational. Therefore, a matron was hired to supervise the women students. As more women students began enrolling in higher education and more coeducational institutions began securing housing options for women, administrators believed female students needed protection and supervision along with guidance in their morals. To address these issues, institutions began hiring deans of women.\textsuperscript{127}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{124} Bashaw, *Stalwart Women.*
\textsuperscript{125} Bashaw, *Stalwart Women*
\textsuperscript{126} Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”
\end{flushright}
Drum identified LeBarron Briggs as the first person to be named a dean in a student welfare capacity. Briggs became the Dean of the College at Harvard in 1890. Elizabeth Powell Bond became the dean of women at Swarthmore later that year. Because Swarthmore is a women’s only institution, most historians recognize Alice Freeman Palmer as the first Dean of Women. Palmer was hired in 1892 at the University of Chicago to serve as the dean of women and other colleges and universities soon followed. Unlike Swarthmore, the University of Chicago was a coeducational institution; however, classes at the University of Chicago were segregated by sex to exclude women.

Historians who study deans of women suggest Palmer and Marion Talbot to be the two most prominent early deans of women. Both women were deans at the University of Chicago and were great friends. According to Nidiffer, Alice Freeman Palmer became the first dean of women at the University of Chicago in 1892, although she only worked 12 weeks out of the year. Palmer left her position as president of Wellesley College when she married in 1887. Palmer was intrigued by the opportunity to be a faculty member at a coeducation institution, so she left Boston to become professor of history and dean of women at the University of Chicago. When Palmer accepted the position at the University of Chicago, she required her friend and mentee, Marion Talbot, to be given a position at the university. Subsequently, Talbot was the acting dean of women in Palmer’s absence. Marion Talbot became the official dean of women at the University of Chicago in 1895. Talbot came from a prominent Boston family and interacted in the same social circles as Louisa May Alcott, the author of Little Women. Talbot

---

128 Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean.”
129 Schwartz, “Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education.”
131 Nidiffer, “From Matron to Maven.”
132 Schwartz, “Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education.”
133 Ibid.; Nidiffer, “From Matron to Maven.”
believed that intellectually women were just as capable as men, yet women needed their own separate place and environment on campus. As the dean of women, Nidiffer suggested Talbot gave women a voice at the University of Chicago and advocated on their behalf to create separate spaces on campus that enabled a safe and nurturing learning environment.\footnote{Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”} This created a separate community on campus for women and they were ensured safety on campus and the ability to maintain propriety, but still provided for a coeducational classroom. Even in their separate spaces on campus, women were expected, and required, to conform to certain standards, including using proper manners.

According to Schwartz early deans of women were viewed as spinsters who were out to be women disciplinarians and take fun away from women students. However, Schwartz argued that much of the histories of college students during the late 1800s to early 1900s is male dominated. Deans of women not only provided guidance to women students on college campuses, they conducted research to improve the experience on college campuses, and viewed their position as a part of a scholarly profession.\footnote{Schwartz, “Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education.”; Schwartz, “How Deans of Women Became Men.”} Schwartz affirmed deans of women should be applauded for their research and scholarly contribution to higher education.\footnote{Schwartz, “Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education.”}

Herron and Schwartz indicated that many of the first deans of women were hired for dual roles including teaching positions.\footnote{Herron, “True Spirit of Pioneer Traditions.”; Schwartz, “How Deans of Women Became Men.”} Herron argued that being a dean of women was a “back door” path into a faculty position; however, the faculty position usually received secondary consideration and focus.\footnote{Herron, “True Spirit of Pioneer Traditions,” 7.} Another dean of women, Lois Mathews, was hired for dual roles.\footnote{Nidiffer, “From Matron to Maven.”; Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”} Lois Mathews, who was the dean of women at the University of Wisconsin from 1911-1918, was
hired to be a faculty member in history, but most of her time was spent on administrative tasks leaving her little time to pursue her academic pursuits in the history department.\textsuperscript{140} Thus, Mathews invested her time and energies into her work as dean of women.

Three major principles guided Mathews’ work as a dean of women. Mathews strove to develop women’s education, ensure individual development of women students, and encourage social responsibility. Mathews developed and sponsored an annual vocational conference which lasted for 35 years. One of the most influential contributions of Mathews was her book, \textit{The Dean of Women}, published in 1915.\textsuperscript{141} According to Nidiffer, Mathews believed “deans should be scholars, experts on women’s education, and general advocates for women who expanded the social vocational, and intellectual opportunities available to them.”\textsuperscript{142}

Nidiffer argued in the progressive era (1880-1915) deans of women did two things; first they improved the college environment and opportunity for women students and second, they created a new professional identity for their careers as deans of women.\textsuperscript{143} The deans of women of the progressive era were, in most cases, the first women administrators on coeducational campuses.

When more women enrolled in coeducational institutions, administrators and faculty felt women students needed protection from their new environment and needed supervision. Women were not seen as intellectual students by popular view on college campuses. Drum affirmed that many women came to get a “Mrs.” Degree and took their studies less seriously.\textsuperscript{144} Bashaw noted that women around the 1920s, especially those in the middle class, were able to attend college.\textsuperscript{145}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{141} Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”
  \item \textsuperscript{142} Nidiffer, “From Matron to Maven,” 22.
  \item \textsuperscript{143} Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”; Nidiffer, “The First Deans of Women.”
  \item \textsuperscript{144} Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean.”
  \item \textsuperscript{145} Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Both serious students who did not want marriage and women who saw education as a way to find a husband enrolled.

The attitude and belief that women were enrolling in college only to find a husband created a negative impact on deans of women as their role was not taken seriously either. Deans of women faced unfair stereotypes of them personally and of their position. For example, deans of women who were unmarried faced the harsh stereotype that they were spinsters.\textsuperscript{146} As a result, women deans were forced to deal with this negative stereotype. Alternately, acting as an authority figure as a woman proved difficult for many deans of women. Nidiffer argued that being in a professional capacity and being authoritative was seen as “unfeminine.”\textsuperscript{147}

Gordon argued by the early 1900s and during the progressive era, popular magazines portrayed college women as beauties in the tradition of the “Gibson Girl.”\textsuperscript{148} This change in portrayal illustrated the social change of an educated woman. A “Gibson Girl” was fun-loving and feminine. Gordon argued that earlier barriers facing women students were diminished as women developed their own college culture, which included clubs and organizations, social events, and other entertainment. An educated woman still faced the dilemma of having a career or having a family as it was very difficult to have both. Some educated women wanted a husband and family but “could not find men who wanted an educated, independent wives.”\textsuperscript{149} Being unmarried was not easy for women as socially it was still not accepted as she was pitied or scorned because of her “supposed or actual homosexuality.”\textsuperscript{150} Women supported each other and Gordon argued many women remained in “lifelong partnerships” with one another. The idea of

\textsuperscript{146} Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean.”; Nidiffer, “The First Deans of Women.”
\textsuperscript{147} Nidiffer, “The First Deans of Women,” 14.
\textsuperscript{148} Gordon, “The Gibson Girl Goes to College.”
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 223.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 226.
the “Gibson Girl” disappeared in the 1910s and college women still faced difficulties following their studies.

The view of women students as not being serious stewards of their education extended to the view of deans of women on campuses. Drum believed that the negative view of women students drove many on college campuses to not understand the goals of the dean of women and support her genuine concern for women students.151 The dean of women wanted to eliminate the “repressive role” that was viewed on college campuses to instead support intellectual and personal leadership for women students.152 Subsequently, the deans of women worked to support and improve opportunities for women students on campus; however, the women students felt the deans were just ensuring they followed the rules. Students sometimes viewed the deans of women as matronly chaperons who were to ensure women students were behaving themselves. As such, although the deans of women were supportive of women students and were dedicated to improving their educational experience, often women students resented the need for the deans of women.153

One of the deans of women who was resented by some of her students was Mary Bidwell Breed.154 Nidiffer explained Mary Bidwell Breed faced resentment at Indiana University from both students who saw her as a threat to their freedom, and male faculty who did not want a woman to have any administrative power.155 Still, Breed worked to overcome the resentment and continued to support women students. Breed pressed to have women students become involved in policy and program development including social gathering activities, lecture series, and etiquette and entertainment challenges.

151 Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean.”
152 Ibid., 5.
153 Nidiffer, “The First Deans of Women.”
154 Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”
155 Ibid.
Although deans of women were faced with criticism from some of the women students, and male faculty, that did not deter the deans from advocating for more opportunities for the women students. Nidiffer examined the development of an expertise among the deans of women. In 1906, Ada Comstock, Dean of Women at the University of Minnesota, pushed the university to meet “higher needs of women, such as sense of community, leadership roles, employment and intellectual opportunity.” Furthermore, Nidiffer highlighted five “phases” of the careers of deans of women. First, deans worked for professional recognition of the position. Second, they sought to build on understanding that women students had needs that must be met by the college or university. Third, the deans of women contended to withstand the resistance to their role on campus by the male faculty. Fourth, the deans worked with women students to overcome their resistance to male faculty and students who resented their presence on campus. Finally, the culminating phase of the career for a dean of women involved providing women students with genuine access to the university, not just admission.

Deans of women faced other challenges. As Nidiffer explained, as more women enrolled, resources were not equitable, especially in the Midwest. Many institutions had a lack of housing, no access to medical support, or limited physical education facilities for women students. Fewer scholarships existed for women students and the negative climate on college campuses was difficult for women students to overcome. Clubs and organizations, groups, and other societies, excluded women and a few faculty ignored women students in class. As a way to combat hostility and create opportunities, women deans supported women students in beginning their own literary societies, starting their own magazines, newspapers, and sororities. Other

---

156 Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”
157 Ibid., 146.
158 Nidiffer, “The First Deans of Women.”
159 Nidiffer, Pioneering Deans of Women.; Nidiffer, “Crumbs From the Boys Table.”
initiatives deans of women developed included student government and hall associations for women.\textsuperscript{160}

Additionally, the deans of women planned social activities for the women but enforced strict time limits on the students so the activities would not interfere with their studies. Deans of women gave personal and academic advice to the women, and helped with finding off-campus employment, which proved to be more difficult for the female students.\textsuperscript{161} As articulated by Schwartz, much of the foundational work conducted by the early deans of women outlined much of the student affairs work continued today including counseling, advisement of students, admissions and orientation, housing and career services.\textsuperscript{162}

**The Progression of the Position**

The deans of women were active in improving their profession, their skillset, and their collegial relationships with other deans of women. Early deans of women, such as Marion Talbot and Lois Mathews, were instrumental in conducting research and forming professional relationships with other deans of women to improve their abilities as deans of women, and ultimately improve the experience for women on college campuses. Drum argued that the expectations and responsibilities in student life varied by region and the type of institution served.\textsuperscript{163} Early residential colleges in the U.S. had a more restrictive model enforced on students. Faculty were responsible for much of the discipline outside of the classroom. Drum contended faculty did not enjoy being responsible for student behavior, thus the role of disciplinarian was given to the deans of women.\textsuperscript{164}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{160} Nidiifer, “Advocates on Campus.”
\bibitem{161} Herron, “True Spirit of Pioneer Traditions.”
\bibitem{162} Schwartz, “Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education.”
\bibitem{163} Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean.”
\bibitem{164} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
Developing Legitimacy and Professionalism

Nidiffer described Talbot as a catalyst for change for the deans of women and outlined four steps that helped implement change to the position of dean of women. The first step defined by Nidiffer was “Laying the Intellectual Foundation.” Founding of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae by Marion Talbot and her mother, Emily Talbot, helped college graduates find employment and created a network of contemporaries. Talbot articulated and shared her beliefs that women were just as smart as men. Although Talbot believed women were equally as intelligent, she remained firm that separate social opportunities must exist from male students, but the classroom should be filled with both men and women.

The next step defined by Nidiffer was “Initiating Collective Activity.” Initiatives included a conference with Midwestern deans of women in 1903. Not surprisingly, housing was the most pressing concern at the conference. By 1905 the group decided to only allow deans of women from state institutions from the Midwest, with the exception of Marion Talbot, founder of the conference, to attend the conferences. The conferences were the first opportunity for many deans of women to receive and give support to other deans as well as share experiences, and practices. From these conferences Nidiffer demonstrated that a standard of practice was developed and new lines of communication were opened. Although women students wanted “full access” to the opportunities in college, it appeared many women students did not understand the role deans of women provided in the effort to achieve that access. Nidiffer acknowledged that

165 Nidiffer, “From Matron to Maven.”
166 Ibid., 19.
167 Nidiffer, “From Matron to Maven.”
168 Ibid., 19.
169 Ibid., 20.
deans of women were not always welcome at their institutions by both faculty and students and at times, students were fearful that their freedom would be limited because of the dean.\(^{170}\)

The last two steps Nidiffer outlined, “Becoming an Expert,” and “Creating a Professional Literature and Professional Association” ostensibly cemented the position as a legitimate profession.\(^{171}\) Nidiffer highlighted Ada Comstock, Dean of Women at the University of Minnesota in 1906. Comstock gathered data on women students and published some of her findings. These efforts along with other research and campus programs helped push the profession to give women more leadership opportunities and improve the climate on campuses.\(^{172}\)

**Professional Organizations**

As the profession grew and more deans of women sought development opportunities and support for their position, professional organizations became established. This section will highlight two of the organizations and provide a history of their development. The work of the founders of the organizations and the first conferences are further explored.

**Association of Collegiate Alumni**

The Association of Collegiate Alumni (ACA) was founded in 1881 by Marion Talbot.\(^{173}\) The association began awarding fellowships to women to pursue doctorates in their desired field. Following the fellowships from the ACA, other scholarships and fellowship opportunities were developed to help support women in higher education.\(^{174}\)

---

\(^{170}\) Nidiffer, “From Matron to Maven.”

\(^{171}\) Ibid., 21, 22.

\(^{172}\) Nidiffer, “From Matron to Maven.”


\(^{174}\) Bashaw, “To Serve the Needs of Women.”; Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”
The deans of women were active in collaboration and mentorship with one another. The ACA started a professional journal and in 1903 a two day conference was held for deans of women. Nidiffer wrote that 18 women attended the first conference and at that meeting Mary Bidwell Breed, of Indiana University, was elected president for the next scheduled meeting in 1905.\textsuperscript{175} At the first meeting in 1903, the deans of women discussed “housing of women students, training in etiquette and social skills, women’s self-government, leadership opportunities for women students, and women’s intercollegiate athletics.”\textsuperscript{176} The 1905 conference was titled “Conference of Deans and Advisors of Women in State Universities” and all the participants came from Midwest institutions except the dean of women from the University of California, Lucy Sprague.\textsuperscript{177}

The organization and conference meetings sought to emphasize and promote the premise that admission of women into college was not enough. Nidiffer described other student needs that were of importance at the conference meetings and discussed by the deans of women in attendance. “Housing, adequate meals, rest, and good health…higher needs of women such as intellectual parity, career aspirations, leadership opportunities, and sense of community must also be addressed.”\textsuperscript{178} At the 1905 meeting participants developed standards of practice and communication for their profession, created a specific identity of the deans of women, and established the position as a professional field. At the end of each meeting resolutions were adopted.\textsuperscript{179}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{175} Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”
\textsuperscript{176} Schwartz, “Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education,” 507.
\textsuperscript{177} Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., 143.
\textsuperscript{179} Nidiffer, “The First Deans of Women.”
\end{flushleft}
American Association of University Women

In 1921 the ACA merged with the Southern Association of Collegiate Alumnae to become the American Association of University Women (AAUW). The AAUW was headquartered in Washington, D.C. and its first president was Ada Comstock, Dean of Women at the University of Minnesota.\textsuperscript{180} The AAUW wanted to support and create intellectual opportunities for women students and further cultivate a sense of community among deans of women.\textsuperscript{181} According to Nidiffer, part of the mission of the AAUW was to garner understanding from other university officials that academic standards were not lowered on college campuses just because women were present.\textsuperscript{182} Other research and scholarship was identified by Talbot to demonstrate that institutions needed money for facilities, such as a gymnasium and more women faculty. The AAUW supported women students and women faculty.

According to Bashaw, when women gained the right to join other professional organizations that were previously only available to men, women felt conflicted over which organization to join.\textsuperscript{183} Balancing professional organizations that were always open to women with new found professional development opportunities challenged deans of women. During the Cold War, the AAUW increased fellowship funding, especially for scientists, where women pursued research opportunities. Similarly, the AAUW kept their professional journal focused on women’s issues, research, and the contribution and value of the fellowships given by the organization. Ada Comstock, a former dean of women at the University of Minnesota, and later president of Radcliffe College, was a staunch supporter of the fellowship program. Comstock hoped the fellowship would help diminish obstacles for women in higher education. The

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{180} Nidiffer, \textit{Pioneering Deans of Women}.
\textsuperscript{181} Bashaw, “To Serve the Needs of Women.”; Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”
\textsuperscript{182} Nidiffer, “Advocates on Campus.”
\textsuperscript{183} Bashaw, “To Serve the Needs of Women.”
\end{flushleft}
fellowship program by the AAUW helped legitimize the organization as a professional group for women and not as a ladies society or a social club.\textsuperscript{184}

Unfortunately, the AAUW was not inclusive or supportive of all professional women. According to Eisenmann professional organizations for deans of women in the 1950s, including the AAUW, restricted membership in branch groups to White only educators.\textsuperscript{185} Lucy Diggs Slowe of Howard University created the National Association of College Women to provide opportunities for Black educators when the AAUW would not allow membership or participation of Black women deans. Much like the AAUW, the National Association of College Women limited membership to approved institutions and organized committees to address various educational issues including policy, membership requirements, and interracial issues.\textsuperscript{186}

**National Association of Deans of Women**

In 1916 Kathryn McLean, in partnership with the National Education Association (NEA), held a meeting in New York City for deans of women. That meeting transformed into the National Association of Deans of Women (NADW), and McLean was elected president of the organization and in 1918 the NADW was incorporated.\textsuperscript{187} Nidiffer argued that by 1920 the ACA and NADW were “serving two different types of women professionals.”\textsuperscript{188} The major focus of the NADW was providing training for deans of women. Furthermore, Bashaw illustrated the NADW did not have many representatives from southern universities from 1916-1936.\textsuperscript{189} The NADW sought to standardize the profession, in part, to help diminish the negative stereotype of

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{185} Eisenmann, “A Time of Quiet Activism,” 1-17.
\textsuperscript{187} Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”; Nidiffer, *Pioneering Deans of Women.*
\textsuperscript{188} Nidiffer, *Pioneering Deans of Women*, 126.
\textsuperscript{189} Bashaw, *Stalwart Women.*
deans of women from the public. In 1926 the organization established headquarters in Washington, D.C.\textsuperscript{190}

Consequently, Bashaw identified the four areas that were developed by the NADW to distinguish as important elements of the position: academic, administrative, advisory, and social duties.\textsuperscript{191} To ensure deans of women from institutions across the country had opportunities for professional development and the opportunity to discuss the various academic, administrative, advisory and social duties the NADW established conferences and provided the outlet to the deans of women. It was important for deans of women to have regional and state connections with their colleagues for support. The regional and state associations helped strengthen the professional network opportunities especially for those women who could not travel to the national meeting.\textsuperscript{192}

In 1933, Agnes Ellen Harris of the University of Alabama was the president of the NADW. The annual convention was held in Cleveland, OH in February of 1934, but due to the Great Depression, membership fell and deans found it difficult to afford to attend the conference.\textsuperscript{193} As a final point, Black members of the NADW found it difficult to attend some of the conferences, especially in the South, as they were not permitted to enter the hotels from the front entrance or use the main passenger elevators. Instead, Black deans of women were forced to enter through the back of the hotel and use freight elevators.\textsuperscript{194}

Moreover, expenses were high for women to attend annual conferences, so from 1922-1937 an annual year book was published to keep members abreast of the happenings of the group. In 1938 the yearbook was discontinued and the \textit{Journal of the National Association of}

\textsuperscript{190}Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”
\textsuperscript{191}Bashaw, \textit{Stalwart Women}.
\textsuperscript{192}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{193}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{194}Ibid.
*Deans of Women* began. The first editor of the journal was Ruth Strang, a graduate of Teachers College. The journal was published for 60 years. As the student personnel landscape changed so did the professional journal.\(^{195}\) The ability of the NADW to adapt to the changing environment of American higher education and the professional development needs of the deans of women kept the organization relevant and an important professional association for deans of women.

The organization continued to change and evolve as professional needs of the deans of women changed. According to Bashaw, in 1956, the NADW changed its name to the National Association of Deans of Women and Counselors (NADWC) and in 1973 the organization transitioned to become the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors (NADWAC) and finally by 1991 was the National Association for Women in Education.\(^{196}\) In 2000, the National Association for Women in Education dissolved and the remaining assets were given to the American Association of University Women. With the dissolution of the organization, the association’s publication, *Initiatives*, ceased to exist.\(^{197}\)

**Training for Deans of Women**

There were other professional development and educational opportunities for deans of women besides membership in professional organizations. Further opportunities for training and education were offered at Teachers College of Columbia University in 1916. In 1916 the institution began offering a graduate program for women to study to become deans of women. Kathryn McLean advocated for the program.\(^{198}\) One of the earliest fellows at Teachers College studying student personnel was Ruth Strang. Strang became one of the most prolific and an early researcher of the profession. In her article, Strang (1928) wrote when researchers are

\(^{195}\) Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”
\(^{196}\) Ibid.
\(^{198}\) Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”
describing the position of deans of women “personal qualities” are still emphasized over academic characteristics. In her study, Strang wanted to know four main questions: 1) What does the dean of women really do? 2) How does a woman know if she can do the work of the position? 3) Where does a woman get trained for the position? 4) If a woman received training is there a position really available?

To answer these questions Strang kept “ten outstanding deans’ schedules” to show what a typical day entailed. It is not clear how the ten deans were chosen in Strang’s mixed-methods study. Activities of the deans included conversing with faculty about a student absence, writing letters of recommendations for students, preparing for class sessions, meeting with residence hall (dormitory) staff, giving permission to a student to attend an out of town dance, and hosting students in their own home in the evenings.

Strang received 103 completed surveys from deans of women in State Teachers Colleges and Normal Schools in the U.S. and overwhelmingly 75 percent stated that “personnel work with students is the kind of work which deans perform most frequently.” Strang divided their responses into five categories including personal advisement of students, social activities, curriculum and teaching, orientation of freshmen, and control of the physical environment.

Next, Strang analyzed the qualifications institutions desired their dean of women behold. Strang found that the qualifications generally listed by the colleges were vague and focused too much on personal qualities which were hard to measure such as “charm.” Strang outlined where students may receive training to become a dean of women. Interestingly the University of

---

200 Ibid.
201 Ibid., 108.
202 Ibid., 109.
203 Strang, “A Method of Gathering Information About the Profession of Dean of Women.”
Oklahoma and Southeast Missouri State Teachers College were the only two southern schools listed. In her explanation for the future of the position, Strang stated that the position still focused heavily on social activities but there is a shift to see the dean of women as an educational leader not just a social leader.204

Through these professional organizations and education, a dramatic shift of thought occurred within the profession. Many deans of women were no longer thought of as spinsters, as some of the earliest deans of women were, but now their work was formidably placed in academic scholarship through research and professional development.205 Schwartz described the evolution to the student affairs profession as a result, in part, by the work of the deans of women that occurred from the late 1800s through World War II.206 Their research, development of professional associations, student guidance, and the development of a graduate program changed the profession. Schwartz argued the deans of women worked tirelessly to support each other and improve their work.207 As early as 1940, researchers recognized the strong support professional organizations provided to deans of women.208

The Development of Student Personnel

Deans of women continued to work to change the educational experience of women students. Deans advocated for access to facilities and opportunities for women students. Deans were forced to balance their on-campus commitments as they conducted research on student guidance and student support. When the deans of women developed professional relationships with colleagues around the country they pushed their profession in a new direction.

204 Ibid.
205 Schwartz, “Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education.”
206 Schwartz, “How Deans of Women Became Men.”
207 Ibid.
Student Personnel Point of View of 1937

Two major works had a drastic effect on student personnel in U.S. higher education, the Student Personnel Point of View of 1937 and the second document, the Student Personnel Point of View of 1949, both written by the American Council on Education (ACE). In 1937, a group of educational professionals met in Washington, D.C. and drafted the Student Personnel Point of View.²⁰⁹ Of the nineteen members on the committee charged with developing a professional statement, Esther Lloyd-Jones was the only active dean of women. The group identified and articulated the experiences and goals which college students should strive to achieve. These professionals wished to promote the “betterment of society” through college education. In support of this goal, the group developed a philosophy on the importance of educating the whole student.²¹⁰ Eight specific areas for student development were identified in the report: intellectual, emotional, physical, social, vocational, moral and religious, economic, and aesthetic growth and education.²¹¹

Administrators of colleges and universities believed it would be difficult for faculty to provide education of the whole student, so a new type of educator emerged. Many of their original duties were for student discipline but their responsibilities grew to include “educational counseling, vocational counseling, the administration of loans and scholarship funds, part-time employment, graduate placement, student health, extracurricular activities, social programs, and a number of others.”²¹²

²¹⁰ Ibid., 39.
²¹¹ Ibid.
²¹² Ibid., 40.
The report by the ACE described how the job duties evolved into student services on college campuses. Areas encompassed in student services identified in the document included orientation, career assessments, placement, family and parent programs, student development, student health and wellness, residence life, food service, student activities, campus ministry, developing of curriculum electives, financial aid, student records, discipline and conduct, advertising of services, and assessment of programs. The group believed, for the student personnel division to be successful, administration had to view it as important. Coordination of these services was considered important so as to not duplicate work by various personnel and departments. Additionally, academic divisions were made aware of the services available to students.

The American Council on Education connected high schools to higher education. As high school seniors made plans for the following fall it was important students are linked to resources to help them make informed decisions about their opportunities. As a result, communication and coordination with high schools was deemed important as high school grades and test scores effected admission into college. Furthermore, career and vocational goals from high school impacted student success in college. Connecting high school students with information and providing an action plan was the beginning of cooperative admission efforts.

The Student Personnel Point of View of 1937 highlighted the lasting impact the division of student personnel had after a student completes their higher education. Career programs during college, professional development opportunities and alumni relations were recognized as a part of student personnel programs. Arguably, these various programs helped keep graduates

\[214\] Ibid.
\[215\] Ibid.
\[216\] Ibid.
connected to the institution even after they had left the campus. Finally, the group adopted six research areas important to the work and success of student personnel: aptitude testing, social development, diagnostic techniques, scholastic aptitude test scale, occupational information, and traits necessary for specific occupations.\footnote{217}

**Student Personnel Point of View of 1949**

As a follow-up to the 1937 document, the *Student Personnel Point of View of 1949* recommended new goals to further continue the education of the whole student. In the 1949 *Student Personnel Point of View* recognized and believed students were responsible for their own development.\footnote{218} The student personnel movement grew after World War I as more students enrolled in colleges and wanted to develop relationships with other students. Education was no longer confined to the classroom. The American Council on Education believed educating each student as an individual and supporting individual needs was important. It was important students developed cultural values and understanding, were able adopt to changing school conditions, developed emotional control, cultivated moral and ethical values, fostered physical well-being, and developed a vocational goal that can contribute to society.\footnote{219}

The American Council on Education stressed in the *Student Personnel Point of View of 1949* that personal growth achieved by students was the responsibility of the student but colleges held an obligation to influence experiences and attitudes to foster student development.\footnote{220} The college supported this growth by providing orientation programs to help students transition to their new environment. Furthermore, by providing proper admissions guidance and developing

\footnote{217}{Ibid.}
\footnote{219}{Ibid.}
\footnote{220}{Ibid.}
standards in the institutional admissions criteria, institutions nurtured student development and success.

The *Student Personnel Point of View of 1949* identified retention and graduation concerns among students because students “lacked proficiency or personal motivation.” Other factors contributed to low student retention including lack of maturity, lack of an emotional ability to deal with the stress of college, and failure to choose a curriculum path suitable to their goals. To help students achieve student success, colleges were encouraged to provide services such as study skill development opportunities and time management development strategies, counseling services, and remedial support in reading and speech. Furthermore, colleges were influenced to develop opportunities for students to meet other students, provide social activities for students, deliver diverse social programming, collaborate with community colleges, ensure proper academic advising, offer financial aid guidance, provide career guidance and placement and even marriage counseling. The document held that with a plethora of services offered to support students, it was the responsibility of the student to be in control of their actions rather than need punishment for poor behavior. The *Student Personnel Point of View of 1949* characterized that living with others prepared students for social obligation outside of college and further developed leadership abilities.

Student personnel services should be provided by trained professionals and institutions should adapt these services to meet the needs of their particular institution. Defining what department is responsible for each of the student development areas “should be clearly established” among employees to avoid duplication of duties and to ensure the best service

---

221 Ibid., 22.
possible for students.\textsuperscript{223} Students should have input, and be involved in the development of programs and services, and assessment should take place on a regular basis.

The \textit{Student Personnel Point of View of 1937 and of 1949} outlined the student experience and student success initiatives. Within the scope of the framework provided by the \textit{Student Personnel Point of View of 1937 and of 1949} deans of women were responsible for the safety, well-being, and educational opportunities for women students. Before women were enrolled, the responsibility of supervising men belonged to the faculty. After deans of women were hired, faculty and administrators saw the usefulness of the position, thus, deans of men emerged on college campuses.

\textbf{Deans of Men and the Student Personnel Movement}

It was not until 1917 that the first dean of men, Thomas Arkle Clark, was hired at the University of Illinois.\textsuperscript{224} According to Schwarz, the deans of men were first hired to meet the disciplinary matters of male students and their professional meetings were more social outings than for professional development of good practice and research, almost a good old boys network. The deans of men, in their organizations, were adamant about not needing graduate education to function in their roles. Joseph Bursley, in 1931, who was the dean of men at the University of Michigan said “there is only one place where I believe that preparedness is absolutely essential to the success of a dean of men – that is in the selection of a wife.”\textsuperscript{225}

Schwartz argued the deans of men were much more reluctant to engage in professional research than the deans of women.\textsuperscript{226} By the 1930s many deans saw the shift to a student personnel model and understood the possibility that both deans of men and deans of women

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{223} Ibid., 30.
\item \textsuperscript{224} Schwartz, “Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education.”
\item \textsuperscript{225} Ibid., 511.
\item \textsuperscript{226} Schwartz, “How Deans of Women Became Men.”
\end{itemize}
positions may be combined or eliminated. Schwartz found by the 1940s and 1950s most deans of women positions disappeared, in part, because of the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act (GI Bill) which created a drastic rise in the number of males on college campuses.\textsuperscript{227} Although women’s enrollment in higher education did not decline with the passage GI Bill, the rapid surge of male war veterans who enrolled on campuses changed the type of services necessary on college campuses.\textsuperscript{228}

The many professional organizations that developed during a 30-year span pushed and solidified the profession into what Schwartz described as the “personnel movement.”\textsuperscript{229} The professional organizations responded to the change in the type of student who enrolled on college campuses, mainly GI Bill recipients. As campuses adapted policies and services to serve the needs of the influx of students, administrative structures changed. Schwartz revealed that Walter Scott from Northwestern University was instrumental in changing the hierarchy of student personnel into a one director model, essentially ensuring the dean of women position would be changing.

By the 1950s Schwartz argued another shift happened on college campuses affecting women students and deans of women.\textsuperscript{230} Deans of women were no longer viewed as supportive of women college students, which contributed to a lack of saliency, contributing to a shift back to the deans of women being perceived as a spinster role. Women students believed deans of women were no longer on campus to support their academic endeavors and extra-curricular activities, rather, women students wanted more freedom. The diminished role of \textit{in loco parentis}

\begin{flushbottom}
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{228} Eisenmann, \textit{Higher Education for Women in Postwar America, 1945-1965.}
\textsuperscript{229} Schwartz, “How Deans of Women Became Men.”
\textsuperscript{230} Schwartz, “Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education.”
\end{flushbottom}
challenged the need for deans of women, at least in the eyes of women students. As such, the deans of women began to fade out on college campuses.

Unfortunately, as Sartorius illustrated, women made great strides in attending higher education before World War II, but the end of the war brought a dramatic increase in the number of male students attending college with the GI Bill. By the 1960s, the role of the dean of women was no longer that of a high-ranking administrator; thus the position lost influence and power. Sartorius explained with the demise of the position of the dean of women, women were many times excluded in policy decisions until the 1980s.

**Women in Higher Education in the 1950s – 1970s**

Although deans of women worked to create a more inclusive environment for women students on college campuses, deans of women in higher education in the Post-war era were still required to enforce various campus regulations including dress codes, curfews, and ensure the women students did not engage in “sexual lapses” in judgment. Furthermore, by the 1950s women students and deans of women were dealing with a changing reality of the number of married women returning to the workforce. As more women returned to the workforce new challenges emerged. As women’s activism grew in the Post-war era, many women were forced to choose between entering a traditional field and facing obstacles and barriers, or create a new field. Incidentally, the deans of women were an example of women turning a non-standardized job into a “legitimate profession.” The needs of the women students changed on campuses due to the economic climate in the U.S. in the 1950s and the increase of racial diversity on college campuses.

---

232 Sartorius, “Experimental Autonomy.”
233 Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition,” 159.
234 Ibid., 162.
camps. With this changing landscape, the role of deans of women changed from a major focus on student discipline to providing more student support.\textsuperscript{235}

Similarly, Graham argued that “the American woman of the mid-twentieth century was to appear young, beautiful, and ardent on demand. She was also to find happiness in her home. Many found that combination difficult.”\textsuperscript{236} Women graduate students began to marry, which was not common in the early twentieth century. Unfortunately, by the 1940s and 1950s, the number of women who were earning doctorates declined. In this time, having a professional career and a family was difficult.

Eisenmann argued not everything was picture perfect for women educators or women students following World War II.\textsuperscript{237} The stereotypes of the television show \textit{Leave it to Beaver} was not the way of life for many educated women in the 1950s. Eisenmann argued that historians painted a picture of feminist activism in the late 1960s and 1970s, but the picture of activism following World War II until the 1960s is less clear. Activism did take place in the postwar era, but Eisenmann contended that the activism was conducted “with a quieter voice” and conducted on an individual level rather than as large groups thus making the effort less cohesive and visible.\textsuperscript{238}

One area of change in the 1950s was the enrollment of Black women and more non-traditional students.\textsuperscript{239} Non-traditional women students were students of color, married students, or those who were divorced. With an increase in non-traditional students various challenges emerged as women struggled to schedule classes at a time when access to childcare was

\textsuperscript{235} Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”
\textsuperscript{236} Graham, “Expansion and Exclusion,” 770.
\textsuperscript{237} Eisenmann, “A Time of Quiet Activism.”
\textsuperscript{238} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{239} Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”
available. Deans of women valued these students, and articulated the needs and contributions these students brought to their respective campuses.240

Eisenmann described two commissions, namely the American Council on Education’s, Commission on the Education of Women, which encouraged and supported research on women’s education from 1953 to 1962; however, the project was poorly funded. The Commission supported a liberal arts based curriculum that supported both career choices and motherhood for women students.241 The second commission described by Eisenmann was the President’s Commission on the Status of Women that was started by President Kennedy in 1961.242 The President’s Commission was active until 1963 and worked to understand the contributions made by women, and explored policy efforts on women’s education that promoted individual choice for women students. The President’s Commission, however, was not a group that advocated for radical change.243

**The Slow Elimination of the Deans of Women**

As campuses struggled to provide a holistic education for both men and women students and adapt to financial realities, a slow change began to occur in the offices of deans of women and deans of men. Campuses began creating student personnel or student affairs offices with the changing paradigm from separate divisions of deans of women and deans of men to one student personnel office. In this new paradigm, the new head of the department always seemed to be a man, leading to the dissolution of the dean of women position.244 Although this movement also led to the elimination of the dean of men position, the dean of men often became the new vice

---

240 Ibid.
242 Ibid.
244 Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean.”; Schwartz, “Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education.”; Schwartz, “The Rise and Demise of Deans of Men.”
president of student affairs or the dean of students. Oddly enough, deans of women were the group that advocated research and professional scholarship on the study of college students, yet men were usually hired for the new role in the student personnel positions.\textsuperscript{245} By the end of the World War II, the personnel movement took shape, especially with the GI Bill adding more male students to college campuses.\textsuperscript{246} Although the number of women attending college did not decrease following World War II, the surge of male students on college campuses made it difficult for deans of women to survive.\textsuperscript{247}

Jones and Komives further argued, by the deans of women developing their profession, through assessment of student needs and the efficient organization of student services, the position was diminished as the services became more streamlined and less individualized attention was necessary.\textsuperscript{248} Special services were no longer offered for women students as “gender distinctions in titles” were removed and a dean of students became the norm in higher education.\textsuperscript{249} Student affairs and the education of the whole student and character development became what were important to the profession.

Furthermore, in the 1960s, \textit{in loco parentis}, the institution acting in a parental and supervisory role, began to change. Students resented the way administrators handled student conduct violations. Students saw the dean of women as a university official and an enforcer of the rules, not as an advocate supportive of personal development. The dean of women became an “obstacle to their rights as citizens and personal independence as adults.”\textsuperscript{250} To survive, the

\textsuperscript{245} Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean.”; Schwartz, “Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education.”
\textsuperscript{246} Schwartz, “Reconceptualizing the Leadership Roles of Women in Higher Education.”
\textsuperscript{247} Eisenmann, “A Time of Quiet Activism.”
\textsuperscript{249} Ibid., 233.
\textsuperscript{250} Bashaw, “To Serve the Needs of Women,” 262.
deans of women needed to change their role with women students to remain relevant on college campuses. The deans needed to use their academic skills to survive. Tuttle argued the decline of *in loco parentis* challenged the role of deans of women.\(^{251}\) A further move by institutions to centralize student services as part of the “personnel movement” and the role of accreditation further changed the position of deans of women.

Satorius described the 1960s as the second wave of the women’s movement the first wave being the women’s suffrage movement, which ultimately led to the passing of the 19\(^{th}\) Amendment and then the liberation of women in the 1960s.\(^{252}\) Furthermore, as Bashaw explained, by the late 1960s women faced discrimination in the workforce, and deans of women dealt with career aspirations of students.\(^{253}\)

Adams claimed that the attitude of having women in the work force was more favorable in the early 1960s, however he argued that colleges still held a “dual objective of finding a mate and of preparing herself for responsible employment” for women students.\(^{254}\) The educational opportunities for women students had expanded so women were not forced to train to be secretaries, but could instead study to be scientists. There was a concern for promoting graduate enrollment of women students, but Adams contended that it was considered a risk giving too much encouragement of women students to pursue a graduate degree when they might leave the profession to be married. Adams further explained the role deans of women had on developing women students for employment. Adams wrote the dean of women “should be an educator, not a chaperone.”\(^{255}\)

---

251 Tuttle, “What Became of the Dean of Women?”
252 Sartorius, “Experimental Autonomy.”
253 Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”
255 Ibid., 22.
Deans of women faced other challenges as more women enrolled in higher education and expected full access to the institution, not just admission. Bashaw described the concern deans of women had with the “quality of residence life” on college campuses following the Cold War.\textsuperscript{256} Due to the large increase of students, many campus officials were forced to build larger dormitories, commonly on the outskirts of campus. Many deans of women did not believe those living situations were best for women students as it was not conducive for studying and created safety concerns.

Even with more women attending college, they were still the minority on college campuses. Women in higher education needed support, advice, and encouragement. The need for women’s only organizations still existed, even as women were making progress to be on equal grounds with the men. Historians argued the launching of Sputnik helped women gain entry into more male dominated fields including math and science disciplines. However, even though more women studied math and science; they usually still entered a teaching role instead of an industry role.\textsuperscript{257}

With civil rights and activism such a large part of the 1960s, Bashaw explained women students fought to have the same rules, rights, and privileges and male students.\textsuperscript{258} Part of those rules included the relaxation or removal of dress codes and curfews. Furthermore, more institutions began having only one dean, a dean of students. This position dealt with intense pressure as competition for students in both admissions and retention was important.\textsuperscript{259} Often, when the positions of dean of women and dean of men were consolidated into one office

\textsuperscript{256} Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition,” 173.
\textsuperscript{257} Bashaw, “To Serve the Needs of Women.”
\textsuperscript{258} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{259} Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean.”
consistent with the personnel movement, access to the president and top university administrators became limited.\textsuperscript{260}

**Deans of Women from Other Colleges and Universities**

Several historians have studied deans of women. Each focused on a particular region of the U.S., institution, or time period. The following section outlines a few of the deans throughout history who have garnered recognition for their contribution to their institution, women students, and their profession.

Satorius wrote about the work of Emily Taylor who was the dean of women during the women’s movement, during a time of social change and resistance in higher education in the 1960s at the University of Kansas.\textsuperscript{261} The article chronicled Taylor’s relationship with campus administration and students and how those relationships created social change for women students on the university campus. When Emily Taylor first became the dean of women, women students believed they had two choices: marriage and a family, or a career and an education. When Taylor took the position at the University of Kansas, she would not take the position unless she reported directly to the chancellor. Eventually, she had 11 staff members and graduate assistants working with her.

According to Satorius, Taylor wanted women students to advocate for themselves and push the boundaries and rules of the campus. The issue of giving students keys to their dormitories, which would allow students to come and go as they pleased, caused a great rift within the campus as many believed women students needed more supervision. Taylor believed

\textsuperscript{260} Jones and Komives, “Contemporary Issues of Women as Senior Student Affairs Officers,” 231-248; Schwartz, “The Rise and Demise of Deans of Men.”

\textsuperscript{261} Sartorius, “Experimental Autonomy.”
it was important for women to develop “decision-making skills to act autonomously and determine their own path.”

Historian Carolyn Bashaw studied four southern deans of women, Katherine Bowersox of Berea College, Agnes Ellen Harris at the University of Alabama, Adele H. Stamp from the University of Maryland, and Sarah Gibson Blanding of the University of Kentucky. Each of these southern deans were the voice of women students at co-educational institutions, all remained single and were deans after the Progressive Era. These four southern women faced various economic difficulties from their upbringing which varied their employment and education choices. It created a need for immediate jobs for many.

According to Bashaw, in 1871, the University of Arkansas became the first public institution in the South to accept White women. Sixty years later, on December 1, 1931, the University of Maryland opened their first women’s dormitory. Opening a women’s dormitory was a victory for women students as having access to the classroom was not enough for women students.

