Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project

Interview with Arnold Kahn

Interviewed by Alexandra Rutherford
New Orleans, LA
August 10, 2006

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AK: Arnie Kahn, Interview Participant
AR: Alexandra Rutherford, Interviewer

AK – I was born in Sioux City, Iowa, of all places, June 13th, 1942.

AR – Okay, thank you. Sioux City Iowa of all places? I saw from your CV that you were at Iowa State for quite a while.

AK – Yeah. I was there for about 12 and a half years.

AR – Okay. Well let me start by asking the obvious question that you must get asked a lot of the time. That is, you are, to my knowledge, the only man who has played an active role in the Society for the Psychology of Women. Can you describe how that came to be, how that came about?

AK – Well, okay, how did that come about…I think it was an APA [*American Psychological Association*] convention in New Orleans in 1974. There was a symposium that Rhoda Unger chaired dealing with women and gender. I remember Nancy Henley was on the panel; I don't remember the others. I thought it was fascinating, and I had been active in some women's liberation activities in Iowa, and I came up to Rhoda afterwards and asked her if men could be involved in this thing, and she said, 'Oh of course.' She invited me to come to the Division 35 business meeting. Anyway, I started going to some of those kinds of events. There was an AWP [*Association for Women in Psychology*] conference around the same time, maybe a little bit earlier, I can't remember, and I remember calling Sharon Lord who was in charge of it and asking her if men could come, and she said, 'If you have the sense enough to ask, of course you can come.' And there were some other men at the time, Allan Gross, Ron Smith, other men who were at least attending conferences like AWP, although I don't think they were active on the executive committee.

AR – Okay.

AK – So I played some small roles, helped analyze some data for Martha Mednick's presidential address. In 1976 Barbara Wallston called me and said that she was running for president-elect of the Division and she thought it was time for a man to be involved and asked me to run for secretary-treasurer. And I said, "I'll get back to you;" it was a complete surprise. I asked my wife and she said no, she didn't think it was a good idea. She thought women ought to be running feminist organizations. I called two people, I called Rhoda and I called Ginny [*Virginia*] O'Leary, and both of them encouraged me to do it. And so I ran, and I lost, and Marilyn Grossman won. The Division had little money at that time, and when she found out that she

would have to pay her own way to executive committee meetings and lose part of her practice money, she said that she couldn't do the job. And so there was a constitutional crisis; there weren't any provisions for what happens if an elected officer can't fulfill the office. So the EC decided that the person who came in second would take the position. So that's how I got to be secretary-treasurer and how I got involved actually.

{3:36}

AR – Okay. Well tell me a little bit about what it was like in the early seventies, a) just in Division 35 and b) to be more or less an anomaly because of your gender.

AK – It was very different than today because everything was much smaller. The meetings were 20 people, 25 people, and we all knew each other very well. So it didn't seem that much of an anomaly because we were all friends, and most of us were social psychologists. There were fewer clinical and counselling people involved at that time. Sometimes, when I would attend AWP [*Association for Women in Psychology*] for example, there would be people who I didn't know who would give me strange looks, a kind of 'what are you doing here?' look.

AR – Right.

AK – But within the Division activities, there's never been a problem.

AR – Okay. Well tell me a little bit about some of the similarities and differences between AWP and 35 at that time. AWP has been characterized as the more radical, political, organization, and 35 is the kind of working-within-the-structure type organization. What was your experience of that?

AK – My experience was AWP at the time was a lot more lesbian-friendly, was a lot more student-oriented; there were many more graduate students. It was cheap, you know, they had arrangements for many people to stay in a room and conference fees were low. In those days they were often held on a college campus. They had dorms at a time when dorms weren't occupied, so it was, I don't know if it was more radical, but it was more non-traditional. You'd have more things dealing with feminist spirituality and things like that. And a lot of times many of us complained a bit that AWP had very little science; it was very much practice.

AR – To what extent has that remained true?

AK – I have not been to an AWP meeting in well over 20 years. The last time I went I was working for APA, it must have been mid-80s, and Ginny O'Leary and I hopped on the shuttle one day. We went to New York for the day, and I found very little of interest and a lot of people looking at me funny; there were very few men. It didn't feel very comfortable, and there are only so many meetings you can go to anyway.

AR – It's true.

AK - So I haven't been to AWP in some time and I don't really feel that that is particularly my organization.

AR – Yeah. Well let me ask you to go back about what you said earlier about going to the symposium that Rhoda Unger had organized and finding it fascinating. Do you remember what exactly it was that you found fascinating?

