Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project

Interview with Martha Mednick

Interviewed by Alexandra Rutherford
Washington, DC
February 21, 2005

When citing this interview, please use the following citation:

Mednick, M. (2005, February 21). Interview by A. Rutherford [Video Recording]. Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History and Online Archive Project. Washington, DC.

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A: Alexandra Rutherford, Interviewer

M: Martha Mednick, Interview Participant

M: Mednick is the name I've used, Martha Mednick, and I was born in New York City and I lived there. Birthday, 3/31/29.

A: I'm here in the guise of the Division 35 Oral History Program that we are getting initiated and so why don't we talk about your career, basically, and the ways that feminism and Division 35 - I know you have held various offices within the division - how these intersections between your feminist work and your research and your activities in Division 35, but also, I know that you've been actively involved in SPSSI as well. And I'd like you to talk a little bit about that, so just by way of getting started, I was wondering if you could speak a little bit about how you came into psychology?

M: I would say it was an accident. I went to CCNY, the City College of New York, at that time CCNY was freestanding, there was no city university. And I went there because it was all my parents could afford, plus they didn't want me to go away, because girls didn't go away. My parents were immigrants and working class. I'm from a working class family.

A: Where were they immigrants from?

M: Well my mother came from - they were Jewish, they had come from Russia, my mother came from Russia, town of Pinsk, and my father came from Poland, small town, they didn't come together, they came, well probably at similar times, but they met later. They were very young, my father was probably 16 when he came with his father and my mother, sometimes she said she was 13, other times she said she was 15, she had this way of changing her age depending on her mood, but they were kids, we would think of them as kids, but they both went right to work. So, that's where it started I guess.

A: They wanted you to stay close to home?

M: Well when I, you know, I obviously could go to college and I was, you know, I didn't know much, that was one of the things I realized when I started with my own daughters, that when I went off to school, my parents didn't know anything. I couldn't get guidance from them and I went to New York City High School which was fine, but we didn't get

very good counseling about what you could do, where you could go, what were the possibilities. I was sort of timid and very young. We sort of galloped through school in those days, so I ended up going to City which was a very good school.

When I say where I went to school - old CCNY - people say, "There were girls there?" Actually, CCNY had very few women and it was a liberal arts college that was - the original school policy was written to exclude women, only men were allowed to go, but then they had the College of Education added later that didn't exclude women.

So there were women there, not a whole lot. I started City in 1946, which was right after World War II, and it was pretty intimidating because a lot of the students were returning veterans, married men, you know. To me they were every old, they were like 24, 26, plus they were gung ho, they were determined, they were going to do this as fast as possible. Of course I didn't' realize all of this then, but it was very competitive, it really was, and when I looked around in what to major, of course, my parents - especially my mother - said you have to do something useful so that you could earn a living etc. etc. Maybe you never heard that, but it was a very big thing for my parents. So I took a degree in education and they had a, they had a section called psychological services which was basically about learning testing. They had a big remedial learning program at City at that time, some really very well known people I later found out. So you know we had that, as part of the training, but I also had to take a bunch of Ed. courses, philosophy of education, methodology, you know, and elementary and I did eventually get a New York City teachers licence, but I stayed in psychology and let's see, I finished my BSc in January, and I got all my degrees in the middle of the year, hence I never went to another graduation after high school, much to my mother's distress. But I'm a little sorry about it, because I go to all my kids and grandkids events but the truth is that I graduated in January and at that point I was planning to get married. The wedding was in June, so I started a Master's program, they had an MS in school psychology at City at that time so I started that.

A: What was the job market like by the time you graduated?

M: Well see the thing [was], women were admitted into liberal arts colleges. I graduated in '50, by '51, they admitted women to liberal arts, but until then, any woman who wanted to get a liberal arts degree, might go to City and then switch to either Hunter, Queens or Brooklyn - there were these other schools. (phone rings- Martha gets phone-tape is running).