There was a need for women students to have academic recognition and inclusive activities on their campuses. Bashaw found Bowersox, Harris, Blanding, and Stamp fought for recognition for women students at their institutions including academic honor societies. They believed that formal recognition would equal better job prospects. Additionally, campus rituals helped women become a part of the institution and feel like less of an outsider. Groups and

262 Sartorius, “Experimental Autonomy,” 18.
263 Bashaw, Stalwart Women.
264 Ibid.
265 Ibid.
activities for women students helped them form friendships with their classmates and form a connection to their institution.\textsuperscript{266} 

Many of the single, professional women on college campuses had difficulty separating their personal lives from their work life as many women faculty lived on campus. Bowersox was expected to live in a dormitory and supervise women students at Berea College. Bashaw indicated many women faculty and deans of women pushed for the ability to live off campus.\textsuperscript{267} It was common practice for schools in the eastern U.S. to require their women faculty to live in the residence halls with women students. In the South, there were so few women faculty to fill the role of housemother in sororities many positions were available. Due to the lack of professional jobs available to women in the South, competition for a position as a housemother was intense. 

Harris, Bowersox, and Blanding each had family obligations throughout their careers.\textsuperscript{268} Harris helped her family financially, and found it difficult to balance caring for her ill father, and meet her professional duties. She felt her professional work repeatedly suffered as a result of her family obligations. Although Bowersox never completed a college degree, she did enroll in teachers training courses. Bowersox provided financially for her mother and her brother throughout her lifetime. She also lived in a dormitory her entire professional career.\textsuperscript{269} 

According to Bashaw, Harris enrolled in the summer sessions at Teachers College and earned her degree in 1910.\textsuperscript{270} In 1922, Harris became the dean of women at Alabama Polytechnic Institute in Auburn. It was important to Harris to work at a co-educational school. In 1927, Harris went to the University of Alabama as she felt the president was supportive of women’s

\textsuperscript{266} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{267} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{268} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{269} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{270} Ibid.
education. Bashaw contended Harris resigned her position as the dean of women at the University of Alabama in 1945 when she discovered the new university president was going to restructure parts of the administration and develop a dean of students position. Harris, as the dean of women, would now report to the dean of students instead of the president and she found this unpalatable.

According to Bashaw, Blanding had wished to be a physician but found training too expensive. When the current dean of women at the University of Kentucky resigned to marry the widowed president, Blanding reluctantly accepted the position on a temporary basis. Blanding, however, fell in love with the position. At 27 years of age, she was one of the youngest woman in administration.

Each of these southern deans continually fought for equality for women students. According to Bashaw, pay disparity for women students was very troublesome. Berea College students worked to help pay for school costs and the men were able to earn more than women and the men had more jobs available. As a result, Bowersox implemented a dress code at Berea College for women students to help remove class distinctions and promote equity among students. Many were “grateful for her support for higher wages and non-gendered student employment, a vocal contingent nevertheless hotly opposed a dress code that they believed set college women apart as a distinct class of students and as people who were unable to make independent decisions concerning their clothing.”

The deans of women played a large role in establishing athletics and physical education for women on college campuses. Bashaw showed the availability of athletics to women crossed

---

271 Ibid.
272 Ibid.
273 Ibid.
274 Ibid.
275 Ibid., 58.
other areas of challenge including space issues, lack of facilities, lack of financial resources, and its effect on the overall experience of women students, and the role of women students on college campuses. In the 1930s, adding athletic opportunities was very expensive so the opportunities were added slowly. Stamp believed that physical education would help women students perform better academically. Bashaw argued Boxersox took advantage Berea’s location at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountain’s in Kentucky. She celebrated nature with her students and created activities for the students and other women faculty. Mountain Day began in 1875 and was a beloved campus ritual that allowed women students to socialize with alumni. Although Berea was unique in the labor requirement for students, Bowersox still argued athletics could be healthy for the students. Moreover, Bashaw described the work of Dean Harris at the University of Alabama as instrumental in constructing the women’s campus including the gymnasium for athletic activities for women students.

**Women Deans at Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

Herdlein et al. conducted three site visits over a three year period and conducted archival searches, oral histories, and taped interviews. The study examined three deans of women at historically Black institutions in three different eras of women’s education. Lucy Diggs Slowe, who worked at Howard University and lived off campus, was one of the women Herdlein et al. studied. Slowe was an educator and not a disciplinarian. Slowe held academic rank and believed career guidance was important as Black women were already limited in the career options available to them. Slowe wanted to remove the stereotype that a teacher or homemaker

---

276 Ibid.
277 Ibid.
278 Ibid.
279 Ibid.
280 Ibid.
were the only careers available to Black women. In 1933, according to Bell-Scott, Slowe wrote to the Board of Trustees at Howard University to plead her case to be heard and included in administrative decisions at the institution. Slowe was being edged out of meetings where she was once included, and the decisions affected women students. She was frustrated with the new president who changed the status of her position resulting in a quieter voice for women students at Howard University.

Slowé was instrumental in creating professional organizations that supported education of Black women. As reported by Bell-Scott many of the organizations that Slowé was affiliated with, including the National Association of College Women, were counterparts for organizations like the American Association of University Women because many of those organizations restricted their memberships to White women educators only. According to Perkins, one of the major goals Slowé established for the National Association of College Women was to ensure “the appointment of well-trained deans of women on black college campuses.”

Owena Hunter Davis was the Dean of Women at John C. Smith University, a small, private institution founded in 1867 to educate recently freed slaves. Davis worked to relax the dress code and curfew for women students, which at a southern, religious institution, was difficult. Davis developed parent programs. She served as the dean of women from 1956-1969.

The final woman Herdlein et al studied was Jewel B. Long. Long was the dean of women at Hampton University. She became the dean of women in 1988 following her position as the

281 Ibid.
283 Ibid.
Assistant to the Associate Director of Student Affairs. As an undergraduate she was hired as a typist in the student affairs department and later became a resident adviser. Few institutions retained the position of dean of women in the 1980s. Traditions at Hampton University are still followed including the dress code and curfew for freshmen women.²⁸⁶

Each of these deans of women, Emily Taylor, Lucy Diggs Slowe, Jewel B. Long, Owena Hunter Davis, Katharine Bowersox, Agnes Ellen Harris, Adele H. Stamp, and Sarah Gibson Blanding had different stories educational perspectives and familial backgrounds which helped shape the experiences they provided to women students at their institutions. The experience of these deans provides a framework for comparison of the experiences of Katharine Rea and the women students at UM.

Second-Wave Feminist Movement

According to Klatch many women who were involved in the second-wave feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s did not need to be convinced to join an activist organization or to get involved with the movement as many women were already activists from the civil rights movement in the 1950s.²⁸⁷ Weiler argued the second-wave feminist movement raised consciousness of the oppression of women in the hopes of creating social change for women.²⁸⁸ Each woman faced unique challenges, thus making the goals of the second-wave feminist movement to liberate women difficult to achieve.²⁸⁹ For example, a woman may be ostensibly privileged in one aspect of her life, yet oppressed in another. A woman who worked outside of the home may have felt liberated from her husband and family. In the 1960s the number of

²⁸⁹ Ibid.
women in the labor force increased, especially after the decline following the end of World War II, thus leading to one of the major factors in the resurgence of the women’s movement.\textsuperscript{290}

Rupp and Taylor found most women participating in the women’s rights movement were White, upper class to upper-middle class, and generally had a college degree.\textsuperscript{291} Women were influential in creating civic organizations and volunteer opportunities outside the home. Women commonly found the balance between duties in the home and their new volunteer projects difficult. According to Eisenmann “achieving the proper combination of domesticity and civic activism provoked considerable tension.”\textsuperscript{292} However, involvement in civic organizations gave women the opportunity to develop “independence and leadership skills.”\textsuperscript{293}

The second-wave feminist movement or the women’s liberation movement, which began in the 1960s focused on women’s issues included fairness in the workplace, support for family challenges, reproductive rights, sexuality, and educational barriers facing women.\textsuperscript{294} When President John F. Kennedy formed the President’s Commission on the Status of Women in 1961, he asked Eleanor Roosevelt to chair the Commission. The President’s Commission was to review and make recommendations around women’s issues including employment and education.\textsuperscript{295} In 1963, the Commission completed its work and published a report, \textit{American Women}, a document that “mixed recommendations, pronouncements, and somewhat disjointed messages” to illustrate to the public the work of the Commission.\textsuperscript{296}
Other organizations, books, and feminists contributed to the conversation around women’s rights. In 1960, when the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the oral contraceptive pill, women’s reproductive rights added to the discussion. Betty Friedan and her book, The Feminine Mystique, published in 1963, generated a national conversation around women’s issues and women’s rights. Later, women like Gloria Steinem, who later founded Ms. Magazine continued the discussion of women’s issues. After the work of the President’s Commission on the Status of Women was completed, a new organization, the National Organization for Women (NOW) continued to advocate for women’s rights. NOW was founded in 1966 and the first president was Friedan.

Although most institutions eliminated the position of dean of women by the 1970s, new legislation continued to open doors to women in higher education. The passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination against women in the workplace. Furthermore, when Title IX was passed 1972, women gained equal opportunity and access on college campuses across the nation.

Local branches of larger national organizations were creating an impact on local communities across the nation. Besides professional organizations affiliated with the position of dean of women like the AAUW or the NADW, communities across the country had other activist organizations where women volunteered and met other women who shared similar interests. Organizations such as the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) and the League of Women Voters (LWV) provided an opportunity for women to gather and volunteer in their local

communities. Furthermore, these organizations provided women an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations and promote a call for action to their dedicated causes.\textsuperscript{300} Blair argued the YWCA and the LWV “were vital channels for feminist activism in cities and towns throughout the United States.”\textsuperscript{301}

**Conclusion**

Historians have long been studying women in higher education and the deans of women who were a primary force for facilitating women’s access on campuses. Ultimately, the deans of women became one of the strongest advocates for access to higher education for women and the improvement of their educational experiences. The first deans of women were hired to supervise women students. As such, the position of the dean of women was not viewed as a professional career. Early deans, including those in the progressive era worked to legitimize their profession and develop standards of practice and professional organizations.

From the standardization of the profession the deans began engaging in research of their position and the success of women students through professional organizations like the National Association of Deans of Women and the development of professional journals, including *Journal of the National Association of Deans of Women*. Through their work, the student personnel movement took shape and by the end of World War II, college campuses across the nation began changing the services provided to students.

Deans of women from across the nation who worked in coeducational institutions faced similar challenges and opportunities in their support of the educational experiences of women students. Historians have studied several of these women at various institutions across the country and have documented their successes, struggles, and triumphs. The story further


\textsuperscript{301} Ibid., 31.
continued with the development of professional organizations and the shift to combine resources into one student personnel division. Finally, the studies about the deans of women and the disappearance of the profession showed adaptation of colleges and universities to provide similar services in other ways to women including through women’s studies programs and the development of women’s centers. This literature review on the history of the deans of women and the rise of women’s studies and women’s centers on college campuses shapes my historical case study on the professional work of Dr. Katharine Rea at The University of Mississippi.
CHAPTER II

KATHARINE REA: DEAN OF WOMEN

Katharine, the only daughter to Bud and Georgia Rea, grew up in Meridian, Mississippi. Like most families in the 1930s, Rea’s father expected her to marry and have children after graduating from Meridian High School in 1931. Although Rea knew her father’s expectations, she had a different path in mind.\(^\text{302}\) After graduating high school Rea enrolled at Copiah-Lincoln Junior College. She transferred, in 1935 to Delta State Teacher’s College. Rea completed her baccalaureate degree in English and social sciences in 1936.\(^\text{303}\) Her senior year, she was elected “most charming girl.”\(^\text{304}\) After completing her college degree Rea taught English in the Philadelphia (Mississippi) Public Schools from 1936-1939. She then taught at Hillman Junior College in Mississippi from 1939-1941.\(^\text{305}\) Rea completed her master’s in history from Duke University in 1941. In the fall of 1941, Rea taught at Gulfport City Schools, where she later became the director of student guidance.\(^\text{306}\) After ten years of service in Gulfport, Mississippi, Rea decided to move north to Oxford. In Oxford, at the University of Mississippi, Katharine Rea pursued a path of advocacy for women’s equality in higher education in the state of Mississippi.

\(^{302}\) Bud Rea, personal interview with author, March 10, 2012.
\(^{303}\) “Katherine Rea takes over as Dean of Women,” The Mississippian, p. 1, September 15-18, 1957.; The Broom, Delta State Teacher’s College [Yearbook], 1936. Retrieved March 1, 2013, http://archive.org/details/broom1936delt; Jacquelyn C. Franklin, Memorandum to All AAUW Branch Presidents, [Nomination and Resume for Katharine Rea], October 1, 1979, American Association of University Women Collection, box 41, UM.
\(^{305}\) Note: Hillman Junior College closed in 1942.
\(^{306}\) “Katherine Rea takes over as Dean of Women,” The Mississippian, p. 1, September 15-18, 1957.; Jacquelyn C. Franklin, Memorandum to All AAUW Branch Presidents, [Nomination and Resume for Katharine Rea], October 1, 1979, American Association of University Women Collection, box 41, UM.
Katharine Rea arrived on the campus of the University of Mississippi in 1952 when she accepted a position as a “field representative” in the admissions office. Rea came to UM from Gulfport High School where she served as a teacher and guidance counselor for ten years. The next year, Dean of the Division of Student Personnel, L.L. Love, announced the appointment of Rea and Thomas Hines, assistant registrar, to serve as pre-college counselors. In her two years in admissions, Rea spent many hours traveling to meet with potential students interested in enrolling at UM. In 1952-1953 she traveled 72 days out of the year, and traveled more than 10,000 miles. In her second year in admissions, 1953-1954, Rea spent 100 days traveling to meet prospective new students. Even with a concentrated effort to recruit new students, enrollment at the university declined by more than 30 percent. In 1948-1949, 3,387 students enrolled at UM, but by 1953-1954 only 2,250 students were enrolled. Administrators were not prepared for a decline in enrollment. In the early 1950s other institutions in the state began offering academic programs that were exclusively offered at UM. Perhaps the new found competition contributed to the decline of enrollment at UM. At the end of the academic year, Rea elected to pursue an advanced degree in higher education.

In 1954, Rea accepted an offer from Ohio State University to complete her doctoral studies. The supervisor of the division, L. L. Love was supportive of her graduate work. “Miss Katherine Rea, Admissions Representative, received an excellent graduate assistantship at Ohio State University to continue work toward the doctorate in student personnel, she is on leave of

307 Robert R. Ellis, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, p. 151-156, [Registrar], 1952-1953, UM.
308 L. L. Love, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, p. 148, [Student Personnel Division], 1952-1953, UM.
309 Robert R. Ellis, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, p. 140-141, [Registrar], 1953-1954, UM.
310 Ibid.
311 Sansing, The University of Mississippi, 266.
absence for 1954-1955.” Love began his career at the University of Mississippi in 1949 and was responsible for the Division of Student Personnel, including the Office of Dean of Women; Counseling Center; and Placement and Financial Aid among other areas. In her dissertation acknowledgements, Rea thanked Dean Love for his support throughout her doctoral studies and for being her mentor. Coincidently, Love also received his doctorate from Ohio State University. Love announced he extended Rea’s leave of absence for the 1955-1956 academic year to complete her doctoral studies. Her position in admissions was left vacant due to budget constraints.

When Rea returned to campus in 1956, Dean Love announced she would “divide her time between the Counseling Center and the Department of Religious Life.” Although Rea’s position in the admissions area, under Robert Ellis was vacant, Rea was given the opportunity to work in two new areas on campus under Dean Love. Perhaps Love knew retirement of the long-time UM Dean of Women, Estella Hefley was just around the corner.

Estella Hefley began her work as the Dean of Women at UM in the fall of 1933. Upon her hiring, Chancellor Alfred Hume outlined three primary duties for the position. First and foremost the dean of women should oversee the “social life of the girls,” ensure the girls’ physical health, and finally support the girls’ academic and intellectual interests. Hefley was

---

312 L. L. Love, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, p. 134, [Student Personnel Division], 1953-1954, UM.
313 Sandra Nichols, “Dean Love Serves as Coordinator for Several Different Departments,” The Mississippian, November 18, 1957.
314 Katharine Rea, “A Follow-Up Study of Women Graduates From the State Colleges in Mississippi, Class of 1956,” PhD diss., Ohio State University, Katharine Rea Collection, UM.
315 Sandra Nichols, “Dean Love serves as coordinator for several different departments,” The Mississippian, November 18, 1957.
317 Ibid.
318 Alfred Hume, [Letter to Estella G. Hefley]. July 25, 1933. Chancellors’ Papers/General, box 141, folder 10, UM.
the matriarch for women students on the campus and a trusted advisor to Chancellors and other university administrators in the support of women students in her 24 years of service to women students at the University of Mississippi.\textsuperscript{319}

Often, the deans of women were viewed as the campus disciplinarian for the women students.\textsuperscript{320} Before deans of women and deans of men emerged on college campuses, faculty were often responsible for disciplining students for inappropriate behavior outside of the classroom.\textsuperscript{321} Faculty were not always in favor of serving as the campus disciplinarian, thus the deans of women and men were given the responsibility.\textsuperscript{322}

**The New Dean of Women**

The university saw the entire office of the dean of women turn over in 1957. The Associate Dean of Women, Miss Harriet Jackson planned to study abroad for the year and then pursue a teaching position in modern languages on campus. With Hefley retiring and Jackson leaving for the next year, Dean Love announced Katharine Rea would become the next Dean of Women at UM.\textsuperscript{323}

Rea was much younger than Dean Hefley. At the beginning of the school year in 1957, the student newspaper, *The Mississippian*, announced Rea’s hiring by declaring her the “charming, attractive new Dean of Women.”\textsuperscript{324} Julia Waits was hired as the Panhellenic advisor

\textsuperscript{319} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1957-1958, UM.

\textsuperscript{320} Bashaw, *Stalwart Women.*; Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean.”; Nidiffer, *Pioneering Deans of Women.*

\textsuperscript{321} Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean.”

\textsuperscript{322} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{323} L. L. Love, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Student Personnel Division], 1956-1957, UM.; “Non-Teaching Personnel,” University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1958-1959, UM.; “Meridianite Is Dean of Women At Ole Miss,” *The Meridian Star*, September 1, 1957, Vertical Files, Mississippi Faculty, Misc., UM.

\textsuperscript{324} “Katherine Rea Takes Over as Dean of Women,” *The Mississippian*, September 15-18, 1957.
and assisted Rea with other women student activities.\textsuperscript{325} The two women worked in tandem and provided support for the women students at the University of Mississippi. Waits fondly recalled her time with Rea. “She was a wonderful supervisor.”\textsuperscript{326} Rea was a constant communicator and scheduled many meetings with the staff including the house directors. Each week the house directors met with Rea in the cafeteria over coffee to review the agenda for the week.\textsuperscript{327}

Katharine Rea and Julia Waits along with the head residents and sorority house mothers were the voices for women students on campus. Although there were a few female faculty members, addressing behavioral concerns and the well-being of the women students was the responsibility of the office of the dean of women. Rea was called to serve on various university committees, presumably to represent the “feminine point of view” in an administrative capacity.\textsuperscript{328} Rea’s committee service included admissions, student financial aids, student health interests, student housing, student organizations and recreation, student orientation, and summer session.\textsuperscript{329} In her first year as dean of women, Rea reported a supportive and collaborative relationship with other areas within the division of student personnel, especially the areas of counseling, student activities, student health, and admissions. According to Judith Trott, a former UM student, and Panhellenic advisor in the late 1960s under Dean Rea, Rea was more progressive than Dean Hefley and less concerned with the rules for women students than her predecessor.\textsuperscript{330} Dean Rea did face resistance in her attempts to relax the rules for women, but she pushed forward, slowly. Trott believed Rea did not enjoy the disciplinary responsibility of her job duties, although she was viewed as harsh or stern as her predecessor Dean Hefley. Rea still

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{325} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1957-1958, UM.
\textsuperscript{326} Julia Waits Farris, personal interview with author with author, March 6, 2013.
\textsuperscript{327} Julia Waits Farris, personal interview with author with author, March 6, 2013.
\textsuperscript{328} “Katharine Rea Takes Over as Dean of Women,” The Mississippian. September 15-18, 1957.
\textsuperscript{329} “Office of Administrators,” University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1958-1959, UM.
\textsuperscript{330} Judith Trott, personal interview with author, November 8, 2010; January 17, 2013.
\end{flushleft}
enforced the rules, and as the dean of women, maintained a certain fear factor among women students.\footnote{331}{Judith Trott, personal interview with author, November 8, 2010; January 17, 2013.}

Much like Emily Taylor, dean of women at the University of Kansas in the 1960s, Rea allowed the women students to push the traditional rules on campus. According to Satorius, Taylor advocated for women to make decisions for themselves and determine an academic and career path on their own.\footnote{332}{Sartorius, “Experimental Autonomy.”} One of the new found freedoms for women students at UM in 1957 was the access to automobiles. In the fall of 1957, women students above freshmen status were allowed to bring vehicles to campus. The new influx of vehicles on campus concerned Rea, however, she reported the public safety office handled the change well. “Relations here have been amicable [with Department of Public Safety], and women students now share equally with the men students whatever benefits or restrictions may come as a result of any traffic survey.”\footnote{333}{Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1957-1958, p. 121, UM.}

Access to vehicles provided women with a new freedom to explore the Oxford community.

Although the women began to enjoy new freedoms, supervision was still a part of Dean Rea’s responsibilities. Monitoring the behavior of women students was part of the justification for the position of the dean of women. Rea took her responsibility seriously, but not with an iron hand. In her first annual report, Rea announced the Women’s Student Government Association (WSGA) elected a new chairman for the Judicial Council. In her annual report, Rea’s tone indicated the chair was a new position. The Judicial Council under WSGA now had power similar to the Associated Student Body (ASB) Student Judicial Council, which heard violations of the student code of conduct for male students. The Judicial Council for WSGA would now
hear violations of student conduct for the women students at UM.\textsuperscript{334} It is unclear if all of the disciplinary duties were handled by Dean Hefley prior to Rea’s arrival on campus. Regardless, under Rea the decision to punish women students for a rules infraction appeared to be collaborative and provided an educational opportunity for the women students instead of a punitive decision.

Not only was Rea concerned with the behavior of the girls, she was concerned with the academic progress women made throughout the year. She reported more than 60 women had grade point averages at a “critical level” and received referrals and council in her office.\textsuperscript{335} Rea questioned the established career goals of the students, perhaps pinpointing the reason for their lack of success in college. This was the first time Rea mentioned a desire for women students to think beyond college, and understand that college is not just for fun and dating, but to achieve a greater academic and professional success.

Women’s activities were more restricted than the men, however, early in Rea’s tenure as the dean of women, she advocated for more enrichment opportunities for women students who lived in the residence halls to engage with one another and learn from students who were from different “economic, social, and intellectual backgrounds.”\textsuperscript{336} Rea was concerned women living in the residence halls who were not affiliated with a sorority did not receive the same engagement opportunities as those in a sorority. At the time, approximately 53 percent of women were affiliated with one of the eight sororities on campus. Without appropriate funds to support proper programming in the residence halls many women lacked entertainment activities, and

\textsuperscript{334} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1957-1958, UM.
\textsuperscript{335} Ibid., 122.
\textsuperscript{336} Ibid., 121.
missed the opportunity to learn appropriate “social graces” as one would in college.\textsuperscript{337} One of the opportunities created to foster leadership opportunities within the residence halls and among the women students was through participation in the three governing associations for women, namely the WSGA, the Panhellenic Council, and the new Junior Panhellenic Council. Participation in these councils or governing boards provided young women the opportunity to demonstrate leadership qualities and held them accountable for the dynamics of the women’s groups.

Mary Ann Connell, an undergraduate student at the University of Mississippi from 1955-1959 described her experience on campus as “wonderful.” Connell recognized the limits of her experience at the University of Mississippi. While she recalled many considered the 1950s at UM to be the “golden years,” Connell understood that not everyone had the opportunity to experience campus in the same regard. “While they were not golden for everyone, they certainly were not for Black students because there were no Black students. But for a White female, it was a magical time…I got a magnificent education with my undergraduate work [at UM]. I did not come to school to get a husband as I have heard other women my age say that in their opinion the 1950s girls, as we were called then, just came to school to find a husband. They did not get a good education. They did not find any intellectual curiosity existing on this campus and I have exactly the opposite opinion.”\textsuperscript{338}

\textbf{More than a Pretty Face}

Although Mary Ann Connell was not on the UM campus to find a husband during her undergraduate years, the campus prided itself on being a place where pretty southern women chose to go to college. Pride at the University of Mississippi swelled in the fall of 1958, as coed

\textsuperscript{337} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{338} Mary Ann Connell, personal interview with author with author, April 19, 2012.
Mary Ann Mobley was crowned Miss America.\textsuperscript{339} Mobley was featured in the \textit{Ole Miss Yearbook} and \textit{The Mississippian} for her achievement. As the dean of women, Rea, and Julia Waits the Panhellenic advisor, sent a congratulatory telegram to Mobley on behalf of the department and the Women’s Student Government Association.\textsuperscript{340} The following year, Lynda Lee Mead was crowned Miss America.\textsuperscript{341} Mead was also a sorority woman at UM. Chancellor Williams commented on the excitement of having back-to-back Miss America winners from the University of Mississippi. Williams conveyed his pride and said “at Ole Miss beauty and brains go together.” No official documentation from Rea was found congratulating Mead on winning the title of Miss America. Is it possible, that although many on campus were excited about having back-to-back Miss America winners from UM, Rea was less celebratory? The only record of Rea even acknowledging the achievement by either Mobley or Mead was the telegram sent to Mobley on behalf of Rea, Waits, and the WSGA.\textsuperscript{342}

Although women were admitted to the University of Mississippi in 1882, perhaps the lack of excitement shown by Rea over the crowning of Miss America, showed Rea’s desire for the women students to be more than a pretty face at the university. When the first college women enrolled in coeducational institutions, deans were hired to supervise the women students. Women were not seen as intellectual students by popular view on college campuses. Many believed women attended college simply to find a husband.\textsuperscript{343} If faculty and other administrators believed women were simply enrolling to find husbands, that attitude would negatively affect the women

\textsuperscript{339} Eagles, \textit{The Price of Defiance.}; \textit{Ole Miss Yearbook}, 1959, UM.; John D. Williams, \textit{Parade} [Newspaper Clipping], December 6, 1959, p. 10, Vertical Files, Miss America, UM.

\textsuperscript{340} Women’s Student Government Association, Katharine Rea, and Julia Waits, [Western Union Telegram], “Congratulations,” August 26, 1958.

\textsuperscript{341} Eagles, \textit{The Price of Defiance.}; \textit{Ole Miss Yearbook}, 1959, UM.; John D. Williams, \textit{Parade} [Newspaper Clipping], December 6, 1959, p. 10, Vertical Files, Miss America, UM. \textit{Ole Miss Yearbook}, 1960, UM.

\textsuperscript{342} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{343} Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean.”
students, and the deans who were hired to support women students in their academic pursuits. Over the summer, Rea completed her doctor of philosophy degree from Ohio State University. The completion of her doctorate gave Rea credibility on campus with administrators, faculty, and students as a professional woman.

Rea’s position as the dean of women in the late 1950s was in the middle of the student personnel movement that challenged campus dynamics and support for students in colleges across the country. Despite the new change in personnel services on other college campuses, UM continued with the same administrative structure for many more years. Before student “retention” of women students became an important facet in the student personnel movement, Rea conveyed a disturbing trend in the attrition of women students to continue with their academic studies in their senior year. In 1949, the Student Personnel Point of View identified causes for low graduation rates on college campuses. One of the areas identified included the inability to choose a course of study that matched career goals. Rea worked to ensure women had more than marriage as an ultimate goal in their pursuit of a college degree as evident in her Annual Report to the Chancellor when Rea outlined objectives to improve a campus referral system for students struggling academically and for students with no vocational goals.

One of the ways Rea pushed for women to identify leadership and career opportunities were through student involvement in the residence halls. Due to the divide on campus between women affiliated with a sorority and those not affiliated, the leadership opportunities in the residence halls helped women across campus develop professional skills for the potential future.

---

344 “Katharine Rea to Receive Doctorate,” Oxford Eagle, July 31, 1958, Vertical Files, Mississippi Faculty, Misc, UM.  
345 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1958-1959, UM.  
347 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1957-1958, UM.
careers. Although Rea expressed optimism in the development of leadership programs in the residence halls, her optimism waned after only one year. Rea was disappointed in the lack of staff support in administering the new leadership programs. Without staff support, Rea struggled to implement the programs.\textsuperscript{348}

Although Rea raised concerns in her first year as dean of women over the divide between women students affiliated with a sorority and those without sorority affiliation, the divide appeared to grow the following year. Rea reported an increase in the number of women who rushed a sorority in 1958. The increase of women who wanted to pledge a sorority resulted in the rise in chapter limitations from 58 to 65 to allow more women to participate.\textsuperscript{349} Additionally, plans were made to build two new sorority houses, and Rea expected a new sorority to be incorporated by 1960 at UM. One of the ways the divide between sorority women and non-sorority women was observed included the selection of membership in other campus organizations. For example, Mortar Board, an honors association for women at UM, selected new members of a variety of standards including grades and other campus activities. In 1959, Rea cautioned the women of Mortar Board to be more inclusive of women and to use “the utmost discretion in selecting Mortar Boards for 1959-1960.”\textsuperscript{350}

In addition to the lack of collaboration with new programs in the residence halls, overcrowding added to the challenges for Rea. With more than 800 women students enrolled at UM in the spring of 1958 space in residence halls continued to be a concern, even after a new

\textsuperscript{348} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1958-1959, UM.
\textsuperscript{349} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{350} Mortar Board, [Meeting Minutes], March 2, 1959, p. 8, Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 39, folder minutes of mortar board, UM.
woman’s dormitory was built.\textsuperscript{351} The hall was named “Hefley Hall” in honor of Rea’s predecessor, Estella Hefley.\textsuperscript{352} Hefley Hall would house 150 women students, however, Rea cautioned the use of triple occupancy rooms would be necessary for the next school year to accommodate the women needing to live in the dormitories.\textsuperscript{353}

Rea and Miss Julia Waits continued to meet with women who experienced academic difficulties throughout the year in hopes of improving their academic performance. In 1958, Rea reported exit meetings with senior women to learn about their future plans after graduation, and to gather information about their experiences at UM. Rea hoped the information from the seniors would improve the counseling services for other women students at UM resulting in an improved experience at the university.\textsuperscript{354}

When Rea assumed the responsibility as dean of women, one of her top priorities was to provide support to female students in the areas of career development and, when needed, provided the “feminine point of view in administrative and faculty councils.”\textsuperscript{355} In her second year as dean, Rea found serving on committees frustrating and often an unproductive use of her time. Rea disclosed her frustration for committee work at UM in her annual report in 1958. “Service on committees this year, with the exception of the Steering Committee for the Self-Survey, has proved disappointing and unprofitable. No extensive or effective group action can be explored or initiated when committees meet only once or twice during the academic year.

Student participation on committees appears to be so ineffective as to be a waste of student

\textsuperscript{351} The university experienced a decline in enrollment from 1948-1953. By 1954 the trend reversed and enrollment began to rise. By 1958, University Registrar, Robert Ellis projected an enrollment of 3250 for the fall of 1959. See Robert Ellis, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Registrar], 1958-1959, UM.

\textsuperscript{352} Estella Hefley was given the title Dean Emerita of Women in 1958. “Officers of Administration,” University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1959-1960, UM.

\textsuperscript{353} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1958-1959, UM.

\textsuperscript{354} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{355} “Katharine Rea Takes Over as Dean of Women,” The Mississippian. September 15-18, 1957.
time.” Besides the Head Residents who worked in the residence halls and House Mothers, who supervised the girls in the sorority houses, Katharine Rea and Julia Waits were the only two women in the dean of women office, thus it appeared Rea and Waits were the only two women who represented the student personnel division on university committees.

Despite the office of the dean of women being understaffed throughout the year, Rea became affiliated with the School of Education at UM in 1958. She was granted the title of Associate Professor on November 1, 1958. For many early deans of women, the position created a path into a faculty role. Herron and Schwartz indicated that many of the first deans of women were hired for dual roles including teaching positions. Herron argued that being a dean of women was a “back door” path into a faculty position; however, the faculty position usually received secondary consideration and focus. It is unknown if Rea’s goal after completing her doctorate was to serve as a full-time faculty member, however, when the opportunity to be affiliated with School of Education became available, Rea took advantage of the opportunity. She continued her affiliation with the School of Education at UM throughout her tenure as the dean of women.

**Campus Boom**

Enrollment continued to rise at UM in the fall of 1959 for both male and female students. Although the increased enrollment was encouraging for the campus, the influx of students created challenges for Rea and other members of the student personnel division. One of the biggest challenges for the Office of the Dean of Women was helping the women students adjust

---

356 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1958-1959, UM.
357 “Officers of Administration,” University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1959-1960, UM.
360 Note: It is unknown which courses Rea taught until 1961 when teaching assignments were published in the *University Bulletin*. 88
to crowded conditions in the residence halls. Additionally, with more women to supervise, more women needed care and support. Rea expressed disappointment in her inability to sufficiently reach all of the women students who were struggling to meet the academic standards of the university. The university was predicting an increase in student enrollment for the following fall, raising concerns for housing space for women students. The addition of a new residence hall designed to house 250 was approved, but would not open until 1961. Other upgrades in the residence halls included all new “modern” wooden beds and spring mattresses for the women students. Undoubtedly, the increase in student enrollment placed a larger burden on Rea and Waits to provide academic, social, and career counseling for all of the women students. Additionally, the head residents, professional staff who lived in the dormitories with the women students, were over burdened with the increase in students to provide appropriate council.

The improvement of social programming in the residence halls continued to be a struggle for Rea. The divide between sorority women and those women not affiliated with sororities continued to grow. Rea emphasized the difficulty of the constant need to remind student government officers, chairman of social committees, and other planning organizations that activities and events for sorority women were not for all women. Rea expressed her frustration about the disparity in opportunity among women students in her annual report. “Constant reminders to those planning campus activities became irksome as the year progressed and placed undue emphasis upon the unaffiliated women residents who had very little opportunity for

361 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1959-1960, UM.
362 Ibid.
363 Ibid.
campus participation.” On the contrary, the affiliated women were overburdened with their responsibilities for social planning often affecting their academic achievement at UM. Sorority affiliation among women students reached 58 percent in the 1959-1960 academic year and chapter limits were raised for the second consecutive year from 65 to 83 members.

In 1958-1959 Rea reported resistance to staff development in housing to improve programs for the residents. Even if her spirits were down, Rea pushed for change. One year later it seemed her staff was less resistant to training and staff development. For example during 1959, members of the Office of the Dean of Women staff including head residents held workshops on campus and held weekly staff meetings throughout the year. Several women even attended the Mississippi Education Association meeting that year. While at the conference, Rea arranged for the staff to visit Dean Hefley at her home in Tennessee and tour Lambuth College and Union University. Although the Student Personnel Point of View of 1937 focused on the impact the student personnel division may have on students after college, Rea believed professional development for the staff was equally important. The opportunity to attend conferences and meet other women in the student personnel field provided a learning opportunity for the staff and showed the value Rea had for the work the women did with the college women. Despite Rea’s effort to provide professional development opportunities for her staff, she was disappointed in her lack of time to conduct her own research. Rea explained in her 1959-1960 annual report to the Chancellor the lack of time she had to devote to research of university women students. The lack of research and study precluded Rea from further understanding the challenges facing college women, and ways to improve the educational experience of women at UM.

364 Ibid., 160.
365 Ibid.
366 Ibid.
The 1960s Arrive

The new 250 bed residence hall was slated to open in September of 1961. Although the new residence hall was a welcome addition, the lack of space for women students in 1960-1961 created challenges for the residence hall staff and the Office of the Dean of Women. Even with the extremely crowded conditions in the residence halls, Rea commended her staff for overcoming the challenges and providing programming for the women students.\(^368\) Rea praised the residential hall staff for their commitment to professional development, which appeared to be quite a change from just the year before. Rea complimented the staff in her annual report for completing in-service training throughout the year, developing a new philosophy for the standards of residential life, scheduling weekly meetings to discuss concerns in the halls, and for the staff for “assuming more responsibility in the supervision of women students.”\(^369\)

The growth of sorority affiliation and the incorporation of new sororities continued at UM in 1960-1961. More than 50 percent of women were affiliated with a sorority. A chapter of Alpha Delta Pi joined the UM campus in February of 1961 with plans for new sorority affiliations to soon follow. Additionally, plans to build three new sorority houses on campus were underway for the next year, and two sororities made plans to remodel their existing houses on campus.\(^370\) Again, Rea was concerned over the divide among the women affiliated with a sorority and those students not affiliated. As Helen Horowitz cautioned, “on any coeducational campus, the women students divided themselves into the organized and the outsiders. They further sorted their sororities into a sharply calibrated pecking order.”\(^371\) Sororities created a

\(^{368}\) Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1960-1961, UM.
\(^{369}\) Ibid., 154.
\(^{370}\) Ibid.
divide among members and outsiders. Sorority women spent money on clothes and conformed to campus fads for failure to conform pushed a student to an outsider position within the college social order.\textsuperscript{372}

With the increase of women students and the lack of increase of staff, there was again a shortfall of time for Rea to conduct research on student life. The lack of staff further limited the services the office of the dean of women could provide. Consequently, Rea advocated for the need of a full-time psychologist on campus. The position would provide support and guidance for women students with a “more serious emotional problem” than was currently available.\textsuperscript{373}

1961-1962

Dean of the Student Personnel Division, L. L. Love was Rea’s supervisor when she took the position as Dean of Women in 1957. In his annual report to the chancellor for the 1961-1962 school year Love cautioned if enrollment predictions for the fall of 1963 became a reality, housing conditions would be the worst in university history for men and women students, as crowded halls could not be alleviated, even with the addition of the new dormitories and fraternities and sorority houses.\textsuperscript{374} Housing was not the only space issue on campus in the early 1960s. With the increase in student enrollment, the need for a new student union was apparent. Love advocated for a new Student Union, and office space for the Student Personnel Division including the Student Activities Office, Dean of Women, and the Dean of the Division.\textsuperscript{375}

For Rea, crowding in the residence halls marked the 1961-1962 academic year. Of the 1,359 women students enrolled at UM, more than 1,300 were assigned to live in a residence hall

\textsuperscript{372} Horowitz, \textit{Campus Life}, 211.
\textsuperscript{373} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1960-1961, p. 155, UM.
\textsuperscript{374} L. L. Love, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Division of Student Personnel], 1961-1962, UM.
\textsuperscript{375} Ibid.
Less than five years before, only 800 women were enrolled at UM. As a result, the new residence hall that opened in the fall of 1961 was forced to accommodate more women than designed. Many women were placed in triple occupancy in rooms designed for two students. Along with an increase in women student enrollment, membership in sororities remained high on campus. Rea reported 52 percent of women students were affiliated with a sorority for the 1961-1962 academic year. Furthermore, Pi Beta Phi colonized on the UM campus in March of 1962, opening as the tenth sorority on campus.

Rea emphasized the higher attrition of women students during the second semester of the year. Although she did not believe students were leaving due to crowded conditions in the halls, but rather due to poor academic performance or lack of career plans. Furthermore, the Office of the Dean of Women met with as many students as possible, Rea argued more could be done to help women students if the office had another staff member. Although, the department was unable to hire a staff member to council the women students, a secretary was added to help keep the office organized. The secretary hired was Mrs. Margaret Silver. Silver’s husband, James, was a faculty member in the history department at UM and later author of *Mississippi: The Closed Society* (1964).

Most of the leadership opportunities available to men students at UM in the 1960s were not available to the women students. Therefore, women students created their own associations and leadership opportunities. Women’s student government was one of the opportunities where

---

376 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1961-1962, UM.
377 Robert Ellis, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Registrar], 1958-1959, UM.
378 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1961-1962, UM.
379 Ibid.
380 Ibid.
women could enjoy a leadership role on campus. In 1961-1962, the Women’s Student Government Association at UM changed its name to the Association of Women Students (AWS).\textsuperscript{382} Other academic leadership opportunities were available for women in Cwens, Mortar Board, and Alpha Lambda Delta. All three of these organizations were academic achievement organizations.\textsuperscript{383} Rea expressed concern over the lack of student interest and participation in some of the leadership organizations and Rea worried national affiliation was in jeopardy for some of the societies if improvements were not made, especially concerning membership selection. Without a staff member dedicated to improve student leadership opportunities and collaboration with the women student organizations, Rea feared many of the organizations would no longer exist at UM.\textsuperscript{384}

Like many women deans before her, Rea wanted women students at UM to participate in leadership opportunities. According to Bashaw, many women deans strived to give women students economic independence and choices following graduation.\textsuperscript{385} In the fall of 1961, Rea expressed an interest in additional staffing to help with women student organizations such as Mortar Board and Alpha Lambda Delta, however, the staffing request was not met.\textsuperscript{386} The following year those organizations seemed to improve through strong student leadership and increased participation in renewed academic and service activities.\textsuperscript{387} Leadership opportunities for women students also included attending student conferences. Student Carolyn (Calico)

\textsuperscript{382} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1961-1962, UM.
\textsuperscript{383} All three organizations, Cwens, Mortar Board, and Alpha Lambda Delta accept members, in part, based on academic achievement.
\textsuperscript{384} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1961-1962, UM.
\textsuperscript{385} Bashaw, Stalwart Women.
\textsuperscript{386} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1961-1962, UM.
\textsuperscript{387} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1962-1963, UM.
Maxwell Perry explained Dean Rea made it possible for women students to attend conferences. For example, in 1961, members of the Panhellenic Council traveled to the University of Alabama to attend the Southeastern Regional Panhellenic Conference. Other conferences focused on student government, academic area of interests, and Panhellenic activities.