{7:05}
AK – Well it's hard to say. I got involved - my wife was very involved with what at that time was called the women's movement, and she taught English and was very interested in women writers. I had grown up very much in an anti-racist family, so I was very involved in the African American Civil Rights Movement, but did not know much about the women's movement, or anything. And one day, I taught a large intro psych class, and I would put what I thought were funny wrong answers to some of the questions on the exams, that often made fun of women. I didn't realize what I was doing until this one woman, who was older than I was, I was in my mid twenties, late twenties, she must have been in her thirties, and she came up and she said, 'These answers are really offensive to women.' And somehow it clicked, I understood. And so, although my wife was very active, she wasn't a political person, she was a scholar, a writer, so I, the political activist, joined the local NOW.

AR – Okay. So something inside of you, this incident with this student made a change in your way of thinking about things.

AK – Yeah, I remember I came back to the class and apologized the next class period. I'm sure most of them had no idea what I was talking about, but yeah, it just sort of, the realization that you are part of the problem. And it wasn't until that hit me that I really understood.

AR – And that kind of combined with your political activism, your general orientation to the world, which was to make change.

AK – Right, to do something about it.

AR - So what was NOW like? This would have been early '70s?

AK – This was early '70s.

AR – Yeah, so what form did your participation take?

AK – This was just a local chapter. I really don't remember very much about it. I remember going to some meetings but I was never terribly active. The woman who was the president, the local president, was Ronni's, my wife's, friend, and somebody we knew. You know, the couples knew one another, but I don't remember a whole lot. I got involved in a number of more local things, such as The Iowa Women's Studies Association. I was program chair in 1980-1981.

AR – Right. Well I'm really curious about the way that feminism and feminist theory, and so on, has influenced psychology, and that again is sort of an open question, whether it has or hasn't. But this started happening of course in a symbiotic way with the women's movement; psychology is not divorced from its context. So as you were a young professional in psychology in the early '70s, and becoming more feminist in your way of thinking, how did you integrate that into your professional career in psychology?

AK – I did it mostly in research; it's changed my research completely around. We started doing research on gender and started out – it was a tradition of the times, the times have changed - of looking at gender differences. In teaching it happened more slowly. Somebody who takes my social psych class today, about half of it deals with gender. Almost every topic I bring gender into it, and often race too, less so class because there's less research on that. When I taught statistics I started would use gender as a variable to analyze things, we started considering it. And it's funny, you can ask questions, we would often pass out little surveys in the class and students would analyze their own data, which you now can't do without going through IRB. And so I would ask them to fill out questions where we would expect men and women to differ, and then analyze it and talk about it. So I would incorporate gender into a statistics class.

{11:42}

AR – Right. And how did your colleagues react to this direction?

AK – For the most part, well I must say, all the time that I was at Iowa State, which was until about '81 or '82, I really kept two distinct lines of research. I had the gender stuff but I also did some straight social psychology things on justice, and did Division 8 as well as 35, but I've never had any particular problem with that, nor has there been any criticism from my department, my departments, any criticism about creating women and gender courses. You know, as long as you're publishing, you can get away with a lot.

AR – Right. And how did the students react when you started bringing this into the classroom?

AK – I'm not sure...The biggest difference came when I started teaching psychology of women and gender, where a lot of the times students are very surprised to see a man in front of the class and the two times I've taught Introduction to Women's Studies, they were very surprised, and often they will tell me afterwards, "You know, I wasn't sure I was going to take this class with a man teaching."

AR – Really? Both men and women students say that?

AK – No, I've only had that comment from women students, but I have so few men in the classes. In a class of 25, it will range from zero to three or four.

AR – Yeah, well let me ask, and I'm not going to keep harping on this, but what do you think has kept more men from being involved, actively involved, in places like Division 35?

AK – I don't know. I think a number of the men have sort of moved off to the men and masculinity area, but I think men don't see it as their issue, their problem. This is a women's thing and women ought to handle it; sort of, you tell me what to do. I also think there's a general thing, even within psychology, issues dealing with women are not valued as highly as those dealing with men, and I think some people might see it as a sort of lower status thing to do. I don't know. So on the one hand I have not had any kind of flack from men or women in my departments about what I do, but I have not had men clamouring saying how can I get involved in this?

AR – Right, right. Well what is your opinion about that? I mean, Division 35 is an incredibly strong Division and it is almost exclusively female. Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

AK – I've never thought about that.

{15:17}
AR – I haven't really either. It sort of came to me as we were talking.

AK – I don't know. I'm not always sure that bigger is better. And I know that there is a concern right now that Division 35 membership is losing some members, and when you reach out and try and broaden, you get less committed people who have different values often and it can sometimes change the shape of and nature of the organization. I don't know what the percentage of division members are men, but it's probably less than ten percent.