A: Ok, you were telling us about gender composition, in '51, they were admitting women.

M: Well in the Ed. classes there were still women, because that's the only place where women could go. So once I started taking, especially straight Ed., you see the psych classes, we took the same classes, in order to get the psych degree, you had to take all the psych classes which included everything from experimental, to everything. It wasn't just psychological services, so it wasn't until I actually took Ed. classes that there were a lot

of women. I have this neighbor down the hall here who said she went to City at the very same time, and I mean, we're about the same age, so, and another friend I met recently who was in City, it was a huge place. So anyway, that's what I did in order to go to City.

A: Right right, and then you mentioned that…

M: Then I started the Master's degree in school psychology, I would say it was 50/50, I mean, it's really hard to remember things like gender composition, you didn't think about it so much then, I didn't think about it, I have to confess, and then I got married, in 1950, I got married, I was too young! Anyway…

A: Was it something that was kind of expected…

M: Everybody did it. It's also after World War II, it was in the '50s. I was, I was close to a few women in high school, they didn't even go to college, they were just waiting for their boyfriends to come home so that they could get married and start a life. You know, so, I was really very unusual doing what I did.

So after we married, we moved out, we moved out West. That was mainly so that my husband could go to school at the University of Oregon, and so while I was there I took courses, and I tried to make some money. It was what we had to do. He had an assistantship, but there were some ups and downs and then we moved - he moved - and I followed him. I write about that in here, I don't know if you saw this article, you know, so he moved to Northwestern University and then a year later, I finished my Master's. I went back to New York, finished my Master's degree and then got into Northwestern, I was a year behind. My husband at that time, we were planning to continue the way it was, and we did. One of the nice things at this University of Oregon is that we knew Leona Tyler (past President of APA) - she was in counseling psychology and I took courses with her and in my, in my Masters program I had studied Rorschach a lot, the Rorschach test, and she had this course where she wanted to include projective techniques, so she got me to do some of the lecturing, so that was, you know, it was all a very nice experience, and then we went to Northwestern.

A: And so by this time, you knew that psych…

M: Well, I say, in a way, it always felt in a way like it just happened, although you know, I did like it, but you know we were trained in City, very heavily psychoanalytic. I didn't know a lot of the rest of psychology, and I learned a lot of that later, later. I learned a lot about testing and remedial reading and I could get some work teaching students. It's different now, but that was something that I could do.

A: Other than Leona Tyler, did you have any other kinds of mentors or professors you could count on?

M: Well, you know mentor is a word that also has come into the vocabulary, I wouldn't say recently, but maybe in the past 20 years. Others, at Oregon? Or at all?

A: At all?

M: Well my advisor was Janet Spence**,** my dissertation advisor. She was at Northwestern then as a very young assistant professor, although she was Janet Taylor then, and she was my dissertation advisor. She was very supportive, as supportive as she could be. We see each other a lot. I go to Cape Cod in the summer and she lives there, so we see each other, and I visit her in Texas, well where one of my daughters lived for a while. But anyways, she says now, "I don't think I did as much as I could for you in those years." I mean, because, your perspective changes because when we only looked for a job for my husband and I followed him along, there was a lot of that in those years. So you know, and I wasn't the type to make a stink, there were others that did and I don't know, I couldn't do that, so I always got things to do.

A: Tell me a little bit about your dissertation work.

M: It was published and reprinted - probably I could show you a copy of it. My dissertation was a very experimental dissertation, looking at mediated generalizations, it was kind of in the Hullian tradition. Janet was a Hullian and I used her scale, the Manifest Anxiety Scale, and I looked at how mediated generalization was affected by level of anxiety. It was literally a laboratory study. I measured galvanic skin response, it was my dependant variable and the central thing was the incubation effect. The incubation effect is that if you have a negative association with a particular, in a particular incident, if you don't do anything about it, the anxiety incubates. So I showed all that. It was galvanic skin response which at that time just involved - you know, technology has changed totally. I had colleagues at Howard who were using apparatus that would do the kind of thing that I was doing then. I stopped doing it after a while, after, I left there, but you know it was a very simple-minded device that measured - you hooked the person up to an instrument - the galvanic skin response, your resistance, and it just printed out yards and yards and yards and yards of paper, I mean yards! I had boxes full of that paper that moved around with me until really, I still had it in '69, then I finally decided I'm not going to do anything else with this.