Part of the educational experience for women at UM, in the 1950s and 1960s ensured proper etiquette and manners were obeyed at all times. The Handbook of the Women’s Student Government Association (1961) provided a list of ten “cues for coeds.” The cues included tips about proper dating etiquette, the inappropriateness of the public display of “rolled-up hair,” and the expectation for dress-up attire for events in Fulton Chapel. Dean Rea reinforced these cues, specifically during a formal event. Janet Guyton, class of 1967, affectionately remembered Dean Rea encouraging her to wear white gloves on stage to present an award for an honor society function. Guyton recalled that Dean Rea believed in a formal public address that a failure to wear white gloves was “poor form.”

It was apparent Rea cared about the professional development and leadership opportunities of her staff. The women’s residential staff conducted in-service training and an annual workshop in 1961-1962. Part of the training provided to the staff was the study of the book Student Personnel Work in Higher Education, by Kate Hevner Mueller (1961). Dean Love led the discussion, and faculty and staff from other departments on campus were invited to

---

389 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1960-1961, UM.
386 Women’s Student Government Association, Handbook of the Women’s Student Government Association of the University of Mississippi, 1961-1962, p. 19, [Booklet]. Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 34, folder 176, UM.
391 Ibid.
participate in the training. Rea seemed pleased with the participation and support from the staff, and felt by improving the knowledge of the staff they would be more understanding in their roles to support university women.

Not only did Rea provide professional development opportunities to her staff, she continued to educate others and became more involved on the campus and in the Oxford community. Rea continued serving as a faculty member in the School of Education in 1961-1962. Other members of the student personnel division also held appointments in the School of Education including Dean Love, and Frank Moak. Rea and Love both taught sections of “Guidance: Student Personnel Work in College.” Rea also taught a workshop course on student guidance.

As a member of the Oxford community, the Mississippi Business and Professional Women’s Club recognized Rea as the “woman of achievement for 1962.” The annual award was given “on the basis of outstanding achievement in leadership and contributions to the community through civic work and other fields in addition to her professional work.” According to a newspaper article in the Oxford Eagle, Rea served a number of organizations in the Oxford community including the Oxford Centennial Club, the League of Women Voters, and the Oxford Pilot Club. Furthermore, Rea was the president of the Oxford Branch of the American Association of University Women, and served on the University Women’s Faculty.

---

393 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1961-1962, UM.
394 Ibid.
395 University of Mississippi, Bulletin, 1961-1962, UM.
396 Ibid.
397 The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, March 1, 1963. [photograph]. Vertical Files, Mississippi Faculty Misc, UM.
398 “Dr. Rea is Tapped by Oxford Women,” Oxford Eagle, March 1, 1963?. [newspaper clipping]. Vertical Files, Mississippi Faculty, Misc., UM.
Club at Ole Miss. Additionally, Rea taught Sunday school at the First Baptist Church in Oxford.

**A Campus Forever Changed (1962)**

The University of Mississippi experienced a tumultuous change in 1962 as James Meredith was the first African American student to integrate the campus. In a battle between Governor Ross Barnett, university administration, and even President John F. Kennedy, the University of Mississippi enrolled Meredith on October 1, 1962. The night before Meredith’s enrollment, the Ole Miss campus was a scene of violence and chaos. Rumors and inaccurate tales plagued the campus for days. After the riot, Rea contacted each head resident and house director to determine if any of the women students were injured. Despite receiving only one complaint, that a female student was ill from smelling tear gas, no serious injuries to the women students were reported. However, a rumor spread that one female student, Ann Gillespie, was injured or was still missing during the riot. “Dean of Women Katherine Rea announced earlier in the week that all women students have been accounted for and that all are safe.” The reports of a missing woman student proved to be unfounded.

Rea was in her home the night of the riot, but called the office of The Mississippian to check on the two student editors, Jan Humber and Sidna Brower. According to Humber, the two women students were instructed by Rea absolutely not to miss their midnight curfew. Dean Rea called back to The Mississippian office to remind the women not to be late.

---

399 “Dr. Rea is Tapped by Oxford Women,” *Oxford Eagle*, March 1, 1963?. [newspaper clipping]. Vertical Files, Mississippi Faculty, Misc., UM.
400 Ibid.
401 Katharine Rea, Letter to L. L. Love, “Student Injuries on September 30 and October 1, 1962,” George M. Street Collection, accretion box 17, folder October 8, 1962 Memo, UM.
402 “Ole Miss Coeds Accounted For,” *The Commercial Appeal*, October 9, 1962. [newspaper clipping]. Ann Rogers Dillard Collection, box 1, folder 8, UM.
403 For most of her career, Rea lived in faculty housing on the UM campus.
404 Jan Humber Robertson, personal interview with author, February 19, 2013.
unrest on campus, Rea’s orders stood, and the women returned to their sorority houses before curfew. The safety and wellbeing of the women students was Rea’s top priority the evening of the riot. Dr. Kenneth Wooten, an administrator at UM in 1962, was in the Lyceum building the night of the riot and remembered Rea called the men in charge to remind them to warn the U.S. Marshals not to use tear gas in the direction of the girls’ dormitories.405

Although Rea supported the racial integration of the campus, she handled the disturbance in a “quiet and unassuming way.”406 Jan Humber Robertson, managing editor of The Mississippian in 1962, spoke to Dean Rea about the night of the riot, and the campus unrest that followed. Humber Robertson and Sidna Brower were heavily criticized for the coverage of the riot in the student newspaper. After the tension settled on campus, Dean Rea spoke to Jan about Jan’s support of the racial integration of the campus. “Dean Rea asked me why I spoke up and had a different attitude than most [students]. I felt as a Christian that all [people] are precious. Dean Rea told me she was proud of me.”407 The support from Dean Rea gave Jan confidence and courage to continue her work at the paper.408

Chancellor Williams credited another female student, Emma Clark Hairston from Michigan, as a student leader who worked to restore order and decency to the campus.409 During the riot, Hairston’s brother, Billy, tried to reach her via telephone but was unable to make a connection. Billy wrote his sister “Clark” a letter after the riot of 1962. Billy, living in Dearborn, Michigan in 1962 listened to the events unfold on the radio. “They’ve been playing the whole mess up in real style, and I’m sure not much of it is true. There’s been a riot, of course, and

405 Kenneth Wooten, personal interview with author, February 28, 2013
406 Julia Waits Farris, personal interview with author, March 6, 2013.
407 Jan Humber Robertson, personal interview with author, February 9, 2013.
408 Jan Humber Robertson, personal interview with author, February 9, 2013.
409 “Chancellor Williams presents Ole Miss position in Delta speech last week,” New Albany Gazette, November 8, 1962, [newspaper clipping]. Ann Rogers Dillard Collection, box 1, folder 8, UM.
Barnett [Governor, Ross Barnett of Mississippi] seems to have done his best to screw things up.

Billy noted the editorial by Sidna Brower of The Mississippian was read on the radio station. “It showed much mature thought and insight, and I hope it was favorably received on campus.”

Indeed, many former students and faculty recall Rea being supportive of the racial integration of James Meredith in 1962, albeit her support was not often shown in a very public manner. In 1962, the UM chapter of the AAUP authored a statement in support of James Meredith and the integration of the university. A second letter was signed by faculty who were not members of the AAUP, but supported the racial integration of the campus. Rea did not sign either document to publically show her support. Regardless of the tensions on campus in 1962, Rea continued her work and supported women students in their academic and career pursuits.

The challenges of the racial integration of the UM campus during the 1962-1963 academic year are well documented. In his annual report, Dean Loved described the year as one of extreme contrasts. Love wrote, “At one extreme was the rioting and complete disorder of September 30. At the other was the calm and dignified Commencement on the following August 19. In between were the almost superhuman efforts of many persons to bring about the steady

---

410 Billy Hairston, “Dear Clark,” October 1, 1962, [Billy Hairston letter to his sister, Emma Clark Hairston]. Clark Hairston Taylor Collection, box 1, folder 1, UM.

411 Ibid.

412 List of Signers of Statement Adopted by the UM Chapter of the AAUP, October 3, 1962 [In support of Mr. James Meredith], Lucy Turnbull Collection, box 1, folder AAUP, UM.; List of Signers of Statement Adopted by the UM Chapter of AAUP for Non-Faculty Members, October 3, 1962. [In support of Mr. James Meredith], Lucy Turnbull Collection, box 1, folder AAUP, UM.; List of Signers of Statement Adopted by the UM Chapter of AAUP, October 3, 1962 [In support of Mr. James Meredith], Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 34, folder integration and riot, UM.; List of Signers of Statement Adopted by the UM Chapter of AAUP for Non-Faculty Members, October 3, 1962. [In support of Mr. James Meredith], Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 34, folder integration and riot, UM.

413 See Cohodas; Doyle; Eagles; Barrett; Silver; Sansing; Lambert.
progress that took place in moving from the one extreme to the other.\textsuperscript{414} The total enrollment at UM in the fall of 1962 was 4770.\textsuperscript{415} The Student Personnel Division was busy throughout the year with student conduct issues and dealt with a number of students withdrawing from the university. Furthermore, Provost Charles Noyes reported a decline of enrollment of 490 students from the fall semester to spring.\textsuperscript{416}

Crowded residence halls concerned Rea for several years as the dean of women. Rea did not emphasize the crowded conditions in her annual report in 1962-1963, but affirmed the new seven-story building that was set to open in 1963-1964 would alleviate the crowded conditions. Other residence halls on campus were remodeled and received new lounge furniture. Although Rea made no specific mention of any women students causing trouble during the racial riots over the past year, Rea made a point to thank the residence hall staff and women students for their composure over the last year. Rea’s gratitude to the residence hall staff and women students was expressed to Chancellor Williams in her annual report. “There were many occasions during the past year for this office to be grateful to the women’s residential staff as well as to the women students for their calmness under stress, for their discretion in the midst of conflicting ideology, and for their resilience after crisis. If for the women students the year provided an opportunity for compassion and understanding in an unfamiliar experience as preparation for the future, then for them the University was not a wasteland.”\textsuperscript{417}

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{414} L. L. Love, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Division of Student Personnel], 1962-1963, UM.
\textsuperscript{415} Robert Ellis, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Registrar], 1962-1963, UM.
\textsuperscript{416} Charles Noyes, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Provost], 1962-1963, UM.
\textsuperscript{417} Robert Ellis, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, p. 191. [Office of the Registrar], 1962-1963, UM.
For Rea, most of the year was business as usual. Programming in the residence halls continued. The AWS attempted to revive an organization for women students who lived off-campus. Unfortunately, the organization did not progress. Rea declared many of the women living off campus were “indifferent” towards campus life. Sorority rush was interrupted in the fall by the chaos caused by the integration, thus, numbers of those who participated in rush dropped. However, the building or remodeling of sorority houses continued. Kappa Kappa Gamma, Zeta Tau Alpha each remodeled their existing house while Alpha Omicron Phi announced plans to become the first sorority house built on Sorority Row. Chi Omega planned to follow in 1963-1964.

The divide between sorority women and non-affiliated women continued to plague Rea in 1962. Rea showed displeasure with Mortar Board and their selection process. The secretary of Mortar Board, Nancy Ware wrote in the ledger “She [Rea] feels she is ready to recommend to national a suspension of the chapter on this campus. She said possibly the fault lies in selection; often the membership looks like a sorority roster. She is willing to support the chapter if it can work and place Mortar Board before everything else…more emphasis should be placed on Mortar Board objectives.”

However, from the ledger of the meetings, the Mortar Board association did not immediate change their membership activities or become a more active organization. Rea challenged the women to participate in activities in engage in leadership programs. The University established a Mortar Board chapter in 1942. It was apparent Rea was displeased

---

418 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1962-1963, UM.
419 Mortar Board Minutes, March 14, 1962, [handwritten], p. 44. Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 39, folder minutes of mortar board, UM.
420 Mortar Board Chapter Roll, [Membership list], 1942, Sarah Isom center Collection, box 39, folder mortar board, tassels, 1942, UM.
with the lack of commitment from Mortar Board members to take their membership in the honors organization seriously. At times, Rea argued it appeared the selection process was based on a sorority popularity contest over academic and leadership achievement. At the end of the year, Rea threatened the association with removal as an official chapter on campus if the women failed to conduct timely meetings and carry out group activities.\textsuperscript{421} The following year, there was no documented criticism from Rea on the membership selection, lack of meetings, or official activities from Mortar Board.

Although the campus was in disarray much of the fall, Rea continued her push for professional development for the staff. Rea utilized two publications, \textit{Change and Choice for the College Woman}, from the American Association of University Women, and \textit{Student Service Standards and Behavior: The Educator’s Responsibility}, from the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors for the staff to read, study, and discuss.\textsuperscript{422} Throughout the campus tension of integration, Rea continued to quietly push for leadership opportunities for the women students and staff at UM.

\textbf{Panty Raids}

Although the UM campus experienced a tumultuous year in 1962, students still managed to engage in some harmless (for the most part) antics. However, collegiate antics involving women’s panties, created quite a stir, not only at the University of Mississippi but at colleges across the country. Rioting over the racial integration was not the only disciplinary challenge that Rea and the division of student personnel faced in 1962. Emma Clark Hairston served as the president of the Associated Women Students in 1962. As the president Hairston worked closely

\textsuperscript{421} Mortar Board Minutes, May 8, 1962, [handwritten], Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 39, folder minutes of mortar board, UM.
\textsuperscript{422} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1962-1963, UM.
with Rea, as Rea advised the AWS. Certainly the violence and tension on campus created a less
desirable learning atmosphere on campus. However, the student code of conduct for
women students did not change during the academic year. In the early 1960s one of the most
common “raids” on college campuses did not include tear-gas and U.S. Marshals, but rather, the
chanting and calling for panties out of dormitory windows. Although the Ole Miss campus was
filled with anxious tension following the riots from the night James Meredith enrolled at the
University, the campus was not devoid of panty raids. The Ole Miss Co-Ed Handbook provided
specific instructions for the women students, should their dormitory be raided. The women were
instructed to close the windows to the dormitory and turn off all of the lights. Furthermore, “no
woman is to unlock or open any door or window or to appear at any window or on any fire
escape or roof.”

Before the student personnel movement, activities and events were often separated by sex
and supervised or sanctioned by a dean of men or dean of women. Although the student
personnel movement was in full-swing by the 1950s, students still found the opportunity to
partake in activities not supervised or supported by their institution. Those activities varied from
harmless pranks to riots. Regardless, the spontaneous eruptions or disruptions became an integral
part of the student experience for students across the country.

The creation of student dormitories improved access to college for many young men and
created experiences “which made men of boys.” With more students residing on campus,
administrators and faculty were further able to control student life and monitor student behavior.
Lucas argued the tight quarters of students created an atmosphere “where rumors abounded and

---

423 Eagles, The Price of Defiance.
424 Ole Miss Co-Ed Handbook, 1962-1963, p. 20. Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 33, folder Ole Miss Co-Ed Handbook of the AWS, UM.
tempers flared easily, it was almost inevitable there would be fights, duels, and stabbings."  

The cramped environment for students created boredom, competition, and academic stress that led to mischief and even violence. Rudolph described the role the college dormitory and tight living quarters of young men had on the eruption of campus rebellions and riots. Student rebellions of young college men were a concentrated effort of “protesting against some real or imagined wrong.”

Spontaneous disruptions varied from campus to campus and from region to region across the U.S. The latest craze, rage, trend, or frenzy on college campuses changed so quickly it was hard for administrators to develop effective policies with the changing needs of the campus. A campus fad is another term used to describe a spontaneous disruption on a college campus that seemingly gains student interest. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defined a “fad” as “a practice or interest followed for a time with exaggerated zeal.” In their study one of the fads on college campuses in the 1970s, streaking, or running around naked, Aguirre, Quarantelli, and Mendoza described characteristics of new events appearing on college campuses as fads. First, the fad is “homogeneous in different times and places.” Second, the fad must be out of the ordinary, or not a part of routine behavior. Third, the fad is considered “odd by existing cultural norms” and should convey social disappointment. A fad is impulsive of participants and gains popularity rather quickly, but is generally “short-lived.”

---

427 Rudolph, The American College and University, 97.
430 Ibid., 570.
431 Ibid., 570.
432 Ibid., 570.
One of the more well-known college fads, mainly for the humorous aspects, was the panty raids of the early 1950s. In 1952, male students at the University of Michigan caused what many historians consider to be the first collegiate panty raid. A panty raid would commence when a group of male students cheered, hollered, or demanded panties from the women’s dormitories or sorority houses. Often, men would scale the walls to enter the women’s residences and take the “unmentionables.” In 1952, Time Magazine described the new student disruption as “the newest and noisiest college craze.” Although women did not always welcome the disruption, they often encouraged the male students, and cheered as they threw their panties out the window. Other times, if male students entered the dormitory uninvited the women would fight back with “coke bottles, mops, and plumber’s helpers.”

At the University of Michigan, winters were long, cold, and grey. On Thursday, March 20, 1952 the temperatures rose. According to Tobin the rising temperatures, open windows, and students playing music in the streets soon created pandemonium. Tobin described the perfect blend of circumstances that led to one of the most rowdy and famous panty raids in collegiate history. First, it was the first warm night after months of a long, cold winter. Second, the noise of the musicians in the streets created an excitement and “ambience.” Third, the rules at the University of Michigan at the time forbid unsupervised visits for the men and women. Finally, the campus was full of young males. A perfect storm of sorts that even after the police arrived the mob of students quickly overtook the officers and stormed the women’s dormitories. Women did what they could to fight back at the University of Michigan. They poured water out of their dormitory windows, locked the main doors into the building, but the men still entered their

434 Ibid., 24.
435 Ibid., 24.
436 Tobin, “Panty Raid, 1952.”

105
residencies to steal the “unmentionables.” Although the women could not quell the panty raid-they fought back. According to Tobin women were not allowed to enter the student union unaccompanied and upon their entrance created hysteria in the building. It was then, the dean of women, Deborah Bacon, intervened and sent the women back to their dormitories before curfew. For the men, once the rain came, the entire event was over. The raid, however, sparked national attention and other institutions across the country saw similar mischief on their campuses. Aguirre, et al. explained the spread of fads from one campus to another often depended upon the level of prestige of the campus that first experienced the fad. “The nearer and higher the prestige of the schools that experienced the fad, the greater the probability that other schools will follow suit.” It did not take long before the panty raids became a college fad across the country.

The University of Minnesota experienced one such copycat incident on a warm day in May of 1952. Male students, nearly 1,500, stormed several women’s dormitories and sorority houses that required three different police units to respond. The women students were not simply innocent bystanders, but rather participants in the mayhem where they could be seen “twirling bras and panties above their heads” as the male students traveled to the various women’s dormitories across campus. Word quickly spread that the coeds were organizing their own counter raid. To defuse the situation and dispense the crowd, the police used a can of tear gas in an attempt to dissuade the male students. Fights ensued between a few of the male students

---

437 Ibid.
438 Ibid.
439 Ibid.
440 Ibid.
443 Ibid.
and the police when William Middlebrook, the University of Minnesota vice president managed to gain the attention of the crowd and convince students to head home.\footnote{Ibid.}

Although the panty raid craze really took off in the 1950s, panty raids were still happening more than a decade later. At the University of Mississippi, in the fall of 1964, students participated in a large panty raid the weekend the Ole Miss Rebels were to play the Louisiana State University Tigers in a football game.\footnote{Thomas J. Reardon, “Frank Moak’s Legacy: Dean of Division of Student Personnel, The University of Mississippi 1964-1981.” PhD diss., University of Mississippi, 2000. ProQuest (UMI No. 304610643).} Two days before the Halloween game, students partook in a “spontaneous pep rally [that] turned into a ‘panty raid’ and then a full scale riot.”\footnote{Ibid., 141.} Cars were damaged and law enforcement offices from Oxford and the Mississippi Highway Patrol were called to help with the riot and several students were arrested. The discipline students received varied as most of the charges of rioting and disorderly conduct against the students were dismissed. However, five students received a probationary sentence, and three students were suspended from Ole Miss.\footnote{Reardon, “Frank Moak’s Legacy.”} During the panty raid in 1964, Rea referred several women students to the AWS Judicial Council for rule violations including walking onto a fire escape during a raid, failure to follow instructions from a head resident, throwing panties out of windows, and calling out dormitory windows.\footnote{Letter from Katharine Rea to Frank Moak [List of Cases, Interdepartmental Communication].Frank Moak Collection, box 51, folder 11, 1964, UM.} The student personnel office, especially Dean of the Division of Student Personnel, Frank Moak, and Dean of Women, Katharine Rea were the targets of criticism, especially in the campus newspaper from anonymous letters to the editor for the disciplinary stance taken by the institution.\footnote{Reardon, “Frank Moak’s Legacy.”} However, not all of the panty raids on campus resulted in damage to the halls. In fact, as one former student, Susan Thomas Griffith explained,
most of the panty raids were small bursts of harmless, spontaneous fun for students. Griffith, a student at UM in the 1960s who served on the AWS Judicial Council portrayed the panty raids as “quite frequent…and quite fun.”\footnote{Susan Thomas Griffith, personal interview with author with author, June 7, 2012.}

Panty raids spread across the country from the University of California-Berkeley to Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. where women “invaded” the then all-male campus. It is unknown if the women really escaped male residence halls with male undergarments. Generally, the raids were a noisy fad, although a few instances of the use of tear gas, student expulsions, and broken windows were reported.\footnote{Time Magazine. Epidemic. June 2, 1952, 24.} In the 1950s and 1960s college dormitories were mainly single-sex, thus, women and men were kept separated adding to the fun and mischief of sneaking into the residence hall of the opposite sex.

**A New Year: 1963-1964**

By 1963-1964 tensions on the UM campus remained high. At the end of the academic year, Dean Love announced he would retire from his position as the dean of the division after 15 years of service to the university.\footnote{L. L. Love, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Division of Student Personnel], 1963-1964, UM.; Noyes, Charles E., Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Provost], 1963-1964, UM.} The campus unrest may have been difficult on Love as he served as a mediator between the students and administration. Love began a full-time faculty appointment teaching in the higher education doctoral program in the School of Education at UM. Consequently, the campus unrest continued to negatively affect enrollment. When campus opened for fall term in 1963, 4,348 students enrolled, a loss of 422 students from the previous fall.\footnote{Charles E. Noyes, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Provost], 1963-1964, UM. Note, Robert Ellis, university registrar, accepted a sabbatical to attend graduate school at Florida State University during the 1963-1964 year.}
After the new women’s residence hall, Stewart Hall, opened in the fall of 1963 crowded conditions in the women’s residence halls disappeared. In fact, by the spring of 1964, two of the older residence halls were closed due to lack of enrollment.\footnote{Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1963-1964, UM.} Similarly to most college campuses, UM was dominated by male students in the 1960s. With more than 4,000 students enrolled in the fall of 1964, only 1,466 were women.\footnote{Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1964-1965, UM.} In 1964 women only had nine residence halls dedicated to their use, while men had more than 20. Many women lived in one of the nine sorority houses.\footnote{Tour of the University of Mississippi Campus and Highlights of Oxford, Southeastern Panhellenic Conference, February 21-22, 1964, University of Mississippi [Tour Guide], Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 34, folder sororities, UM.} The drop in enrollment also affected sorority rush, with nearly 100 less women students participating than the prior year. As a result, chapter limits were lowered from 85 to 75, the first time the limit was lowered under Dean Rea. Although the number of women in sororities dropped during the year, the Panhellenic Council remained active on campus and continued to provide leadership opportunities for sorority women. For example, the Panhellenic Council hosted the Southeastern Panhellenic Conference at the Ole Miss campus in the spring of 1964. The conference provided a leadership opportunity for Panhellenic women and brought deans of women and officers from sororities from ten different states. Rea commended the women who planned the conference.\footnote{Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1963-1964, UM.}

Professional development of the staff continued to be a priority for Rea. She selected the publication, \textit{Counseling Adolescents} for the staff professional development meetings.\footnote{Ibid.,} At the end of the year, Rea reported five head residents or house mothers retired. Rea continued to teach
two graduate courses a year in the School of Education. A workshop course in student guidance and a course on student personnel work.\textsuperscript{458}

1964-1965

Dr. Franklin (Frank) Moak assumed the position as the Dean of the Division of Student Personnel in 1964 after the retirement of Dean Love. Moak previously worked in the division as the Director of Placement and Financial Aid.\textsuperscript{459} In his annual report, Moak reported minimal disruption on the campus with the enrollment of two Negro students, the first two Negro students to enroll in the university without a court order. However, Moak portrayed one of the largest causes of “turbulence” on campus was the result of a panty raid before the Ole Miss football game against Louisiana State University, an arch rival.\textsuperscript{460}

As the dean of women, Rea was responsible for the safety of the women students. In 1964, Rea found herself engrossed in the spectacle of a women’s disturbance on the Ole Miss campus. In November, the Associated Women Students (AWS) Judicial Council heard three days of conduct hearings for various conduct violations. The violations included walking onto a fire escape during a [panty] raid, failure to follow a directive from house council or a head resident, throwing of panties out a dormitory window, shouting out of dormitory windows, and the shining of flashlights during a raid. In total, 21 women appeared before the judicial conduct board. At least 15 women were placed on probation from the raids.\textsuperscript{461} The women who were placed on probation were given a short period of time to notify their parents of their infraction.

\textsuperscript{458} University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1963-1964; 1964-1965, UM.
\textsuperscript{459} Frank Moak, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Placement and Financial Aid], 1960-1961, UM.
\textsuperscript{460} Frank Moak, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Division of Student Personnel], 1964-1965, UM.
\textsuperscript{461} Katharine Rea, Letter to Frank Moak, November 6, 1964. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 11, UM.
before a letter was mailed home.\textsuperscript{462} Dean Rea and the AWS Judicial Council collaborated to determine appropriate sanctions for the women. Often, Dean Rea referred conduct cases for the Judicial Council to review.\textsuperscript{463}

The trouble for Rea was not over. In December of 1964, a college coed was referred to the AWS Judicial Council for harboring a pistol in her dormitory room. The head resident asked the coed if she had a pistol in her room. The student denied having the weapon. When the head resident searched the student’s room she found a .22 pistol in a dresser drawer. The judicial council recommended suspension of the student until June, 1965, however the council recommended the student’s sentence be suspended to allow the woman to remain in school. While the woman was on suspension she was not allowed to participate in any club or organizational activities, or receive any awards or accolades from the campus.\textsuperscript{464} The behavior shown by the women students was not in accordance with the “social graces” Rea wished to instill on the University women.\textsuperscript{465}

\textbf{Women’s Dress Code is Not Up for Debate}

Under Dean Rea’s leadership, several of the campus rules began to loosen for the women students at UM in the 1960s, however, the dress code remained firmly in place. The regulations for proper dress clothes for women included restriction for what could be worn on the campus and in the Oxford community. Each year a publication, the \textit{Ole Miss Co-Ed}, was distributed to University women to inform the students of the proper dress requirements, campus rules and

\textsuperscript{462} Katharine Rea, Letter to Frank Moak, November 6, 1964. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 11, UM.
\textsuperscript{463} Ole Miss Co-Ed Sponsored by, AWS, 1963-1964, Handbook of the Associated Women Students, UM.
\textsuperscript{465} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1957-1958, p. 121, UM.
regulations, and extra-curricular opportunities available. In 1964-1965, the Ole Miss Co-Ed clearly articulated the dress code for women. “Proper dress…does not include wearing blue jeans, pedalpushers, shorts, or Bermuda shorts. Rolled up hair, even when covered with a scarf, is not considered proper dress outside of the privacy of a girl’s residence.” Furthermore, women students needed permission from the AWS Executive Council before being photographed in swim suits or any sports attire.

The use of photographs of women students in sports attire for a clothing advertisement caused a stir on campus. In early May, 1964, two coeds, Patsy Fisher and Cherry Haynie were photographed wearing sports attire for a clothing store in Oxford. The photographs appeared in an advertisement for the store in The Mississippian. After the photographs appeared in the newspaper, the women were summoned to appear in front of the AWS Judicial Council for a dress code infraction. After proper punishment was determined, an attack campaign began in The Mississippian against Dean Rea and the AWS Judicial Council for the “archaic regulation governing the appearance of University women in sports attire in publications.” Former student, and one-time AWS Judicial Chair, Karen Clifford Montjoy cautioned it was often the judicial council that was less forgiving than the university administration when students failed to follow the rules.

Danny Roy, a male student at UM, questioned Rea’s influence on the AWS Judicial Council and their subsequent punishment of the two coeds for wearing sportswear in an

---

467 Ibid.
469 Note: It is unclear what punishment the women received, however, probation was likely. Probation usually resulted in the inability to participate in campus associations and clubs and an earlier curfew in the residence halls for a period of time.
471 Karen Clifford Montjoy, personal interview with author, March 5, 2012.
advertisement. Roy’s letter to the editor featured in The Mississippian, directly criticized Rea’s perceived enforcement of the campus dress code. “The Council is based on the principle that women coeds should make their own rules. Closer to reality is Dean Rea making her own rules for the coeds.”

Roy wrote an original editorial after the news of the punishment reached the campus masses but the verbal sparring continued for a week after the incident as other students weighed in on the decision and women’s groups came to the defense of Dean Rea. The Mississippian published a cartoon featuring Rea acting as a puppeteer showing her influence over the students. “Now, girls, you know that you always have the last word.” The cartoon, ran next to Danny Roy’s letter to the editor where he decried the punishment of the coeds.

The AWS Executive Council came to the defense of Rea and the Judicial Council the next day. In a letter to the editor, the AWS Executive Council defended Dean Rea and explained it was the members of the Executive Council who reviewed the rules each academic year and Rea was not present at the meeting. The rule of women being photographed wearing sports attire was never on the docket to be changed and Rea had no influence on the decision. The Executive Council explained to the student body in their letter the decision to keep the campus dress code. “By the unanimous consent of the Council, the rule was not changed. This decision was made according to the personal convictions of each Council member and not from fear of the veto or anger of the Dean of Women.” It is unknown if Rea ever responded to the letter from the Executive Council. Rea never published a letter in response to Danny Roy’s criticism.

---

473 Ibid.
Other groups passed resolutions in support of Dean Rea including Mortar Board. Mortar Board argued Rea acted with the best interest of women students in mind, and the recent attacks on Dean Rea were “vicious abuse” and Rea was commended for being fair minded. Furthermore, Mortar Board recommended Dean Rea “be afforded the respect of all students in accordance with her position as dean of women.”  

Additionally, the Panhellenic Council supported Dean Rea and the AWS Judicial Council. “We respect the knowledge, experiences, and position of our Dean of Women…as a group [of] conscientious women of the university, we protest the newspaper attack on the integrity of the Dean of Women…”

Finally, after a week of back and forth between the AWS Judicial Council, Danny Roy, and the letters to the editor, the two women involved in the advertisement who were photographed wearing sportswear wrote a letter to the editor apologizing for the disturbance and the disrespect Rea endured throughout the ordeal. The women expressed their displeasure for the rule barring sportswear, however, they acknowledge it is a campus rule and the rules should be followed. The two women, Patsy Fisher and Cherry Haynie wrote an apologetic letter to the editor. “Because we did break this rule, even though it was done unintentionally, we deserved the consequences that followed. We both felt our punishment was merited even though we did not realize we were breaking a rule, especially under the circumstances.” Furthermore, the women affirmed their support of Dean Rea. “We are both embarrassed and apologetic that it is because of our actions that such turmoil has arisen. We wish to express our apologies to Dean Rea, the AWS Judicial Council and to the students of the University of Mississippi.”

---


in *The Mississippian* of Rea publicly responding to the letter from Fisher and Haynie. It is a mystery whether or not Rea spoke to the two women privately about the matter.

Katherine Abraham was an undergraduate student at Ole Miss from 1963-1967. Abraham, a Vicksburg, Mississippi native, was involved in sorority life on campus, and served as AWS president her senior year. As AWS president she was keenly aware of the rules on the UM female students. “We had a curfew, and the guys didn’t have a curfew…it never bothered me, but people used to give her [Dean Rea] heat because she would be upset when people broke the rules.”

Despite the judicial conduct cases, Rea reported similar yearly outcomes in her annual report for 1964-1965. Roughly 1,000 women lived in the residence hall, which was not enough to fill all of the spaces, so two halls closed in the spring semester. Sorority participation rose from the previous year resulting in all the pledge slots being filled and approval was granted for the construction of two new sorority houses, Pi Beta Phi and Phi Mu.

Rea reported staff professional development training changed for the year, allowing for more discussion of topics and issues the staff was most interested in studying. Instead of reading a text or book, Rea decided the staff would write case studies and role play the case during staff development meetings. Furthermore, Rea required her staff to submit their own annual reports so Rea could better understand the duties of each staff member.

Finally, Rea expressed concern over lack of communication within the division. Although Rea had previously worked with Frank Moak as a member of the student personnel division staff, this was the first year Moak was Rea’s supervisor. Rea criticized the lack of

---

479 Katherine Abraham, personal interview with author with author, February 3, 2012.
480 Katharine Rea, *Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi*, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1964-1965, UM.
481 Ibid.
communication in her annual report. Rea reported “stimulation that comes from professional people working and planning together cannot occur unless there is effective and frequent communication between staff within the division. This office would benefit from an improvement of communication channels and more information about activities occurring within the various departments.”482

The year was busy for Rea and the head mothers at the sorority houses on campus. Chi Omega, Phi Mu, Bi Beta Phi, and Alpha Omicron Pi each made substantial renovations or built a new house on campus. The new and renovated houses provided sorority women with first-rate accommodations and contributed to the building expansion on campus.483 Although in previous years Rea reported a divide between sorority women and those not affiliated with a sorority, the tension and inequities appeared to lessen, even if only for a short period of time.

**The First Black Women Enroll: 1965**

Rea continued to serve the women students as the dean of women in 1965-1966 where she was responsible for the welfare of 1,729 women students.484 She also served on the national Board of Directors with the Young Women’s Christian Association in 1965.485 Much of Rea’s work concerned managing issues with Greek life. Two new sorority houses were completed, which resulted in all ten sororities having their own sorority houses. Rea was concerned with sorority women and their ability to follow the rules and regulations of the campus, particularly

---

482 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, p. 234, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1964-1965, UM.
484 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1965-1966, UM.
485 Frank Moak, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Division of Student Personnel], 1965-1966, UM.
the regulations concerning “use of alcoholic beverages, visiting bachelors quarters, and weekend leaves.”486

Rea continued to engage her staff in professional development opportunities. In 1965, Rea examined women students who were about to embark on a college career. Rea, and the professional staff, studied the needs, characteristics and experiences of those women to better understand how their work could serve those women.487 For Rea and the head residents, 1965 provided a challenge never experienced before on the UM campus.

The biggest challenge Rea faced in 1965 was the admission of four Black women and their subsequent arrival on campus. The professional development provided by Rea was imperative for the staff to rise to the challenge to support the young Black women at UM. Although the university admitted its first Black student, James Meredith, in 1962 the enrollment of other Black students was slow. In 1965, the university enrolled four Black women students including one graduate student Patricia Anderson, and three undergraduate women, Verna Bailey, Joyce Jones, and Billie Joyce Ware.488 In her annual report, Rea did not expound upon the challenges of having the first Black women enroll, she simply divulged the change did not come without struggle. Rea explained in her report, “while to outside observers the integration of women students was accomplished without incident, there were problems of a subtle nature involved in the adjustment to group living by both races.”489 Although there were no riots on campus with the enrollment of Ms. Bailey, Ms. Jones, Ms. Ware, or Ms. Anderson, the women were not welcomed with open arms. According to Cohodas, Verna Bailey, a native of Jackson,

---

486 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, p 274, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1965-1966, UM.
487 Ibid.
488 Whitney Stuart, Letter to Dr. Franklin E. Moak, Dean of Student Personnel. [Carole Ann Strong and others]. November 29, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
489 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1965-1966, UM.
Mississippi, elected to enroll at Ole Miss because of the quality of the education she would receive, and “she could help widen the path James Meredith had started.” Unfortunately, the women were often greeted with racial epithets, and Bailey experienced other students throwing food towards her in the cafeteria.  

As the dean of women, Rea took her duties to ensure care for the well-being of all students very seriously. According to Charles Rea, a nephew of Dean Rea’s and a UM student from 1964 through 1968, Dean Rea “felt responsible for the care and safety of the first Black female students enrolled at Ole Miss.” To improve race relations on campus, Rea hosted “sensitivity workshops” in her home. At the workshops Rea invited both Black and White women to meet and eat together in a non-threatening environment. For many women, those workshops were the first time sharing a meal with a woman of a different race. Rea did not mention the workshops in her annual report or in other official university documents. It seemed Rea conducted the workshops without a directive from a supervisor or in an official university capacity, but rather for a genuine desire for an improved environment and treatment of Black women and students in the community. Without documentation, it is difficult to understand why Rea hosted the workshops. Complicating the mystery is the lack of attendance records. Who was invited to these workshops? Were the workshops hosted in Rea’s home to avoid questions from the University administration, or were the workshops hosted in her home for convenience?  

Rea arranged to meet with Verna Bailey and Billie Joyce Ware weekly to discuss any difficulties they encountered on campus. Rea reported difficulties for the two young coeds. Two UM graduate students, Mauri Blanks and Connie Green interviewed Rea in the early 1980s about

---

490 Cohodas, The Band Played Dixie, 124.
491 Ibid., 124.
492 Charles Rea, email communication with author, January 20, 2012.
493 Cora Norman, personal interview with author, March 16, 2012.
her relationship and experiences with Verna Bailey and Billie Joyce Ware. In their paper, Blanks and Green wrote about Rea’s memories of the events. “They had problems in the dorm. If they were in the bathroom and a White girl walked in, she would walk out. They also refused to take a shower previously used by a Black student and the doors were often closed as they walked down the halls.”494 As a result of the unfriendly treatment the two women received, it was reported the women stopped meeting with Dean Rea on a weekly basis. “It was not my friendship they wanted, they had that. They wanted to be able to relate to the other students.”495 Making friends and connections with students, especially White women students, was difficult for Bailey and Ware.

By October, there were complaints and concerns over the interactions between Black male students and White female students. Mr. Whitney D. Stuart, Assistant to Dean Frank Moak, wrote an outline of various issues of concerns to Dean Moak in late November of 1965. Stuart described notifications he received of a White female, Carole Ann Strong visiting with a “colored student” in the lobby of a dormitory.496

Strong, an out of state student from Schenectady, New York, wrote to James Meredith in support of his enrollment at the university in 1962 while still living in New York. In her letter, Strong congratulated Meredith on entering the university. Strong wrote, “with wonderful courageous people like yourself perhaps someday all this horrible racial business can be eliminated.”497 In her letter to Mr. Meredith, Strong wrote of her relationship with a “colored

494 Mauri Blanks and Connie Green, “Black Women at Ole Miss” (unpublished manuscript, 1980s?), Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 41, folder black students at Ole Miss, UM.
495 Ibid.
496 Whitney Stuart, Letter to Dr. Franklin E. Moak, Dean of Student Personnel. [Carole Ann Strong and others]. November 29, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
497 Carole Ann Strong, Letter to James Meredith. [Handwritten letter in support of Meredith’s enrollment.]. October 1, 1962. James Howard Meredith Collection, digital file, UM.
boy” she had in New York. She described the segregation as difficult as there were few places they could go together.\(^{498}\) By 1965, Strong was a student at the University of Mississippi.

On the evening of October 28, 1965, police officer Jenkins received a complaint of a “negro and a white girl” visiting together in the Ward Hall lobby. The White student was Carole Ann Strong. Officer Jenkins went to Ward Hall to investigate the complaint. After visiting with the house mother, Mrs. Lodwick, Jenkins reported seeing “Carole Strong and a nigger boy sitting in the lobby.”\(^{499}\) According to Jenkins’ report, Mrs. Lodwick asked what he could do, and Jenkins replied that he was unable to do anything. Jenkins then called Chief Tatum for help. Chief Tatum arrived at Ward Hall and spoke with Officer Jenkins and Mrs. Lodwick and also said there was nothing to be done of the incident.\(^{500}\)

Stuart documented an incident on November 2, 1965 when he received a complaint of two Black male students and two White female students who were seen visiting together on campus. According to Stuart, the student who made the complaint wanted Dean Moak to speak to the students to discourage the behavior. The four students involved were requested to meet with the deans to discuss security challenges.\(^{501}\)

Strong was cited by UM Police Chief Tatum for having dinner in the cafeteria with Eddie Smith, a Black male. In his report, Chief Tatum wrote, “after finishing their meal they sat there and talked until 7:30 p.m. When one of the cafeteria employees went over and told them it was closing time [sic] they got up and left.”\(^{502}\) Mr. Stuart reported discussing the events with Ms.