AR – Probably, yeah. Well, what brought this to mind was, I was thinking another way of framing my question to you would have been what can the division do if it was decided that it was important to bring in more men, what could they do to make it more appealing to men, feminist men? And then that I guess led directly to the question of, well, what is the philosophy here? How do we kind of proceed?

AK – Yeah.

AR – I don't know.

AK – I don't know. I don't see any clamouring within the EC to get men more involved, although I don't see any hostility towards me being involved.

AR – Right. Okay, well let me take this back a little bit. You talk about some of your training in psychology. You did a Masters and PhD at SIU.

AK – Yeah, Southern Illinois University.

AR – And what was your training and who were your mentors?

AK – SIU did not at the time have specialities. You were experimental, clinical, counselling, school. So my degree says experimental psychology and I was trained pretty much as an experimental psychologist who specialized in social psychology. And Sheldon Alexander, at Wayne State now, was really my mentor. Unfortunately, he left right after my Masters Degree to go to NIMH [*National Institute of Mental Health*] and never came back! But he really got me through the first two years of graduate school.

AR – Okay, okay.

AK – And they didn't replace Shell right away, in part because he had a leave of absence, so there were no real social psychologists in the department. I did my PhD with Bob Radtke who was really at the time, (17:43) [*in a field called*] verbal learning, more cognition, he knew very little about social. There was a group of graduate students who taught one another and we managed to get our PhDs.

AR – Oh interesting.

AK – Fortunately, the job market was wonderful in those days; I got lots of job offers.

AR – Oh good, good. Well I know SIU as a place where there has been an effort to recruit ethnic minority students, and I don't know when that started happening, but people like, African American psychologists like Joe White and others, talk about the Freedom Train, and SIU is one of the places, well Bob Guthrie was there. What was your experience of diversity at SIU in the mid to late sixties when you were there?

{18:30}

AK – I recall virtually none. When I think back about who the graduate students and faculty were, everyone was white; there were women faculty and students. [Janet Helms], wait, Janet was at Iowa State, no that was later.

AR – Yeah, because she's been really active in recruiting too, but she's at the University of Maryland now isn't she?

AK – She is now at Boston College.

AR – Oh she is, that's right. She was at Maryland for awhile though.

AK – Yeah, she was at Maryland for awhile. We went to the same high school together and the same college, but she was younger, and I taught her at Iowa State.

AR – Oh my gosh! That's a neat connection. Well the period that you were in graduate school was of course not only the ramping up of the women's movement, but also, the civil rights movement was in full swing.

AK – Right.

AR – What kind of impact did that have at that point in your life and perhaps even in your experience at SIU?

AK – It's funny, during my SIU experience all I could think about were the classes and the research. I was so focused on that as a graduate student. The one incident I remember has nothing to do particularly with SIU, although I was there at the time. The summer that Martin Luther King marched on Selma (20:14), my wife and I decided to take a vacation somewhere and we drove down to Memphis. And I remember Ronni was very scared that we had Illinois license plates as we were heading into the South. And I very much wanted to, we were so close to Mississippi, and I thought I want to see Mississippi, I've never been there before, and Ronni wouldn't go. But I took the car one day and drove in to Mississippi with my Illinois license plates [Laughs]. And the world has changed so much. A few years later, I just starting to teach, and the Ford Foundation had an institute at Fisk University on integrating African American studies into the classroom. I convinced my department head that they should send me. And that was fascinating because it was mostly African Americans in attendance; although there were a few whites. And one time we decided to go to downtown Nashville, and since I had a car I said, "I we can take it," but they said, "It's too dangerous for blacks and whites to ride in the same car."

AR – Wow.

AK – And that's only thirty years ago.

AR – Yeah, oh wow. Well tell me a little bit then about how you came to the Board for Social and Ethical Responsibility in Psychology at APA?

{21:42}

AK – I was really happy teaching at Iowa State. I was doing real well, getting a lot done, had good students, but my wife was very unhappy. The English department had recently become a full department, it had been English and speech, and they had decided that you had to have a PhD, at least be working on a PhD, to get tenure. And Ronni said I don't want a PhD, I'm not a scholar, I want to be a writer and I like teaching writing. So she was no longer able to teach at Iowa State and so I started looking around. One summer we took a vacation to Washington D.C. and I called Ginny O'Leary and she invited us over for dinner, and she mentioned that she was changing jobs at APA and going to publications with *Psychology Today*, and that her job was going to be open. And so while I was there I made an appointment with Mike Pallack and talked to him about the position, and then later got interviewed for the job, and it seemed like a good position, so I went there initially on a leave of absence, I didn't leave my job, with the notion that we can try this and see if we like it, and ended up there.