I showed that there was mediation and I used the mediation, the mediated response was how to use words, words that association - that was another thing that I found very interesting in earlier years was associative responses - anyway, so what we did was, [we introduced a noxious stimulus in association with the word 'light', it happened to be light, there were two words, I can't remember offhand what the other one was, and then, this was all calibrated**,** the noxious stimulus was a very loud noise, and they are sitting there going through this thing and now, I don't think I would be able to do it now, because you didn't have the, what's it called, the same restrictions. I don't think I would want to do it anymore. But the truth is that everyone, there was one group that had to come back after two days, to get the incubation effect, and you know, a group of treated and a group of control, everyone came back except one person who, she couldn't do it anymore, so, it shows either lambs to the slaughter or what, I mean nobody seemed to die, but anyways, I

demonstrated the incubation effect using mediated generalization as the dependent variable and I could give you a copy of the paper.

I will show you my dissertation, they didn't even have Xerox then, so we used the oxalid process which was a photograph that processed that, anyway my dissertation, so you know how photographs used to get faded, so it's very faded, it's like brown. So there you go, that's history for you.

A: I'm really curious as to how you got, you were - I don't know if you would have described yourself as a Hullian, but you were working within a Hullian framework.

M: Well Northwestern was, the Midwest was very different - and Northwestern was a very small psychology department. They came late into even clinical, they didn't even have a social psychologist at that time, so I mean the social psychologist they had there, was very elderly and retired, and they hired Don Campbell later after I was finished, so they didn't have social psychology which was really just ridiculous when you think about it, but I learned a lot of every other kind of psychology, plus I had an internship. I had a two-year internship in the Veterans Administration, where I was going to be a clinical psychologist, we called it clinical-experimental, you know, so this was a clinical topic that I was telling you about, anxiety and Janet went through exactly the same kind of training with Spence, so…

A: Tell us a little bit about your internship then.

M: It was a Veterans Administration [hospital], I don't know if they still have them, but they had excellent internships, and you know at that time, Veterans Administration, it was before any drugs, so the hospitals were full and the outpatient clinics were very very busy, so the first hospital I went to was more of a general hospital, but we worked on a ward where they had people with organic brain damage and the interns who were there were from the University of Chicago and Northwestern. So one of the teachers there was Joseph Wepman**,** who was very big in organic, in that part of psychology, so we learned a lot about organicity, which was very important at that time and I spent, it was a year there. That was at Oak Park hospital by the way, Oak Park VA hospital. I mean I learned a lot of testing; I did a lot of testing with the Wechsler, which was then called the Wechsler Intelligence Test, Wechsler Memory Scale. You know there was a lot – people even tried to diagnose organicity with the Rorschach at that time, so you know, I learned a lot. I learned a lot about people, about psychology, which we didn't learn about as much at Northwestern, we learned how to deal with beings who, human begins who had problems, I don't know, I was probably too young to literally know how to do it, but, you know, there was a psychology, a group of psychologists there, there was a department of psychology and they dealt with all kinds of patients. And then I had a year at another hospital that was a hospital that had chronic patients. It was in Waukegan**,** Illinois. Sometimes we had to drive to those places and if you know the geography, you know, and we had, there was a clinical staff there, a psychology staff there and we learned all the different clinical techniques, including the MMPI and you know and just entered group therapy and individual therapy and were supervised by people on staff, plus people

from the different universities, like Chicago and Northwestern came to consult at, and this was a program that went on for years and years and years and then there was an outpatient clinic downtown we spent a year there. So that was you know, like counseling.