\(^{498}\) Ibid.
\(^{500}\) Ibid.
\(^{501}\) Whitney Stuart, Letter to Dr. Franklin E. Moak, Dean of Student Personnel. [Carole Ann Strong and others]. November 29, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
\(^{502}\) Burns Tatum, Offense Report [Carole Ann Strong and Eddie Smith]. November 27, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
Strong and informed her campus security would do its best to assure her safety, but the security department was unable to provide around the clock supervision. In his notes, Stuart indicated Dean Rea was present at the meeting with Ms. Strong.503

On November 15, 1965, Whitney Stuart documented a report of an incident involving Carole Ann Strong. According to the report, Ms. Strong received a telephone call from Mr. Mason, a father of UM student Nancy Mason, threatening to kill her.504 Campus police chief, Burns Tatum responded to the complaint and completed an offense report.505 Tatum requested officers report to Ward Hall and were given instructions on what to do if Mr. Mason arrived at the hall.506 According to Tatum’s report, Ms. Strong received a telephone call later in the evening from Nancy Mason. Mason was at Professor Russell Barrett’s home and inquired if Ms. Strong may join her. Mr. Tatum gave his approval for Ms. Strong to go to the Barrett’s home.507

Tatum’s report indicated Ms. Strong drove herself to the Barrett’s home, but that Mrs. Barrett returned Ms. Strong and Ms. Mason back to campus around 10:00 p.m. Tatum reported he checked with Mrs. Lodwick, the head resident of Ward Dormitory after 10:00 a.m. and that all was well. Tatum indicated Dean Rea was visiting with Ms. Strong and Ms. Mason in their dormitory rooms, but he never saw Dean Rea that evening.508

503 Whitney Stuart, Letter to Dr. Franklin E. Moak, Dean of Student Personnel. [Carole Ann Strong and others], November 29, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
504 Ibid.
506 Ibid. Note: It is unknown what emergency response instructions the officers were given in the event Mr. Mason arrived on campus.
507 Ibid.
508 Ibid. Note: It is unclear if Carole Strong and Nancy Mason shared a room in Ward Hall or if they were assigned separate rooms in Ward Hall.
By November 18, 1965, Whitney Stuart reported to Dean Frank Moak of Nancy Mason’s withdrawal from campus. On the evening of November 29, 1965 the situation in Ward Hall became dangerous. Stuart reported three telephone calls threatening Ward Hall, including death threats against Nancy Mason (who reportedly withdrew two days before) and Carole Strong. The reason for Nancy Mason’s withdrawal from the University is unclear. Whitney Stuart, in his letter to Dr. Moak reported threats against Mason. Stuart documented Mason, her father, and Dean Rea were to meet, but Mason withdrew before the meeting took place. One of the telephone calls, supposedly to Mr. Buford C. Curtis, whose daughter Michelle Curtis lived in Ward Hall, told Mr. Curtis since Dean Rea would not expel Strong for having “sexual intercourse with a negro student on the campus.” However, the caller threatened Mr. Curtis, that others would punish Strong for her relationship with Black students. From the handwritten notes from the head resident, Margaret Lodwick, the phone call threatened the women students in Ward Hall. Lodwick wrote in her notes a direct threat to Carol Strong and the women in Ward Hall. “Dean Rea would not expel Carol [Strong], but I belong to a committee that will. If you value your daughter’s life get her out of Ward Hall.” Stuart reported he received notification of these threatening phone calls from Dean Rea around 1:00 a.m. on November 21, 1965. To ensure safety, two security officers were to “remain in the vicinity of Ward Hall for the

509 Whitney Stuart, Letter to Dr. Franklin E. Moak, Dean of Student Personnel. [Carole Ann Strong and others]. November 29, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
510 Whitney Stuart, Letter to Dr. Franklin E. Moak, Dean of Student Personnel. [Carole Ann Strong and others]. November 29, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.; Margaret Lodwick, Documentation of Threats Against Ward Hall. [Handwritten Notes]. November 22, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
511 Whitney Stuart, Letter to Dr. Franklin E. Moak, Dean of Student Personnel. [Carole Ann Strong and others]. November 29, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
512 Whitney Stuart, Letter to Dr. Franklin E. Moak, Dean of Student Personnel. [Carole Ann Strong and others]. November 29, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.; Margaret Lodwick, Documentation of Threats Against Ward Hall. [Handwritten Notes]. November 22, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
513 Margaret Lodwick, Documentation of Threats Against Ward Hall. [Handwritten Notes]. November 22, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.

122
remainder of that night.” On November 23, 1965, Stuart was informed the FBI verified one of the telephone calls was placed from a pay telephone in Batesville, Mississippi.

During the 1964-1965 academic year, improvements were made to the residence halls, including the installation of private phone lines. Many of the girls opted for the telephone line to be installed in their rooms. According to Stuart, Carole Strong requested a telephone line be placed in her room, and Dean Rea was “hesitant to the request” due to the threatening phone calls Strong had received. Stuart notified Strong that if threatening phone calls were placed on the university telephone system they would be hard to trace, however, Strong decided she would rather deal with the phone calls than not have a telephone in her room. Stuart recommended to Rea that the private telephone be installed in Strong’s room.

These incidents regarding threats to a women’s dormitory and complaints of White women students talking to Black male students seemed to involve Rea on the periphery level. It is unknown if Rea filed her own reports of the threats to Ward Hall and to Carole Strong to Dean Moak or visited with him regarding the pressures on the women students. From Stuart’s report to Dean Moak, it appeared the decision on how to handle the threats were left to Stuart and Moak and Rea was only asked for a recommendation.

The campus environment was not friendly for the first three undergraduate women who enrolled in 1965. Sadly, reports of threats, taunting, and expletives shouted at the women were common. In late October, Joyce Jones and Verna Bailey reported to the security department

---

514 Whitney Stuart, Letter to Dr. Franklin E. Moak, Dean of Student Personnel. [Carole Ann Strong and others]. November 29, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
515 Ibid.
516 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1964-1965, UM.
517 Whitney Stuart, Letter to Dr. Franklin E. Moak, Dean of Student Personnel. [Carole Ann Strong and others]. November 29, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
518 Ibid.
519 Ibid.
White males cursing at them in the Student Union Building. When an officer accompanied the women back to the Student Union the women were upset the officer could not help them. The women felt embarrassed to be taunted in the Student Union.

On November 1, 1965, Verna Bailey was involved in a car accident with Rayford Anderson, a student at Tougaloo College. In Rea’s report of the incident, Ms. Bailey had permission to leave her dormitory for the evening and was riding with Mr. Anderson to Clarksdale, Mr. Anderson’s hometown. On their way to Clarksdale, a community approximately 60 miles from Oxford, the two students were involved in a one vehicle accident in Batesville in South Panola County. The police arrested Mr. Anderson, and Ms. Bailey suffered minor injuries and was treated at the hospital in Batesville. In her report, Rea reported that Ms. Bailey’s roommate, Billie Joyce Ware and friend, Joyce Jones were on their way to pick up Ms. Bailey as she was told she could not stay at the Batesville hospital. Rea indicated in her report she spoke with the physician and he felt Bailey could return to Oxford without further complications. Rea arranged for Bailey to stay at the university infirmary when she returned to campus. Rea notified Bailey’s father and Chancellor Williams of the accident. Bailey stayed in the infirmary overnight at UM as she was sore from the accident, and suffered a broken nose. Rea

520 Robert Jackson, Offense Report, [Students Cussing at Joyce Jones], October 25, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.; Jones, Joyce O’Neil. Student Complaint. [Handwritten Note.] October 25, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
521 Joyce O’Neil Jones, Student Complaint. [Handwritten Note.] October 25, 1965. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 2, box 51, folder 13, UM.
523 Ibid.
524 Ibid.
525 Ibid.
reported after Bailey was released from the infirmary she drove Bailey to the airport to fly home to Jackson to be with her family.\textsuperscript{526}

Not only did the Black women at UM experience an unfriendly and often abusive environment, students and faculty who visited from other institutions were not always welcomed to campus. In 1965, the University hosted a Southern Literary Festival featuring Mississippi author Eudora Welty and other artists including Malcolm Cowley, Martin Dain, Ruth Ford, and Robert Penn Warren.\textsuperscript{527} Institutions from across the state and region applied to attend the conference, including Tougaloo, a predominately Black institution. The 1965 festival was the first time Tougaloo applied to attend the conference. Unfortunately, when the delegation from Tougaloo settled into the dormitory on the UM campus for the evening, violence ensued. Students were expelled for the violent disturbance which damaged an automobile from the Tougaloo delegation.\textsuperscript{528} The violence outside the dormitory where the Tougaloo students stayed caused the group to return to Jackson and withdraw from the festival early.\textsuperscript{529} Katharine Rea, assisted with the conference, and expressed remorse and apologized to the delegation from Tougaloo about their experience on campus.\textsuperscript{530} Although the Southern Literary Festival was an annual tradition hosted by institutions across the South, it was apparent; the University of Mississippi was not eager to welcome students of color to campus.

\textbf{1966-1967}

Rea’s last year as dean of women was one of growth and change. Enrollment of women students continued to rise in 1966. Residence halls were over capacity and the university was

\textsuperscript{527} Southern Literary Festival, 1965. [Program], April 22-24, 1965, Southern Literary Festival Collection, folder 1965, UM.
\textsuperscript{528} “Dismissal Recommended,” \textit{The Mississippian}, May 7, 1965.
\textsuperscript{529} Ibid.; “Demonstration at Ole Miss Brings Call to End Festival,” \textit{The Commercial Appeal} April 4, 1965.
\textsuperscript{530} Gerald Walton, personal interview with author, March 29, 2012.
forced to re-open Barnard Hall after being closed for three years to house women students.\textsuperscript{531} As enrollment grew, so did sorority involvement in 1966. Alumnus Judith Trott was hired to serve as the Panhellenic Advisor after Miss Julia Waits resigned.\textsuperscript{532} Carolyn Maxwell became president of the Associated Women Students (AWS) in February of 1967 succeeding Katherine Abraham of Vicksburg and the AWS moved into new offices in the Student Union. Panhellenic Council and other women’s organizations shared the new space.\textsuperscript{533}

With new staff and a new office building, Rea continued to stress the importance of studying student personnel issues. The Women’s Residential Hall Staff read and discussed *Women 16 to 60: Education for Full Maturity*, and *Students, Stress, and the College Experience*.\textsuperscript{534} Not only did Rea challenge the staff to develop new skills, Rea continued to challenge women students to push for new and engaging opportunities at UM.

The Associated Women Students organization continued to be active under Dean Rea. They hosted their first AWS week during the fall of 1967. Activities were used to raise awareness of the presence of women and their role on campus. In 1967-1968, Carolyn (Calico) Maxwell Perry was president of AWS. Perry felt Dean Rea influenced the way the women students thought about the rules on campus, which helped make possible changes to the campus curfew. Even in the late 1960s women had a curfew at 10:30 p.m. when they must return to their dormitory or sorority house. For Perry, who was a music major, returning to her dormitory after performances in Fulton Chapel was difficult. The male students were allowed to stay until the end of the performance, but the women often left early to meet curfew. Perry remembered Rea’s

\textsuperscript{531} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1966–1967, UM.
\textsuperscript{532} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1966–1967, UM.
\textsuperscript{533} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{534} Ibid.
support in changing the curfew for the women students to allow them to attend the performances in Fulton Chapel. Perry affirmed “with the backing of Dean Rea, the curfew was changed to midnight [for the women students].”

Rea also wanted the women students to think about issues that were facing women on a national stage. Rea gave a copy of *The Feminine Mystique*, by Betty Friedan to Karen Montjoy while she was a student leader at UM in the mid-1960s. Montjoy believed Rea gave her the book because she wanted students to be aware of larger movements and issues across the nation, not just what was happening in Mississippi. Montjoy found Rea to always be a professional and well informed of the issues on the national platform. That was not the only time Rea gave a student *The Feminine Mystique*. Mary Ann Frugé received the book from Rea following her term as Judicial Chair. Frugé remembered Rea told her “you don’t want these now, but some day you will.”

**Ten Years of Service**

The dramatic increase in women’s enrollment at UM since Rea assumed the position as dean of women in 1957 created changes to campus housing, the sorority pledge process, and ultimately, the services Rea provided to women students during her tenure. In the spring of 1959 less than 800 undergraduate women enrolled at UM. In 1967-1968, Rea’s last year as the dean of women, the enrollment for women surged to a total of 2,381, almost three times as many students were under Rea’s care. Rea cautioned the increase in enrollment was a burden on

---

536 Karen Clifford Montjoy, personal interview with author, March 5, 2012
537 Mary Ann Frugé, personal interview with author, February 15, 2012.
538 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1957-1958, UM.
housing facilities. Housing facilities were inadequate for women, and graduate students had a lack of accommodations on campus.\textsuperscript{539}

Under Carolyn Maxwell’s leadership, AWS hosted an “AWS week” in November. According to Rea, the purpose of the events throughout the week “helped to focus on women’s activities and their place on campus.”\textsuperscript{540} One of the major changes for the academic year was the revision of curfew hours for the women students. Women were also permitted to visit “bachelor quarters” if they were above freshman status and received permission from their parents.\textsuperscript{541}

Leadership opportunities for women at UM continued to increase as enrollment grew. Besides sororities and the Associated Women Students organization, women students participated in honor societies such as Mortar Board. Opportunities also existed for women in their academic department. For example, Gamma Sigma Epsilon was for men and women with high grade point averages who studied chemistry. Women who majored in physical education could join the Physical Education Majors Club. Singing groups, debate club, Y.W.C.A., and church groups were all open to women students. Student, Calico Maxwell Perry also remembered Dean Rea’s insistence of inclusivity during prayers before meetings.

Perry recalled

Dean Rea made me mindful of the fact that when I stood up as president of the women’s student government I was representing a wide range of women with different religious beliefs, and she felt it would be very inconsiderate to end prayers over a public address system or at any other gathering by saying ‘these things we pray in Jesus’ name,’ as I was accustomed to doing….I greatly appreciate that she taught me that.\textsuperscript{542}

\textsuperscript{539} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1966-1967, UM.
\textsuperscript{540} Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1967-1968, UM.
\textsuperscript{541} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{542} Carolyn (Calico) Maxwell Perry, personal interview with author, February 2, 2012.
In her last year as dean of women at UM, Rea granted an interview with Carolyn Maddux from the *Oxford Eagle* and described her role at UM. In the article, Rea articulated her responsibilities over the last ten years as the dean of women. Rea said “I consider my job as dean of women to be concerned with the four broad areas of administration, counseling, teaching and advising.” Rea also expressed concern that women students do not see themselves as ever becoming a dean of women. In the article, Rea criticized the stereotype of the deans of women and said “people have a [stereotyped] idea of a dean of women. They see her as authoritarian, inflexible, dictatorial, but that is not the modern dean at all.” Furthermore, Rea once again showed her concern for the lack of opportunities for women students who were not affiliated with a sorority to find leadership opportunities on campus. Rea expressed frustration with the inability of her office to provide the level of counseling needed to many of the women students for the current staffing levels did were not adequate to meet the academic and social counseling needs. Finally, Rea wished women students would seek careers that were once closed to women because of their gender. Rea explained “I would advise young women today to consider careers that up to this time have been considered closed to women…no longer are occupations designated by sex, yet so few girls here even consider anything other than the traditional. I am overwhelmed at the tremendous amount of job opportunities for women they have not even thought about before.”543 Indeed, students took Rea’s message to heart. Calico Maxwell Perry warmly remembered Rea’s emphasis on the importance of earning good grades and having a profession when women graduated.544

Aside from graduate programs, Rea’s involvement with professional organizations during her service as dean of women at UM shaped her knowledge and understanding of women college

---

students. Additionally, the National Association of Women Deans provided a network of resources for Rea and other deans of women across the country to improve the quality of education for women students on college campuses. The National Association of Women Deans was one of the earliest professional organizations for deans of women in U.S. higher education.

**National Association of Women Deans**

In 1916 Kathryn McLean, in partnership with the National Education Association (NEA), held a meeting in New York City for deans of women. That meeting transformed into the National Association of Deans of Women (NADW), and McLean was elected president of the organization and in 1918 the NADW was incorporated.\(^545\) Nidiffer argued that by 1920 the ACA and NADW were “serving two different types of women professionals.”\(^546\) The major focus of the NADW was training for deans of women. Furthermore, Bashaw illustrated the NADW did not have many representatives from southern universities from 1916-1936.\(^547\) The NADW sought to standardize the profession, in part, to help diminish the negative stereotype of the position from the public. In 1926 the organization established headquarters in Washington, D.C.\(^548\)

Consequently, Bashaw identified the four areas that were developed by the NADW to distinguish as important elements of the position: academic, administrative, advisory, and social duties.\(^549\) It was important for deans of women to have regional and state connections with their colleagues for support. The regional and state associations helped strengthen the profession especially for those women who could not travel to the national meeting.\(^550\)

---

\(^{545}\) Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”; Nidiffer, *Pioneering Deans of Women.*

\(^{546}\) Nidiffer, *Pioneering Deans of Women,* 126.

\(^{547}\) Bashaw, *Stalwart Women.*

\(^{548}\) Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”

\(^{549}\) Bashaw, *Stalwart Women.*

\(^{550}\) Ibid.
In 1933, Agnes Ellen Harris of the University of Alabama was the president of the NADW. The annual convention was held in Cleveland, OH in February of 1934, but due to the Great Depression, membership fell and deans found it difficult to afford to attend the conference.\(^{551}\) As a final point, Black members of the NADW found it difficult to attend some of the conferences, especially in the South, as they were not permitted to enter the hotels from the front entrance or use the main passenger elevators. Instead, Black deans of women were forced to enter through the back of the hotel and use freight elevators.\(^{552}\)

Moreover, expenses were high for women to attend annual conferences, so from 1922-1937 an annual year book was published to keep members abreast in the happenings of the group. In 1938 the yearbook was discontinued and the *Journal of the National Association of Deans of Women* was started. The first editor of the journal was Ruth Strang, a graduate of Teachers College. The journal was published for 60 years. As the student personnel landscape changed so did the professional journal.\(^{553}\)

As a professional organization committed to the support and professional development of women deans, and other women administrators, Rea was a long standing member of the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors, as well as the state branch in Mississippi. Rea attended as many state and national meetings as her time allowed.\(^{554}\) At the national convention of the NAWDC, Rea heard Betty Friedan, author of *The Feminine Mystique* speak about the “crisis in women’s identity.”\(^{555}\) At the conclusion of Friedan’s speech, Rea and other deans of women from across the country led round table discussions on the role education could play in

---

\(^{551}\) Ibid.

\(^{552}\) Ibid.

\(^{553}\) Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”

\(^{554}\) Judith Trott, personal interview with author with author, January 17, 2013.

\(^{555}\) National Association of Women Deans and Counselors, 1964, [Convention Program], National Student Affairs Archives, Center for Archival Collections, Jerome Library, Bowling Green State University, OH.
supporting women’s identities. The Mississippi Association for Women Deans and Counselors (MAWDC) held its first annual workshop in the fall of 1965 at Mississippi State College for Women. The association designed subgroups to meet the needs of its members in various levels of education. The groups were separated into junior high counselors, senior higher counselors, junior college deans, senior college/university deans, and residence hall personnel.\footnote{556 Mississippi Association for Women Deans and Counselors, [Program], September 30-October 1, 1965, Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 1, UM.}

Rea attended the fall workshop for the Mississippi Association for Women Deans and Counselors in 1965 where she served on the subgroup committee for senior/college university deans. The state association followed the lead of the national organization and focused attention on student development challenges for the 1960s. The theme of the conference “the role of the counselor in the social, moral, and intellectual development of women students in our changing time”\footnote{557 Ibid.} were issues Rea addressed several times in her annual report.\footnote{558 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1964-1965, UM.; Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1958-1959, UM.; Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1966-1967, UM.} Rea specifically cautioned the increase in women students on campus and the growing spectrum of challenges facing the women students limited her ability to properly counseled the students.

The concern over the mental health and the role the dean of women served in supporting students with mental health changes was the theme at the 1966 annual workshop of the Mississippi Association of Women Deans and Counselors. At the workshop, held at Mississippi College, Rea served as the section chair for the college and university subgroup.\footnote{559 Mississippi Association for Women Deans and Counselors, [Program], September 29-30, 1966, Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 1, UM.} Rea continued to serve as the section chair for the college and university group of deans of women at the 1967 annual workshop. Other women at UM began to attend the meetings, presented
sessions, and served in leadership roles. Judith Trott, who worked with Rea, reported on the national convention, Margaret Lodwick who served as a head resident in a women’s residence hall at UM led a session on residence hall programming, and Rea presented a session on legislative issues in the state and nation.  

Deans of women faced a variety of unique challenges on college campuses in 1967. The annual workshop of the Mississippi Association for Women Deans and Counselors focused on four of those challenges and the communication necessary to address the challenges. The challenges included school dropout rates, campus moves, the use of drugs on campus, and legislative programs. The president of the Mississippi Association of Women Deans and Counselors invited Rea to speak with Dr. Robert Louis Jones, Dean of Student Affairs at Mississippi State University, on emerging issues on campus. Specifically, Rea focused her discussion on the “rights and freedom of students.” Rea continued her devoted service to the Mississippi Association of Women Deans and Counselors as she served on the executive board in 1967. After resigning her position as dean of women at UM, Rea remained involved with the NAWDC as a faculty member in the 1970s.

**Conclusion**

Former students described Dean Rea as the ultimate southern lady who wore classic styled clothing. Rea often was photographed with painted finger nails and dark lipstick. Classic white gloves and beautiful dresses were common fashion staples in Rea’s wardrobe as

---

560 Mississippi Association for Women Deans and Counselors, [Program], September 21-22, 1967, Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 1, UM.
561 Mississippi Association for Women Deans and Counselors, [Program Description], September 21-22, 1967, Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 4, UM.
562 Fay Marshall, Letter to Dr. Robert Louis Jones, January 16, 1968 [Concerning speech with Katharine Rea], Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 5, UM.
563 Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting of the Mississippi Association of Women Deans and Counselors, December 6, 1967, Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 9, UM.
564 Joyce Jenkins, personal interview with author, February 20, 2013.
the dean of women and community activist. Dr. Kenneth Wooten described her as not pushy, but very firm in her decisions and she taught young women were equal to men.

In her role as the dean of women, Rea was not only concerned about equality of women to men, but equality in the educational experience for all women students at the University of Mississippi, regardless of sorority affiliation, or family standing. Rea advocated for leadership opportunities for all women students through honor societies, student government, and career aspiration planning. Rea further illustrated her belief in uplifting those around her by providing professional development opportunities for the staff in the dean of women’s office. Exposing the staff, and student leaders to conferences, academic literature, and professional organizations gave women the opportunity to learn more about the student personnel field and the career advancement opportunities for women. There is no evidence Rea did not want women students to marry and have children, much like her father wanted for her, however, Rea did want women students to understand the possibilities for career attainment were vast. By the time Rea left her position as the dean of women in 1968, it was becoming the norm to believe that women could raise a family and have a successful career. In July of 1968, Rea resigned her position as dean of women to serve as a full-time faculty member in the school of education. Although she left the dean of women position, Rea remained committed to furthering education opportunities for women. She closed her last annual report to the chancellor with a plea for cooperation between academic and student affairs. Rea expressed her desire for collaboration between higher education divisions when she argued “it is hoped that the graduate program in student personnel services might be coordinated with some of the learning programs for women are still a fruitful source of exploration both from the standpoint of the women whose needs should be served and

---

from that of the University which is in a favorable position to offer the service." Rea’s vision was to ensure every University of Mississippi undergraduate understood those possibilities.

---

567 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, p. 8 [Office of the Dean of Women], 1967-1968, UM.
CHAPTER III
LIFE AS A FACULTY MEMBER

Katharine Rea progressed through the faculty tenure and promotion process at the University of Mississippi quickly. In November of 1958, a few short months after completing her doctorate in higher education and guidance from Ohio State University, Rea received an affiliated appointment as an associate professor in the school of education. The affiliated appointment was a dual appointment with her position as dean of women in the Division of Student Personnel. Although her appointment provided her the opportunity to teach, she was not eligible to serve as a voting member on the Faculty Senate, however, as the dean of women, Rea served in an affiliated role.\(^{568}\) By 1963, Rea received a promotion to full professor in the School of Education, even though she was still the dean of women.\(^{569}\) By the time Rea resigned her position as the dean of women in 1968 to concentrate solely on her teaching role in the School of Education, she had served five years as a full professor. In her new position, Rea served as a longtime member of the Faculty Senate as a representative for the School of Education. In her first year in a full-time academic appointment, Rea served in a leadership capacity on the Faculty Senate as the secretary/treasurer beginning in December of 1969.\(^{570}\)

\(^{568}\) Senate of the Faculty, April 6, 1963. [Meeting Minutes], Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 3, folder 3, UM.

\(^{569}\) University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1968-1969, UM.

\(^{570}\) Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, December 10, 1970. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 7, box 39, folder 4, UM.; Faculty Senate Officers, 1969-1970. [Meeting Minutes]. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 7, box 39, folder 4, UM.; Faculty Senate Officers, 1970-1971. [Meeting Minutes]. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 7, box 39, folder 4, UM.; Senate of the Faculty, February 27, 1970. [Meeting Minutes]. AAUP Collection, box 5, folder 3, UM.; Senate of the Faculty, March 2, 1970. [Meeting Minutes]. AAUP Collection, box 5, folder 3, UM.
American Association of University Professors and Katharine Rea

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) began in 1915 and developed the first set of principles of academic freedom and tenure through the “General Declaration of Principles and Practical Proposals.” The two major concerns of the AAUP was the academic freedom of faculty and the tenure process. Furthermore, the organization focused on faculty governance and faculty salaries. The University of Mississippi Chapter of the AAUP began as early as 1950. Although Rea received an affiliated appointment as an associate professor in the school of education, in 1958, her appointment as a faculty member was less than half time, thus she did not meet the admissions requirement for membership in the AAUP. In the late 1950s the AAUP pressured colleges and universities to improve faculty salaries. Hutcheson argued “the association was deliberately calling attention to economic disparities at the institutional level in the hopes of improving professors’ salaries.” Finally, the organization created a “Statement on Procedural Standards in Faculty Dismissal Proceedings” to ensure due process was given in faculty dismissal and disciplinary cases.

By 1968, Rea’s first year as a full-time faculty member in the School of Education, Rea earned academic tenure, however it is unclear if she became a member of the University chapter of AAUP that academic year. Regardless of the first year Rea became a dues paying member, it did not take her long to hold a leadership role within the organization on campus as she served

---

572 Hutcheson, A Professional Professoriate, 1.
573 Constitution of the UM Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, April 14, 1950. AAUP Collection, box 3, folder 6, UM. Note: The AAUP dismissed or placed UM on probation following the actions of Governor Bilbo in the early 1930s. It is unclear if UM had an independent AAUP chapter at that time, or was only sanctioned by the national AAUP. See: Sansing, The University of Mississippi, 241-242.
574 Hutcheson, A Professional Professoriate, 44.
575 Ibid., 39.
576 Members of the University Faculty with Tenure, 1969-1970. AAUP Collection, box 6, folder 9, UM.
as the Vice President in 1971 and President in 1972. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) at the University of Mississippi hosted an open meeting in December, 1973 to discuss employment discrimination against women in higher education. Rea served as a panelist, along with Madge Pfaffman, a pharmacology professor at the University who was involved in a four plaintiff lawsuit against the University alleging sex discrimination in the workplace.

Rea’s commitment and membership to the University chapter of AAUP remained stable during her entire tenure as a faculty member at UM. She served a second term as chapter president during the 1977-1978 academic year. The UM chapter of the AAUP was relatively small. Although Rea is listed as chapter president in the fall of 1979, she retired from campus at the end of the academic year. Rea’s status changed to “emeritus member” in the fall of 1980. Unfortunately, minimal meeting minutes from the UM Chapter of AAUP exist in the university archives. Although Rea served in leadership capacities, it is unknown if the organization was embattled in any serious controversies in the 1970s or rather met to maintain an active chapter.

**Black Affairs Committee**

A separate faculty organization from the AAUP at UM was the Faculty Senate. Representatives from each college or school were elected to serve on the Faculty Senate for two-

---

577 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1971-1972, UM.; AAUP Quarterly Roster for UM, October 1, 1971, AAUP Collection, box 6, folder 15, UM.  
578 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1972-1973, UM.  
579 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], December, 1973, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 11, UM.  
580 Larry DeBoard, Letter to Membership, UM Chapter, AAUP. October, 1977. AAUP Collection, box 7, folder 5, UM.; AAUP Quarterly Roster, April 13, 1978, AAUP Collection, box 7, folder 2, UM.; AAUP Quarterly Roster, October 13, 1979, AAUP Collection, box 7, folder 2, UM.  
581 AAUP Quarterly Roster for UM, October 1, 1971, AAUP Collection, box 6, folder 15, UM.; University of Mississippi, AAUP Membership Constitution, 1960?, AAUP Collection, box 3, folder 6, UM.  
582 AAUP Quarterly Roster, December 31, 1980, AAUP Collection, box 7, folder 2, UM.
year terms, with an apparent option for re-election. Rea served as a member of the Faculty Senate the majority of her years on the university faculty. Perhaps her most significant contribution to the Faculty Senate was her service on the Black Affairs Committee.

Enrollment of Black students was slow in the early 1970s, and enrollment of Black females was especially low. Furthermore, racial tension on campus rose as Black students felt they were treated unfairly on campus. In an undated letter to Chancellor Porter Fortune, the Black Student Union expressed their displeasure with university administration for failure to improve the treatment of Black students at UM. The letter cautioned the administration if the original ten demands set forth by the Black Student Union in 1968 were not met, students would use whatever means necessary to evoke change on campus.583 One of the demands included formal recognition of the Black Student Union as an official university organization. The students also demanded the hiring of a “Dean of Black Students” who must be approved by the Black Student Union.584 In March of 1969, the Black Student Union received its official charter from the university, but it was not enough to ease the tensions on campus.585 The racial tensions on campus continued to mount, until the frustrations of the Black students at UM resulted in an organized effort to protest in February of 1970.

By 1970, the list of demands from the Black Student Union had grown and the perceived lack of response from university administration added fuel to the fire and created rising angst among the Black students. Consequently, Black students held a demonstration on campus in late February during an Up with People program, an educational program designed to address

583 The Black Student Union, Racism, [Letter to Chancellor and Vice Chancellor]. N.D. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 10, folder 14, UM.
584 Ibid., 2.
585 Anne Percy, “The History of the Black Student Union of the University of Mississippi,” (unpublished manuscript, 1993), UM.
cultural differences within communities, which resulted in 89 Black student arrests.⁵⁸⁶ Many of the Black male students who were arrested were sent to Parchman Penitentiary. Parchman Penitentiary, located in the Mississippi delta, was a prison where inmates were sentenced to manual labor, mainly farming chores to raise cotton.⁵⁸⁷ In 1961, many of the “Freedom Riders” were sentenced to Parchman Penitentiary.⁵⁸⁸ The decision to send the students to Parchman was made by Sheriff Bon McElreath, not a university administrator.⁵⁸⁹

One young female student, Clara Taulbert, was arrested at the protest and was sent to the Lafayette County jail.⁵⁹⁰ Years later, Clara’s brother, Clifton wrote of Clara’s arrest at UM in his book, Watching Our Crops Come In. In the book, Clara disputed her involvement in the protest. Clara argued “we had gone to an Up with People concert on the campus that had been the object of protest by some of the Black students, but my friends and I had not taken part. Nevertheless, we were the right color, and a few White students lied and signed false testimonies that placed us at the protest. As a result, about fifteen of us were hauled off to jail like common criminals.”⁵⁹¹

Regrettably, the few Black students who were enrolled at UM by 1967 were not welcomed by all students, or even all faculty and staff. Joyce Jenkins, who was a cousin to Clara Taulbert, enrolled in the summer of 1967 to study English education. Although violence was not common, the campus was not a friendly place. “There was a feeling of isolation, more

⁵⁸⁹ Reardon, “Frank Moak’s Legacy,” 221.
⁵⁹⁰ Clifton Taulbert, Watching Our Crops Come In.
⁵⁹¹ Ibid., 94.
indifference instead of outright prejudice.”\textsuperscript{592} Jenkins recalled being invited to Rea’s home during orientation with several other Black women students. Jenkins explained “she [Rea] was probably one of the individuals who smoothed the process…and made an honest effort to work with the Black students.”\textsuperscript{593}

When Joyce Jenkins and Clara Taulbert arrived on campus in the summer of 1967, they were assigned as roommates in Hefley Hall. The roommates were assigned before the women arrived on campus. When the women checked into their room, the third roommate was a White student. The parents of the White student told Jenkins and Taulbert that three girls to a room would not work. Although the parents argued three to a room was crowded, Jenkins believed the parents were uncomfortable with their White daughter sharing a room with two Black students.\textsuperscript{594}

By the time Clara was arrested at the Up with People concert, Katharine Rea was no longer the dean of women. However, Clifton Taulbert asked his sister, Clara, if Dean Rea came to her aid after she was arrested. Clara explained, “Dean Ray [Rea] was a good woman. She went beyond expectations to ensure that the Black girls had ‘little extras’ like snacks and spending money. And even though she was White, she helped make our lives bearable. But this was different. We were in ‘Black folk’ trouble, and I didn’t need a hair net or money to go home. I needed out of jail.” As a result, Clara did not call on Katharine Rea for help, but rather called a Black woman, Mrs. Bryant from Oxford who helped get Clara released.\textsuperscript{595}

The two faculty governance associations on campus, the AAUP and the Faculty Senate issued statements on the protests and articulated action plans to remediate the situation. The

\textsuperscript{592} Joyce Jenkins, personal interview with author, February 20, 2013.
\textsuperscript{593} Joyce Jenkins, personal interview with author, February 20, 2013.
\textsuperscript{594} Joyce Jenkins, personal interview with author, February 20, 2013.
\textsuperscript{595} Clifton Taulbert, \textit{Watching Our Crops Come In}. 

141
AAUP issued a statement on March 3, 1970 and condemned the decision to send the students to Parchman prison. The AAUP also condemned the abusive language many Black students used towards the Chancellor in expressing their displeasure. Similarly to the Faculty Senate, the AAUP issued a list of recommendations to improve the racial tensions on the UM campus including the recommendation to drop the criminal charges against the student demonstrators.\(^{596}\)

Both the Faculty Senate and the AAUP condemned the demonstration and the treatment of Black students on campus. The AAUP recommended monthly meetings between the Chancellor and Black student leaders and the appointment of Black students to the *Mississippian* staff.\(^{597}\)

In an effort to improve the racial tensions on campus the Faculty Senate, in which Rea served, moved to study the challenges on campus and provide solutions to the list of more than 25 demands from the Black Student Union, which included the hiring of Black coaches and faculty to the hiring of a Black barber on campus.\(^{598}\) In March of 1970, the Faculty Senate voted unanimously to form five committees to address the list of complaints put forth by the Black Student Union.\(^{599}\) The Faculty Senate divided the list of demands expressed by the Black Student Union into five categories. First, a committee should examine the feasibility and progress of instituting a “Black Studies” program and the hiring of Black teaching assistants, faculty and deans. A second committee should study the potential hiring of Black instructors and the “wages, promotions, and job allocations for Blacks on the University staff.” Furthermore, this committee would examine the financial aid policies for Black students and the potential to hire Black personnel members in the financial aid office. A third committee should consider the need for

---

\(^{596}\) Statement of the University Racial Crisis, University Chapter of AAUP, March 3, 1970. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 1, UM.

\(^{597}\) Ibid.

\(^{598}\) The University of Mississippi Blacks Students Demands!. N.D. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 10, folder 14, UM.

\(^{599}\) Senate of the Faculty, March 2, 1970, [Meeting Minutes]. AAUP Collection, box 5, folder 3, UM.
Black student athletes, coaches, and recruiters in the department of athletics. Additionally, the committee should examine the use of the Confederate flag. The fourth committee approved by the Faculty Senate should examine student services for Black students including a campus barber, extra-curricular programs for Black students, the hiring of Black head residents in the dormitories, and Blacks to serve as student counselors. Finally, the fifth committee should consider the role of Black students in student leadership positions including *The Mississippian*, the Associated Student Body, and for a Black student to serve on the campus ASB Judicial Council. Each faculty senator was asked to consider serving on one of the five committees and to submit their preference in writing. If a faculty member wished not to serve on any of the committees, the request would be honored. It is unknown if Rea submitted her name to a specific committee, however, she would be among a small group of faculty to serve on a newly created Black Affairs Committee on the UM campus.

The Black Affairs Committee held its second meeting in December, 1970 to address the concerns of the Black students at UM. The small committee included chairman, John Crews, an associate professor of English; Katharine Rea; Ronald Borne, an assistant professor of pharmaceutical chemistry; and William Hal Furr, an assistant professor of philosophy. Rea was the only member of the committee who worked at the University during the racial integration of the campus in 1962. Furr arrived on campus in 1965, followed by Crews in 1966. In 1968, Borne began working at the University.

---

600 Ibid., 2.
601 Senate of the Faculty, March 2, 1970, [Meeting Minutes]. AAUP Collection, box 5, folder 3, UM.
602 Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, December 9, 1970. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 1, UM; Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, May 12, 1971. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 2, UM.
The Black Affairs Committee met with a group of seven Black students in December of 1970 to gain a better understanding of their dissatisfaction with their university experience, and what solutions would help improve the situation. In their conversation with the Black students, the Black Affairs Committee heard the perspective about the UM experience for Black students “ninety per cent of the entering Black students at the University are not activists when they arrive, but become so after having been here awhile.” Much of the new activism stemmed from the expressed feelings of mistreatment from Campus Security and staff in the Registrar’s and Bursar’s office. The Black Affairs Committee cautioned the Faculty Senate that the report was the articulated feelings of mistreatment from the Black students, not an affirmation of agreement from the Black Affairs Committee.

Rea continued to serve as a member of the Black Affairs Committee in 1971. Dialogue with Black students and the Black Affairs Committee continued to be “spirited” in early 1971 as solutions were presented by both sides to improve the campus experience and treatment for Black students. The recruitment of Black athletes remained a concern for many Black students in 1971.

The Black Affairs Committee recommended four resolutions in which the department of athletics may make progress to improve race relations.

1. Issue statements condemning racist attitudes of students and fans at athletic events, particularly football games;
2. Issue statements indicating sincere desire to recruit black athletes;
3. Work to improve its image with black students at the University;
4. Hire a black athletic recruiter to establish contact between the department and the person being recruited.

---

604 Report by the Black Affairs Committee, Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, December 9, 1970. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 1, UM.
605 Ibid.
606 Report by the Black Affairs Committee, Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, January 13, 1971. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 2, UM.
607 Ibid.
608
Furthermore, the Faculty Senate approved the recommendations from the Black Affairs Committee and urged Chancellor Fortune to direct the athletics department to comply with the recommendations. In a handwritten note to John Crews, a faculty member in the English department, Rea commended Crews for his reports on behalf of the Black Affairs Committee ensuring the committee was not reactionary to the student demands rather relaying the information to the larger university constituency. Rea knew the committee would be criticized for representing the demands of the Black students, but felt the communication must continue. In a note to Crews, Rea wrote “I’d like to save us from harsh criticism but such criticism cannot always be anticipated….” Regardless of the impending criticism of the work of the Black Affairs Committee, the group continued to meet with Black students to improve race relations at UM.

By March the Black Affairs Committee continued to address the numerous concerns raised by Black students on campus. The committee recommended further training for the campus security department and reported that Chief Popernik was open to the training. Other recommendations made to the committee from the Black students focused on the lack of Black faculty and administrators. A proposed exchange program with other institutions was suggested, although it is unclear if the suggestion ever materialized into action. Additionally, the committee acknowledged the request to hire a Black recruiter for the campus, and the suggested need for a space where Black students may gather on campus. A final recommendation included a

---

608 Report by the Black Affairs Committee, Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, January 13, 1971, p. 3 Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 2, UM.  
609 Katharine Rea. [Handwritten note to John Crews]. N.D. John Crews Collection, Civil Rights Digital Archives Collection, UM.  
610 Ibid.  
611 Report by the Black Affairs Committee, Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, March 10, 1971. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 2, UM.
“sensitivity session” for faculty and students of both races to gather and learn about the “Black students’ outlook and problems.”\(^{612}\) Clearly, the small Black Affairs Committee was committed to meeting with the Black students throughout the year and brought forth their concerns to the Faculty Senate. Unfortunately, it is difficult to discern if the discussion led to measurable change on campus. However, the work of the committee established a pattern on how the University would respond to racial tensions for years to come.

Near the end of the academic year, the Black Affairs Committee met with Chancellor Fortune to discuss the progress made during the year and to formulate a strategy to continue the work of the committee in the fall. The committee remained a small, yet committed group of faculty of four members including chairman John Crews, Rea, Borne, and Furr.\(^{613}\) At the meeting with the Chancellor, the committee strongly recommended the designation of a room where Black students may gather to hold social functions and meetings. It appeared the committee and the university administration discussed the need for such a room earlier, but progress to procure the room was slow.\(^{614}\) Moreover, the committee discussed the possible faculty exchange program with Rust College. Chancellor Fortune reported the agreement would begin as early as fall semester.\(^{615}\)

Unfortunately, when the Black Affairs Committee reconvened with Chancellor Fortune in October of 1971, the Chancellor reported the exchange agreement never transpired for the fall with Rust College or Mississippi Valley State, two historically Black colleges in Mississippi.\(^{616}\)

\(^{612}\) Ibid., 2.

\(^{613}\) Report by the Black Affairs Committee, Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, May 12, 1971. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 2, UM.

\(^{614}\) Ibid.

\(^{615}\) Ibid.: Note, although it was recorded the faculty senate minutes of the impending exchange, there are no documents that confirm the exchange took place in the fall of 1971.

\(^{616}\) Report by the Black Affairs Committee, Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, October 20, 1971. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 2, UM.
The committee was also disappointed to learn that although the recommendation to hire a new counselor for the student counseling office was approved, the new hire was not Black. The one area of progress was made in the procurement of a room for Black students to gather in the Old Chapel, commonly referred to as the “Y” on campus.\textsuperscript{617} The “Y” building was one of the oldest buildings on campus, built in 1853 on The Circle and in the 1960s held various University ceremonies and provided offices for the department of religious life and foreign student services.

By the spring of 1973, the Black Affairs Committee was dormant. At a meeting of the Faculty Senate, Chairman George Stengel informed the Faculty Senate he received a written report from the Black Affairs Committee and recommended the committee continue despite being inactive during the last year.\textsuperscript{618} The recommendation from Stengel worked, however, by the next summer, the purpose and need for the Black Affairs Committee was questioned once again. Robert Ellis, former Registrar during the integration crisis in 1962 made a motion to change the title and purpose of the Black Student Committee. Ellis proposed the new “Student Affairs Committee…be concerned with the out of class development of the intellectual and physical life of all University students.”\textsuperscript{619} The motion passed by a slim margin, 13-11. With one quick vote, the organized faculty advocacy group for Black students disappeared. Certainly one of the greatest losses of the committee was the ability to foster productive conversations between the Black students and the university’s administration.

\textsuperscript{617} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{618} Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, March 14, 1973. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 4, UM.
\textsuperscript{619} Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, July 10, 1974, p. 2. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 9, UM.
The Black Affairs Committee was not the only faculty committee Rea served. In 1970 Rea served as a faculty representative on the Foreign Students Committee. Rea’s willingness to serve on various committees focused on the well-being of students affirmed her willingness to be a student advocate. Rea’s term on the Faculty Senate ended in 1971, however, she replaced Professor Robert Ellis from the School of Education in the fall of 1972 when he resigned from the senate. In 1973, Rea was elected to serve another term on Faculty Senate. Rea served as a member of the University Committee on Academic Discipline from 1973-1975. It is unclear if this committee involvement was set through the Faculty Senate, regardless; Rea used her expertise as the former dean of women to remain involved in the student culture on campus and remained an advocate for diverse students.