AR – Right, right, and you worked there for about four or five years in the mid eighties?

AK – For about five and a half years.

AR – Tell me a little bit about BSERP and your work there.

AK – Well I think it was very much like the Public Interest Directorate is today, it's just in many ways a change in name. But it certainly changed my life in many ways because suddenly I was working with the top psychologists in the country who are interested in the public interest and social responsibility, and a great group of people. And my job was like - you ended up in staffing meetings to make sure that the board or committee does what they're supposed to do and doesn't cause trouble for the organization [Laughs]. APA is a very time consuming place during these meetings because (24:08) the chair comes in the night before, and you go over the agenda. And sometimes you have good chairs who know what's going on, and others who have never read the agenda, and it's just getting through the meetings and working with APA. I learned so much about public policy issues as well as how to run meetings and keep a group on track.

AR – Were there any controversies that stand out in your mind from that period?

AK – There were a number of things, they weren't exactly controversies. We were trying to get APA to divest of its interest in companies that did business in South Africa. Jack McKay did not want to do this, and BSERP felt very strongly, as did many women and other groups, and certainly the Board of Ethnic Minority Affairs. So there were those kinds of in-house issues, and then there are the usual things that would come up. For example, when we passed a resolution on corporal punishment in schools, the scientists weren't so sure that was the way they wanted to see APA go. I think one of the big things, Ginny started it and carried it through, was getting the Committee on Psychology and Disabilities going, and it really was the first time that APA really

paid any attention to its own members with disabilities or disability issues, other than Division 22 Rehabilitation Psychology, which really is a different kind of focus.

AR – Right, right.

{26:00}
AK – There's always controversies between science and practice, and we're in the middle of them. But I think the most exciting things during my tenure was working with the Committee on Gay Concerns, which became the Committee on Lesbian and Gay concerns. Getting that developed and really getting their feet wet and learning how to work with the organization rather than against it.

AR – Who were the kind of catalysts for the Committee on Gay Concerns?

AK – That's (26:30) [wild]. That's when Ginny had the position, [she] created the committee. She wanted to make the committee composed of three men, three women, three gay, three straight. Well, of course she was wrong on some (26:50) [people] [laughs]. I was one of the initial members of that group and, I sort of lost track of the question.

AR – Just sort of who was the catalyst, how did that all get started.

AK – Yeah, Steve Morin was probably the biggest catalyst, and Allan Malyon, who's since passed away. Most of the people who were interested, active, were very young; they had just gotten their degrees. Steve was older, as was Marty Rochlin. I'm having trouble remembering them all because it's not a group that I stayed active with, but that was a wonderful group to work with. I remember one time I was staffing a meeting and we were out to dinner, it was the second day of the meeting, and suddenly this woman looked at me and said, 'You're not gay, are you?' and I said, 'No.' [Laughs]

AR – Oh that's neat. Well I remember reading something that, I can't remember if it was Martha Mednick who wrote this, but in something that has been published about the history of the division, maybe it was someone else, I can't remember, but one of the historical anecdotes that was relayed was one of the, I don't know if it was the section on Black women dance or if it was just a 35 dance, where you danced with another man to challenge peoples homophobic instincts.

AK – That's right, that was Alan Gross. Alan was very active in Division 35and then he quit psychology and went to law school. He was a faculty member at Maryland and decided to go to law school, and so he just completely left psychology. He's a lawyer.

AR – Oh wow.

AK – That's why he's not in the Division today. I think it was an executive committee meeting, but it may have been something else, but I remember we were in the hotel lobby and they had a band, and some of the women were dancing together, so Alan and I decided that we would dance together, too.

AR – Oh neat, neat.

AK – That was true.

AR – Well let me ask you since we're on APA stuff, you've also been involved in SPSSI, Division 9, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social issues. How did you get involved with them?

AK – I had left APA, and, I'm trying to remember, I'm pretty sure I was gone from APA, and I just decided to run for SPSSI council, and I won. And so I was on SPSSI council and they needed a secretary-treasurer so I ran and was elected.
{30:00}

AR – And you had had some experience in that role.

AK – Yeah, I've never wanted to be president of a division, but I love being behind the scenes. And I see very little difference between Division 35 and Division 9. Many of the players overlap entirely, Irene Frieze, Rhoda Unger, have been presidents of both divisions. It's pretty much the same people, only it has the men.

AR – Right, right.

AK – So that was a wonderful time. The years that I was secretary-treasurer were very painful times.

AR – How so?