A: And so at that point …

M: I had that for two years, so the good part of it is paid money, and when we both were in that program. I never paid a penny for any of my education, isn't that amazing? I read, I see with my own family, you know, it's not what it was, I was so lucky, I was lucky, considering, I was very lucky, I just went all the way through school, you know.

A: Can you remember what the relationship was between the psychologists and the psychiatrists were at the time?

M: Crummy. Well they once sent around… I love this story because I'm sure its, I'm sure it covers a lot of under, other territory that you didn't hear about as an intern; we were the low of the low. But once the psychiatry department sent around a notice saying, only real doctors can park in the reserved parking lot. So you know that fight, that would have, that was going on, so you know, but you know, there was some psychiatrists always that understand that as psychologists we weren't, we had different kind of knowledge about individual, human behavior than the psychiatrists at that time anyways, I mean they were residents who had just gone through a few years of medical school and at that time, I mean they didn't have psychiatric courses, they were just in learning. They didn't even have all the drugs they have now, so it was very different kind of training and we were pretty separate, I don't know we had a department head with a totally different view of this, I can't remember who the heck it was then. I just, but umm, we had good, very energetic supervisions, I mean I remember we took it seriously and they liked it, I mean the psychologists liked having the students of course.

A: I meant to ask you about, I know you spent some time, I don't know how long it was, I know you spent some time at Harvard Behavior Research Laboratory?

M: Skinner's lab. You know of him? (laughs). Well see that was after I followed my husband to Harvard, that was his first job, Harvard, how can you say no to Harvard?! Even if it was $ 3000 a year! (laughs) Can you believe it? Anyways, um, so I was looking around for different positions. I was all finished, I had my PhD, and my former husband stayed on, you know he was finished before me, but he got a postdoc and stayed on, so I finished. That was my dissertation year, which was very good, so I could say, that was supportive and umm, then we , then we moved to Cambridge where the job was and umm, then you know, I was looking what to do, I had to do something, I had to have , apart from the fact that I wanted to do something, we had to have some income, so I did a lot of weird things, but then I found out I could try for a post doc, well Ogden Lindsley hired me on to do some testing of his catatonics, which, I know a lot about tests, and I knew about umm, test like , I have a paper on that too, a test like, very simple minded test, where the umm, patients just has to point at what you are saying, very simple kind of intelligence tests, anyways, so Ogden hired me on and I was doing some of that, we lived

actually pretty close to where this lab was so , and umm, then I decided to apply for this postdoc and I got the postdoc and it was sponsored by Skinner, and a psychiatrist named Harry Solomon at the Harvard Medical School so that's when, and I did my own study, I mean I had my own study which I did with autistic children which was pretty hard. I think that's when I left clinical psychology at some level after that, so, you know that's…

A: And do you have any recollection of what the lab was like?

M: Well it was filled with characters. Well, I don't know if I was a character, it was during that year that I got pregnant with my first child and but you know, I hung in and finished my study because once I had the postdoc, I had, I was just, I did, I tried to set up a token economy, you know you can tell I was in that behaviorist mode for quite a number of times, I probably still am, you know, very, non psychoanalytic, umm, and I taught personality theory a lot. Anyways, I set up this token economy with these kids, there was this separate state mental health, children's hospital and I worked with kids who were all hospitalized, so I worked with a group of those kids and I also found the control group a very, smart alec kids from Boston and I did, I tried to set up this token economy, and it sort of failed, but I did, well, I made these beautiful tokens, I had them made, I had a little bit of money and I had these tokens made, they were blue rectangular chips, umm, I don't know that they said on them, they said something on them and they were quite attractive, so the autistic children, they were supposed exchange them for money, for candy, for money, we tried, well, they just hung them around their neck and wanted them, so that was, the funny story about that. You are wasting your tax money!

A: It wasn't Fernald…?