Rea continued to serve as a senator of the Faculty Senate in 1975-1976 year and attended the meetings throughout the academic year. A proposal was made regarding academic appointments by the Committee on Academic Affairs and Academic Freedom and

---

620 Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, June 10, 1970. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 3, folder 4, UM.
621 Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, December 8, 1971. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 7, box 39, folder 4, UM.
622 Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, October 8, 1972. Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 2, UM.
623 Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, October 10, 1973. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 7, box 39, folder 5, UM.; Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, November 13, 1973. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 7, box 39, folder 5, UM. Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, January 14, 1976, Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 3, UM; Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, January 22, 1976, Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 3, UM; Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, February 11, 1976, Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 3, UM; Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, June 9, 1976, Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 3, UM.
624 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1973-1974, UM.; School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1974-1975, UM. School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1975-1976, UM; School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1976-1977, UM; School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1977-1978, UM; School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1978-1979, UM.
625 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1975-1976, UM.; Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, April 14, 1976. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 7, box 39, folder 7, UM.
626 Ibid., See Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 7, box 39, folder 7 for attendance records of the 1976 faculty senate, and folder 8 for 1977/1978 attendance records.
Tenure at the Faculty Senate meeting in June, 1976. After learning about the proposal, Rea questioned the lack of inclusivity for part-time faculty. As Rea explained most of the part-time faculty at UM were women.\textsuperscript{627} By not including part-time faculty in any resolutions regarding academic appointments, many women in teaching roles were left without a voice. Although the Faculty Senate meeting minutes detailed Rea’s concern, no answer or resolution appeared.

Throughout 1976 and 1977 many of the issues discussed in Faculty Senate were less serious than the issues that plagued the campus just 15 years prior. In 1977 some of the most contentious issues focused on parking challenges on the campus. Other concerns included salary of faculty, energy consumption on the campus, the need for more library books, and the need for more funding in general for the university library.\textsuperscript{628} In 1977, Rea and Faculty Senator, Thomas Wentland, a professor of communicative disorders, urged the Faculty Senate to consider the faculty status of librarians. The issue was tabled for further discussion and was presented at the fall meeting.\textsuperscript{629}

Faculty Senate, in 1978, served and advocated for the fair treatment of University faculty. In an effort to clarify the university policy for faculty tenure, Chancellor Fortune charged a committee of seven faculty members, including Rea to evaluate the current tenure policy and examine whether the policy was too strict. Fortune expressed a concern over the limited options of the current policy for administration to either grant tenure or terminate a faculty member. The

\textsuperscript{627} Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, June 9, 1976, Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 3, UM.
\textsuperscript{628} Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, January 11, 1977, Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 3, UM; Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, February 9, 1977, Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 3, UM; Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, April 13, 1977, Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 3, UM; Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, June 8, 1977, Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 3, UM.
\textsuperscript{629} Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, July 13, 1977. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 7, box 39, folder 8, UM.; School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1977-1978, UM
policy, Fortune argued, often harmed faculty who first served as instructors. Because the Senate of the Faculty, the AAUP, and the Academic Council reviewed any changes made to the tenure policy, Fortune asked the committee to complete its work and make a recommendation quickly. Even at the end of her career, Rea advocated for the professoriate and worked to improve the conditions for women faculty and part-time faculty. Rea continued to serve on the Faculty Senate until her retirement from the university in 1979.

**Professional Association Involvement**

As the dean of women, Rea was actively involved with the National Association of Women Deans. She continued her professional involvement with the organization, even as her role at UM changed. The organization changed and evolved as professional needs of the deans of women changed. According to Bashaw, in 1956, the National Association of Deans of Women changed its name to the National Association of Deans of Women and Counselors (NADWC) and in 1973 the organization transitioned to become the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors (NAWDAC) and finally by 1991, was the National Association for Women in Education (NAWE). In 2000, the National Association for Women in Education dissolved and the remaining assets were given to the American Association of University Women. With the dissolution of the organization, the association’s publication, *Initiatives*, ceased to exist.

---

630 Fortune, Porter, Letter to Gerald Walton, [Tenure Policy Committee Memo], April 26, 1978, AAUP Collection, box 7, folder 5, UM.
631 Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, September 13, 1978. Frank Moak Collection, series 1, subseries 7, box 39, folder 8, UM. Minutes of the Senate of the Faculty, May 9, 1979, Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection, box 4, folder 9, UM.
632 Bashaw, “Reassessment and Redefinition.”
As a professional organization committed to the support and professional development of women deans, and other women administrators, Rea was a long standing member of the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors, as well as the state branch the Mississippi Association for Women Deans and Counselors (MAWDC). The MAWDC held its first annual workshop in the fall of 1965 at Mississippi State College for Women. The association designed subgroups ostensibly to meet the needs of its members in various levels of education. The groups were separated into junior high counselors, senior higher counselors, junior college deans, senior college/university deans, and residence hall personnel. Although she resigned her position as dean of women in the spring of 1968, Rea did not relinquish her membership in the national or state associations. In the fall of 1968, she served as chairman for the college and university division of the Mississippi association and attended the annual workshop at Delta State College. The new Dean of Women at UM, Margaret Lodwick, also attended. Rea served a second year as the chairman for the college and university division, although it is unclear if she was able to attend the annual state workshop in 1969.

Unfortunately, many of the official records including membership, conference attendance and presentations, and officer positions were destroyed during Hurricane Camille in 1969. A new official ledger documented the loss of the materials in 1970. In the fall of 1970 the association met for its annual workshop at the University of Southern Mississippi, a few short months after

---

634 Mississippi Association for Women Deans and Counselors, [Program], September 30-October 1, 1965, Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 1, UM.
635 1968 Annual Workshop, [Program], Mississippi Association of Women Deans and Counselors, October 1968, Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 1, UM.
636 1969 Annual Workshop, [Program], Mississippi Association of Women Deans and Counselors, October 1969, Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 1, UM.; Attendance and Mailing List, 1969 Annual Workshop, Mississippi Association of Women Deans and Counselors, October 1969, Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 1, UM. Note: no materials from the 1971 or 1972 state annual workshops were available in the archives. It is unknown if Rea attended or presented at either of those workshops.
637 Mississippi Association of Women Deans and Counselors, 1970, [Handwritten Ledger], Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 3, UM.
the hurricane decimated much of Mississippi. Rea and Margaret Lodwick attended the
workshop. The next year Rea paid dues to the association, but was unable to attend the fall
workshop at Hinds Junior College.

At the 1973 Mississippi Association of Women Deans and Counselors annual workshop,
Rea presented a session entitled “Human Initiatives.” As the student personnel movement
began to change the profession, the professional organizations adapted to the changes.
Consequently, at the 1973 annual workshop, the Mississippi Association of Women Deans and
Counselors officially changed its name to include a broader scope of women working in
education. The name change followed the national association’s lead. The organization became
the Mississippi Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors. Any woman in
education who performed “duties of deans, counselors, advisors, or administrators in the field of
student personnel in all levels of education” was eligible to join the organization.

Rea kept her pulse on the national concerns for women in student personnel roles. Rea
attended the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors at the
annual convention in Chicago in April, 1974. Rea attended the Mississippi Personnel and
Guidance Association annual meeting in November, 1973 and presented with Jeanette
Phillips. There is little record of Rea publishing any papers, books, journal articles, however,
she remained abreast to the conversations affecting college women by attending professional
conferences. According to the Annual Report of the Chancellor, 1973-1974, Rea was a charter

---

638 Mississippi Association of Women Deans and Counselors, 1970, [Handwritten Ledger], Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 3, UM.
639 Registration for Fall Workshop, October 25-26, 1971, [Dues and Conference Registration Payments], Sarah Isom center Collection, box 48, folder 3, UM.
640 Mississippi Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, 1973, [Annual Workshop Program], Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 1, UM.
641 Constitution for the Mississippi Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, [As Amended, October, 1973], p. 1., Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 2, UM.
642 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1973-1974, UM
643 Ibid.; The UM Report of Convention Travel, 1974-1975, Porter Fortune Collection, box 8, folder 1, UM.
member of the Mississippi College Personnel Association and served on the Board of Directors. The Mississippi College Personnel Association was divided into regions, and Rea served as the representative for the Northwest region in 1973-1974. Despite the lack of evidence of scholarly publications, Rea served a two-year term on the board for *The Journal*, the official academic publication of the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors. Her appointment began in 1973 and continued until her retirement in 1979.

Although Rea no longer served as dean of women in the 1970s, she remained a committed member of the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors. She attended the national conference for the association in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with Judith Trott, a former student and now colleague in 1975. Rea also attended the Mississippi Personnel and Guidance Association annual meeting in Jackson in the fall of 1974 and presented with Roy Ruby, a UM graduate student. Rea participated in a Governor’s Conference throughout the mid-1970s. In July, 1974 she attended a session on the Education of Women, and in December, 1974 when the session focused on Career Education. The next year she served as a group leader during the Education session, and attended the Governor’s Conference on the proposed Required School Attendance law. Meanwhile, Rea continued to serve as an active member of the American Association of University Women and as a member of the League of Women Voters. Usually her official roles in the AAUW were featured in the

---

644 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1973-1974, UM. Note: The Annual Report interchanges the Mississippi College Personnel Association and the Mississippi Personnel and Guidance Association. I believe it is just one association that recently had a name change, thus is used interchangeable in the annual report.
645 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1973-1974, UM; School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1975-1976, UM.
646 The UM Report of Convention Travel, 1975-1976. Porter Fortune Collection, box 8, folder 1, UM.; School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1974-1975, UM.
647 Ibid.
648 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1974-1975, UM.
649 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1975-1976, UM.
Annual Report to the Chancellor, but her involvement with the League of Women Voters was featured more sporadically.

The Mississippi Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors celebrated its 10th annual workshop at the Mississippi University for Women in the fall of 1975 and Rea gave the opening address. Dr. Judith Trott, was now the president of the organization. At the annual meeting, Rea was a featured speaker and presented a session entitled “Past to Present.” At the workshop, Rea “shared memories of the beginning days of the workshop programs and development.” Furthermore, in 1975, Rea attended the Mississippi Personnel and Guidance Association Conference and presented her work with another graduate student.

For Rea, the year was business as usual. She attended the Mississippi Personnel and Guidance Association annual meeting and presented research with a graduate student. While at the conference, Rea was elected president-elect for the upcoming year.

Rea attended the Mississippi Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors and attended the conference for the national association. While at the national association’s conference, Rea served as the chair of the Manuscript Review Committee.

As a member of the board for the Journal of NAWDAC, Rea, once again, attended the national NAWDAC convention and served on a panel and discussed what “the editorial board considers important” for publication in the Journal. Rea served on the Journal review board
for several years in the late 1970s. The national association continued to strengthen its publications and added monographs and other outlets for scholars in women’s education. In 1976, a new “manuscript review committee” was established, and Rea served as the committee chair.\textsuperscript{657} The new committee worked to “publish monographs, articles, essays, bibliographies, and books that are of value to its members, to other educators, and to the field in general, and that are not appropriate for inclusion in the other publications of the Association: the \textit{Journal}, and \textit{Bulletin}, the Conference Summary, or the Annual Report.”\textsuperscript{658} As chair, Rea served three years and was appointed by the NAWDAC President.\textsuperscript{659} The national association continued to strengthen its publications and added monographs and other outlets for scholars in women’s education. In 1976, a new “manuscript review committee” was established, and Rea served as the committee chair.\textsuperscript{660}

Rea attended the Mississippi Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors conference in 1977 which focused on “Laws Affecting Women Status in the U.S.”\textsuperscript{661} Rea continued her commitment to the national association and attended the national conference in 1977.\textsuperscript{662} At the Mississippi Personnel and Guidance Association annual meeting in 1978, Rea moderated a panel discussion by three graduate students from the School of Education at UM.

\textsuperscript{657} National Association of Women Deans and Counselors, 1978, [Convention Program], National Student Affairs Archives, Center for Archival Collections, Jerome Library, Bowling Green State University, OH.

\textsuperscript{658} Manuscript Review Committee, “Statement of Policy,” p. 20., N.D. National Student Affairs Archives, Center for Archival Collections, Jerome Library, Bowling Green State University, OH.; Christiansen, Marjorie, Letter to Katherine Rea, December 10, 1976, National Student Affairs Archives, Center for Archival Collections, Jerome Library, Bowling Green State University, OH.;

\textsuperscript{659} Report of the NAWDAC Manuscript Review Committee, March 1, 1977, National Student Affairs Archives, Center for Archival Collections, Jerome Library, Bowling Green State University, OH.

\textsuperscript{660} National Association of Women Deans and Counselors, 1978, [Convention Program], National Student Affairs Archives, Center for Archival Collections, Jerome Library, Bowling Green State University, OH.;

\textsuperscript{661} Fall Newsletter, 1977, Mississippi Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, [President’s Message], Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 2, UM.

\textsuperscript{662} National Association of Women Deans and Counselors, 1977, [Convention Program], National Student Affairs Archives, Center for Archival Collections, Jerome Library, Bowling Green State University, OH.
the annual meeting Rea was officially elected President of the association.\textsuperscript{663} Rea continued to serve as the chairman of the Manuscript Review Committee for the \textit{Journal}, the official publication of the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors. Despite retiring to the Mississippi Gulf Coast in the spring of 1979, Rea continued to attend the annual workshops for the Mississippi Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors. At the 1980 workshop, Rea was a section leader for the “College/University” group.\textsuperscript{664} The following year, 1981, the workshop was held at the University of Southern Mississippi, in Hattiesburg, MS. Rea recently moved to the Mississippi Gulf Coast following her retirement from the University of Mississippi. Hattiesburg is less than a two hour drive from the coast, which afforded Rea the opportunity to host the association at an information reception at her home in Gulfport, MS.\textsuperscript{665}

\textbf{School of Education: Higher Education and Student Personnel Department}

The School of Education endured organizational changes in the 1970s. During the 1970-1971 academic year, the School of Education reorganized and created six academic departments. One of the departments, higher education and student personnel services, was previously two separate departments with two faculty directors. Professor John Fawcett, who arrived at the university in 1967, was the director of the higher education program and Katharine Rea served as the director of the student personnel services program. When the two programs combined, Fawcett was charged with leading the new department.\textsuperscript{666} Three full-time faculty comprised the

\textsuperscript{663} School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1977-1978, UM.
\textsuperscript{664} Mississippi Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, 1980, [Annual Workshop Program], Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 1, UM.; Mississippi Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, 1980, [Agenda], November 17, 1980, Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 2, UM. Note: No materials were found for the annual workshops for 1977, 1978, or 1979.
\textsuperscript{665} Mississippi Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, 1981, [Annual Workshop Program], Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 48, folder 1, UM.
\textsuperscript{666} School of Education, Annual Report to the Chancellor, 1970-1971, UM.
department, Fawcett, Rea, and Robert Ellis, who joined the School of Education full-time in the
summer of 1970. Dr. Franks, who served as the Associate Registrar at the University served in a
part-time capacity.\textsuperscript{667} The relationships among the faculty in the department were cordial and
professional, \textsuperscript{668} although philosophically and politically, Rea and Fawcett were “180 degrees
apart.”\textsuperscript{669}

Dr. John Fawcett’s wife was extremely conservative and very religious, often writing
letters to the editor of \textit{The Mississippian}, to express her displeasure with a campus event,
speaker, or campus organization.\textsuperscript{670} Mrs. Fawcett was even critical of the women’s liberation
movement comparing the movement to Communism. In her letter to the editor, Fawcett pleaded
with readers to understand how the women’s liberation would destroy families. In one of her
letters to the editor at \textit{The Mississippian}, Mrs. Fawcett wrote “What this amounts to in reality is
the destruction of the family and the degradation of womanhood. The Communists have always
taught that one’s first loyalty is to the Party, not to one’s husband or wife or children. Children
are the property of the State; they are trained to be good Communists. The sanctity of marriage
does not exist in the Communist’s world because, to a dedicated Red, there is no God who
sanctifies such a union.”\textsuperscript{671} Although Rea never wrote a letter to the editor of \textit{The Mississippian}
in response, it is doubtful the two women engaged in a social relationship. Regardless of the
beliefs and public display of opinion by Patricia Fawcett, by all accounts, the relationship
between Dr. John Fawcett and Katharine Rea appeared professional to others within the

\textsuperscript{667} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{668} Sylvester Moorhead, personal interview with author, March 7, 2013.; Judith Trott, personal interview with
\textsuperscript{669} H. Dale Abadie, personal interview with author, April 4, 2013.
Note: Patricia Fawcett wrote more than 16 letters to the editor in the 1969-1970 academic year. Critics of Patricia
Fawcett’s letters included faculty member David Sansing. See: Sansing, David, “Reader Gets Perverse Pleasure
university community. Rea was considered a peace maker and used diplomacy in difficult situations. Former faculty member in the School of Education, Dr. Peggy Emerson described Rea as “fair-minded in every situation” who worked to keep tensions low.

The new department only offered graduate degrees, thus dissertation advising loads appeared high for the faculty. For example, between August, 1970, and May 1971, the department of higher education and student personnel services conferred 20 doctoral degrees, and Rea served as chair on seven dissertation committees. In comparison, in 2012, the higher education program conferred five doctoral degrees. Although she served in various faculty leadership roles, she also taught courses and served in other capacities on campus and in the region. Rea was granted a sabbatical for the spring semester in 1973. Regardless of her sabbatical leave, Rea continued to serve as the President of the University Chapter of AAUP. Moreover, Rea served as the regional representative for the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors in 1973 and served on an adhoc committee that studied the discrimination against women in the workforce.

Because of Rea’s knowledge of women’s issues in the work force she was called upon to speak beyond the University. Rea continued in her support of women and the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and served as a moderator for an ERA discussion with the Mississippi Women’s Cabinet of Public Affairs. It is unknown how Rea was selected or appointed to serve as the moderator for the ERA discussion, but Rea accepted the invitation. She also spoke on a

---

673 Peggy Emerson, personal interview with author, March 8, 2013.
674 School of Education, Annual Report to the Chancellor, 1970-1971, UM.
675 Ibid.
677 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1972-1973, UM.
678 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1972-1973, UM.
panel regarding the importance of continuing education for women in 1973. These activities were featured in the end of the year annual report for the School of Education. Even if support for the ERA amendment was not unanimous in the state of Mississippi, her work with the amendment was not hidden from the department, school, or university.

The three faculty members in the Higher Education and Student Personnel Department at UM, John Fawcett, Robert Ellis, and Rea, were busy teaching classes, serving on university committees, attending conferences, and advising dissertations. From 1973 to 1979 Rea chaired eight to 14 dissertations in any given year. Usually, Rea chaired the highest number of dissertations in the department.680

In 1974, John Fawcett, chairman of the department requested the addition of a new master’s in student personnel services degree program be added. In 1974 the only degree offered in the department was the doctorate.681 By 1975, the School of Education had six different academic departments. The professional atmosphere and collegiately within the school was not always favorable. In a letter to Chancellor Fortune, Julia Grimes wrote of the “unfavorable condition that exist in the Ole Miss Secondary Education Department” in the School. Although Rea was not a member of that department, she was mentioned as one of the few faculty members who Grimes’ believed was a “cooperative” and “efficient” faculty member in the school.682 Later that year, the School of Education was restructured, and reduced the number of departments from six to four. The Higher Education and Student Personnel Department was combined with other

679 Ibid.
680 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1973-1974, UM. School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1974-1975, UM; School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1975-1976, UM; School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1976-1977, UM; School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1977-1978, UM; School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1978-1979, UM.
681 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1974-1975, UM.
programs and created the new Educational Administration, Counseling, Psychology and Higher Education Department. Professor John Fawcett was no longer chair of the department. The new chair was Dr. Joseph Blackston.\textsuperscript{683}

Despite the organizational changes in the School of Education, Rea remained reliable in her participation in the Faculty Senate, the National Association of the Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, and the Mississippi Association of Women deans, Administrators, and Counselors, and the Mississippi Personnel and Guidance Association. Additionally, Rea served on an advisor panel for the Center for Studies in Southern Culture, was a member of the Oxford Civic Council, and participated in the State Coordinating Committee for International Women’s Year.\textsuperscript{684} Her commitment to educational and women’s initiatives continued even as she neared retirement from the University.

**Commission on the Status of Women**

In 1978, Chancellor Fortune commissioned a committee of women to determine whether the UM campus was in need of creating a Commission on the Status of Women, or developing a Women’s Studies Program and/or a Women’s Center.\textsuperscript{685} At the time, the university still had a dean of women, Jan Hawks, but the national trend had moved to eliminate the position in favor of a dean of students. The three new academic programs, centers, or committee could, perhaps, serve instead of the dean of women position. Members of the committee included chair, Dr. Jan Hawks, dean of women and assistant professor of history; Dr. Ann Abadie, was classified as an independent studies specialist (non-teaching personnel); Dr. Carolyn Ellis, assistant professor of law; Kathleen Sullivan, graduate student in the School of Education; Dr. Lucy Turnbull,

\textsuperscript{683} School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1976-1977, UM.
\textsuperscript{684} Ibid.
professor of classical archaeology, and other university faculty. 686 Ultimately, the university decided to open the Sarah Isom Center for Women, however Hawks remained the dean of women until the early 1980s.

The University of Mississippi had a dean of women much longer than many other college campuses across the country. By as early as the 1930s, institutions shifted to the student personnel model and began combining the positions of deans of men and deans of women. Schwartz found by the 1940s and 1950s most deans of women positions disappeared, in part, because of the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act (GI Bill) which created a drastic rise in the number of males on college campuses. 687 Although different rules for women students had disappeared in the 1970s, UM was still committed to providing support for women students.

Although the dean of women position was eliminated on many campuses after World War II, that did not diminish the need for support of women students. Women centers were created on college campuses and provided a variety of support and services to women students. 688 The shift to the student personnel movement changed the support structure drastically for women students as institutions began combining the position of dean of men and dean of women into one position. 689 When the deans of women disappeared on college campuses, women students lost their voices and advocates, resulting in an institutional climate change. The change created a movement and a need for women’s centers to fill the void left by the vacated position. Moreover, the women’s center helped students connect with each other.

Furthermore, after the deans of women disappeared from the majority of coeducational institutions, women’s centers emerged, and new field of study developed. In the early 1970s, San

686 Ibid.
687 Schwartz, “How Deans of Women Became Men.”
689 Chamberlain, Women in Academe.
Diego State University founded the first women’s studies department in the U.S.\textsuperscript{690} A main thread of women’s studies courses was the examination of women “from different background, races, and classes.”\textsuperscript{691} Moreover, Keohane, Rosaldo, and Gelpi described the women who first advocated for women’s studies courses as “political activists” who were, perhaps, trying to raise awareness of the oppression of women in society and in the academy.\textsuperscript{692}

**Women’s Centers Fill the Void**

With the elimination of the dean of women position on most college campuses across the country, historian Jana Nidiffer asked if perhaps women’s studies programs and women centers have taken over the duties that deans of women once held?\textsuperscript{693} Although the dean of women position is no more, the need to support women students still continues as many campuses now offer women’s studies programs and have spaces dedicated for women students. Brooks examined the purpose of women’s centers on college campuses and the different support and services they provide women students.\textsuperscript{694} Brooks argued that with the shift of the student personnel movement it changed the support structure drastically for women students and with whom they could talk for encouragement and advice.\textsuperscript{695} With the decline in the position of deans of women, the climate on college campuses changed and a need grew for women’s centers to fill the void left by the vacated position. The women’s center helped students make connections to each other and provided opportunities to women for social interaction.\textsuperscript{696}


\textsuperscript{691} Ibid., 71.


\textsuperscript{693} Nidiffer, “From Matron to Maven.”

\textsuperscript{694} Brooks, “The Women’s Center,” 17-21.

\textsuperscript{695} Ibid., 17-21.

Brooks believed when the dean of women’s position was vacated, women students lost their advocate, and the women’s center helped fill that void. The centers became a symbol for the commitment of women’s education. Sadly, the budgets were not adequate for the scope of the work that was needed. Finally, Brooks asserted that administrators cannot put women students in a separate subgroup on a college campus and believe equality will happen.

**Katharine Rea in the Classroom**

Although appointed an associate professor in education on November 1, 1958 the first documented course Rea taught was in 1961-1962. The course, at the graduate level “Guidance: Student Personnel Work in College” would remain a course Rea taught almost every year until her retirement. Rea also taught, The College and the Student, a course dedicated to studying “the college student, his needs, identity, potential, choices, and characteristics.” Rea taught with a gentle voice and favored the “socratic method” as she preferred to ask a lot of questions of her students and encouraged discussion and debate. The topic of women’s issues often found their way into the curriculum in the various courses Rea taught. Federal law related to student personnel work, including the importance of Title IX, was a common lesson Rea ensured her students knew, even if some of her male students resented its provisions. Furthermore, Rea taught a seminar course in Student Personnel Services, a practicum course in Student Personnel Services (a course similar to an internship opportunity for students), a guidance course focused on group methods, and Organization and Administration of Student

---

698 Ibid., 17-21.
699 Officers of Administration, University Bulletin, 1959-1960, UM.
700 Officers of Administration, University Bulletin, 1961-1962, UM.
702 George Abraham, personal interview with author, January 18, 2013.
Personnel Services in Higher Education.

Always the consummate professional, Rea addressed her students by their full names, and refused to use nicknames. A University of Mississippi graduate, Thomas Reardon, more fondly known as “Sparky” to his friends, classmates, and colleagues, recalled Rea’s refusal to use his nickname, to Rea, he was always “Thomas” or Mr. Reardon. “Dean Rea refused to call me Sparky. In class, if anyone referred to me by my nickname, she would very gently remind them with a simple, “Are you referring to Thomas?” Other graduate students recalled her formal demeanor. One student of Rea’s Kathleen Sullivan, further affirmed “everyone was their given name. No nicknames.” Dr. Rea was a scholar and formal in her demeanor. She was always professional and proper, in her work environment and even in less formal settings.

Perhaps her greatest contribution to teaching at UM was the course she developed on women in higher education, Student Personnel Work with Women. Rea first taught the course, Student Personnel Work with Women during the 1965-1966 academic year, when she served as the Dean of Women. Rea continued to teach that course every year until she retired. Former graduate student, George Abraham, enrolled in Rea’s Student Personnel Work with Women in his second semester of doctoral studies in the 1970s. Abraham recalled reading Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex, work by Letty Pogrebin, co-founder of Ms. Magazine, and Betty Friedan’s, The Feminine Mystique, in Rea’s class. Abraham called Rea an “inspiring” mentor. Furthermore, Abraham described Rea as a woman “so ahead of her day.” Rea dedicated her life

---

704 Thomas (Sparky) Reardon, personal interview with author, July 8, 2011.
708 University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1965-1966, UM.
to educate others and to advocate for social justice. “She was really pushing for women’s rights and minority rights when it was unpopular," Abraham cautioned about Rea’s advocacy. Rea pushed students to challenge their own conventional thinking and to analyze the world around them. Indeed her views in support of the feminist movement and racial equality were not always shared in her classroom, Abraham argued for her likability “whether you agreed with her or not, you could not, not like her.”\footnote{George Abraham, personal interview with author, January 18, 2013. Note: Author added italics.}

Academic programs emerged in the 1970s to study the oppression of women. Feminist pedagogy, as a way of studying women’s liberation, described by Weiler was “developed in conjunction with the growth of women’s studies” and “is grounded in a vision of social change.”\footnote{Weiler, “Freire and a Feminist Pedagogy of Difference,” 455, 456.} The first women’s studies department opened at San Diego State University in the early 1970s.\footnote{Ginsberg, The Evolution of American Women’s Studies.} Women’s studies programs gave students the opportunity to study women through a new lens. Ginsberg explained what made women’s studies courses so unique, is the assumption that throughout history, women were an oppressed class.\footnote{Ibid.} In the early 1970s, the University of Mississippi did not have a women’s studies program, however, Rea clearly brought elements of the second-wave feminist movement into her courses as an educator in higher education and student personnel.

From the development of women’s studies courses, new scholarship emerged. In 1977, the National Women’s Studies Association was formed. The organization held a yearly conference and published a scholarly journal.\footnote{Weiler, “Freire and a Feminist Pedagogy of Difference.”} The national organization and instructors of
women’s studies courses worked to have the women’s studies program recognized on college campuses, and maybe more importantly, receive funding for the program.\footnote{Ginsberg, \textit{The Evolution of American Women’s Studies}.}

Similarly, other programs may have helped fill the void to reach women students; women still sought high ranking professional posts within colleges and universities. Nevertheless, as Jones and Komives described in their work, men in the 1980s held a disproportionate number of senior student affairs positions and women were held at the mid-level positions which usually meant lower salaries for women.\footnote{Jones and Komives, “Contemporary Issues of Women as Senior Student Affairs Officers,” 231-248.} Women made up more master’s and doctoral students but men still held the upper administrative positions. However, at smaller institutions more women held the senior level positions. Women were more likely to be promoted from within an institution as career mobility and access were common challenges facing women. To help even the gender scale, Jones and Komives recommended mentoring and other supportive networks be put in place to help women advance to senior level positions.\footnote{Jones and Komives, “Contemporary Issues of Women as Senior Student Affairs Officers,” 231-248.}

In addition to teaching courses, Rea was a mentor to all of her students. Katherine Abraham who was an undergraduate student at UM in the 1960s was one of Rea’s final doctoral students in education. Abraham commented Rea established a tradition of hosting a party in a new graduate’s honor. “As a doctoral student, I remember how much she cared about her students and how she wanted them to succeed. Every time one of her students graduated, she gave them a party at her house.”\footnote{Katherine Abraham, personal interview with author, February 3, 2012.} Heralded as a gracious and frequent hostess, Rea ensured her students knew the pride she felt in their accomplishment.\footnote{Katherine Abraham, personal interview with author, February 3, 2012.} Rea was a “magnificent hostess” and often served parties and gatherings in her home. When hosting she used her silver collection and

\footnote{Ginsberg, \textit{The Evolution of American Women’s Studies}.}
Although Rea was supportive and caring towards her graduate students, do not mistake the compassion and support for lack of rigor. She held high academic standards for her students, and challenged them to be excellent writers and professionals.

Rea’s academic year would come to an end at the conclusion of the academic year in 1979. In the late 1970s, university policy dictated that if a faculty member’s 65th birthday fell during the academic year the faculty member must retire at the conclusion of the year. However, Dean of the School of Education, Sylvester Moorhead, requested an extension to the policy on Rea’s behalf. To Rea’s disappointment, Vice Chancellor, Harvey Lewis, denied the request.

Regardless if Rea was disappointed in her impending retirement, she valiantly served in the same tireless capacity she had for the last 10 years as a member of the university faculty. In her last year on the faculty, Rea served her year as president of the Mississippi College Personnel Association, attended the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors conference and fulfilled her duty as chairman for the Journal manuscript review committee. She served as the chairman of the Library Council at the University, and as a member of the Executive Committee of the AAUP. Rea also volunteered her time to serve as the director of the Center for the Study of Contemporary Rural Women, a grant funded program designed to help rural women with career and professional development opportunities. In her role as director, Rea organized “workshops on success strategies for women.”

---

719 George Abraham, personal interview with author, January 18, 2013.
722 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1978-1979, p. 204, UM.
Conclusion

Katharine Rea was an educator with high academic and professional standards. Her dedication to the University of Mississippi and the students in the higher education and student personnel program was second to none. Former graduate student, George Abraham conveyed “instead of a husband, she dedicated her life to students, she loved them; not just liked them, loved them.”\(^723\) For many doctoral students, especially women, Rea served as an ardent advisor, mentor, advocate, and friend. Katherine Abraham described Rea as “very gracious to the graduate students. We became a cohesive group. We took weekend courses and Rea often hosted get-togethers for us.”\(^724\)

In addition to her service to the graduate students in the School of Education, Rea served the University of Mississippi in a variety of capacities. Although the UM Chapter of AAUP was small, Rea devoted her time to shared faculty governance with the AAUP and served a term as secretary and two-terms as president. Furthermore, her role as a faculty advocate, especially to part-time faculty was evident with her support on the Faculty Senate at UM. Rea’s work with the Black Affairs Committee in the early 1970s challenged the campus climate for both Black and White students. Despite the short duration of the committee’s existence, the work of the committee forever changed the campus experience of all students at UM.

Finally, Rea’s professional involvement with organizations such as the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators and Counselors, the Mississippi Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, and the Mississippi Personnel and Guidance Association allowed Rea to continually learn about the student personnel movement and women in higher education. Furthermore, Rea encouraged other professional staff, faculty, and graduate

\(^723\) George Abraham, personal interview with author, January 18, 2013.
\(^724\) Kathleen Sullivan, personal interview with author, February 21, 2013.
students to join these organizations to expand their learning and educational understanding beyond the University of Mississippi.

On May 13, 1979, Rea officially retired from the University of Mississippi after serving the University for 24 years. 725 George Abraham disclosed “in every aspect of her life she gave… she was truly the definition of cosmopolitan.”726 Although she retired from the University, her support of women remained. Her affiliation with two activist organizations, the American Association of University Women and the Mississippi League of Women Voters served as an outlet to promote equality for women, an outlet Rea was committed to for more than 50 years.

725 School of Education, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, 1978-1979, UM.
726 George Abraham, personal interview with author, January 18, 2013.
CHAPTER IV

REA’S LEGACY: WOMEN’S ACTIVISM

The deans of women at the University of Mississippi (UM) have a long history of involvement with the American Association of University Women (AAUW). In 1906, the University became a member of the Southern Association of College Women (SACW) when six women, including Eula Deaton, the first UM dean of women, joined to create a local branch.\(^\text{727}\)

The Oxford branch of SACW was small in membership in the early 1900s. By 1909 the Oxford branch failed to hold regular meetings. The branch remained small for the next two decades and suffered from inactive membership in the 1920s when the Association of Collegiate Alumnae merged with the Southern Association of College Women in 1921.

As a result of the small and inactive membership, the Oxford branch was not recognized as an official charter member of the American Association of University Women. Furthermore, the University of Mississippi did not provide physical education for the girls on campus and did not have a favorable ratio of women faculty, therefore they did not meet the requirements of the new association.\(^\text{728}\) Finally, in 1929, after some politicking from the former branch President, Mrs. Calvin S. Brown, the current UM Dean of Women, Mrs. Edna Lowe Eatman, and several other former members, the Oxford branch received official recognition from the national

\(^{727}\) Southern Association of College Women, Secretary’s Book, 1906 Charter Members, American Association of University Women Collection, box 11, folder 1, UM.

headquarters of AAUW in Washington, D.C. for the 11 due paying members. The small group of women worked to keep the Oxford branch of AAUW active. A little more than 20 years later, the entire state of Mississippi had a viable and productive AAUW state division, with the women in the Oxford branch often serving in leadership roles for the state organization.

**Katharine Rea and the AAUW**

The book *Women in Academe: Progress and Prospects*, by Mariam Chamberlain, described the American Association of University Women as an educational association that provided educated women a support network, advocacy, and support for career advancement. The association held conferences and provided women the opportunity to study issues of national and regional importance. By the 1950s the AAUW was a popular organization for college educated women to join. One of the women, Dr. Katharine Rea, served as a member of the Mississippi Division of AAUW for more than 50 years.

While teaching English at Gulfport High School in the 1940s, Rea became a member in the Gulf Coast branch of AAUW, including serving as the Gulf Coast branch president for a two-year term from 1946-1948. As a member of AAUW, Rea served on committees within the Mississippi division including a term as chairman of the International Relations committee in 1946. In the mid to late 1940s the Mississippi Division of AAUW had a strong focus on improving teacher salaries, attracting more women to the teaching profession, and improving the public perceptions of teachers. The Mississippi division authored a short report on the teaching profession in the late 1940s. The report highlighted salaries of male and female teachers and

---

729 Belle Rankin, Executive Secretary of the National AAUW Branch, to Anne Clyde Lindsey, Oxford/University chapter member, American Association of University Women Collection, box 11, folder 1, UM.  
732 Minutes of the 20th Annual Convention of AAUW, April 26, 1946, American Association of University Women Collection, box 22, folder Minutes of the 20th Annual Convention, Meridian, 1946, UM.
outlined several ways in which the state could improve the teaching profession. The report signaled

As for attracting sweet young things to the profession in my opinion, conditions must be improved so that those who teach can impress the possible candidates with their attractive personalities, their joy in teaching, and their prestige in the community. That means teaching loads must be lowered until the teacher has energy enough left after the days grind to live as other professional people; she must have time from the drudgeries of teaching for some leisure pursuits; and she must have an income which will maintain a standard of living in keeping with educational requirements of her profession. Further, since teaching children is vital to the well being of a republican form of democracy the persons doing the teaching should not be the subject of jibes jokes, and caricatures ill fitting the builders of character…For example usually the teacher is displayed as a sour, poorly dressed, sharp featured cranky spinster, seldom a sweet looking pretty mortal. This needs changing.  

As a former high school teacher and soon to be dean of women, Rea was familiar with the negative stereotype of women in education. Her career and professional activism worked to improve the lives of women across the state of Mississippi. As a member of AAUW, Rea served on various committees within the Mississippi division including a term as chairman of the International Relations committee in 1946. In 1949, the Mississippi division began organizing state-wide workshops to plan for the upcoming year at the state and branch level. The first workshop was hosted at Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi. The Mississippi division leaders recognized they were slow to organize as the Alabama division was in their seventh year of state workshops. State workshops were held in the fall and were generally smaller in scale than the annual state conventions held in spring, but the fall workshops provided the woman an opportunity to organize and plan for the coming year. Rea held other offices including chairman

---

733 AAUW Mississippi Division Objective for the Year. Improving School Teaching. 1946-1949? [Undated report]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 46, folder State and Branch Reports, President MS 1946-1949, UM.

734 Minutes of the 20th Annual Convention of AAUW, April 26, 1946, American Association of University Women Collection, box 22, folder Minutes of the 20th Annual Convention, Meridian, 1946, UM.

735 Mississippi Division, AAUW Holds First State Workshop. 1949 [Press release]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 28, folder State Workshop, Clinton, 1949, UM.
of the Standardization and Recognition of Colleges Committee in 1949 and 1950\textsuperscript{736} and served as the Secretary of the Mississippi Division from 1950 to 1952.\textsuperscript{737}

In 1952, Katharine Rea accepted a position as an admissions counselor at the University of Mississippi and transferred her AAUW membership from the Gulf Coast branch to Oxford. By the time Rea arrived in Oxford she had a ten year relationship with AAUW. Women in the Oxford branch provided books to a local institution for delinquent boys as part of a social service project started the year before.\textsuperscript{738} Rea served as secretary of the Mississippi Division of AAUW in 1953.\textsuperscript{739} After taking a leave of absence from Ole Miss in 1954, to complete her doctorate in higher education and guidance from Ohio State University, Rea returned to the Ole Miss campus in 1956. She split her time between the university counseling center and the Association of Christian Students office.

In 1957, one year after completing her doctorate, Rea replaced a 25 year veteran dean of women on the Ole Miss campus, Estella Hefley. Hefley, was also a long-time member of the Oxford branch of AAUW. In her new leadership role as the dean of women, Rea utilized the resources from the AAUW to be a “quiet activist” during the second-wave feminist movement for the women students on campus, and the women in the Oxford community. The second-wave feminist movement, a period of women’s activism that began in the wake of World War II and concluded in the late 1970s, helped frame new conversations around women’s issues in higher

\begin{footnotes}
\item[736] Program, 23rd Annual Convention of AAUW, 1949, American Association of University Women Collection, box 22, folder Report on the 1949 Convention and Credential Committee, Oxford, UM.
\item[737] State Officers, AAUW, South East Central Region, 1950-1952, American Association of University Women Collection, box 22, folder Regional AAUW 1950, UM.; MS Division of AAUW, 24th Annual Convention, 1950, American Association of University Women Collection, box 22, folder 24th Annual Convention 1950, UM.
\item[739] [Newspaper clipping], The Commercial Appeal, April 12, 1953. American Association of University Women Collection, box 23, folder 27th Annual Convention, University of Mississippi, 1953, UM.; Officers and Executive Committee [Officer List], 1953-1954, American Association of University Women Collection, box 23, folder 16\textsuperscript{th} Biennial Conference, Biloxi, 1954, UM.
\end{footnotes}
education. The second-wave feminist movement raised consciousness of the oppression of women in the hopes of creating social change for women and bringing liberation.\textsuperscript{740}

In the 1960s, the number of women in the labor force was making a strong comeback, especially after the decline of women in the workforce immediately following the end of World War II. The increase of women in the labor force in the 1960s was one of the leading factors in the resurgence of the women’s movement.\textsuperscript{741} Rupp and Taylor found most women participating in the women’s rights movement were White, upper class to upper-middle class, and generally had a college degree. Women were influential in creating civic organizations and volunteer opportunities outside the home. Women commonly found the balance between duties in the home and their new volunteer projects difficult.\textsuperscript{742} According to historian Linda Eisenmann “achieving the proper combination of domesticity and civic activism provoked considerable tension.”\textsuperscript{743} However, involvement in civic organizations gave women the opportunity to develop “independence and leadership skills.”\textsuperscript{744}

Women like Katharine Rea helped facilitate activism and leadership opportunities for women students and women in the Oxford community. In her role as dean of women, Rea, was required to provide support to female students in the areas of career development and, when needed, provided the “feminine point of view in administrative and faculty councils.”\textsuperscript{745}

The AAUW provided an activity where women could “study and then act on significant issues.”\textsuperscript{746} Although Rea was a member of the Oxford branch of AAUW since 1952, and served

\textsuperscript{740} Weiler, “Freire and a Feminist Pedagogy of Difference.”
\textsuperscript{741} Rupp and Taylor, \textit{Survival in the Doldrums}.
\textsuperscript{742} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{743} Eisenmann, “Educating the Female Citizen in a Post-War World,” 134.
\textsuperscript{744} Ibid., 138.
\textsuperscript{745} “Katharine Rea Takes Over as Dean of Women,” \textit{The Mississippian}. September 15-18, 1957.
as chairman of various standing committees at the state level while she resided in Gulfport, she
did not take a high level leadership role in the Oxford branch or with the state division until
Estella Hefley, previous dean of women retired in 1957. Hefley held leadership roles in the
Oxford branch and at the state division level, including a stint as branch vice president during her
last year on campus. Estella Hefley and Katharine Rea were acquainted through their
involvement with AAUW as both served as President of their respective branches in 1948 and
attended the 22nd annual state convention in Greenville, Mississippi. Perhaps out of respect for
her predecessor, Rea did not serve in a leadership capacity in the Oxford branch until Hefley
retired. Regardless, Rea remained involved in the Oxford branch often serving as hostess during
meetings but did not appear to take leadership ahead of more senior members in the branch.