AK – At the time SPSSI was headquartered in Ann Arbor, and the woman who was the sort of executive officer in Ann Arbor, and the past-president (30:56) and - I'm secretary at the time - the president did not think that the executive officer was doing things right. She felt that she was not handling money correctly, and the past-president and I were very upset at the president. There were endless phone calls among the four of us, and it turned out the president was right. And I remember one APA, the president and I got together, had lunch. After lunch we hugged and I said, "I'm sorry, you were right," because the president wanted her fired, and she was eventually.

AR – This was well before the move to Washington right?

AK – Yes, well before. SPSSI does so well because *JSI* [*Journal of Social Issues*] brings in so much [*by way of*] royalties.

AR – Right. Well what were your impressions, well you've told me that you feel that SPSSI and 35 are very similar, except SPSSI has the men. But what do you see as the...

AK – Let me interpret for a second. One of the real differences between 35 and SPSSI is that 35 very much tries to influence APA and tries to change it. SPSSI is really sort of separate from APA.

AR – Its own thing.

AK – SPSSI is sort of part of APA, they will have council reps and will fight for issues they believe in, but the SPSSI people don't want to be president of APA, they sort of want to do their own thing. And so I see that as a real kind of difference.

AR – Yeah, I knew that but I hadn't experienced it until I attended a few SPSSI council meetings as their historian following Fran Cherry. I didn't realize that there was so much, in some members anyway, quite a lot of conviction about how separate SPSSI should remain from APA.

AK – Right.

{33:05}

AR – And I knew that that had historically been the case and so on, but I didn't realize that so many people felt so strongly about that, so it was kind of an eye-opener to me.

AK – Yeah. I don't know how many members of SPSSI are not members of APA, but I would imagine that it's a fair number. I don't know.

AR – Probably, and a lot of people on council feel quite strongly about keeping things pretty separate. Okay, well now let me ask you now a little bit about your research. You came to gender issues, as you have described, fairly early on, but I notice from your CV that a big area of publication for you has been research on rape and sexual violence. Now how did that evolve?

AK – Very serendipitously. I had a Masters student who was very interested in rape and why some women did not label their experiences as rape. We hadn't done any research on this before, and you know the first time you do research in a new area you're going to make lots of mistakes, and her thesis had lots of problems that we couldn't have known about ahead of time. What we wanted to do is have people write out scripts, and so what she did was give a typical restaurant script. So the person goes into the restaurant, they're greeted by a host, they're seated, given water, given a menu, and so on. Then we asked people to talk about what happens on a typical rape; woman walking, man attacks woman, you know, they didn't give us enough detail so there was very little to analyze.

AR – Right.

AK – So she graduated, but Ginny Matthie, who was on her thesis committee, and I decided, there's something here, let's see if we can explore this more. So we got a team of undergraduates to work with us and pre-tested and worked out some ways of getting people to write more elaborate scripts. Now an interesting sideline: a 1994 paper on rape scripts was the first manuscript that Jackie White accepted as editor of PWQ [*Psychology of Women Quarterly*].

AR – Oh neat.

AK – So anyway, Ginny and I just continued for awhile, always with students, doing this research, doing different aspects of it, and I've continued to do it up till today.

AR – What have been some of the most, in your view, the most important or interesting findings from this research?

AK – I think the thing that has amazed me the most, and surprised me, is how a lot of women refuse to admit or call their experience rape and go to extraordinary lengths to not label it as rape. When you have people write about their experience, which is what we do, we don't call it rape, we just ask them to write about their experience, they will sometimes put in big capital letters, "THIS IS NOT RAPE" even though what they're writing about fits the legal definition of rape to a T. And one of the things I'm very interested in right now is what are some of the limits? For example, women who have been raped by a boyfriend never call it rape. When we ask observers to read the same descriptions, the observers can't decide; sometimes they say yes, sometimes no. Oral sex, even if it's forced, women do not call it sex or rape. Again, observers aren't sure, they think maybe it is, maybe it isn't; if it's not me who had oral sex forced on me, then maybe that is rape for her. But there are certain situations, alcohol for example. If the woman's been drinking, she seems to blame herself - I shouldn't have been drinking, I should have known better - kind of counterfactual.

{37:25}

AR – Right, right.

AK – And so one of the things I think I would like to explore is what are some limits of this. What are some things that lead people to call it rape and not rape? We've tried to do some stuff with men and it's not been very successful; I've never gotten anything. We tried to examine men's rape scripts and what men see as happening during a typical rape and it's very interesting data. We tried to look at acknowledged and unacknowledged rapists, and we couldn't get people to acknowledge that they had raped anybody; we couldn't get a sample.