M: That's was a school for retarded children, and that has a whole, I mean I didn't have anything to do with them, he was the one who did the social quotient scale, is that right? I think and he was measuring how socially apt, kids be, what they could deal with, but that was a different institutions and they had the small children's hospitals that was attached to Metropolitan State Hospital, that's where I worked with Og. I mean, I think he hired people, I don't know why he hired me, but , they were all characters. There was one guy there who umm, was a Harvard undergraduate who studied bats, but he got interested in catatonic schizophrenics and developed a relationship with this guy who when he started, he was trying to use a reward, a reward system to get this guy to even get out of his room and he established a relationship with this, this undergraduate, so I mean there was probably an interesting person, interesting people, not characters, anyways.

A: I mean, I've seen your name in your publications that were all kind of, how does Martha Mednick hook up with all these people?

M: I mean he was, he eventually got his doctorate at that time, he was fighting with them, I don't know if you want to hear this story, but he was fighting with them to umm, accept Russian as a second language and they wouldn't do it, because they did French and German. And you know, why Russian? Well Ogden said, well, Pavlov, you know, and he knew Russian, and I don know if he finally talked them into it or what, but that was

like and he was really stubborn, but and everyone smoked in that office until my daughter, I said, maybe that's why you are so flakey, everyone smoked in that office, while I was pregnant with her.

A: So you become pregnant with your first child, how did that impact on your career?

M: Well I stopped working, after the fellowship was over. I did a little bit of stuff, I did stuff at Harvard, I was - I don't know what I was - sort of assisting in the clinical courses a little, but the first year she was born, it wasn't until late in that year I was just staying home, it's just the way it is, it's the way it was. And I was ok with that, I mean.

A: Was there any, I'm likely being a bit presentist, was there… taking current day kind of ideas… and your husband, was he in the psychology department?

M: Yah he was in the psychology department. Mednick, and he's famous in other parts of psychology, he's still, he's still doing stuff at University of Southern California in schizophrenia and criminality and genetics, there we part company.

A: Was there any talk of being able to get you a somewhat more permanent position or was that jut not…considered?

M: You know, not really, and partly I sometimes think, where was I, but, and there were people at Michigan, women, at Michigan who wouldn't have been there if they hadn't insisted, but some of them came there into the department and then married later, so they were all ready maybe married academic, or Elizabeth Douvan, she married an attorney in Ann Arbor, but she was already in the department, so I mean there were, some women models. Now, I know that - well, anyway, no, the answer is no. It wasn't something that we talked about, but after, when my daughter was 11 months old, we moved to Berkeley, lock stock and barrel where my ex-husband worked at the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research, it also wasn't an academic, you know it wasn't a line appointment, but we just went, we liked to go around. I got a half-time position teaching clinical psychology, I was teaching testing anyway and I still have students who I'm still in touch with. I was 28. I was doing that and this guy came over to me, I'll never forget this, John Enwright was his name, and he said, oh you're taking this course, (laughs) because you know he was older. So I mean, no I'm teaching it! I enjoyed it, but Leo Postman who hired me said, now remember, you're not in line [for a position], remember this is not an academic appointment. He felt he had to make it clear you know, [at] which [point] I said, ok, I didn't even know if we were going to be there next year, so… but other people might have, and I know people who did fight, did have a big fight there, Sue Irvine**,** I don't know if you ever heard of her, she's a psycholinguist and she was hired as maybe getting in line, but they wouldn't hire her and she just kept [going], and she finally got into the psycholinguistics department at Berkeley.

A: Well I know at Berkeley they have nepotism rules…

M: I mean there were everywhere, Michigan, after that we went to Michigan and there were some exceptions, but with me they told me I couldn't even teach in the school of education, I couldn't - no matter what. So you know, again, I, I got this part time job and we got grants and that's how, until the divorce which was in 1964, I sought out and at that point I figured oh I have to make more money, and I want more. You know when my kids were little, you are so absorbed in little kids, at least I was, I could see with my daughter, I think she's too absorbed with the kids, but…

A: So by the time you got to the University of Michigan and by the early '60's you were starting to think about ending your marriage and then pursuing your career.