Rea’s first administrative position within the Oxford branch, was serving as the Social
Studies chairman in the fall of 1957, the following year, she served as the Program Committee
Chairman. As program committee chairman, Rea utilized materials from the AAUW
headquarters and helped organize the topics discussed throughout the year. One of the annual
traditions of the Oxford branch was to host a senior tea at the Chancellor’s home for senior girls
and graduate women students. As program chairman, Rea organized the event. Mrs. Williams,

---

information for Oxford Branch]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 11, folder, Branch
Report for Oxford, 1953-1959, UM.
748 Program, AAUW 22nd Annual State Convention, 1948. American Association of University Women
Collection, box 22, folder, 22nd State Convention, 1948, UM.
information for Oxford Branch]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 11, folder Branch
University Women Collection, box 10, folder Oxford Branch Secretary’s Book, UM.; Social Studies Branch
Chairman, 1957-1958; American Association of University Women Collection, box 23, folder Regional AAUW
1957, UM.; AAUW, Southeast Central Region Mississippi Division (1957-1958), [Directory], American
Association of University Women Collection, box 48, folder Regional, State, and Branch Officers, 1956-1958, UM.
University Women Collection, box 11, folder Branch Report for Oxford, 1954-1960, UM.
wife of John D. Williams, University Chancellor, served as a co-hostess of the event.\textsuperscript{751} The tea served several purposes. First, it was a way for the women of AAUW to show support for the women students on campus. Second, it provided an opportunity to recruit new members to the branch. Although the senior tea appeared to be more of a ladies aid society activity, the Oxford branch women held the event in the home of the Chancellor and invited him as a special guest, thus providing an opportunity to meet and share the activities of the organization with the Chancellor. Since Rea’s service as the president of the Gulf Coast branch of AAUW in 1947 she has been hosting teas as a way to garner more interest in membership in AAUW and to thank those who have served the organization throughout the year.\textsuperscript{752}

Rea did not wait long after Hefley’s retirement to assume a leadership role in the Oxford branch of AAUW. Rea served as the corporate delegate from the University of Mississippi to attend the South East Region Conference in 1958.\textsuperscript{753} Rea was selected to participate by Chancellor J.D. Williams, as the college president was asked to appoint the corporate delegate to represent their institution at the conference.\textsuperscript{754}

Rea served her first term as President of the Oxford branch of AAUW in 1959. In Rea’s first year as president, programs included honoring and welcoming new members, reports on the national AAUW convention, an international program on “the rise of Nationalism in Africa,” and mental health options in Mississippi, a topic that Rea would advocate for her entire adult life in

\textsuperscript{751} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{752} Gulf Coast Branch Report. Katharine Rea, 1947-1948 [hand-written]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 46, folder State and Branch Reports, President MS Branch AAUW, 1946-1949, UM.; AAUW Branch President Report, Gulf Coast, 1947-1948 [AAUW formal document]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 46, folder State and Branch Reports, President MS Branch AAUW, 1946-1949, UM.
\textsuperscript{753} Minutes of the 18th Biennial Conference, 1958. American Association of University Women Collection, box 23, folder Proceedings of the 18th Biennial Conference, 1958, UM.
\textsuperscript{754} Ibid.
Mississippi. In her role as President, Rea attended the AAUW National Convention in Kansas City, where the theme was “The College Woman.” A delegate of eight women represented the Mississippi division at the Convention and reported on their experience during the fall AAUW Workshop in 1959.

In the second year of her term, 1960-1961, the Mississippi division of AAUW adopted a special focus on international relations including studying a University in Chile. In the two years Rea served as president of the Oxford branch, the membership remained stable with 54 members. Rea and other members raised money for fellowships through the national organization, attended meetings and workshops in the state and within the Mississippi division, and Rea attended the AAUW National Convention in Washington, D.C. in 1961, where AAUW dedicated the new Educational Building.

Perhaps the highlight of the year for the Oxford branch was a visit from AAUW President, Dr. Anna Rose Hawkes. Hawkes, a graduate of George Washington University in 1912, served as President of AAUW from 1955 to 1963. According to Levine, Hawkes “urged educators to gear their programs toward women’s domestic responsibilities, but she also emphasized the importance of women’s influence in public life.” In her address, Hawkes spoke of the difficult times ahead for women by 1970 including “new weapons,” and

---

756 AAUW National Convention, 1959, [Program]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 82, folder National Convention, 1959, UM.; Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1958-1959, UM.
757 Program, AAUW Mississippi Division Workshop, 1959. American Association of University Women Collection, box 28, folder MS Division Annual Workshop, Jackson, 1959, UM.
758 Katharine Rea, Memo from Rea to AAUW Oxford Branch. 1960, [End of the year summary of the Oxford Branch]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 10, folder Oxford University Branch Meeting Minutes, 1955-1968, UM.
759 Ibid.
competition from new places. Hawkes stressed the importance of providing leadership opportunities to women to improve communities. In closing, Hawkes remarked to the group “the time demands that women think.”

Although the women in the Oxford branch were well educated and many were married to university administrators, perhaps Hawkes’ plea challenged the women to be willing to ask questions and defy the norm around them. The challenge for many women in the 1960s in Oxford, Mississippi, and other communities in the South, was to strike a balance between speaking out and yet remain a respected lady in the community. The new awareness and understanding of challenges for women in society did not always result in extensive action by the women in the association. Second-wave feminists advocated a “consciousness raising” to understand personal issues and challenges in a larger social context; however, new awareness did not always create social change.

In the early 1960s, women’s organizations were wary of being viewed as unpatriotic. Organizations like the AAUW that supported academic freedom and other causes such as “women’s rights, international cooperation, and educational reform placed the Association squarely in the camp of American liberal reform most vulnerable to cold-war attack.”

Each year the AAUW created program choices for the divisions and branches of AAUW groups across the country. In 1960, the MS Division of AAUW provided further suggestions to its branches. One of the suggested programs was to focus on the college woman as an “individual and citizen.”

Supporting various education initiatives had long been a mission of

---

761 The Educated Woman as a Community Leader, October 13, 1960, Address to the Oxford Branch, AAUW Fall Conference from Anna Rose Hawkes. [Notes summarizing the speech written by an audience member]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 12, folder Oxford Conference, UM.


763 Levine, Degrees of Equality, 69.

AAUW. For example, in 1960 the group advocated for full support to improve the rating and perception of college teaching as a high quality career. Furthermore, the Mississippi division advocated for higher salaries for college teachers and better library facilities. As chairman of the Higher Education committee in 1960, Rea was responsible for communicating and planning for the advocacy of higher education. At the elementary and secondary education level the MS Division created a program focused on gifted and exceptional students as well as advocating to addition of foreign language curriculum to the public school curriculum.

Other issues on the program for the Mississippi division in 1960 included a focus on social and economic welfare, the status and encouragement of women to participate in public office, and the study of legislative issues—especially legislative measures that supported the mentally ill in Mississippi. Additionally, the legislative program called for an increase of participation of women on boards and in elected offices. Surprisingly, the program of work in 1960 made no mention of racial tensions in the state, and had a very narrow focus on the disparity between the wealthy and the poor. For many women, choosing to support the second-wave feminist movement frequently meant women were forced to “choose between their racial and gendered identities.” The AAUW had a much stronger focus on women’s rights than racial equality, this was especially true in the Mississippi division.

At the 1960 Mississippi state division annual meeting in Vicksburg, Dr. Porter Fortune, who was then serving as the Dean of Mississippi Southern College and Graduate School (now

---

765 Mississippi State Division, Workshop, 1960. American Association of University Women Collection, box 28, folder Minutes of the Board of Directors, Workshop, 1960, UM.
766 Ibid.
the University of Southern Mississippi), spoke on the responsibilities of college women. In his speech, Fortune implored educated women to focus on their three main responsibilities as he identified them. First, to prepare for “wholesome home-making, child-bearing, and child-rearing” as the most important responsibility of women. Second, Fortune encouraged women to prepare to become wage-earners if their home situation required. Third, he advised the women to prepare for “stimulated, motivated, responsible citizenship.”

Rea attended the MS state division annual meeting in Vicksburg, MS, as she was the official representative from the Oxford branch. Ostensibly unbeknownst to Rea, the 1960 annual meeting was one of her first encounters with the man who would lead the University of Mississippi as Chancellor following the most contentious and volatile time in university history.

Many of the topics of interest and programs of study for the division remained for the 1962-1963 year. The division explored programs art, elementary and secondary education, higher education, international relations, social and economic issues, and the status of women.

The following year, at the 35th Annual Convention in Hattiesburg, Rea was introduced as the conference chairman for the Southeast Central Region (SEC) Biennial Conference that was to be held in Memphis in April of 1962. In April of 1962, at the Peabody Hotel in downtown Memphis, the women of the SEC Region met for the 20th Biennial Conference. The first morning of the conference the women were introduced to University of Mississippi Chancellor, John

---

769 34th Annual Mississippi State Division Meeting [Program]. April 22-23, 1960. American Association of University Women Collection, box 24, folder 34th Annual Convention, UM.
771 Ibid.
774 Minutes of the 35th Annual Convention, MS State Division, 1961. American Association of University Women Collection, box 24, folder 35th Annual Convention, UM.
Davis Williams, who delivered the keynote address “Issues in Education in the South.” No conference notes or minutes were found of Chancellor Williams’ 1962 address, but the entire conference had a strong focus on improving the quality of education in the South, from elementary and secondary schools through colleges and universities. Perhaps an underlying tone to the conference was the racial inequality of schools in Mississippi and other states in the South. If education of Black children in the South was not discussed at the meeting in the spring 1962, the group could not avoid the topic of racial discrimination much longer.

By the fall 1962, the Oxford community was shaken by the racial integration of the Ole Miss campus by James Meredith. Although the racial integration caused severe damage to the campus, including physically, politically, and financially, there is no record of the Oxford branch of AAUW even discussing racial tension in the community in 1962. Although no formal documentation including meeting minutes of the Oxford branch exists where the women discussed the racial integration of the university and the impact on the community, however each woman was impacted by the historic change on campus. The topic most definitely would be sensitive among members of the organization including Mrs. John D. Williams, wife of the university chancellor, and Mrs. Robert Ellis, wife of the university registrar as both of their husbands were embattled into the racial integration battle. Although the AAUW and the second-wave feminist movement primarily focused on women’s issues, it is surprising the Mississippi division, particularly the Oxford branch, took no official stance on the issue of racial integration. Regardless, the AAUW continued to hold meetings throughout the year and

---

775 20th Biennial Conference, Southeast Central Region, 1962. [Program]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 24, folder 20th Biennial Conference, UM.
776 Official documentation of the Oxford branch’s stance on the integration of Ole Miss was not found in the American Association of University Women Collection, however, I believe at least some of the members discussed the challenges on campus. The discussion among the members was probably not in an official capacity, but I do believe members had opinions and concerns regardless if those opinions and concerns were shared publicly.
members of the Oxford branch, including Katharine Rea, continued to hold leadership positions in AAUW.\textsuperscript{777}

Tensions involving racial equality were still boiling in Oxford in 1963, but work continued on campus. University of Mississippi faculty member, James Silver, wrote *Mississippi: A Closed Society*, documenting the racial integration, tension, and violence on the Ole Miss campus. There is no record of the Oxford branch reading or discussing Silver’s work during any official AAUW meeting, however, there was a copy of the manuscript saved and included in the archival files as a suggested branch program for the years 1961-1967.\textsuperscript{778} According to Judith Trott, Rea supported Silver’s work as she also worked to change the attitudes and beliefs of people in an educational setting.\textsuperscript{779} Dr. Cora Norman, a member of the Oxford branch of AAUW in 1962, described the meetings of AAUW during the integration as very cautious. Norman indicated women were very careful to speak boldly on the issue of racial integration as you could never be sure how others felt. The conversations on the integration of the campus were held in private in one-on-one settings, rather than with large groups of women.\textsuperscript{780} Norman’s description of the private conversations among Oxford branch members supported the lack of official documentation from the Oxford branch records.

On the national level, the AAUW was perceived as an organization where women studied intellectual issues and challenges within their communities rather than invoking swift action to solve the problem. In Oxford, Mississippi in 1962, it appeared many educated women were too

\textsuperscript{777} The meeting minutes from the Oxford branch of AAUW contain no mention of the racial integration of the campus or racial tension in the Oxford community. See: Oxford University Branch Minutes 1955-1968, [Meeting Minutes], (1955-1968), American Association of University Women Collection, box 10, folder Oxford University Branch Minutes 1955-1968, UM.

\textsuperscript{778} *Mississippi: A Closed Society*, James W. Silver, 1964. American Association of University Women Collection, box 51, folder MS, A closed Society, UM. Note: The manuscript was written after Silver gave a speech at the Southern Historical Association in the fall of 1963.

\textsuperscript{779} Judith Trott, personal interview with author, January 17, 2013.

\textsuperscript{780} Cora Norman, personal interview with author, March 28, 2013.
fearful of openly and directly discussing the racial challenges in the community. According to Huber the dichotomy of studying an issue versus activism, and the national leadership of AAUW’s initiative to strengthen the their voice as activists. Huber argued “as a vehicle for even a modest degree of action at the local level the AAUW was not very satisfactory, leading one of my friends to formulate the drip-drip theory of social change: if you drip water on a rock long enough, one day it will be eroded.”\(^781\) For Rea, balancing the dichotomy of studying versus activism was forever important. It would take the AAUW a couple of years to be boisterous in their support of racial equality in the state of Mississippi.

In her role as dean of women, Rea continued to support women in higher education, and remained committed and involved with AAUW. At the 1963 Mississippi division annual convention in Jackson, Rea served as a panelist focused on higher education. Rea’s specific message was the financing of higher education. Other panelists focused on the recruitment and desire of young people to attend higher education and making library resources available to students.\(^782\) The panelists encouraged AAUW members to support high school counselors to better prepare students for the challenges they will face in college. Additionally, AAUW members and branches needed to work to ensure high school students were aware of the scholarship opportunities available. Funding for faculty salaries and academic freedom of faculty members in the state of Mississippi was a concern for the panelists. Interestingly, the panel made a recommendation that colleges and universities needed to improve programs that supported women who had their education interrupted by marriage.\(^783\) As the dean of women, Rea understood many women left the university after marrying and did not complete their degrees.

\(^781\) Huber, “From Sugar and Spice to Professor,” 132.
\(^782\) 37th Annual Convention [Minutes]. Jackson, MS, April 27, 1963, American Association of University Women Collection, box 24, folder MS Div. 37 Annual Convention, UM.
\(^783\) Ibid.
Just three years before, Dr. Porter Fortune spoke at the Mississippi State Division meeting on the importance of women developing skills to be proper home-makers and child-rearers. AAUW did not advocate women not stay at home and raise their children, however, the message began to shift that women could do both, earn a college degree and be a mother and wife.

In the spring of 1964, Rea continued her focus on higher education by presenting a session entitled “Expectations for Education” at the division’s biennial conference. The theme of “expectations” in education remained on the SEC Regional convention program the next two years. The theme of the Mississippi division’s annual convention in 1964 was “educational and organizational changes,” perhaps a direct acknowledgement to the racial integration of state colleges. Rea served as the implementation committee chairman to promote and implement the program “expectations in education” for the Mississippi division. Although she was unable to attend the annual convention in Biloxi in 1964 she was working to change the expectations for women’s attainment and place in education across the state. Promoting educational change and higher expectations for equality was particularly needed at the elementary and secondary school level in Mississippi where school districts were much slower to adopting racial integration policies.

On the national stage, perhaps the biggest victory for women came in 1964 with the passing of the Civil Rights Act, including Title VII, which prohibited discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, race, or religion. Although most women were not participating in large women’s liberation movements “comparable to the sit-ins in the South or the picket lines

784 MS Div. 21st Biennial Conference. [Program]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 24, folder MS Div. 21st Biennial Conference, UM.
785 38th Annual Convention, Biloxi, 1964. [Program]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 24, folder 38th Annual Convention, UM.
786 Ibid.
in the North,” the women’s liberation movement celebrated major victories.  

For women, choosing to support the second-wave feminist movement frequently meant women were forced to “choose between their racial and gendered identities.” Many second-wave feminists advocated for a “consciousness raising” to understand personal issues and challenges in larger social context. However, Coleman argued that new awareness did not always create social change.

The Mississippi Division identified five other emerging areas of interest for the women to study in 1964-1965. Although none of the topics were served by a chairman, the five topic areas included:

1. Educating Our Legislators to Support Our Educators
2. Better Participation in Community Projects
3. Understanding the Implications of Student Unrest and Demonstrations the World Over
4. Studies of Families and Morals and True Values in Our Society
5. Mental Health-Its Complex Problems and Effective Solutions

Interestingly, the topic of civil rights and race relations did not make the agenda for the Mississippi division in 1964-1965. On the national stage, perhaps the biggest victory for women came in 1964 with the passing of the Civil Rights Act, including Title VII, which prohibited discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, race, or religion. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 originally did not include wording outlawing discrimination on the basis of sex; however, political maneuvering, particularly on the part of southern senators, pushed the legislation forward. The bill passed even without a widespread women’s movement showing support of the

---

789 Coleman, Jenny “An Introduction to Feminisms in a Postfeminist Age,” 11.
790 Know Your Division Better. MS AAUW Division 1964-1965. [Division Handbook]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 12, UM.
It appeared that the Mississippi division of AAUW was one of the women’s associations that was vigorous in support of the legislation.

Although the AAUW was an organization dedicated to women’s equality, racial disparity, especially in the South, could hardly be ignored. Even by 1965 racial equality was not on the agenda of the Mississippi division. Although the Oxford branch was slow to show support for the racial integration of the campus and the civil rights movement, Rea acted as an individual supporter. She hosted racial sensitivity training in her home. Rea invited White women leaders on campus to dine with Black women. For Cora Norman, a White woman living in Oxford who became an activist for women’s rights and racial equality, the meal at Rea’s home was the first time she had shared a meal with a Black woman. In my interview with her, Norman commented that the simple experience of sharing a meal changed her life.

In 1965 Rea was still attending the Mississippi Division Annual Conferences and SEC Regional conferences and she continued to serve as the chair of the “expectations for education” committee. Furthermore, Rea became actively involved on a national level with AAUW, attending the national convention in the summer of 1965 in Portland, Oregon. Although Rea’s work and interests continued to expand with her involvement in AAUW, one of the selected topic programs from 1965 would provide Rea an outlet to further educate women and promote equality within the Oxford community, state of Mississippi, and beyond. The topic, “The Law

---

791 Stephanie Coontz, A Strange Stirring.
792 Cora Norman, personal interview with author, March 28, 2013. Note: Norman could not remember the exact year Rea hosted the sensitivity workshops. It is doubtful the workshop was hosted in 1962 with the unrest on campus.
793 Cora Norman, personal interview with author, March 28, 2013
and the Citizen” was introduced during the 1965 Mississippi Division Annual Conference in Greenville.⁷⁹⁶

Rea served as the chairman of the “Law and the Citizen” program for the Oxford branch of AAUW in 1965-1966.⁷⁹⁷ Throughout the fall of 1965, the branch held monthly meetings and focused on various judicial topics. It appeared the program the “Law and the Citizen” morphed into a project on legislative affairs. Programming on legislative issues was a program introduced from the national headquarters of AAUW. Each state division and local branch was responsible for introducing the legislative topics in the manner local leadership thought best for the women in their branch. At the Oxford branch, Rea served as the Legislative Program Chair in 1965-1966. Topics included a focus on the historical background of the court system, how legal issues affect the “poor and unpopular,” and the concern an educated woman should have for the legal system in the U.S.⁷⁹⁸ Furthermore, the topic of “The Law and the Citizen” focused on the legal treatment of individuals who are poor, mentally ill or who are juveniles. The question was raised, if those individuals are treated the same as others under the law, would they be treated equally?⁷⁹⁹

The Oxford branch would not be the only group of women adopting legislative programs. The entire Mississippi division studied legislative concerns. As the program chair of the Oxford branch Rea served on the Mississippi division program committee for legislative affairs. Early

---


topics in the legislative affairs program included those who administer justice, the jury system, and law enforcement. In her report to the Mississippi state division office regarding the progress of the legislative program, Rea argued “as educated women, we have a responsibility to society. One of the best means of improving society is through good laws and working for these is a logical part of our study-action program.”

The following year, the SEC Region of AAUW was still embracing the study of legislative issues. At the 22nd Biennial Conference of the SEC Region in Mobile, Alabama, the theme was “The Educated Woman as a Citizen” and Rea served as a moderator where the women discussed legislative issues and the role of AAUW.

By 1967, the legislative committee was not only at the branch level, but at the state division and national level as well. Rea served as the Mississippi division chairman for the legislative committee in 1967. Rea also served on the Association Legislative Program Committee in 1967. The committee had developed four main areas of focus for local branches to study and discuss. The four topics were “Educational Policy, Foreign Policy, Constitutional Rights and Guarantees, and the Population Control area.” Each branch chose which topic area the women in their local branch may be most interested in studying. The national committee on legislative issues, which Rea was a member, provided flexibility for local branches to focus on

---

800 The Law and the Citizen [Program Outline]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 13, folder MS Div. The Law and the Citizen, 1966, UM.
804 Ibid.; MS Division of AAUW 41st Annual Convention. 1967 [Meeting Minutes]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 24, folder 41st Annual Convention, 1967, UM.
the legislative issue that was of greatest concern for their branch. Each branch took into consideration the topics that may be construed as highly controversial for the time period and branch leaders were able to select topics they felt most beneficial to their group. The group believed studying issues of foreign policy and the study of China, or Chile, or Cuba seemed less controversial to outsiders than the study of constitutional rights and guarantees. It is unknown if the Oxford branch extensively focused on constitutional rights and guarantees, but there is no question, the role of the federal government was displayed in education battles in the state of Mississippi in 1962 and continued to be challenged during the desegregation of elementary and secondary schools in the state.

As the membership in AAUW continued to grow, Rea encouraged women to consider topics of international and national importance that would be of interest to members not only in their local branch and region, but beyond the scope of their immediate community. At the fall AAUW Workshop, Rea served on a committee that questioned the held values of the time. The session titled “Testing Values in a Changing Society” may have prompted questions among members to examine their own beliefs and the working scope of AAUW. It is difficult to measure the magnitude of the session, as no official meeting minutes or response from participants exists from the workshop. Not only was the Mississippi division of AAUW adapting to the changing needs of the community, but according to Susan Levine, the national AAUW made a conscious effort to change programming and policies to encourage inclusivity and a more diverse membership.

---

805 Ibid.
806 Katharine Rea, Legislative Program Report, 1966?. American Association of University Women Collection, box 12, folder Annual Reports, Oxford Branch, 1960-1969, UM.
807 Mississippi State Division Workshop, Agenda, 1967. American Association of University Women Collection, box 28, folder MS Division State Workshop, 1967, UM.
808 Levine, Degrees of Equality, 142.
Not only was Katharine Rea active in the Oxford branch and within the Mississippi Division of AAUW, she began receiving nominations in the late 1960s to serve on the national level. At the Board of Directors Meeting in 1967, Rea was nominated to serve as the Mississippi Representative on the National Foundation Board of AAUW. Rea accepted the nomination of the division, and served as representative for the year. The year before, Rea declined the Mississippi Division’s nomination to serve on a Research Committee due to her inability to handle any more travel duties.

One of Rea’s most successful initiatives in support of legislative understanding, activism, and involvement in state issues affecting women was the creation of Legislative Day in 1968. The League of Women Voters of Mississippi initiated the event and invited AAUW to become co-sponsors. At the 41st annual convention of AAUW in Columbus, Mississippi, the resolution to accept the invitation “passed without opposition.” When Rea presented the opportunity to co-sponsor a Legislative Day with the League of Women Voters to the delegation at the AAUW convention, she did not indicate to the women that she was also the president of the League of Women Voters of Mississippi, however, members of each organization may have known Rea served as president of each organization. Leveraging her involvement with both organizations, Rea was instrumental in creating the first annual Legislative Day at the state capital in Jackson, Mississippi.

---

811 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, July 15, 1966. American Association of University Women Collection, box 53, folder Executive Board Minutes, 1963-1969, UM.
812 Forty-First Annual Convention Meeting Minutes, April 8, 1967. American Association of University Women Collection, box 24, folder 41st Annual Convention, 1967, UM.
The purpose of Legislative Day was to introduce women to their state legislators and for the state legislators to know more about the AAUW and League of Women Voters. Moreover, Legislative Day provided women the opportunity to learn more about the legislative process. The women engaged in discussions and study sessions before the first Legislative Day to learn how a proposed bill became a law.\textsuperscript{813}

One of the first state divisions to hold a Legislative Day was the Alabama AAUW Division. In 1965, Rea identified the Alabama Legislative Day as a successful venture in educating women in the legislative process and providing women the opportunity to meet with legislators, therefore, the Mississippi Division had a model to emulate for their first Legislative Day.\textsuperscript{814} Perhaps the Mississippi Division was motivated by the Alabama Division and thought if Alabama could host a successful Legislative Day there was no reason the Mississippi Division would not be as successful. During the day’s activities the women visited the Senate and the House at the Mississippi state capitol building and had the opportunity to hear from the AAUW Mississippi division president, Mrs. Tripp Geddings of Vicksburg, and the Mississippi League of Women Voters president, Dr. Katharine Rea. The group invited legislators to a luncheon from their congressional district where the women had an opportunity to engage in a question and answer session with legislators.

In 1968, one of the most pressing and controversial causes the two activist organizations supported was a compulsory school attendance law for young children in Mississippi, thus, the topic was discussed with the legislators. Leading up to the Legislative Day, the AAUW knew the


\textsuperscript{814} Katharine Rea, Legislative Program Report, 1966?. American Association of University Women Collection, box 12, folder Annual Reports, Oxford Branch, 1960-1969, UM.
cost of a compulsory school attendance law would be a concern, but the women were committed
to the “enactment and enforcement of a compulsory school law.” More than 300 women
attended the event representing the League of Women Voters of Mississippi and the
Mississippi Division of AAUW. The organizers were pleased with the participation of the
legislators and of the women in the League and AAUW and continued to organize Legislative
Days.

In 1969, the two organizations, AAUW and League of Women Voters of Mississippi
continued to collaborate to strengthen women’s understanding of the legislative process and
improve the annual Legislative Day. To help plan for a successful Legislative Day at the
Mississippi capital, the AAUW and League of Women Voters of Mississippi held a joint meeting
in Clinton, Mississippi in July of 1969. Rea served as the general chairman for the meeting and
Cora Norman of Oxford served as co-chairman. The two organizations hosted Mississippi
Senator Jean Muirhead, a Tallahatchie native, and Representative Betty J. Long of Meridian,
who were both newly elected to the Mississippi legislature. Muirhead and Long spoke to the
women in attendance about committee organization and process to move a bill into law.
Additionally, a representative from the Mississippi Education Association met with the women
to discuss legislative issues addressed during the 1968 legislative session. At the end of the
meeting, Rea moderated a session where the women discussed the legislative priorities and
developed action strategies for the second annual Legislative Day.

---

815 Executive Board Minutes, November 11, 1967. American Association of University Women Collection, box 53, folder Executive Board Minutes, 1963-1969, UM.
817 Joint Legislative Workshop, Program, 1969. American Association of University Women Collection, box 28, folder MS Division, AAUW, 1968, UM.
818 Ibid.
The importance of understanding legislative affairs was a topic of concern for many. AAUW became so involved with legislative issues at the federal level that became the theme of for the 1969 AAUW annual convention.\textsuperscript{819} The four topic areas that were agreed upon two years prior were educational policy, foreign policy, constitutional rights and guarantees, and social and economic programs. These topic areas provided a focus for the Association Legislative Program Committee to help narrow study materials and program sessions for other conventions. Furthermore, the topic areas focused discussions and programs at the state and division level for AAUW members.\textsuperscript{820}

At the SEC Regional Biennial Conference in New Orleans, LA in the spring of 1968 the group focused on the educational needs of women. Although Rea remained was still a member of AAUW, she did not attend the SEC Biennial Conference.\textsuperscript{821} The next year at the Mississippi Annual Convention in Meridian in April of 1969, Rea’s name did not appear in the program.\textsuperscript{822} After 15 years of involvement serving on committees or as president of the Oxford or Gulfport branch it seemed strange not to see Rea in a leadership role in the Mississippi division of AAUW. However, her break in leadership positions did not last long.

During the two years Rea’s leadership role in AAUW seemed to be on a smaller scale she was embarking on a major professional transition at the University of Mississippi. In the spring of 1968, a mere three months after the first Legislative Day, Rea resigned her position as Dean of Women at UM and became a faculty member in the School of Education. Rea earned the title of Associate Professor in 1964, teaching a class or two during the academic year and summer

\textsuperscript{819} AAUW Legislative Program Fact Sheet, 1969 Convention. American Association of University Women Collection, box 83, folder National Convention, 1969, UM.

\textsuperscript{820} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{822} Minutes of the MS Division, AAUW State Convention, 1969. American Association of University Women Collection, box 24, folder 43rd Annual Convention, UM.
terms. In the fall of 1969 she concentrated solely on her role as a faculty member. The change in her career did not slow Rea down in her plight to improve educational opportunities, women’s rights, and racial equality in the state of Mississippi and beyond. Rea continued to serve as the President of the Mississippi League of Women Voters in 1968 and served as an ex-officio member of the joint AAUW and LWV Legislative Day committee. Rea also held positions as the Educational Foundation Representative in the Oxford branch of AAUW, and served on the Publicity and Bulletin Committee as Chairman.

By May of 1970, Rea was serving as the President of the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Division of AAUW. In the early 1970s, Rea was actively engaged in supporting the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and the Early Childhood Education Act among other causes. Organizations from across the state supported funding a public kindergarten system in the state of Mississippi. The League of Women Voters, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Mississippi Association of Educators, University of Mississippi School of Education, Mississippi School Board Association, and the American Association of University Women all advocated for the support and financing of public kindergarten and a compulsory school attendance law. The Legislative Day hosted jointly by the AAUW and League of Women Voters in 1970 urged Mississippi state legislators to support public education from early childhood education through university. The groups were especially concerned with use of state funds to support private education initiatives in the

---

In 1970, Rea no longer served as the dean of women at UM. In her role as a faculty member perhaps Rea had more freedom to speak out on women’s issues.

As the President of the Board of Directors for the Mississippi Division, Rea was invited to attend the AAUW State President’s Conference in 1970. The conference was in late June in Warrenton, Virginia and focused on public office for women, feminist issues, women’s participation in national politics, state and federal legislative issues, and the status of AAUW.

At the conference, Rea heard from Patsy Mink, Congresswoman from Hawaii and later author of Title IX. Rea also had the opportunity to learn about abortion repeals in Hawaii, the status of public kindergarten in Montana, and the women’s liberation movement.

The President’s Conference focused on the role of AAUW in improving educational opportunities for women. Six areas were outlined to improve higher education for women. The first area of concern is research, including research into admissions policies at graduate schools, and career counseling for women students, especially those in high school to better understand options available to them following graduation. The second area of concern is corporate membership in AAUW. The leadership of AAUW viewed the corporate membership as a means to improve communication with institutions, and evaluative standards for women on college campuses. Third, and perhaps the largest subarea of concern, is the status of women in higher education. The status of women in academic, nepotism on college campuses, and support for the movement to repeal the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which excludes colleges and universities from

---

827 Ibid.
829 AAUW State President’s Conference, 1970. [agenda]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 54, folder State President’s Conference 1970-1971, UM.
830 Ibid.
coverage. Ensuring continued educational opportunities for women is the fourth area of concern. Certifying women have access to professional training and financial aid. Fifth, the continuation of providing fellowships and scholarships to worthy students, including new scholarship initiatives to support African teachers in U.S. universities, and women students studying Afro-American studies among other programs. Finally, creating a stronger relationship with the International Federation of University Women provided the organization with learning opportunities previously underutilized.832

At the AAUW Mississippi Division workshop in 1970, Rea spoke to the group of 65 attendees and encouraged educated women to take an active leadership role in their communities. Rea called for educated women to participate in solving problems in their communities, including “effective public education, pollution, voter re-registration, racial harmony, equal employment opportunity, and adequate housing.”833 This is one of the first and certainly most poignant pleas that I found documented for women to support racial equality, gender, and class equality in an official AAUW setting. Although other AAUW documents imply some discussion on the challenges of race relations in the South, the language in the documents is generic and vague.

Gertrude Owens, the Executive Director of the Mississippi District of the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) spoke to the women at the workshop about a woman’s place in society in 1970. Owen’s credited Betty Freidan and her book The Feminine Mystique with persuading women to demand equality and opportunity.834 The Feminine Mystique,
published in 1963 started a national conversation around women’s roles in the home and in society. Friedan defined the feminine mystique as “the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfillment of their own femininity.”

Rea was no stranger to Friedan’s work. Rea even provided copies of *The Feminine Mystique* to women student leaders in the 1960s and required students in her higher education courses to read the book.

Rea spoke of similar expectations for women in her address at the workshop in 1970. It was noted in the meeting notes, Rea opened with the quote, “We don’t have to stay where we are.” At the workshop, the women discussed the Equal Rights Amendment. Rea implored members to write, wire, or call their congressmen and “urge him to sign Congresswoman Martha Griffith’s motion to discharge the ERA from the Judiciary Committee of the House so that it may be debated and acted on.” The national association would publish an opinion poll in the association’s *Journal* in October of 1970 to urge the amendment move through the Judiciary Committee to be voted on the floor of the House of Representatives.

At the conclusion of the action workshop, Rea wrote a letter to the Mississippi branch presidents recapping the discuss of the workshop and further encouraging members of AAUW to support ERA.

Finally, efforts to diversify membership of the Mississippi Division of AAUW seemed to be slow, or even non-existent, throughout the 1960s. At the Executive Board Meeting during the summer workshop in 1970, Rea acknowledged that two institutions, Alcorn A & M and Jackson

---

Note: Betty Friedan later founded the National Organization for Women (NOW) which worked to end discrimination against women and promote equal pay for women.

State College had met the requirements of AAUW to be considered for membership. The two institutions were Historically Black Colleges. Alcorn A & M (now Alcorn State University), founded in 1871, was located in the Mississippi Delta, while Jackson State College, founded in 1877, was located in the Mississippi capital city of Jackson.

In April of 1971, Oxford, Mississippi and the University of Mississippi served as hosts for the 45th Annual Convention for the Mississippi Division. At that time, Mississippi had 16 AAUW branches. In a letter to each branch in the Mississippi division, Rea addressed four major areas of concern she had for the division. The most important and pressing issue facing the Mississippi division was a lack of diversity among branch members. Rea cautioned “not stated (and I fear not even implied) is the need for the branches to face honestly and unafraid the need for non-white college women as members.” In her letter, Rea implied branches took a backseat approach in the recruitment of women to AAUW, and that if programs in the branches were strong, the enticement for women to join the organization would exist. To Rea, that was not good enough. Diversity among members will not just happen in an organization because the group provides good programming. Perhaps as a tenured faculty member, Rea felt she could make a stronger case for racial equality in AAUW. Regardless of the opinions of other women in the Mississippi division of AAUW, it is apparent Katharine Rea was willing to demand opportunity for membership for women of color, and encouraged a more inclusive organization, whether other members approved of her position.
Rea also had strong criticisms regarding the programming selection at the various branches. Although she was pleased certain branches were showing enthusiasm towards various topics, there was a lack of communication between the state division and the local branches regarding materials and resources provided by the national organization to assist with appropriate programming. To alleviate and improve the programs, Rea charged the branches to work during the next annual meeting to outline appropriate programs for their respective branch for the coming year. Rea encouraged branch leaders to focus attention on the “Fellowships Funds, to Legislative Day, to state, regional, and national conferences, and to their peculiar local events and projects.”

The third recommendation Rea made to the branch leaders in her letter was to increase participation among women in the AAUW conferences at the local, regional, and national level. To help make the participation a reality, Rea encouraged branches to plan accordingly for funding to support attendance. The final recommendation Rea made to the AAUW Mississippi Division branch leadership was for monetary support for the AAUW Fellowship Fund. Although Rea acknowledged the women had supported the Fellowship Fund verbally, monetary contributions were sparse.

In April of 1971, the Annual Convention was held in Oxford, Mississippi, where the Mississippi Division gave approval for a new, provisional branch in Lorman, Mississippi. Lorman was home to Alcorn A & M College, a Historically Black College in the Mississippi Delta. Although Rea encouraged other branches to recruit and encourage women of color to join predominantly White branches, the support and enthusiasm shown by Rea with the

---

843 Ibid.
844 Ibid.
845 Minutes of the MS Division, 45th Annual AAUW State Convention, 1971. American Association of University Women Collection, box 25, folder 45th Annual Convention, UM.
acceptance of branch in Lorman helped further integrate the Mississippi Division of AAUW. A second branch in Holly Springs, Mississippi was introduced to the group as a new potential branch. Women in the Holly Springs community were working to establish membership, and fill officer roles within the branch. Rea, as president, acknowledged both branches at the board meeting and thanked the women for their hard work in establishing branches in their communities. Both the Alcorn A & M branch and the Holly Springs branch were inter-racial\textsuperscript{846} which appeared to be the first two inter-racial branches in the Mississippi division.

At the executive board meeting held during the annual convention, Rea, requested a task force be established to examine and make recommendations to expand the membership base of AAUW in the Mississippi division.\textsuperscript{847} It seemed Rea was pleased with the expansion of inter-racial branches within the division, however, having two inter-racial branches in a state with such a racially diverse population did not appear adequate to Rea as the head of the division.

At the next executive board meeting in July of 1971, Rea introduced a representative from Rust College in Holly Springs. Mrs. Alberta Lindsey was the formal representative, and she reported to the board that 30 women from Holly Springs were interested in joining an AAUW branch in Holly Springs. Of those 30 women, only five were White. The board discussed the branch status of Holly Springs and voted unanimously to submit paperwork to the AAUW headquarters to have Holly Springs officially recognized as a branch within the Mississippi division.\textsuperscript{848}

\textsuperscript{846} Ibid.; Minutes of the Mississippi Division of AAUW, November 20, 1971. American Association of University Women Collection, box 54, folder Minutes of the Executive Board, 1970-1976, UM.
\textsuperscript{847} Minutes of the MS Division of AAUW Board Meeting, April 23, 1971. American Association of University Women Collection, box 54, folder Minutes of the Executive Board, 1970-1976, UM.
The Mississippi Division of AAUW and the League of Women Voters of Mississippi once again hosted a Legislative Day for women at the Mississippi State Capital in Jackson in February of 1971. Legislative Day was a topic on the agenda at the 1971 Annual Convention. Members and current committee chairman of the event requested a change regarding the Legislative initiatives of the event to focus more closely on issues being discussed in the state legislature.\textsuperscript{849} Furthermore, the Legislative Program, a committee focused on legislative issues which are discussed throughout the year, requested a change in focus. Specifically, the committee asked to take a stand on laws affecting public education, revision of the Commission on the Status of Women, supporting laws reducing pollution, and consumer education.\textsuperscript{850} Interestingly, not one of the focus areas specifically targets civil rights issues. The request passed, but one has to wonder if Rea was disappointed in the lack of commitment or force the committee showed in improving race relations in Mississippi.

At the end of the year, Rea submitted her official report as state president. Rea expressed her concern for the lack of interest in the women’s liberation movement among the Mississippi division membership despite her efforts to talk to the membership and write about the importance of the movement.\textsuperscript{851} Rea indicated she was hopeful more branches would support the ERA and the workshop in July would focus on the purpose of the legislation.\textsuperscript{852} In the second year of her term as Mississippi division president, Rea led the 46\textsuperscript{th} Annual Convention in Jackson in 1972 where Mississippi had 18 branches. Rea prepared a report for the Convention in which she was critical of two main areas. First, Rea reported disappointment in

\textsuperscript{849} Minutes of the MS Division, 45th Annual AAUW State Convention, 1971. American Association of University Women Collection, box 25, folder 45th Annual Convention, UM.
\textsuperscript{850} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{851} Katharine Rea, State President’s Report, 1971-1972, American Association of University Women Collection, box 55, folder State President and Program Development Reports, 1970-1978, UM.
\textsuperscript{852} Ibid.
the lack of membership. Although she acknowledged there was an overall increase in membership, most of the new members came from two new branches. The other branches in the state reported a loss of membership. Second, Rea reported programs at various branches often have little to do with the collaborative efforts and purpose of AAUW. Often, outside speakers, with no affiliation to AAUW, fill a void in a program slot. Although the situation is not ideal, Rea challenged the members to remain open and dedicated to the mission of AAUW and provide appropriate programming.\footnote{Report of the President, Katharine Rea. MS Division, 46th Annual AAUW State Convention, 1972. American Association of University Women Collection, box 25, folder 46th Annual Convention, UM.}

Legislative Day became an annual tradition and collaborative effort between the AAUW and the League of Women Voters. With any large-scaled event, changes are made each year to increase participation and improve the quality of the event. The Legislative Day of 1972 once again allowed women across the state of Mississippi to mingle and visit with state legislators and discuss important issues affecting the women and citizens of the state. Rea, as President of the Mississippi Division of AAUW, wrote letters to members of the Mississippi House and Senate urging legislative support of the Early Childhood Education Act of 1972.\footnote{Katharine Rea. [Formal letter] to the Mississippi House of Representatives and the Senate of the Mississippi Legislature. March 3, 1972 American Association of University Women Collection, box 55, folder Mississippi Division, Legislative Day and Legislative Program, 1970-1972, UM.} The Early Childhood Education Act would establish a pilot program for early childhood education in the state of Mississippi. Rea wrote state Senators and members of the House of Representatives urging their support of the bill.\footnote{Katharine Rea, Letter to W. A. Wilkerson, February 14, 1972, American Association of University Women Collection, box 55, folder Mississippi Division, Legislative Day and Legislative Program, 1970-1972, UM.; Katharine Rea, Letter to Milton Case. February 14, 1972, American Association of University Women Collection, box 55, folder Mississippi Division, Legislative Day and Legislative Program, 1970-1972, UM.; Note: In the letter to Milton Case, Rea wrote of Mr. Tom Hines, Director of Student Activities being ill with cancer and that a new dean of women will be hired. Rea wrote of her joy being detached from the office and responsibilities of the dean of women’s office.} Although the bill only established a pilot program, thus ensuring not all
Mississippi children would have access to early childhood education, the AAUW supported the bill because at that time there was no public early childhood education in the state.