AR – Sure, that's tricky.

AK – Even responding anonymously.

AR – Right. I'm curious, in women's writings where any outside observer might easily say this qualifies [*as rape*] and yet they are vehemently opposed to the idea of calling it rape, have you had anyone describe why it's so uncomfortable to call it rape?

AK – No, we've not done that. I find doing real qualitative research with undergraduate students very difficult. To train them how to interview and then the data collection interviews, and transcribing the tapes is just too difficult, We tried last year to look at women who have successfully resisted an attempted rape and what are they like and what they did to escape. We surveyed a large number of students, giving examples of 'Have you ever done…' this, that, and we asked them to take one of them and write out in detail what they did. And the final thing we did was ask if they would be willing to be interviewed about their experience. Well we started in the fall and by the time the students got up to gear and we got through the IRB (which took a long time), we barely got the surveys finished in the fall. Then we do another IRB to interview the people, and the IRB took forever, and then we tried calling the people back, trying to schedule them for an interview. However, it was getting close to finals, and the students didn't want to take an hour out of their lives to talk about a bad experience.

AR – Right, right.

AK – So we got all of four interviews and I said, no more. I love qualitative research, it's great, it's so rich, it's so damn hard.

AR – Yeah, it is, it really is.

AK – I would love to do more of the kind of in-depth thing, but it's really, it's too hard, it takes too much training. To train my assistants took a couple of months; we'd practice interviews, had them read about interviewing. But you know, of all the things that can possibly come up when you're talking about sexual assault with somebody and we had to get the students ready to handle difficult situations.

AR – There's that whole dimension, yeah. I've been trying to train some students to do, well, we have history and theory graduate students that I work with and a lot of them are very interested in qualitative research and have been trained in it, and can't find anywhere to go and do it, so they come to our history theory program. So I'm trying to get some of those folks to mentor some of the undergrads and help me learn too. Oral history interviewing is one thing but it's not the same as an interview that you would do to do qualitative research. There are ways in which oral histories can be used in that way but that's not the primary purpose. So it's been interesting for me to learn more about it and it does seem incredibly time consuming.

{41:25}

AK – Yeah, there's a really good book called *Talking with Strangers*, I can't remember the author, that I have the students read. And he's wonderful, talking about what you do in certain dilemmas; what happens if in the course of the interview you learn this person might commit some kind of dangerous act. You've made an agreement that everything is confidential.

AR – Yeah, almost like teaching clinical skills and ethics, and so on, at the same time.

AK – Right.

AR – Well let me ask now, switching gears a little bit, you mentioned earlier today that you have taught women's studies, introduction to women's studies. And I'm curious, as a historian, about the relationship between women's studies programs and psychology. A lot of the people I've interviewed have been very influential in getting women's studies started at their universities or have been involved. But my impression is that psychology as a discipline hasn't maintained really strong ties with women's studies, except in places where there are some psychologists who make it, feminist psychologists who make it their business to kind of be involved in women's studies. So I guess my question is in your experience has that been true, or maybe the proper question is to what extent has psychology, in your experience, been accepted as part of women's studies?

AK – I have not been involved in any program that has had a big women's studies program. I was very instrumental in starting the program at Iowa State. We (43:12) [*worked*] with a number of people going before the Faculty Senate and then a group of administrators, talking about what is necessary to have a viable academic program. I've taught introduction to women's studies three times. I came to James Madison in 1986, and there was nothing; there was not a women's studies program, there was no psychology of women, nothing. There might have been a women's literature course or something. There had been a Faculty Women's Caucus that had

for years been talking about proposing this program but it never seemed to get off the ground. Sharon O'Hara, who was a faculty member in economics, and I got together and we said why don't we do a course (44:12) [*before we get the program going, there should be a course*.] And so she and I co-taught introduction to women's studies, sort of struggled along, we didn't know what we were doing, and then after that we got other people to teach it. I once co-taught the course with a sociologist, and one semester I taught the course by myself. After Pam Gibson came to JMU, the two of us developed the psych of women course at James Madison, which I had done many years ago before at Iowa State. And we got that going and after teaching it once, they decided that they wouldn't give Pam and I both credit for teaching this one course, and so we started alternating teaching it, and then Pam went off to develop her women and mental health seminar and a course on women and disabilities. Now I just teach women and gender once a semester.

AR – Okay.

AK – But I've been involved. I'm on the women's studies faculty advisory board, and there are sociologists, psychologists, a couple of literature people, a historian, a person in religious studies, but we have not gotten into boundary issues and things. It's much more how can we coordinate what's going on, how can we get more students involved, how can we better communicate among one another. A number of advisory board members all went to a National Women's Studies Association meeting; I went to North Carolina to the beach [laughs]. It was hard, it was a tough choice!