M: Well, when the marriage ended, and after I got over the aggravation, which I don't want to talk about, but then I figured well… but actually I stayed in Michigan for three years, I had different part time jobs, I taught at the school of nursing, we taught research methodology, I had you know finished up a grant which I had with my husband on a test we had developed and I taught some evening classes, so I eked out a few [opportunities]. And I still liked not having to be out eight hours a day, I didn't even look for that kind of job at that time. And then I started you know, by that time I knew a lot of people at Michigan. There were pretty knowledgeable people there and you know I started asking around, like Bill McKeachie (President of APA and head of U.M. Psychology Department) helped me a lot. I said "You know, I have to find a real position now." And so that's when I started looking around and I'll tell you, I had a lot of publications, I was publishing right from day one, so that was the saving thing. So you know, we published a book together about theories of personality, research in personality, I'm looking up there because I have it on the shelf there, my ex-husband and I worked on that a lot. And so the publication, I thought I would get [something], and Proshansky and he tried to get me something at Brooklyn College and they came through with something and he said, "I'm even embarrassed by this, it's really low level and I didn't want to do that." Despite, serendipity, this Howard thing came through and I ran into this guy Larry Littig who was teaching at Howard and he was trying to build a PhD program at Howard at that time. And so I ran into him at Michigan - he was a Michigan PhD - and we started talking and then they invited me to come. It was actually through a former professor of mine at Northwestern that the connection was made, so you know eventually… I came here and I liked it here and you know it seemed like it was a place I could come to with little kids, that was a consideration and I came here and talked to everybody and I got an offer and decided I would come here, so…

A: When ….?

M: That was already 19, when I was doing all of this, negotiating, it must have been '67, because I came here, I came to Howard February '68, was when the semester, was when I started, because I didn't want to come in September, so they let me come in February, it just would have been too hard, so..

A; at that time, late '60's, the women's movement is kind of…

M: Well it was while I was at Michigan, that's when I met Sandra Tangri**,** she was a student, a graduate student at Michigan finishing up her dissertation and she started telling me about what she was doing, and Matina Horner was there, and I don't know if you know her, fear of success, that was her, that was…

A: That's when you got exposed to that.

M: I got exposed to that, I'm blocking on this woman's name. There was a course, an evening course that I attended, with this whole bunch of these very active women at Michigan, and that was you know, got me thinking about all of this you know, at Michigan I was working on a study of socialization into the world of work, and we only tested boys, and never, and now, some people have argued with me, that we did talk about girls, to my recollection, we never said girls also go to school, girls should also work, never, I can imagine, thinking of saying that now, again, but I was a research associate there, but you know, just plugged into the study doing one section of it, but it was, I mean that study continued for many years, but I left before it was before, and you know, I just ahh, so lets see. Well we had a core, we had like a seminar, it wasn't, I don't know if anyone even got credits for it, but all of these people were talking about what's going on, and combining how we should look at all this differently and you know, people made different contributions, I was mainly an observer because at that time, wasn't, I wasn't thinking along those lines, it sort of , so by the time I came to Howard and Sandy and I started working on that journal of social issues, new perspectives on women and so, by the time we were done that together, I mean she was very important, in my, in my development and thinking so, then I started thinking about getting grants and the rest of my career I mainly focused on women and achievement and theoretical issues and so on. So that was a big turning point in many ways for me. And I taught, I started teaching psychology, what do you call it? Psychology of Gender at Howard, or Psych of Women, the first time I taught Psych of Women, it was at a Catholic university, because they were I don't know, there was an unreadiness at Howard. It's more complicated at Howard than … and that was very interesting for me, I only did it one semester because I didn't have anyone to teach it, so they asked me and in addition to my Howard stuff, just an evening course, and now I hate to drive at night. I remember going over there and not even thinking about it, but anyways.