A report for Legislative Day was given at the convention, again with overwhelming support for the event. Rea provided her support for Legislative Day when she wrote in her final report “all women in AAUW can mingle, discuss, decide, and even disagree happily together.” However, the event was usually held in February, which made it difficult for AAUW members to contact the newly elected legislators in time for the event. The members voted, and approved moving the event to coincide with the Mississippi Division annual workshop in June.

Furthermore, Rea advocated that the women of AAUW should be informed of the progress of the Equal Rights Amendment. Rea was committed to the passage of the ERA, even if the legislative process was slow. She served as a member of the Mississippi Committee to Ratify the ERA in 1973-1975. At the end of the meeting, the Division thanked Rea for her service as Division President, as her term came to an end.

At the next Mississippi Annual Convention in 1973, Rea did not attend, nor did she hold any leadership position within the division. Nor did Rea attend the SEC Biennial Conference in Louisville, Kentucky in 1974. During her 18 month break from AAUW leadership positions, Rea continued to teach in the School of Education at the University of Mississippi, advise student dissertations, and serve the university on various committees. By 1974, Rea

---

856 Report of the President, Katharine Rea. MS Division, 46th Annual AAUW State Convention, 1972. American Association of University Women Collection, box 25, folder 46th Annual Convention, UM.
858 Minutes of the MS Division, 46th Annual AAUW State Convention, 1972. American Association of University Women Collection, box 25, folder 46th Annual Convention, UM.
resumed committee duties and served as chairman of the Nominating Committee in the Mississippi Division of AAUW. In her year as chairman, Rea forwarded the nomination of her dear friend, Mrs. W. H. (Cora) Norman to be President of the Mississippi Division.\textsuperscript{861}

Rea continued her advocacy work with the establishment of new branches and the diversification of other branches. In 1974, Rea served as the topic chairman for the “Organization of New Branches” committee.\textsuperscript{862} The organization established a list of legislative priorities to advocate for and the issue of supporting public kindergarten remained a platform issue for AAUW in Mississippi. The first issue was to support public kindergarten or to support the lowering of the pupil to teacher ratio in first through third grade. The second issue was to support attendance laws for school aged children in Mississippi. Finally, AAUW advocated for the passage of Equal Rights Amendment.\textsuperscript{863}

By 1975, Rea focused her involvement with AAUW to help recruit and organize new branches and served as the Vice President of Program Development with the Oxford branch.\textsuperscript{864} Rea continued to be involved with the national AAUW, and attended the 28\textsuperscript{th} National Convention in Seattle earlier that year.\textsuperscript{865} Rea was also appointed chairman of the Women’s Committee. The committee was charged to work with the legislative committee to help ratify the

\textsuperscript{861} 48th Annual AAUW State Convention, 1974 [Minutes]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 25, folder 48th Annual Convention, 1974, UM.
\textsuperscript{862} Minutes of Mississippi Division of AAUW Board of Directors Meeting, July 12, 1974. American Association of University Women Collection, box 54, folder Minutes of the Executive Board, 1970-1976, UM.
\textsuperscript{863} Legislative Priorities, January 1974. American Association of University Women Collection, box 39, folder Mississippi Division AAUW Position of Legislative Priorities, January 1974, UM.
\textsuperscript{865} AAUW Mississippi Division Board of Directors Meeting, December 6, 1975, p. 3. American Association of University Women Collection, box 54, folder Minutes of the Executive Board, 1970-1976, UM.
ERA, and to work to ensure more women receive political appointments and serve on corporate boards.\textsuperscript{866}

Rea continued her work in support of women’s rights legislation including ERA, Title IX, and abortion rights. At the 27\textsuperscript{th} SEC Region Biennial Conference in Birmingham, Alabama in 1976, the conference discussed Affirmative Action and Title IX issues affecting women.\textsuperscript{867} Rea, presented a program on “Women.” Rea discussed the requirement of Title IX that women must be represented on college Affirmative Action committees.\textsuperscript{868} Further discussion resulted in concerns of more senior and experienced women failing to renew their AAUW membership. The women shared concerns of lack of participation and women who were not as committed to the efforts of the organization.

At the summer workshop in 1976, a pamphlet was distributed with new ideas for Action Topics within the Mississippi division. Many of the topics focused on recycling and pollution problems in the state. Other topics encouraged creative opportunities, including taking an art class or working with libraries to enhance creative options for residents of the community.\textsuperscript{869} At the summer workshop in 1976, Rea presented a session to the group on “Action for Advancement.”\textsuperscript{870} On the second day of the workshop, it appeared Rea could not be present, but her report as the chairman of the division’s “Committee on Women,” the group reviewed the Displaced Homemaker’s Bill. The Mississippi House and Senate each had a different version of

\textsuperscript{866} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{868} 27th Biennial Conference [Minutes]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 25, folder 27th Biennial Conference, 1976, UM.
\textsuperscript{869} Branch Ideas for Action in the Topics, [Pamphlet]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 28, folder AAUW Summer Workshop, 1976, UM.
\textsuperscript{870} Summer Workshop, 1976, Program. American Association of University Women Collection, box 28, folder AAUW Summer Workshop, 1976, UM.
the bill which would support widowed or displaced homemakers. The state of California had been successful in 1975 passing similar legislation.\textsuperscript{871}

Another major legislative issue facing American’s was the \textit{Roe v. Wade} Supreme Court case. In March of 1976, the national headquarters of AAUW released an official statement on the support of a woman’s right to choose to terminate a pregnancy.\textsuperscript{872} Although the news release was found in the AAUW Archival Collection for the Mississippi Division, there are no supporting documents to indicate if the Mississippi Division of AAUW was supportive or in favor of the United States Supreme Court ruling. However, the national organization clearly articulated its stance on the issue. Perhaps women who fundamentally or religiously disagreed with the national stance withdrew their membership from the Mississippi Division, although there is no documentation to support that theory. In concert with the organization Rea was supportive of the legislative.\textsuperscript{873}

During the SEC Region Biennial Conference in 1976, a resolution was made to support a coalition to work on the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.\textsuperscript{874} The resolution did not pass at the conference, thus, a concerted effort to support the Equal Rights Amendment within the Southern Region dissipated. Individual branches were left to work independently, diminishing the efforts of a larger and concentrated voice in support of women’s rights. Rea continued her commitment to the Women’s Committee and served as chairman the following year, in 1977 within the Mississippi Division, a role she kept through the 1978 Mississippi Division

\textsuperscript{871} Ibid.; Note: In 1990 a federal law the Displaced Homemakers Self-Sufficiency Assistance Act was passed. The law provided career training to assist women in attaining higher-level employment who had previously worked in the home. The law was supportive of women who were recently divorced or widowed and no longer had income from another family member. 1990 H.R. 3069; 101 H.R. 3069 The law was repealed in 1998. §§ 2301 to 2314. Repealed. Pub. L. 105–220, title I, § 199(a)(3), Aug. 7, 1998, 112 Stat. 1059
\textsuperscript{872} Abortion Statement by AAUW. March 22, 1976. American Association of University Women Collection, box 41, folder Abortion Statement, National, 1976, UM.
\textsuperscript{873} Kathleen Sullivan, personal interview with author, February 21, 2013
\textsuperscript{874} Ibid.
Rea was unable to attend the Board of Directors Meeting in December of 1977, so her written report on the progress of the Women’s Committee was read to the board.

In her report, Rea asked the local branch Women’s Committees to collect self-evaluation data on the status of Title IX from the local school administrator. Rea believed most branches did not have an active Women’s Committee, thus the reports will be limited. Regardless, Rea asked each local branch who received the self-evaluation reports from the local schools to study the results in the following ways. First, note areas of compliance with Title IX regulations, and areas that need improvement. Second, compare salaries and job duties for men and women. Third, visit with women teachers in the district and discuss availability of promotion within the district. Fourth, determine if any curriculum differences exist for the men and women students. Finally, Rea requested a member of each local branch visit with the Title IX compliance coordinator “and discuss plans to end sex discrimination.”

In her letter, Rea noted that often litigation from outside groups has helped improve the status of women faculty and students in schools that were not in compliance with Title IX legislation. Rea closed her letter to the board by reminding the group of the upcoming Legislative Day with the League of Women Voters. One of the most urgent issues was the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Rea provided the group packets of ERA materials to allow the women to ask questions thought-provoking of their legislators regarding their opposition to ERA in the state of Mississippi.

---

877 Ibid.
Rea also served another term on the Nominating Committee within the Mississippi Division in 1977.\footnote{Minutes of the Mississippi Division, AAUW Executive Board Meeting, April 1, 1977, American Association of University Women Collection, box 54, folder Minutes of the Executive Board, 1977-1979, UM.} In the fall of 1978, Rea was appointment as chairman of a Blue Ribbon Task Force on Women’s Equity in the state of Mississippi. The task force was designed to help colleges and universities comply with equal opportunity laws. The task force was designed and created by the AAUW and had representatives from AAUW, Mississippi State University, Millsaps College, Tougaloo College, and other institutions in the state.\footnote{Letter to Dr. Aubrey Lucas, President of University of Southern Mississippi. September 3, 1978. Author unknown. Blue Ribbon Task Force on Women’s Equity. American Association of University Women Collection, box 40, folder Report on MS Conference on Higher Education, 1977-1978, UM.} The task force urged college and universities to establish a Commission on the Status of Women, and to consider more women for administrative positions on campus.\footnote{Mississippi Division Bulletin, July 1978. American Association of University Women Collection, box 66, folder Bulletin, 1970-1978, UM.} Although Rea continued to serve as a member of the Blue Ribbon Task Force,\footnote{Spring Board Meeting [Minutes of the Mississippi Division Executive Board], April 6, 1979. American Association of University Women Collection, box 77, folder AAUW Mississippi Division Scrapbook No. 4, 1978-1979, UM.; Note: It is unclear if Rea attended the board meeting on April 6, 1979. She was about to retire from the University of Mississippi.} she was not present the Mississippi Division’s Annual Convention in April of 1979.

Rea’s professional work at the University of Mississippi would come to an end in the summer of 1979, as she retired from the faculty at the University of Mississippi and moved back to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Although many revel in the opportunity to sit on the beach and enjoy retirement, Rea had gave no indication she was going to stop her involvement with the AAUW or League of Women Voters. She attended the AAUW National Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico in the summer of 1979.\footnote{Convention Report, 1979. American Association of University Women Collection, box 28, folder Summer Workshop, Clinton, 1979, UM.; Photograph of a group of women at the AAUW National convention, 1979, American Association of University Women Collection, box 84, folder National Convention, 1979, UM.} In the convention report given to the Oxford branch following the trip to Albuquerque, the change in Rea’s status as a member of the
Oxford branch was noted. “Katharine Rae [sic] was a convention delegate, and we’re still getting accustomed to her having a Gulfport address following her retirement from the University.”

In the spring of 1980, Rea attended, once again, the Mississippi Division Annual Convention in Vicksburg. She even held a new leadership position, serving as a branch consultant for new branches and branches that needed revival. Rea continued to serve as a consultant throughout the 1980s and attended the summer workshops and Mississippi Division conventions. One of the programs included the “rights of the individual” which included the “woman’s right of individual choice in the determination of her reproductive life.”

Rea attended the National Convention in 1981 in Boston, Massachusetts. As a delegate from the Mississippi division, Rea gave a report on legislative programs within the division. Rea remained involved with the AAUW into the 1990s. She served on the nominating committee, worked as a branch consultant, moderated program discussions, and even gave a presentation on date rape at the Mississippi Convention in 1987 when she was 74 years old.

The service and commitment Rea provided to AAUW did not go unrecognized. In 1981, friend and fellow AAUW member, Cora Norman nominated Rea for an award for her service to “women’s rights” in AAUW. In her nomination letter, Norman wrote “at her [Rea’s] own institution she consistently exhibited concern for the Black student in a predominately White

---

885 Ibid., 4.
886 Centennial Convention, AAUW, June 21-25, 1981. [Report by the Mississippi Division Delegation]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 84, folder National Convention, 1980, UM.
887 AAUW Spring Convention, 1987. [Program]. American Association of University Women Collection, box 26, folder Spring Convocation, Vicksburg, 1987, UM.
institution straight-laced by tradition. She helped organize a series of sensitivity workshops which were held at the University of Mississippi to pave the way for an integrated student body at that institution. Dr. Rea has firmly believed and has been publicly recognized for her commitment to the worth of human beings.”\(^\text{889}\) Rea received the award from the Mississippi Division of AAUW for her service to women’s rights. In the press release, Rea was lauded for her commitment to women in higher education, and expressed “Dr. Rea has not only helped women to achieve a higher status in education and employment, but she has been an agent of agent in helping men to recognize and to be aware of the status society has decreed for women.”\(^\text{890}\) The accolades continued for Rea in her retirement years. In 1987 an endowed scholarship was established by the Mississippi Division of AAUW to the AAUW Educational Fund in Rea’s honor.\(^\text{891}\) Although Rea retired, she never really took a break as an advocate for equality in the state of Mississippi, region, and beyond.

**Mississippi League of Women Voters**

In 1919, the League of Women Voters (LWV) was created as a division of the National American Woman Suffrage Association to advocate for the passage of the 19\(^{th}\) Amendment, giving women the right to vote.\(^\text{892}\) In the early existence of the league, “league leaders sought to transform the enthusiasm for a common goal into collective commitment to more limited but specific goals.”\(^\text{893}\) The creation of league branches was slow to spread to the South. Even by the 1950s league branches in the South were slow to incorporate. The annual report announced “the

\(^{889}\) Ibid.
\(^{890}\) Press Release from MS Division of AAUW, Special Awards, N.D. American Association of University Women Collection, box 38, folder Katharine Rae Endowment Scholarship Fund, 1987-1988, UM.
\(^{893}\) Young, *In the Public Interest*, 2.
Southern leagues represented only 15% of the total national membership and were not as strongly rooted as those in some other regions of the country. In part, many of the southern leagues found it difficult to confront the racial discrimination and attitudes in their home communities.

In 1962, Oxford became a provisional branch of the League of Women Voters with 58 members. Any woman citizen of legal voting was eligible to join the league. The league did not support any political candidate or political party, rather the league worked to “promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.”

By 1964 the Oxford league had received official status as a “new league.” Although the league granted official status to the Oxford league, other longer standing branches were struggling with the civil rights tension in the state and the purpose the league served in their community. In 1964 the Natchez branch refused to comply with the national programming on the support of civil rights legislation and the civil rights movement. At the state board meeting in Jackson, the Natchez branch “advised it strongly opposed the proposed national program and stated it would ignore any study of civil rights because of the adverse effect on the league’s reputation in the city. It requested the state league strong oppose the adoption of such an item of study.” Other branches in the league were struggling to maintain their membership and struggled to find women willing to serve in leadership roles. Current president of the LWV of Mississippi, Betty

---

894 Ibid., 172.
897 League of Women Voters of Mississippi, State Board Meeting, February 27, 1964. [Minutes]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 8, folder 8, UM.
898 Ibid., 4.
Rall expressed concern over the voter registration program as women were scared to help others register because of the strong oppositional groups in the state.  

Debra Northart studied the Mississippi League of Women Voters during the civil rights era. Northart acknowledged women who worked to change the racial disparity within the state faced difficulties, even violence for their supportive views. Northart argued, “any action that indicated even the slightest acquiescence with racial equality or agreement with the objectives of those from Tougaloo who were working on civil rights could mean not just the loss of League support but potential violence at the hands of those who were determined to maintain the racial “norm” in Mississippi.” Several women in the Mississippi league were concerned with how their membership in the league affected their status, and even safety, in their local communities. Regardless of the perceived danger, a small, but dedicated group of women remained committed to the organization.

Despite the racial tensions across the state with league membership, the Oxford branch remained stable in 1965 with 62 members. In 1965 two of the issues the group discussed was the importance of jury selection and service for women and the importance of a state legislative program. It is important to note, the League of Women Voters did not support any candidate or political party. The league only supported an issue after careful study and consideration and membership reached a consensus.

---

899 Betty Rall, Letter to League of Women Voters of Mississippi, September 14, 1964. League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 2, UM.


902 Yearbook, League of Women Voters, 1965-1966, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 9, UM.
In 1965-1966, Rea served on the board of directors as the “Development of Human Resources” chairman. Following the national agenda, the purpose of the “Development of Human Resources” committee was to “evaluate the policies and programs in the United States to provide for all persons equality of opportunity for education and employment.” More specifically, the “Development of Human Resources” was a less direct title for a committee focused on equal educational and employment opportunities for all citizens. The “Development of Human Resources” was adopted at the national convention in 1964 as an item focused on civil rights. At that time, Mississippi league president, Betty Rall was delighted the title did not specifically state civil rights. Rall announced “this change in title offered Mississippi League members a wonderful way to down play the equality angle of the item, and maintain the existence of the League in the state.” Two years later, the title of the committee remained disconnected to the actual purpose of the committee.

There were several prominently women from the university community who held membership in the league in 1965-1966. Mada Barrett, wife of faculty member Russell Barrett who wrote the book Integration at Ole Miss which was published in 1965, served as a member of the league. Other members included, Willie Hume Bryant, wife of vice chancellor, W. Alton Bryant, Cora Norman, a friend of Katharine Rea’s and fellow member of the AAUW, and Ruth Williams, wife of UM chancellor, John D. Williams.

---

903 Ibid., 4.
906 See: Russell Barrett, Integration at Ole Miss, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965). Russell Barrett was a political science professor who was James Meredith’s academic advisor in 1962. See: Russell Barrett Collection, UM.
907 Yearbook, League of Women Voters, 1965-1966, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 9, UM.
At the Mississippi League of Women Voters state convention in 1965, the league officially adopted a position to “enact effective attendance law.” The league firmly supported the right that every child receives education that provided a foundation to become productive adults. The league outlined several areas to improve education in the state of Mississippi, including a school attendance law. First, the league recommended the reinstatement of a school census to better determine students who are not attending school. Second, the league advocated the hiring of school attendance counselors who would monitor students not attending. Third, although not a popular decision, but evoking a court process to ensure school counselors have the support to solve school attendance problems. The league proposed a phased in system of the attendance law beginning with first grade.

**Impromptu League Presidency**

In June, 1966, Rea agreed to serve as the interim Mississippi state president of the League of Women Voters after current president, Betty Rall resigned due to illness. It appeared Rea was nervous to accept the presidency of the organization, but did so regardless of her nervousness. In her letter to the state League members Rea wrote “I feel someone shaky as I issue this call to you for the first state board meeting under my gavel. Only the conviction that this organization can make a difference in the lives of women in Mississippi gives me courage to accept this interim appointment as president. Thank you for your confidence in me.”

---

908 Attendance Law Adopted at LWV of MS State Convention, 1965. [Position Report]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 10, folder 1, UM.
909 Ibid.
910 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], June, 1966, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
911 The Mississippi Voter, [newsletter for LWV of Mississippi], July, 1966. League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 3, UM.; Note: Although the newsletter described Rall’s resignation due to physician orders, Rall continued to serve as a member of the state board. Is it possible Rall resigned due to the civil rights battle in the state and the pressure of leagues to admit black women?
912 Katharine Rea. Letter to the State Board of the League of Women Voters of Mississippi, June 2, 1966, n.p. League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 2, UM.
introduction to the members of the league in Mississippi, the state newsletter, *The Mississippi Voter*, called her the “attractive and vivacious” state president.\(^\text{913}\) It seemed even though Rea was an educated and professional woman, her physical attributes continued to be at least as noteworthy as her intellectual capabilities.

In her first few months as league president, Rea expressed her desire for league branches to expand their membership to be more representative of the population in the community. Furthermore, Rea requested leagues conduct programs that were open and inclusive to the community population.\(^\text{914}\) With only six leagues within the state of Mississippi, increasing the participation of women in the league was a top priority for Rea.\(^\text{915}\) Furthermore as president, Rea received reports of concerns over the Natchez branch of the League of Women Voters, and the need to disband the branch.\(^\text{916}\) As the new president of the state league, Rea was responsible reporting to the national level on the progress and work of the Mississippi league.

In September of 1966, the state league received a request from ABC News to help report local election results. Members of the league would visit local polling stations and conduct exit interviews with voters.\(^\text{917}\) The information was called into ABC news for the evening broadcast. The Oxford league voted against participation, however, the state league made the commitment, so Oxford was forced to participate.\(^\text{918}\) In November of 1966, leaguers from across the state traveled to area polling stations to collect the voting data. Rea, along with Judith Trott, a former student and now employee of the university, traveled to the Pine Valley precinct in Yalobusha

\(^{913}\) *The Mississippi Voter*, [newsletter for LWV of Mississippi], October, 1966. League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 3, UM.

\(^{914}\) *The Mississippi Voter*, [newsletter for LWV of Mississippi], July, 1966. League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 3, UM.

\(^{915}\) Ibid.

\(^{916}\) League of Women Voters of Mississippi, State Board Meeting, September 28-29, 1966, [Minutes]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 8, folder 9, UM.

\(^{917}\) Judith Trott, personal interview with author, January 17, 2013.

\(^{918}\) “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], November, 1966, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
county. There was concern among leaguers of possible trouble at polling stations, however no league participants reported difficulty in carrying out their assignments.919

In 1967, Rea committed to remain the league president for the next year.920 The league worked with AAUW in other capacities in 1967, namely supporting a joint project “Public Education Pays.”921 Rea participated in the project that worked to support personal needs of students in local schools including providing clothing to children in need.922 In 1967, the League of Women Voters collaborated with the American Association of University Women to establish the first “Legislative Day” in the state of Mississippi, an event Rea hinted at hosting for the last year.923 Rea’s vision came to life as the first joint Legislative Day was held at the state capitol in Jackson in February of 1968. The newsletter clarified “the purpose of Legislative Day is to inform legislators of the objectives and scope of the sponsoring organizations and of their concern for problems facing Mississippi, and to inform members of the league and AAUW on legislative procedures.”924

As president of the league in 1968, Rea was responsible for establishing new local leagues. In 1968, Rea visited Tupelo, Mississippi to consider if a league might be plausible.925 Women from Biloxi inquired about a possible league branch in their community.926

920 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], February, 1967, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
921 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], August, 1967, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
922 Ibid.
923 Katharine Rea. Letter to the State Board of League of Women Voters, July 21, 1966, League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 2, UM.
925 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], November/December, 1969, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.; League of Women Voters of Mississippi, Pre-Council State Board Meeting, May 14, 1968, [Minutes]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 8, folder 9, UM.
926 League of Women Voters of Mississippi, Pre-Council State Board Meeting, May 14, 1968, [Minutes]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 8, folder 9, UM.
At the 9th biennial council meeting in May of 1968 Rea expressed concern, and perhaps a bit of frustration with the Mississippi league for failure to act. In the newsletter Rea wrote “we are held back by attitudes, prejudices, and fears characteristic of women before women’s suffrage. We need to find women for the League, by doing, not just talking of what kind of organization we are.”

The league reported membership of 57 in the Oxford Area league in 1968. As president of the Mississippi league, Rea attended the national League of Women Voters convention in Chicago in 1968. Several topic areas were identified at the national convention including a new study on the Electoral College. Moreover, the human resource committee voted at the national convention to support equal housing opportunity measures.

The league was struggling in Mississippi in the late 1960s for membership and officers. Finding members willing to serve on the state board was difficult. Only 280 total members belonged to the League of Women Voters of Mississippi in 1969.

In 1968, the league formed a school lunch committee to address concerns of hungry children during the school day. The newsletter announced “reports by leaguers teaching in the Negro school that some pupils are too hungry to learn have led to the appointment of a committee to investigate problems and possible solutions.” Ann Abadie, a member of the

---

927 League of Women Voters of Mississippi, Ninth Biennial Council, May 15, 1968, [Minutes]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 8, folder 9, UM. Note: The quote from Rea is verbatim from the meeting minutes.
928 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], July/August, 1968, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
929 Katharine Rea, May 3, 1968. Letter to the Members of the Board and Local Presidents of League of Women Voters, League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 2, UM.
930 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], May, 1968, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
931 “Sara.” Letter to Katharine Rea, President of the League of Women Voters. January 18, 1969, League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 2, UM.
933 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], February, 1969, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
Oxford league served as chairman of the committee.\textsuperscript{934} The league supported other educational improvement initiatives in the state. At the state council meeting in 1968, the council supported a compulsory school attendance bill.\textsuperscript{935}

In 1968, Rea completed her final year as dean of women at UM before accepting a full-time faculty position in the School of Education. Due to her professional obligations, Rea expressed regret regarding her inability to visit each of the five leagues in the state of Mississippi during her presidency in 1968.\textsuperscript{936} To help reach local leagues, and to provide support for their efforts, Rea proposed members of the state board visit leagues in the state to serve in a consultant role to better meet the needs of the branches in the state.\textsuperscript{937}

In 1968, Rea undertook planning Legislative Day with AAUW.\textsuperscript{938} In February the first Legislative Day took place at the Mississippi State capitol in Jackson. \textit{The Mississippi Voter} declared the day a “success story” where more than 150 members attended and learned about the legislative process, met with state legislators, and shared the purpose and mission of their organizations with them.\textsuperscript{939}

The Oxford league reported to the national headquarters of a concerted effort of the members of the Oxford branch to promote involvement of university connected women and to promote and encourage Negro women to join the Oxford branch. To encourage membership and to show the commitment of current Oxford league members, the branch held a meeting in the

\textsuperscript{934} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{935} “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], May, 1968, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
\textsuperscript{936} The Mississippi Voter, [newsletter for LWV of Mississippi], October, 1968. League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 3, UM.
\textsuperscript{937} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{938} “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], March, 1968, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
\textsuperscript{939} The Mississippi Voter, [newsletter for LWV of Mississippi], April, 1968. League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 3, UM.
Stone Park Recreational Center, a recreational facility located in a predominately Negro neighborhood. By 1969 the Oxford league had 76 voting members.

In 1969-1970, Rea served as president of the Oxford league and had completed her term as the Mississippi state president of the LWV. The league supported a change in voting procedures for the U.S. President and Vice President elections. The preference was for the league to eliminate the Electoral College and rely on the popular vote to determine the winner. Ann Abadie recalled “because of the development of modern communications media that enable voters to be well informed, we feel that the citizens of this country are ready for the full responsibilities of citizenship-that they do not need to have their voices muffled by the elaborate machinery of the electoral college system.” The league was concerned with third-party candidates and the damage left from the Democratic convention in 1968 that promoted their stance on the issue.

At the fall 1969 board meeting, Rea gave a report on the collaborative legislative workshop the LWV conducted with the AAUW at Mississippi College in July. At the workshop the 45 attendees met with Senator Jean Muirhead and studied the process of how a proposed bill becomes a law. The group also heard from Representative Betty Jean Long on committee organizations and structures within government. Finally, Charles Johnson from the Mississippi Education Association discussed the progress of the 1968 legislative session with the attendees.

---

943 The Mississippi Voter, [newsletter for LWV of Mississippi], July, 1969. League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 3, UM.
945 Ibid.
After much discussion at the workshop the two organizations, the LWV and the AAUW decided to focus their efforts on the compulsory school attendance law and absentee ballot procedures for the next joint Legislative Day at the Mississippi State capital.  

At the state convention in 1969 in Jackson, Rea was honored for her service to the league. Her term as president had ended, yet she received a nomination to serve on the national board. It is unclear if Rea was selected to serve on the national board. In 1970, Rea was a member of the League of Women Voters but did not serve as chair of any committee. In issue of concern in the state of Mississippi was tax assessment. At the September meetings of the league, Rea presented the advantages and the argument against supporting the “Equalization of Property Tax Assessment” which would reassess how property values are determined in the state. The state board encouraged local leagues to work on improving voter registration in their communities.

With collaboration with AAUW, the league participated in Legislative Day in 1970. Cora Norman represented the AAUW and Rea presented the LWV. In the LWV newsletter, the committee for Legislative Day reported 100 women attended the luncheon with 40 legislators. The league expressed concerns over absentee ballots and the use of “private school subsidies.”

Rea, as the AAUW state president served as a panelist on an education discussion with the League of Women Voters state president, Mrs. Robert Zirkle, Representative Hainon Miller, from Kosciuko, MS, and Senator Bill Burgin, from Columbus, MS.

---

946 League of Women Voters of Mississippi, State Board Meeting, October 15, 1969, [Minutes]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 8, folder 9, UM.
947 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], May/June, 1969, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
948 League of Women Voters of the Oxford Area, 1970-1971, [Pamphlet], League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 9, UM.
949 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], September, 1970, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
950 League of Women Voters of Mississippi, Pre-Council State Board Meeting, May 14, 1970, [Minutes]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 11, folder 2, UM.
951 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], February, 1971, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
One of the last major obstacles Rea confronted as president of the Mississippi league was the financial solvency of the organization. Unfortunately, the Mississippi league was smaller and not as financially solvent as other leagues across the country. By 1970 the state board acknowledged that the Mississippi LWV was “in dire financial need.” Rea, as president, asked the group to consider sending the pledges from 1971 to the state league immediate. The group agreed and sent the state league the pledges immediately. The following year, in 1971, Dr. Cora Norman was selected as the new president of the league. As president, Norman was responsible for appointing others to the board of directors. One of her selections was Katharine Rea. In 1971 Rea served as the chairman for the “Time for Action” committee. A “Time for Action” was “a formal request for action on [a] position.” Although the league did not support a specific political party or candidate, the group studied issues of national, regional, and state importance and made recommendations.

One of the most popular ways for the women in the league to learn about issues of regional and state importance was through the Legislative Day that had become an annual tradition with the AAUW. At the 1971 Legislative Day co-sponsored with AAUW, the league placed a special emphasis on the “equalization of tax assessments and provision of

---

952 League of Women Voters, Board Meeting, March 19, 1970, [Minutes]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 13, UM.
953 Ibid.
955 League of Women Voters of the Oxford Area, 1971-1972, [Pamphlet], League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 9, UM.
Rea reported to the league that the representation from the League of Women Voters in Legislative Day was small, but she declared the event was the “best so far.”

In 1971, the League of Women Voters observed three local boards of government in the Oxford community including the Oxford school board, the board of aldermen, and the Civic Council. The state program was divided into several sub-groups. One subgroup focused on educational issues in the state of Mississippi including public school financing, compulsory school attendance law, and improvement of higher education. A second subgroup studied county government which focused on property reassessment and tax assessments. The third subgroup studied state government, which Rea chaired. It appeared this subgroup was new, as the description of the group was very generic. “A study of the effectiveness and efficiency of Mississippi state government.” Finally, a subgroup focused on election laws in the state of Mississippi including improvement of the absentee ballot provisions in the state.

One of the purposes of the league is to inform citizens about important legislative issues. In 1971, the league sponsored a forum for candidates to discuss issues and answer questions from citizens. Candidates running for sheriff, senators, legislators, county superintendents, chancery clerk, justices of the peace, and constables among others spoke to the capacity crowd. The league hosted the forum two year prior and found the event to be an opportunity to learn.

958 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], February, 1971, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
959 Yearbook, League of Women Voters, 1965-1966, p. 3, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 9, UM.; Note: A “program” as defined by the LWV is “subjects of government on which the league may take action. There are local, state and national programs. It comprises two parts: current agenda and continuing responsibilities.”
960 League of Women Voters of the Oxford Area, 1971-1972, [Pamphlet], League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 9, UM.
961 Ibid.
The league prepared questions for each political office in advance, but allowed the audience to ask questions of specific interest. \(^962\)

At the 11\(^{th}\) biennial convention of the League of Women Voters of Mississippi, Katharine Rea served as chairman of the event and hosted an evening social in her home. \(^963\) At the convention, members voted to unanimously to adopt a new program of study for the year. The group agreed to study the Mississippi State Government, with a particular focus on its ability to be effective and efficient. Other items of concern for the league that would be examined in the coming year included conducting a school census to better understand the number of children who are not attending school. This information would be helpful in further advocating for a compulsory school attendance law. Furthermore, the league would study the length of a state political campaign for an election. \(^964\)

The 1972 joint Legislative Day with AAUW was smaller than the year before due to severe weather, therefore many members of the league and AAUW were unable to reach Jackson. \(^965\) However, the planning committee experimented with a new format for the event to encourage more discussion of the issues. Instead of allowing the legislators to present a platform, the AAW and LWV agreed to host an assembly style meeting on key issues and ask questions of the legislators. The associations felt this would provide more discussion on the issues and less wrangling over the politics. \(^966\). However, the league and AAUW seemed pleased with the

\(^{962}\) “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], July, 1971, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
\(^{963}\) The Mississippi Voter, [newsletter for LWV of Mississippi], June, 1971. League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 3, UM. League of Women Voters of Mississippi, 11th Biennial Convention, May 13-14, 1971, [Program]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 11, folder 2, UM.
\(^{964}\) The Mississippi Voter, [newsletter for LWV of Mississippi], June, 1971. League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 3, UM.
\(^{965}\) “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], December 1972/January 1973, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 11, UM.
\(^{966}\) “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], October, 1972, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 11, UM.
progress and response for the Governor and legislators. The members focused their attention on compulsory school attendance laws, funding for public kindergarten, equalization of property taxes, and the ERA. Even without support of the ERA, the leagues wrote of optimism of the day and the progress made towards the priorities of the AAUW and League of Women Voters initiatives.967

Often it was the small items that kept the league active, and visible in the Oxford community. In 1972, Rea served as an observer for the Civic Council meetings and chair of the third subgroup, state government.968 Rea also served on the by-laws committee. One of the decisions the by-laws committee made in 1972 was to increase dues to seven dollars.969 At the June meeting of the Oxford Civic Council, the council discussed the possibility of raising funds for two swimming pools in Oxford.970 Rea served as chairman to coordinate league volunteers to report on the area election results for ABC news. The women conducted exit polling at various precincts throughout northern Mississippi and called ABC news with the results.971 Although none of these tasks were ground-breaking, Rea understood it was the small bouts of success that kept the community and the league moving forward.

968 League of Women Voters of the Oxford Area, 1972-1973, [Pamphlet], League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 9, UM.
969 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], January, 1972, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
970 League of Women Voters, Board Meeting, June 15, 1972, [Minutes]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 13, UM.
Rea was selected as a delegate to the 11th biennial convention of the Mississippi League of Women Voters in 1972. From 1973-1975, Rea served as a member of the state nominating committee of the league and served as the state program chairman for the state legislature committee. During her first two years as the state legislature chairman the league studied the Mississippi legislature for effectiveness and efficiency. The committee focused on accountability of the legislature, the legislature’s ability to make decisions and the ability respond to the needs of the citizens of Mississippi. The committee commended the legislature for its fiscal management, the “increased salaries and expense allowance in order to attract qualified candidates for office,” and for the modernization of computer equipment to improve the efficiency of the operation. Although the league provided praise in a few areas, 15 areas of reform were given to improve the legislative process in the state and to ensure accountability of legislatures. Concerns included opening committee meetings to the public including notification of time, place, and the topic of discussion. Utilize newspapers to inform the public of bills under consideration. Finally, the committee recommended a “declaration of business professional interests and all organization memberships be made a matter of public record and filed with the Secretary of State for conflict of interest reasons.” For most of 1972-1973, Rea opened her home to the league members and hosted board meetings. The membership for the Oxford

---

972 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], April, 1972, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 10, UM.
974 League of Women Voters Collection, box 9, folder 3, UM.; League of Women Voters of Mississippi, State Board Meeting, March, 19, 1973. [Minutes]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 11, folder 2, UM.
975 Ibid.; League of Women Voters of the Oxford Area, 1973-1974, [Pamphlet], League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 9, UM.
976 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], April, 1973, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 11, UM. “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters],
league remained small with a reported a membership of 69 people. Rea helped keep the organization active by opening her home to the membership for meetings.

The LWV and AAUW hosted a dinner in October of 1973 and met with legislators to discuss the ratification of the ERA. The women wanted to show the legislators that the women urging the ratification of the ERA are responsible, logical citizens of the state, not radical “bra burners.” A pamphlet advertising the LWV declared “the purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.” Katharine Rea was elected to serve a two year term, from 1974-1976, as a director in the Mississippi League of Women Voters. At the league board meeting in 1974, Rea advocated for joint programming to continue with AAUW. The board agreed to hold joint meetings in October to encourage conversation and plan for upcoming events with AAUW.

In 1974, the LWV of Mississippi passed a resolution urging the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. The LWV newsletter reported the consensus of the day seemed to be that woman’s place is what each individual woman wanted her place to be. It is not a predetermined role, attitude, or selection list of socially acceptable occupations. Two years prior, in 1972, at the national convention, the League decided to support the ERA. Furthermore, with the decision to support the ERA, the league acknowledged limiting their membership to women was

---

978 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], October, 1973, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 11, UM.
979 League of Women Voters of the Oxford Area, 1975-1976, [Pamphlet], League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 9, UM.
980 Ibid.
981 League of Women Voters, Board Meeting, May, 1974, [Minutes]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 13, UM.
982 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], September, 1974, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 11, UM.
983 Stuhler, For the Public Record, 289.

226
in essence, discrimination against men. According to Stuhler, “in an acknowledgement that equality works both ways, men—who had not been barred from the League but seemed to be excluded by virtue of its name—were recruited and accepted as full-fledged members of the organization in 1974.”984 Rea even convinced Kenneth Wooten to join the Mississippi League of Women Voters for a year. Although Rea was often involved with political organizations, her involvement always was “very quiet and sophisticated.”985

The LWV of Mississippi voted at the 12th biennial state council meeting in 1974 to continue to support Legislative Day in conjunction with AAUW, and Woman’s Day.986 Sadly, other events were not as joyful for Rea in 1974 as her mother, Georgia, who had lived with her the last few years, passed away in 1974. The Oxford league donated ten dollars (adjusted to roughly 50 dollars in 2012 due to inflation) to the Friends of the Library fund in honor of Mrs. Georgia Rea.987

In 1975, the state program on legislative issues split. One group focused on representative government and focused on open meeting laws, ethical concerns of legislators, campaign finance, and voting rights.988 In the second group, state legislature, Rea served as the chairman. The state legislature committee “supports reform to improve the legislative process, accountability, decision making and responsiveness toward the needs of Mississippians.”989 Areas of reform sought by the committee included a release of voting records to the news media,

984 Ibid., 289; “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], July, 1974, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 11, UM.
986 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], June, 1974, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 11, UM.
987 “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], March, 1974, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 11, UM.
988 League of Women Voters of the Oxford Area, 1975-1976, [Pamphlet]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 9, UM.
989 Ibid.
the establishment of schedules for committee meetings, and the establishment of an office concerned with financial analysis.\textsuperscript{990}

In 1976, the league shared a concern for the representation of minorities on governing boards. Rea argued for equal representation of women and Blacks on state boards and commissions related to education. Although Rea thought quotas were not the best solution, she argued until minorities had a voice on these governing boards, change would not be made.\textsuperscript{991} In 1976, Rea served on the State Legislative Committee as chairman.\textsuperscript{992} The Oxford league reported 46 members in 1976 annual report.\textsuperscript{993} Rea served as a member of the Mississippi League of Women voters for more than 15 years. Although the league battled for membership across the state, a friend and colleague of Rea’s, Dr. Ann Abadie, believed Rea was supported in the Oxford community regardless of her involvement with the league.\textsuperscript{994}

In 1979 Rea had moved to Gulfport, yet remained an active member of the league. She served as secretary of the board of directors.\textsuperscript{995} By 1979, the Mississippi league had grown to eight branches.\textsuperscript{996} However, the Mississippi league was not sustained into the 1980s. Branches, including Oxford folded due to lack of interest from people in the community.\textsuperscript{997} Currently, there are only two active League of Women Voter branches in Mississippi, Jackson and the Gulf Coast.

\textsuperscript{990} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{991} “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], June/July 1976, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 11, UM. “The Oxford Area Voter” [Newsletter of the League of Women Voters], May, 1976, League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 11, UM.
\textsuperscript{992} League of Women Voters, Board Meeting, April, 1976, [Minutes]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 5, folder 13, UM.
\textsuperscript{994} Ann Abadie, personal interview with author, March 5, 2013.
\textsuperscript{995} Board of Directors, 1979-1980, [Directory]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 11, folder 6, UM.
\textsuperscript{996} League of Women Voters of Mississippi, 15th State Convention, June 8-9, 1979, [Program]. League of Women Voters Collection, box 11, folder 11, UM.
\textsuperscript{997} Cora Norman, personal interview with author, March 28, 2013.
branch.\textsuperscript{998} One must wonder, is the Gulf Coast branch still a viable branch today because of the work Katharine Rea did with the branch in the 1980s and 1990s?

**Conclusion**

If Rea was a target for criticism, or suffered for her activism efforts in the League of Women Voters, it was not widely known. She was respected and highly regarded in the university community.\textsuperscript{999} Although the league was perceived to have a politically charged agenda, especially compared to the AAUW, Rea did not let the perception of others hold her back from accepting leadership roles in the organization. Her commitment to women’s rights were evident in her willingness to accept the state presidency in the mid-1960s in the midst of the civil rights movement. Furthermore, Rea challenged other women to step outside of their comfort zone. She did not allow women to remain members of an organization if they did not support the organization’s mission.

\textsuperscript{998} Mississippi League of Women Voters, 2013, http://www.lwv-ms.org/Local_Leagues.html

\textsuperscript{999} H. Dale Abadie, personal interview with author, April 4, 2013.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

In this study, I sought to answer two questions. First, who was Katharine Rea? Second, what was her story with the UM community? To find the answers to these complex questions, I took a journey on a path I never dreamed I would travel. Meeting members of Rea’s family, former students, and colleagues provided a glimpse into the work of one southern woman, who devoted her time and talents to improve the lives and opportunities for women at the University of Mississippi, and in Mississippi. However, after all of the archival research and oral history interviews I conducted, there is much about Katharine Rea’s life and work that remains a mystery to me.

The research began with a literature review on the history of deans of women and the student personnel movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Next, primary archival documents were analyzed from the J.D. Williams Library, Department of Archives and Special Collections and from the personal collection of Mr. Bud Rea, Katharine’s last living sibling. For this study I interviewed more than 30 individuals who knew Katharine Rea. Their memories, stories, and insights were extremely valuable in my research and often provided me more interesting clues to adequately tell the story of Katharine Rea.