{46:05}

AR – But the beach won out!

AK – But I had been out in California earlier visiting my daughter in Sacramento.

[Tape Flips]

AR – As a person who's been involved in organized feminist psychology and who has done research on gender issues and so on for, gosh, thirty years, you [must] have some perspective on the field, and someone who has been involved in APA too.

AK – Yeah.

AR – In your view how successful has feminist theory, feminist approaches, feminist therapy, how successful have these things been in influencing the way psychology is done and the way psychologists' think?

AK – That's interesting. I like the phrasing "is done"

AR – Yeah, I know, (47:02) [it kind of leaves it open]

AK – I think in many ways it's been enormously successful, beyond dreams. Students tell me that in a counselling course now there's a section on feminist therapy. That was simply unheard of [before]. When we started out there was no feminist therapy, so it evolved. I think, and I haven't looked at intro psych books and things like that, but I think issues relevant to women,

things such as abortion and equal wage kinds of things, have made it into the mainstream in the field in a way that, these things were just invisible. Violence against women is something that is in every social psych textbook, but it wasn't when I started out. So in many ways I think it has been very successful. At least academic psychology, it's like anything else in academia, it's like a big foam rubber pillow – as long as you're there pushing, you have an impact. The minute you turn your back, it goes away. It'll revert back to the way it was.

AR – Right.

AK – So it's not as though we've won the battle and now we can go work on some other issue. But I think it's definitely had an impact. At one time I could keep up with, in terms of psychology of women, there was *Sex Roles, Psych of Women Quarterly,* and that was it. Also, of course, there was *Signs*, a women's studies journal and some other things, but now there are so many journals out there. You know, *Violence Against Women* is a separate journal, and even within the small area that I'm interested in, I can't keep up with the research. So it's really expanded a great deal.
{49:17}

AR – One of the things I'm interested in is to what extent the increasing proportion of women in psychology will have an impact on how psychology is done. I mean we're at a place now where the statistics show that gosh, at both undergraduate and graduate levels now, women are by far in the majority. Still a little bit of work to be done in terms of tenured faculty and so on.

AK – Right.

AR - But I'm so curious about how this will play out in an era in which so few undergrads that I work with will actually come out and say "Yeah, I'm a feminist."

AK – Yeah.

AR – What's your, I mean you work with undergrads in these areas, what are your views on that?

AK – I'm sort of getting two things here.

AR – Yeah, I put two things out there, sorry.

AK – In terms of the young women and certainly the young men, feminist is a bad label for them, and they always say it's this ugly, braless woman who's crude. And what I find fascinating, after they take my course or almost any other similar kind of course, they're proud to be called feminists.

AR – Yeah, so it's sort of a matter of getting educated and knowing what that means.

AK – I think it's a matter of getting educated and then, I really think it would be fascinating to do a follow up study because I think once you get out of that class, you go back to your peers, you go back out into the real world, where those views aren't supported. I'm not sure what happens when you leave. I mean I find it necessary to come to a Division 35 executive committee meeting periodically just to find out that my view of the world is a correct one, where other people agree with me.

AR – Yeah.

AK – And it can give me some social reality out there. But certainly taking these kinds of classes does have an impact. In fact, we have a poster on Saturday morning and Jan Yoder, Ann Fischer, and I, looking at three different schools where we look at the impact of taking a women and gender class and compare it with a control group of students who take introductory psych class. And the change is really remarkable.

AR – Oh neat. Well tell me, you've talked a little bit about the success of feminist psychology, the journals, the areas of research, topics that people would not have even considered to be part of what researchers should look at. What remains as the challenges? Where has feminist theory, feminist psychology failed to make in-roads?

AK – One thing, and I'm a firm believer, I think the mistake we made a long time ago was not using the word feminist. I would love to see Division 35 be called feminist psychology, to legitimate that term. And what we've done is leave the opponents of feminism to redefine it essentially. But I think listening at the EC meeting last night, and it's been going on for awhile, the whole issue of intersecting identities is a really fascinating one. And I think that feminist psychology is slowly learning that not all women are the same, and they're not all white, and they're not all middle class, and that's been the primary voice that's been out there, and to add these other voices. Who knows what could happen; it could be revolutionary.

{53:31}

AR – Yeah.

AK – One of the real differences between psychology and other fields, in terms of feminism, is psychology is slow to embrace post-modern thinking, qualitative methods, any other kind of methods other than empirical, counting and comparing. And I think changing methods can dramatically change the field. So I think there's exciting things going on and I think that many of the people who are in control are open to some of those things in a way that they weren't 15 years ago.