Rea’s brother, Bud Rea, recalled his father’s hopes that his only daughter, Katharine, would marry and have children after she graduated from Meridian High School in 1931. Unfortunately, little is known about Katharine’s upbringing in Meridian, Mississippi and how she responded to her father’s expectations. Furthermore, the nature of Rea’s relationship with her
mother, Georgia, during her childhood is unknown. In her later years, Georgia lived with Katharine in faculty housing at the University. As a single woman, Rea took responsibility for the care of her aging mother. How did Rea’s mother, Georgia, influence her decision to attend college? Was her mother a political activist in her own right? These questions, still unanswered, may have shaped the outcome and legacy of Katharine’s life as an educator and activist for women’s rights.

Other mysteries remain around Rea’s educational, career choices, and decisions. What experiences or people influenced her decision to attend Copiah Lincoln Junior College and later Delta State Teacher’s College where she earned her degree in English and social science? Before she arrived at the University of Mississippi she was a high school teacher and guidance counselor. Teaching as a socially acceptable career option for women, and depending upon their social class and race, teaching may have provided autonomy. What prompted Rea to leave Gulfport after ten years as a teacher and guidance counselor to accept an admissions position at UM?

Arguably, early life and educational experiences shape family and career expectations and aspirations of students. I wonder how Rea’s collegiate experience influenced her decisions to work at a university. Rea was not an ivory tower academic, she was a teacher. Today, the student development field known as student affairs is referred to as a “hidden career.” Students do not earn undergraduate degrees in student affairs, so for many students, especially first-generation college students, the first exposure to the profession is through their own collegiate experience. Rea was a first-generation college student in the 1930s. These experiences influenced Rea’s

---


231
career, but it unknown how. Did either institution have a dean of women who supported Rea in her educational endeavors? What social activities and mentorship did she receive at Copiah Lincoln Junior College or Delta State Teacher’s College to prompt her to leave her high school teaching position to accept an admissions position at UM?

Although Rea arrived at the UM campus in 1952, most of this dissertation focused on her work after she assumed the position as dean of women in 1957. None of the individuals interviewed for this study, except a few family members, remembered Rea during her time in the admissions office or in the counseling center. Most of the former students I interviewed, spoke fondly of their experiences at the University of Mississippi, and their interactions with Dr. Rea in her role as the dean of women. One of those former students, Mary Ann Frugé, spoke of the respect and admiration she felt for the influence Rea had on her collegiate experience. Katharine Rea was “a strong woman who used her strength in a gentle way. She was intelligent and respected.”1002 Above all else, many of the women students felt supported by Dean Rea. She held a protected demeanor for women students and cared about their well-being. Frugé remembered Rea’s concern over proper etiquette for southern women. Rea provided “guidance and encouraged proper behavior from the women students as she wanted the University of Mississippi and the women students to be seen in their best light.”1003 Perhaps Rea’s desire for proper etiquette and behavior was a means to protect the women.

The education and support for women students at the University of Mississippi provided by Rea lasted more than 20 years. The family members and friends of Rea’s that I interviewed spoke of her kindness, her open-mindedness and fight for fairness. Former student and friend, Ann Abadie, described Rea as a woman who balanced her intellectual assertiveness with grace.

---

Perhaps the greatest asset Rea had was her ability to be “tough intellectually” where she would speak out if necessary, while maintain respect, “she was a southern lady.”

It is interesting that Rea was described as a southern lady. A southern lady emerged when a southern belle, “a privileged white girl who is at the glamorous and excited period between being a daughter and becoming a wife” was selected by a gentlemen and married. A southern lady was described as a woman who took care of her husband and his needs, the needs of the children in the family, and maintained the “family’s social position.” Often, comportment as a southern lady reinforced social class identity for women and families in the South, more so than in other regions in the U.S. Rea was often described by family members and friends, and featured in photographs, as an impeccably dressed woman with fashionable clothing and styled jet-black hair. Her appearance, proper manners, and formal demeanor reinforced the normative gender role of a southern lady, however, her career choices, lack of a husband and children, and her activism in various women’s organizations challenged the literary comparisons of a southern lady or southern belle.

When Katharine Rea became the dean of women at the University of Mississippi in 1957, she replaced a formidable dean with more than 25 years of experience. Rea arrived on campus in the midst of the national student personnel movement. Although Katharine had previous experience as a high school English teacher and guidance counselor, her classic appearance and updated style, and much younger age, made her an instant hit on campus, as she was a noticeable contrast to the former dean of women, Estella Hefley.

---

1006 Ibid., 42.
1007 Ibid., 44.
1008 American Council on Education, “The Student Personnel Point of View, 1949.”
Often, a single woman with a career was categorized as a “spinster” arguably admonished status from that of a southern lady. A spinster, or an unmarried woman of an appropriate marrying age, “had been rejected, passed over, or not had the opportunity to snare a husband. This promoted several unattractive images of old maids.”¹⁰¹⁰ In all of the archival documents and oral history interviews Rea was never characterized or labeled a spinster, even though she never married nor had children.

For Rea, if the student body saw her as a spinster, it was not a publically held viewpoint. Even the campus newspaper, *The Mississippian*, declared her the “charming” and “attractive” new dean of women.¹⁰¹¹ I wonder if the declaration of Rea’s appearance was an unintentional insult to her predecessor, Estella Hefley? Or, perhaps an announcement to the campus that Rea was eligible for marriage. Interestingly, on these counts, Rea and Hefley shared the fact that they never married. According to Clinton, “Southern women, as a rule, married very young—younger than their northern counterparts and much younger than men.”¹⁰¹² It was not unusual for deans of women to be labeled spinsters, as many deans of women were unmarried.¹⁰¹³

Although the student newspaper called her “charming,” others on campus, including Ann Abadie, a former graduate student and friend of Rea’s, affirmed Rea’s lady-like qualities, while characterizing Rea as an intellectual woman. “She was very gentle, very feminine…always looked beautiful you know with her pearls and suit and she was just elegant but she was tough, intellectually and morally and socially, she would speak up.”¹⁰¹⁴ Rea’s attitude and ability to

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid., 168.
speak out encouraged other women to take advantages of opportunities available, especially the leadership opportunities on campus, and civic organizations within the community.

Arguably, Rea’s education, earning power as a career woman, polished appearance, and public poise helped her avoid the negative, socially undesirable label of spinster. Her career and ability to support herself also established her autonomy allowing her to live on her own with a career separate from her familial obligations. In literature, Clinton illustrated examples of single women who became the “maiden aunt” in their families who took care of nieces and nephews in exchange for housing or other support from members of their family.\textsuperscript{1015} Rather than live with one of her four brothers, Rea lived on her own in faculty housing at the campus of UM.

In addition to her role as the dean of women, Rea pursued faculty opportunities earning the title of Associate Professor in 1958.\textsuperscript{1016} Perhaps Rea’s own drive for professional success influenced the way she regarded the experience of women students at UM. Behind her feminine and proper exterior, Rea expected women to think bigger and achieve academically and professionally. As the Dean of Women at the University of Mississippi in the 1960s, Rea faced many challenges in her administrative capacity.

One of the early challenges Rea faced as the dean of women was the divide among the women students on campus. In her book, \textit{Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present}, Helen Horowitz described three types of college women; insiders, outsides, and rebels.\textsuperscript{1017} Early in Katharine Rea’s career, she cautioned other campus administrators of the divide among the women students over sorority affiliation. The ability to affiliate with a sorority created a class and culture of insiders that Rea argued ostracized other women students and limited their ability to actively participate in campus events. As the dean of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1016] “Officers of Administration,” University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1959-1960, UM.
\item[1017] Horowitz, \textit{Campus Life}.
\end{footnotes}
women, Rea worked to ensure all students had the opportunity to join leadership organizations and to develop career skills by expanding the number of academic forums, organizations, and women’s governance structures. Rea fought against the stereotype that many women students enrolled in college only to find a husband, even as deans of women often faced the stereotype that they were spinsters.1018

There was a need for women students to have academic recognition and inclusive activities on their campuses. Other southern deans of women, including Katherine Bowersox of Berea College, Agnes Ellen Harris at the University of Alabama, Adele H. Stamp from the University of Maryland, and Sarah Gibson Blanding of the University of Kentucky fought for women students to receive recognition at their own institutions during the Progressive Era.1019 In many ways, Rea advocated for some of the same opportunities in the 1960s at UM that Bowersox, Harris, Stamp, and Blanding argued for decades prior. By participating in leadership opportunities, Rea was preparing students for career opportunities. Additionally, Bashaw argued, campus rituals helped women become a part of the institution and feel included and a sense of belonging. Groups and activities for women students helped them form friendships with their classmates and form a connection to their institution.1020

Her family members and former students perceived Rea as a proper southern lady, and she expressed her desire for the women students at the University of Mississippi to develop proper “social graces” while at the University.1021 The lack of sorority membership for women unaffiliated with Greek organizations, Rea feared, prevented many women from participating in activities where they gained poise and sophistication. Aside from sorority affiliation, in her early

1018 Drum, “From Dean of Women to Woman Dean.”; Nidiffer, “The First Deans of Women.”
1019 Bashaw, Stalwart Women.
1020 Bashaw, Stalwart Women.
1021 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1957-1958, p. 121, UM.
years as the dean of women in the late 1950s, Rea had met with women students who experienced academic difficulties. Furthermore, Rea cautioned women students to think of their long-term goals, especially the pursuit of a career outside of the home, even handing copies of *The Feminine Mystique* to women student leaders.

Many of the first deans of women in the late 1800s fought for women to have spaces on campus including dormitory space, gymnasium, and meeting spaces. Most of Rea’s career, she fought for upgraded housing facilities for the women students and inclusivity for all women in campus organizations. As the dean of women, Rea was the primary advocate for women students at the University. The staff dedicated to the experience of women students was small in the office of the dean of women. Mainly Rea, and Julia Waits, and later Judith Trott, who both served as the Panhellenic Advisor, were the women responsible for the experience and well-being of UM’s women students. The head residents in each of the residence halls and house mothers at each sorority house also ensured women’s safety and well-being in the 1960s while Rea was the dean of women. All of the other positions in the Division of Student Personnel at UM in the 1960s were held by men while Rea served as the dean of women. A few women served as members of the University faculty, and others served in secretarial, janitorial, or kitchen capacities.

As the dean of women, Rea was responsible for providing leadership opportunities to the women students, most of the activities, honor societies, and club activities for men and women students were separate in the 1960s and 1970s at UM. Although many of the leadership opportunities were separated by gender, both women and men found time at UM to engage in unsanctioned activities at the university such as panty raids. These spontaneous disruptions were generally a short-lived prank that resulted in harmless fun for students.
Rea’s personal view on the campus panty raids is unknown, however, her concern for the reputation of the women students and her desire for the women to develop “social graces”1022 I would argue Rea did not approve of the chants and throwing of undergarments out of a dormitory window. Furthermore, women students who went against the dress-code faced sanctions from the AWS Judicial Council. Panty raids, streaking, violations to the student dress-code, curfew infractions, and lack of academic progress were concerns Rea dealt with each year in her role as dean of women. The women students who served on the AWS Judicial Council were responsible for determining the women’s rules for the academic year. Rea was not opposed to changing campus regulations for women, however, if a policy was in-place Rea enforced it.

Perhaps Rea’s most difficult task as the dean of women was ensuring the first Black women who enrolled at the University of Mississippi were safe on campus and had as positive as possible experience as students on campus. Ann Abadie characterized Rea as an advocated for women and other disenfranchised groups including, “minorities, African Americans, and any group like that she felt that society had not done right, she was very supportive.”1023 Rea specifically fought for the UM “outsiders” to find a place and fit on the campus including women not affiliated with a sorority, and the first Black women on campus. Although James Meredith became the first Black student to enroll at the University of Mississippi in 1962, the first Black women did not enroll until 1965. Rea hosted “sensitivity workshops” in her home to help improve race relations on campus.1024 The workshops provided a space and support for interracial meetings and discussions. The workshops also provided women an opportunity to get to know other women in the community. The lack of official document of these racial

1022 Katharine Rea, Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, [Office of the Dean of Women], 1957-1958, p. 121, UM.
1024 Cora Norman, personal interview with author, March 16, 2012.
“sensitivity workshops” hosted by Rea adds to the mystery of the campus climate and support Rea received from administrators, colleagues, and students in the mid-1960s. Furthermore, Rea only briefly mentioned the enrollment of the Black women in her Annual Report to the Chancellor in 1965. By 1965, Frank Moak served as the Dean of the Division of Student Personnel. His annual report failed to mention the enrollment of the University’s first Black women, or Rea’s concern over their welfare. If the Dean of the Division did not mention the challenges the women faced on campus or Rea’s work with the women students what does that mean? When Dean L. L. Love wrote the report for the Division of Student Personnel in 1962-1963 he clearly articulated the struggles the Division endured during the first year of racial integration on the campus. Did Moak not included the enrollment of the first Black women on campus because the enrollment of Black women did not evoke campus violence?

As the dean of women, Rea sought out leadership opportunities for women students, but what was the desired outcome Rea wanted for women students from their participation in groups and activities? Throughout her tenure as the dean of women Rea advocated for opportunities for women not affiliated with a sorority to have the same experiences for growth and involvement as those women who were affiliated with a sorority. Furthermore, Rea encouraged inclusivity in the academic societies like Mortar Board and Cwens, which both required an invitation based on high academic achievement. Other opportunities such as the Associated Women Students provided women the opportunity to govern and shape campus policy, and Rea advised these groups.

I argue Rea encouraged and supported these various leadership and membership opportunities for women because they helped the women students develop career skills and “social graces.” But, perhaps most importantly, Rea sought out her own membership
opportunities throughout her life including the NAWDAC, AAUW, League of Women Voters, Faculty Senate, and many others. It was through these memberships, Rea seemingly developed friendships and a sense of purpose and belonging. Rea advocated for public kindergarten in the state of Mississippi through her involvement with the AAUW and League of Women Voters.\textsuperscript{1025} Rea did not just advocate for issues that would serve her, or the University, but rather she worked to improve opportunities for college women to improve education in Mississippi. Rupp and Taylor found most women participating in the women’s rights movement were White, upper class to upper-middle class, and generally had a college degree. Women were influential in creating civic organizations and volunteer opportunities outside the home.\textsuperscript{1026} The description of women’s rights advocate provided by Rupp and Taylor described Rea, however as historian Linda Eisenmann argued, many woman found achieving a balance between domestic responsibilities and civic activism difficult.\textsuperscript{1027} Instead of balancing domestic responsibilities in her home with a husband and children, Rea needed to balance her professional work responsibilities with her commitment to civic organizations. Through both her career and membership in various civic associations Rea developed leadership skills. By encouraging other women and students to become involved she helped foster the leadership skills of others. In a few of these organizations, including the AAUW, membership in the association provided educated women a support network, served was an advocacy organization for women’s issues, and helped women pursue career advancement.\textsuperscript{1028}


\textsuperscript{1026} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{1027} Eisenmann, “Educating the Female Citizen in a Post-War World.”

\textsuperscript{1028} Chamberlain, Women in Academe. 285.
By the 1960s, many institutions began eliminating the position of the dean of women and combined the position with the dean of men, which resulted in a dean of students position. It was common for a man to be appointed to the newly created dean of students position rather than a woman. Although the dean of women position was eliminated on many campuses after World War II, that did not diminish the need for support of women students. Campuses began to create women’s centers to provide support and services previously given by deans of women. The shifts to student support structures brought by the student personnel movement changed the support available to women students as institutions began combining the position of dean of men and dean of women into one position. When the deans of women disappeared on college campuses, women students ostensibly lost their voices and advocates, resulting in an institutional climate change. The change created a movement and a need for women’s centers to fill the void left by the vacated position.

Furthermore, after the deans of women disappeared from the majority of coeducational institutions, women’s centers emerged, and new fields of study developed. Keohane, Rosaldo, and Gelpi described the women who first advocated for women’s studies courses as “political activists” who were, perhaps, trying to raise awareness of the oppression of women in society and in the academy. Ferguson, Katrak, and Miner defined the 1970s as the “women’s studies decade” as new courses emerged on feminist issues on college campuses.

1031 Chamberlain, *Women in Academe*.
The University of Mississippi kept the dean of women’s position until the early 1980s. This is much later than many other institutions as the movement to combine the dean of women and dean of men position into one began in the 1960s. In her role as dean of women, Rea expected the young women to be ladies. Dr. Kenneth Wooten, a colleague of Rea’s for many years at the University described Rea’s desire for the women students to be concerned about their own welfare and education. “She was the transition between the old school and new modern ways. She wanted the girls to be concerned about their reputation.” In her pursuit for the women students to be concerned about their reputation and education, Rea worked to change the educational experience for women students at UM.

In the early 1960s, a new book, *The Feminine Mystique*, by Betty Friedan argued women struggled with their own identity. Friedan explained that women’s identities were compartmentalized into three stages, childhood, motherhood, and then personhood. Rea gave the book to at least two undergraduate students while she served as the dean of women. One of the students, Karen Montjoy said, Rea also wanted the women students to think about issues that were facing women on a national stage. Montjoy believed Rea gave her the book because she wanted students to be aware of larger movements and issues across the nation, not just what was happening in Mississippi. The other student, Mary Ann Frugé received the book from Rea following her term as Judicial Chair in AWS. Frugé remembered Rea told her “you don’t want these now, but some day you will.”

---

1036 Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*.
1037 Karen Clifford Montjoy, personal interview with author, March 5, 2012.
1038 Mary Ann Frugé, personal interview with author, February 15, 2012.
Other feminist theorists utilized Friedan’s work and *The Feminine Mystique* to frame new identities for women. In *Shattering the Myths: Women in Academe*, Judith Glazer-Raymo (1999) identified voluntarism as a “characteristic of the feminist psyche.” Volunteer opportunities were abundant for women in the 1950s and 1960s through various civic organizations. According to Eisenmann, for married women, balancing the duties in the home and civic activism caused tension for women. Yet, these new volunteer and civic activism opportunities provided women an outlet to enhance their “independence and leadership skills.” Although Rea did not have a husband or children, she balanced several professional and civic organizational commitments, a full-time career, and for a few years took care of her mother, Georgia, in her home. Rea also encouraged other women, especially women students, to join organizations that would provide them an outlet to hear new ideas and discuss issues facing women in the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s.

Rea’s membership in various organizations, some focused on women’s issues including the League of Women Voters and the AAUW, and others like the Black Affairs Committee on the Faculty Senate at UM served both men and women. Rea showed commitment to these organizations for many years through service in leadership positions and conference attendance. During most of her career at the University of Mississippi, including during her service as dean of women, Rea lived in faculty housing. The salary from her professional position and financial support through dues from the various organizations, allowed Rea to attend many state, regional, and national conferences associated with the numerous organizations in which Rea was a member. Rea encouraged other women, who were able, to attend the conferences and urged the

---


1040 Eisenmann, “Educating the Female Citizen in a Post-War World,” 138.
organizations to provide financial support so more women could attend.\textsuperscript{1041} I would argue, Rea was in a better position to attend more of the conferences, especially the conferences out of town, than other women with families. Other women with family obligations may have found the travel difficult and too time consuming, whereas Rea had the freedom to attend the conferences and conventions if her professional obligations allowed.

When Rea left her position as dean of women in 1968, she continued to advocate for women students, but did so from the classroom. As a faculty member, Rea took leadership roles in various faculty organizations, including serving two terms as president of the UM Chapter of AAUP during her tenure as a faculty member. The University’s archival records for the AAUP from the 1970s do not provide a clear picture of the challenges facing the faculty at the University. However, the other members of AAUP respected Rea enough to elect her as president for two separate terms. Although membership records remain, meeting minutes are scarce for the UM AAUP in the 1970s, therefore, much of Rea’s advocacy efforts as a member of the AAUP are a mystery.

As a faculty member, Rea served as a member of the Faculty Senate for many years in the 1970s. Various committees branched from the Faculty Senate. Perhaps Rea’s most substantial service contribution in her faculty role to the University of Mississippi was her service on the Black Affairs Committee in the early 1970s.

The Black Affairs Committee consisted of four faculty members, including Rea, who were willing to mediate between the concerns and challenges of the Black students on campus and university administrators. The task was not easy. Many of the ideas to improve race relations on campus never came into fruition. For example, the Black Affairs Committee worked with

\textsuperscript{1041} Minutes of the MS Division, 45th Annual AAUW State Convention, 1971. American Association of University Women Collection, box 25, folder 45th Annual Convention, UM.
Chancellor Porter Fortune to increase the number of Black faculty on campus by developing an exchange program with Rust College or Mississippi Valley State. The idea was short-lived, however, and by the following fall, the Black Affairs Committee knew the faculty exchange program would not exist. However, the members of the Black Affairs Committee showed the Black students that they did have a voice on campus, and support from faculty who were willing to make requests of executive level administrators or advocate for their needs. Despite the official reports from the Black Affairs Committee to the Faculty Senate, many questions remain about the Black Affairs Committee and Rea’s role in improving race relations on campus. Why did Katharine Rea and John Crews, an assistant professor of English, both serve on the Black Affairs Committee from its original creation until the committee was disbanded in Faculty Senate in 1974? What was the relationship between Rea and the Black students on campus in the early 1970s? As a faculty member was she more effective in persuading University administration to improve the experience for Black students than she was in her role as the dean of women?

Although the Black Affairs Committee was only a committee in the Faculty Senate at UM for less than five years, much of the original intention and structure remains at the University today. Instead of a committee of individuals, one staff member in the Division of Student Affairs at the University is responsible for multicultural initiatives pertaining to student race relations on campus. To date, no official center is dedicated at the University of Mississippi for student use for multicultural services. The UM campus does support the William Winter

One of the missing pieces of the puzzle into the life of Katharine Rea is her inspiration to become an educator. Bud Rea, Katharine’s brother, described his father’s wishes for his daughter to marry and have a family.\footnote{1043 Bud Rea, personal interview with author, March 10, 2012.} Did her collegiate experience impact her decision to become a faculty member and challenge students to think about women’s issues in higher education? As a faculty member in the Higher Education and Student Personnel Department at the University, Rea developed, Student Personnel Work with Women, a course that challenged both men and women to examine how stereotypes and the college experience affected women students. During the interview process for this dissertation, several interview participants commented on Rea’s development of the first women’s studies course. Although the course, Student Personnel Work with Women, was not classified as a women’s studies course in the college catalog, or in the School of Education’s Annual Report, the course was the first documented course specifically designed to focus on the collegiate experience of women at the University.\footnote{1044 University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1977-1978, n.p. UM.; University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1969-1970, UM.; University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1963-1964, UM.; University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1962-1963, UM; University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1971-1972, UM.}

The number of faculty in the Higher Education and Student Personnel Department at UM was small, but Rea had was given an outlet to discuss women’s issues and women’s higher education with the development of Student Personnel Work with Women. Aside from providing copies of The Feminine Mystique to two undergraduate women, Rea required students, male and female, in one of her higher education courses to read the book.\footnote{1045 George Abraham, personal interview with author, January 18, 2013; Karen Clifford Montjoy, personal interview with author, March 5, 2012; Mary Ann Frugé, personal interview with author, February 15, 2012.} Other feminists scholars
including Simone de Beauvoir, author of the *The Second Sex*, and Letty Pogrebin, who co-founded *Ms. Magazine* with Gloria Steinem were also studied in Rea’s courses. After the passage of Title IX in 1964, courses on various women’s issues were offered on college campuses in a variety of departments including sociology and anthropology. Eventually, the study of women and feminism became accepted and was integrated in the curriculum. On a legislative issue, the ERA amendment was an important issue in feminist studies. Many women faculty pledged their support for the ERA, including Rea. However, Glazer-Raymo argued although many faculty supported the ERA or other women’s issues like campus-based childcare, “their main preoccupation became teaching, research, and career advancement within the academy.” I would argue Rea had no further desire to advance in the academy. She was a full professor by 1963, five years before she became a full-time faculty member. Rea was one of the women faculty who was driven and found meaning in her activism, voluntarism, and fight for women’s rights in Mississippi.

Rea’s commitment to the inclusion and betterment of women in society was demonstrated through her activism efforts with organizations like the American Association of University Women and the League of Women Voters. Since the early 1940s when Rea lived in Gulfport, MS as a high school teacher she was committed to AAUW. Although the two organizations, especially the AAUW, were often viewed as intellectual organizations that would study specific issues rather than boldly take a stand, Rea used the opportunity to quietly advocate for change on a variety of issues. Rea was an advocate for women’s issues, especially the Equal

---

1046 George Abraham, personal interview with author, January 18, 2013
1048 Ibid., 24.
1049 University of Mississippi Bulletin, 1968-1969, UM.
Rights Amendment and the passage and compliance of Title IX. Rea’s commitment to both of these organizations was not simply in name only, as she served in leadership roles.

In fact, Rea convinced others to join the organizations and to become active participants in the governing system. The cooperative Legislative Days between the AAUW and the League of Women Voters demonstrated the blend of educational and activist mission of the two organizations. Furthermore, Rea even convinced Kenneth Wooten to join the Mississippi League of Women Voters for a year. Although Rea was often involved with political organizations, her involvement always was “very quiet and sophisticated,” according to Wooten.\footnote{1050} Even in retirement, Rea’s membership and civic activism remained strong.

Upon her retirement from the University of Mississippi she returned to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, a place she lovingly called “the promised land.”\footnote{1051} Her activities in retirement included public service work to save the public library and a devotion to the League of Women Voters in the Gulf Coast branch. Additionally, Rea advocated and worked for the local rape crisis abuse center, and was a fundraiser for the Gulf Coast Symphony.\footnote{1052} Today, there are only two branches in the Mississippi League of Women Voters, including the Gulf Coast branch. Perhaps Rea’s involvement and commitment to the Gulf Coast branch ensured a stable foundation for the branch to exist today. Katharine continued to travel in her retirement. She traveled with dear friends Cora Norman and Imogene Borganelli to the United Kingdom in the 1990s. In 1993, Norman and Rea traveled to Ireland where they visited Dublin and Belfast.\footnote{1053} Always an adventurer, Rea continued her dedication to the people and causes she supported even in retirement.

\footnotesize\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{1050}{Kenneth Wooten, personal interview with author, February 28, 2013.}
\item \footnote{1051}{Katherine Abraham, personal interview with author, February 3, 2012.}
\item \footnote{1052}{Cora Norman, personal interview with author, March 16, 2012.}
\item \footnote{1053}{Cora Norman, \textit{Mississippi in Transition: The Role of the Mississippi Humanities Council} (Knoxville, TN: Tennessee Valley Publishing, 2009).}
\end{itemize}
Limitations of the Study

Three different methods of information gathering were used in this study including the analysis of archival documents, oral history interviews, and review of the literature. Although the review of the literature was completed first, it was necessary to conduct all three methodologies simultaneously. Throughout the study, more than 30 people were interviewed, however, not every interview resulted in a thick description of Katharine Rea. Regardless, every interview proved valuable in a unique way. If a direct quote was not possible from the interview, the interviewee usually provided additional archival source collections for me to consider analyzing, or resulted in a snowball interview of another individual who knew Katharine Rea.

Unfortunately, it was very difficult to find interview participants, especially from former students, who were not college “insiders.” Most of the former students were sorority women who were actively involved in campus leadership organizations including the Associated Women Students or Mortar Board. It was difficult to find women who were not actively involved in campus life who were willing to speak with me, or who had a connection to Katharine Rea. Furthermore, it was extremely difficult to find Black women from the 1960s who were willing to speak with me about their experience at the University of Mississippi and their memories of Katharine Rea. Other interview participants commented on Rea’s beliefs towards the racial integration of the campus. Colleagues like Kenneth Wooten believed Rea was supportive of the racial integration of the campus in 1962. Wooten explained, “Rea was very fair minded and supportive of integration.” However, without comments from more Black students, there is not a perspective from those students who were marginalized to fully understand Rea’s involvement with the integration of the campus.

---

Likewise, hundreds of archival documents were analyzed for use in this study. However, many of the documents contained basic descriptive information including membership dates, conference locations, and attendance records. Specifically, the American Association of University Professors Collection was limited, therefore a full understanding of Rea’s activities with the AAUP is incomplete.

**Final Comments**

For more than 20 years, Katharine Rea served the students at the University of Mississippi as the dean of women and then as a member of the faculty. When Rea assumed the position as dean of women, the student newspaper declared her “charming.” Although Rea was seen as a southern lady on the UM campus, she used her poise and charming demeanor to improve the collegiate experience for college women at UM. Creating and supporting leadership opportunities through student government, or academic societies were important to Rea as she wanted women to be prepared for a career following graduation. As a faculty member she continued to improve the collegiate experience for students, especially Black students with her service on the Black Affairs Committee in the early 1970s. Not only was Rea concerned with the experience of students, she strived to improve the experience for faculty through her service with the UM Chapter of AAUP and the Faculty Senate.

As a southern woman, Rea dressed in a classic and conservative manner. As a woman, her father had aspirations for her to marry and have children, but education became Rea’s career choice. Being a teacher was an acceptable profession for women, but throughout her career Rea was driven to achieve more than what was acceptable. She pushed boundaries for collegiate women, however, she pushed the boundaries in a way that was found acceptable. I believe

---

1055 “Katherine Rea Takes Over as Dean of Women,” *The Mississippian*, September 15-18, 1957. 250
former colleague, Kenneth Wooten emulated Rea’s leadership style on campus. “She was the transition between the old school and new modern ways.”\textsuperscript{1056} She advocated for spaces where dialog could take place on difficult subjects, including race relations in the South. Rea balanced the conservative campus and community with modern intellect and dialog. As a modern southern woman, Rea took advantage of her career opportunities to travel to new places, meet new people, and discuss new ideas.

Finally, Rea was a leader and an activist for college women. Rea’s work was dedicated to ensuring UM college women received a quality educational experience. Through professional organizations including the AAUW and the League of Women Voters, Rea worked to promote equality for women in the workforce. As a modern, southern woman, Rea used her intellectual capabilities and dedication to voluntarism to improve the lives of women in the state of Mississippi.

\textsuperscript{1056} Kenneth Wooten, personal interview with author, February 28, 2013.
BIBLIOGRAPHY OR LIST OF REFERENCES
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. BOOKS, ARTICLES, DISSERTATIONS, AND WEBSITES


Blanks, Mauri, and Connie Green, “Black Women at Ole Miss” (unpublished manuscript, 1980s?), Sarah Isom Center Collection, box 41, folder black students at Ole Miss, UM.


Lloyd, James B. *The University of Mississippi: The Formative Years 1848-1906.* (The University of Mississippi, University, MS, 1979), UM.


Mississippi League of Women Voters, 2013, [http://www.lwv-ms.org/Local_Leagues.html](http://www.lwv-ms.org/Local_Leagues.html)


Percy, Anne. “The History of the Black Student Union of the University of Mississippi” (unpublished manuscript, 1993), UM.


Rea, Katharine. “A Follow-Up Study of Women Graduates From the State Colleges in Mississippi, Class of 1956,” PhD diss., Ohio State University, Katharine Rea Collection, UM.


Sansing, David. The University of Mississippi: A Sesquicentennial History (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1999).


Soloman, Barbara M. In the Company of Education Women (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 81.


2. ARCHIVES AND LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

Archives and Special Collections, University of Mississippi (UM):
- Ann Rogers Dillard Collection
- Annual Reports to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi
- American Association of University Professors Collection (AAUP)
- American Association of University Women Collection (AAUW)
- Chancellors’ Papers/General
- Chancellor’s Collection
- Porter Fortune Collection
- [Emma] Clark Hairston Taylor Collection
- Faculty Minutes and Committees Collection
- Frank Moak Collection
- George M. Street Collection
- Handbook of the Associated Women Students
- James Howard Meredith Collection
- John Crews Collection
- Katharine Rea Collection
- League of Women Voters Collection
Lucy Turnbull Collection  
Sarah Isom Center Collection  
Southern Literary Festival Collection  
*Ole Miss Yearbook*  
Vertical Files  
“Mississippi Faculty”  
“Miss America”  
“Women”  
University of Mississippi Bulletin

Center for Archival Collections, Jerome Library, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.  
National Student Affairs Archives

Personal Collections  
Bud Rea  
Judy Coursey Crowson

NEWSPAPERS

*The Mississippian*  
*The Oxford Eagle*  
*The Commercial Appeal* (Memphis)

INTERVIEWS

Ann Abadie  
H. Dale Abadie  
George Abraham  
Katherine Abraham  
Mary Ann Connell  
Peggy Emerson  
Julia Waits Farris  
Mary Ann Frugé  
Susan Thomas Griffith  
Janet Singletary Guyton  
Joyce Jenkins  
Karen Clifford Montjoy  
Sylvester Moorhead  
Cora Norman  
Carolyn (Calico) Maxwell Perry  
Kathleen Sullivan  
Bud Rea  
Thomas (Sparky) Reardon  
Jan Humber Robertson  
Judith Trott
Invitation for Interview

Dear University of Mississippi Alumni:

My name is Sara Kaiser and I am a doctoral student in Higher Education at The University of Mississippi (UM). I am currently working on an oral history project about Dr. Katharine Rea, who was the Dean of Women at UM from 1957-1968. I want to know more about Dr. Rea and her work with students. As an alum, I would like to talk with you about your impressions of Dr. Rea and what it was like to be a student at UM during the late 1950s through the 1960s.

I hope you will consider sharing your story and memories about Dr. Rea and your time as a student at UM in a one-on-one interview with me. I will do this at your convenience, talking to you either in-person or over the telephone. I would like to audio record our conversation, but if you prefer, I will simply take notes. If you would like to participate in this project, or have any comments or questions, please contact me at (218) 280-2291(cell), or email me at skaiser@olemiss.edu.

If you have additional questions, I want you to know that my research supervisor is Dr. Amy Wells Dolan, Associate Professor of Higher Education and Associate Dean of School of Education at UM, and that she may be reached at (662) 915-5710. Also, this study has been reviewed by UM’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study fulfills the human research subject protections obligations required by state and federal law and University policies. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482.

Sincerely yours,

Sara R. Kaiser
Doctoral Student, Higher Education
The University of Mississippi
School of Education
224 Guyton Hall
University, MS 38677
APPENDIX B
APPENDIX B

Preliminary Interview Questions

What was your full name while you were a student?

What years were you a student at Ole Miss?

Where is your hometown?

What activities were you involved with?

What was your major?

What was campus like when you were here?

How did you get to know Dean Rea?

What are some of your memories of her?

How did she support or encourage you?

Can you recall any of her work with African American women students on campus?

What do you remember of the Ole Miss climate when you were a student?

How was Dean Rea viewed by other female students on campus?

Can you describe her style when meeting with students?

What did you call her? (Dean Rea, Dr. Rea??)

Do you have other memories or stories of Dr. Rea or Ole Miss you’d like to share?

Do you know of any other female students who would have remembered Dr. Rea?

Can you think of anyone else I should contact regarding this study?
Dear Interview Participant:

I am happy to tell you my dissertation on the work of Dr. Katharine Rea at the University of Mississippi is in its final stages. I cannot thank you enough for your help and assistance with my dissertation. The information you provided on the work and life of Dr. Katharine Rea was immensely helpful in my research.

I recently added quotes and information from our interview to the document. Per our conversation and my Institutional Review Board (IRB) interview protocol, you must review and approve of the information that I would like to include in the dissertation from our interview(s). The quotes and citations from our interview are below. If you would like any of the information changed, or deleted from my document please let me know as soon as possible. Once you are satisfied with the information please sign the bottom of this form verifying I may quote your words (You may also email me your approval and any necessary changes).

I must have your consent before I can include any of the information you provided during our interview(s). I am sending a copy of this document via the U.S. Postal Service and will include a self-addressed stamped envelope for your consent. Please provide your consent to quote your words via e-mail or hard copy at your earliest convenience.

Thank you again for your willingness to be interviewed for this project. I am eternally grateful. If you have any other questions or concerns I can be reached at (218) 280-2291 (cell), or email me at skaiser@go.olemiss.edu.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara R. Kaiser
Doctoral Student, Higher Education
University of Mississippi

Home address:
VITA

Sara R. Kaiser

EDUCATION:

August 2013  Ph.D., Higher Education, University of Mississippi
Dissertation: A “Quiet Activist” During the Second-Wave Feminist Movement: Katharine Rea a Historical Case Study

May 2009  M.S., Educational Leadership, University of North Dakota
Independent Study: Retaining Academically At-Risk Students: A Program Model

May 2004  B.S., Communication, University of Indianapolis
Internships: Public Relations Intern: Shank Public Relations, Indianapolis, IN (Spring 2004)
Marketing Intern: RCA Tennis Championships, Indianapolis, IN (Spring 2003)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

May 2011 – May 2013

Graduate Assistant, School of Education: University of Mississippi
Assist the Associate Dean with writing intensive research; data interpretation; Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate graduate assistant and research fellow; website development; recruitment activities; and organization of school wide committees

January 2012 – December 2012

Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate Research Fellow
Conducted a site visit to study how CPED has influenced how changes occurred at participating CPED institutions. (Project funded through a FIPSE grant). Wrote “Critical Friends” report and conducted analysis of CPED doctoral programs
August 2010 - May 2011

Graduate Assistant, Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning: University of Mississippi

Researched future grant opportunities; compiled statistics for EDHE 202 student success; assisted with faculty workshops; met with students who were in need of extra academic support

March 2006 – August 2010

Student Experience/Parent Coordinator: University of Minnesota, Crookston

Organized and coordinated new student registration and orientation; hired, trained, supervised, and evaluated student orientation leaders and work study students; facilitated campus retention efforts through data driven decisions; managed student mentor program; organized Living and Learning community; advised Alpha Lambda Delta honor society; planned weekend events; served on the admissions committee; developed policy for conditional admission standards; implemented academic workshops; managed Summer Start program; wrote family newsletters; maintained data on retention rates of specific student groups; co-designed and co-taught two sections of First-Year Seminar (Fall 2007); managed over-flow student apartments (live-in position, 2008-2009); co-authored 1.5 million dollar federal TRiO grant; wrote two grants in support of the campus Cinco de Mayo Celebration (total of $4,000); and managed four departmental budgets

September 2004 – March 2006

Admissions Counselor: University of Minnesota, Crookston

Recruited students from specific territories; managed work-study students; maintained relationships with high school guidance counselors; presented at Financial Aid Nights at area high schools; cultivated relationships with prospective students and their families; cold-called prospective students; organized campus preview days; implemented first Campus Camp-In; coordinated summer registration; coordinated, hired, and trained student telemarketers

COLLEGE TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

University of Mississippi-

EDHE 101 Academic Skills for College
EDHE 671 The College and the Student (TA)
EDHE 660 History of Higher Education (TA)
PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:


PROFESSIONAL REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS:


Kaiser, S. (2012, October 25). University of Mississippi and the CPED Initiative. Presentation to the School of Education faculty, University, MS.


GRANTS:

“Second Annual Celebration of Mexican Culture and Tradition in the Spirit of Cinco de Mayo,” Sponsored by a grant from the Northwest Minnesota Arts Council and the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. University of Minnesota, Crookston, April 2010. ($2,000) Accepted

“Second Annual Celebration of Mexican Culture and Tradition in the Spirit of Cinco de Mayo,” Sponsored by a grant from the McKnight Foundation through the Northwest Regional Development Commission. University of Minnesota, Crookston, April 2010. ($2,000) Accepted

Federal TRiO Grant for Student Support Services (co-author). University of Minnesota, Crookston, 2010. ($1,500,000) Unfunded

HONORS/AWARDS:

2013 Outstanding Doctoral Student, Higher Education, University of Mississippi

Aug. 2012 Student of the Month, University Mississippi, School of Education

2010 – Present Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society Member

2009/2010 University of Minnesota, Crookston, Friend of TRiO Award

April & Sept. 2008 Faculty/Staff Person of the Month, University of Minnesota, Crookston

2006 New Professional of the Year, Minnesota College Personnel Association

2003 & 2004 Outstanding Student in Sports Information, University of Indianapolis
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

2013  American Education Research Association Mentoring Seminar Division F, San Francisco, CA
2012  Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Graduate Policy Seminar, Las Vegas, NV
2012  American Education Research Association Mentoring Seminar Division F, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
2012  Southern History of Education Society Conference, Tallahassee, FL
2012  Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate Convening, Williamsburg, VA
2011  Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate Convening, Burlington, VT
2011  Women in Higher Education-Mississippi Network Spring Conference, Gulfport, MS
2006  International Conference on the First Year Experience, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
2006  The Collaboration’s 2006 Summer Institute; Improving Student Learning Through Institutional Change, Northfield, MN
2006  Focusing on the First Year Conference, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
2006  National Orientation Directors Association Region V Conference
2006  Minnesota American Council on Education (ACE) Conference

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

2010 – Present  American Educational Research Association, Division F & J (AERA)
2010 – Present  Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)
2012 – Present  American Association of University Women (AAUW)
2007 – 2009  American College Personnel Association
2006  National Orientation Directors Association
2006  Minnesota College Personnel Association
2005  Northwest High School Counselors Association
SERVICE:

2012 – Present  UM Allies Program Training/Ally Member

2013  Focus Group Facilitator, UM Housing Curriculum Committee

2011 – Present  Commission on the Status of Women, UM

2012  AERA Division F Proposal Reviewer, 2013 Annual Conference

2013 & 2012  Washington D.C. Internship Experience Interview Committee, UM University of Minnesota, Crookston

2008 – 2010  Admissions Committee

2009  Domestic Violence Awareness Work Group

2008  Financial Aid Search Committee

2006 – 2009  Retention Committee

Subcommittee Member: Weekend Programming

Subcommittee Co-Chair First Year Seminar

2007  Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Search Committee

2007  Comprehensive Review Committee- Athletic Coaching Staff

2006  Chair, Search Committee for Director of Student Activities

2005  Orientation Committee

2005  Search Committee for Director of Admissions

2005  Fitness Center Committee

2005  Co-Chair Bookstore Research Committee

COMPUTER SKILLS:

PeopleSoft, CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) certified for human subjects research, Skype, SPSS, NVivo, SAP (employment/student management software), Prezi, Microsoft Office programs including: Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.