AR – I was going to ask you about that, how you've seen, even within the division, the kind of feminism or the definition of feminism change and evolve.

AK – Well I see it mostly if you look at our research methods affecting things. And some people say that we can't live together with qualitative and quantitative; they're two different philosophies all together. They come from two different traditions and I'm not sure they can easily be [used together]

AR – Yeah, Jeanne Marecek has written about this and I happen to agree that using them with the idea that they're somehow going to converge in what they, I don't think that that's maybe the best way to go because of the differing philosophies. You could use a quantitative method and a qualitative method and they could come up with very different results, contradictory results even, but that doesn't mean that one is valid and one isn't.

AK – Yeah but typically they ask very different questions.

AR – They do, to begin with, yeah.

AK – And so the evidence isn't necessarily compatible.

AR – Yeah. I'm glad you brought up intersecting identities because it is fascinating and it has certainly become somewhat of a buzz word, at least within 35, and I think in many divisions. And one of the things I've been trying to do with the interviews is get people to talk about what that is like in their own lives, how gender and ethnicity, and yes being a feminist, but also being a person of colour, a woman of colour and a feminist, and how they experience that. Personally in your case, do you consider that you have an intersecting identity, and if so what are the intersections?

AK – Oh yeah, I mean…I don't know. It's hard to know what the world is like from another person's perspective. You know, we talk about this in class so much, but I don't wake up and say, 'Oh my god, I'm a guy. I'm heterosexual' you know! [Laughs]. So you have a lot of identities that are pretty much invisible until they're brought out. Now, when I come to an EC meeting, my being a man becomes very relevant and I think about that a lot. So, I find it changes depending on the situation. I was never so aware that I was white as when I was at Fisk University at workshop. I would go off campus across the street to go into a bar to have a beer, and I'm the only white person in the bar. You know, I'm in a Black ghetto, and it's a very weird feeling.

{57:05}

AR – Yeah, yeah.

AK – And so it certainly plays out in my own life in different ways. There is a course at my campus for people who want to be in higher education, such as the office of residence life, a graduate course. And they got a group of Jewish people at the university, had a couple students, a couple faculty, a couple staff people, one person who was an army recruiter, to talk about what it was like being Jewish at JMU. Well, suddenly, you realize how much a given identity does impact you in some ways.

AR – Right

AK – Until you start talking about it with other people. I told them I thought it was a fascinating course, because they're doing it with different identities; have a group of lesbian and gay people come in and talk about what it's like, and again, faculty, students, staff, and different identities. And it was an interesting technique that I'd never seen before. We all sat in the centre and talked for about an hour, break, and then we go on the outside, some of the students go in the centre, and talk about their reactions to what we were saying.

AR – Oh wow.

AK – And we could then talk back and forth, so we could look at how they saw us as we were talking.

AR – Oh interesting. Well is there anything that I haven't asked you about that you would like to add?

AK – I don't know, an interesting thing I find, talking about identities, is when I started out with Division 35 we were all so young. And when I go back there I think, there are all these young people that I don't know! [Laughs] And I really find that very heartening, that new people are coming in with energy and doing things. And one reason I dropped out of Division 35 and went to SPSSI for a while was I thought you just can't have the same people doing things all the time, you need to make room. I see it sometimes happening in some of the positions, you know, president, council rep, convention chair, council rep again, and of course because you have name recognition, you always get elected.

AR – Right, right. So trying to make way for new people to come in.

AK – Yeah, you sort of have to step away. What I'm doing now is book series editor and it's probably the most work I've ever done, but it's not central to the functioning really. It might bring in a little money.

{1:00:05}

AR – Okay, well any kind of closing remarks in terms of the future of the division? You've already spoken a bit about where things are at, how things have changed, any things you'd like to see the division continue to do or do in the future?

AK – I think the division has been very, very successful and I think one of the ways of looking at that is just looking at the balance sheet, compared to a time when there was nothing. We paid for our own transportation and our own lodging, and that was true for the president, or we had maybe $300 for the president. I hope the division keeps doing what they do well – putting out a really good journal, a really interesting newsletter. I got really scared last night when people talked about, well maybe we should lower the standards for publication in our journals for people who are trying to get tenure. And that's a little bit scary because I think if you say that some articles have lower standards than others, your journal starts losing its credibility. I don't know, I think inevitably there's going to be some kind of conflict between science and practice, there always is, and I think the division has been very fortunate in having, for the most part, avoided that.

AR – Yeah, that's true.

AK – But that's always a dangerous thing.

AR – Okay, well why don't we stop there.