A: In the Catholic school, there was some demand…for Psych of Women?

M: I don't know how it is now, but they had a pretty good psych department.

End of Tape 1 Side A

Beginning of Tape Side B

M…. I had just started thinking about it, so it was a good entering for me and then, I'm not sure, I can't remember when I started teaching at the undergraduate level, actually it was double listed, but mostly undergraduates took Psychology of Gender and there were young men in that class too.

A: There were a number of things doing on that I want to ask you about at this point, but you mentioned working with on an issue of JSI?

M: Yah did you see it.

A: Uhh, I haven't reviewed it, but were you trying to get involved in SPSSI at this time?

M: Well I joined SPSSI in '65 at Michigan 'cause Herb Kelman who was a social psychologist, he was at Michigan for a few years and he became president of SPSSI, you know it was like casual and that was a time when all of the teachers and a lot of socialism stuff was going on the ground and umm, I just got interested in SPSSI, I can't remember when I first got on council, I did the book, I did the issue first with Sandy and I can't remember, but I mean was I started, I mean there was no other, if this is imaginable, there was no other social issues division at that time (in '65) and SPSSI, they used to call it the conscience of APA, you know and I think now APA has more of a conscience then it did, well it was, you know it was a totally different organization, but when SPSSI started umm, anyhow, it was, it was a very new thing and hard for them to accept, but they did, they did.

A: So how did you get involved with the group that then became, in the '70's, AWP and then…?

M: I wasn't involved in the AWP at all. It was the Committee on Women in Psychology that was very instrumental.

A: I've read some of your, your work in that period where you talk about the relationship between AWP and division 35 so I wasn't, I actually didn't know that you were not involved at all in AWP.

M: Well, umm, I wrote that one when I talked about the relationships, about the one I handed you before. Umm, it's co-authored, so umm, I mean there was a group of people, but um, but I just never got active, I was active in it, but the Committee on Women in Psychology started mainly in organizational work before that, I wasn't umm, in organization work in this area, before that I wasn't and how I got involved in that, my colleague James Bayton**,** who was a, do you know the name? He was a, in social personality psychology and was at Howard university for a long time as marketing person and he was on the first ad hoc Committee on Women and Psychology and in '72, I went to , I was away for six months on a sabbatical, I went to Israel and when I came back, and I did studies on sex roles on the kibbutz and when I came back from there, Jim said, I have something for you and that's how he got me on the Committee for Women in Psychology, I mean it was not a committee, it was an ad hoc group when I first got on it, and then it graduated into being a committee, the rest is history and that's how I got involved, and at, lets see, about a year or so, people started collecting signatures to start the new division, division 35 and there was, there was overlap of people that I started to

know and then I got on APA council too and we worked on women's issues to some extent.

A: So you wrote in that period about some controversy about how political or activist the divisions should have been concurrent … do you ….?

M: I say that in my presidential address? There was only four years… that was, the fourth, that was going to be fourth… fifth year…

A: Can you tell me about the controversy abut, even the naming of the division, … the goals should be that kind of thing? Who was saying what?

M: Oh gosh, well, umm, well, umm, I remember, I mean Rhoda Unger would be a good one to talk to about this, because she , she remembers being on the, umm, you know, when we had, when the division was formed, the first meeting, I think was in Toronto actually, right? And we had a meeting and Rhoda tells me, I don't know, I think I was presiding, I don't think I was president then, but I was one of the people talking about the division umm, Rhoda tells me that we were there, she was there agitating, like she would be picket this and picket that, and she and um, some other younger people thought Barbara Wallston was one of them, she died too, very young, umm, Rhoda, was the one who told me that , I wanted to make it more academic, that was and I want even connected to the clinicians needs until later on when we formed an ad hoc committee on umm, clinical, clinical psychology, I was very interested in developing psychology of women and umm, not just me, but there was a group like Carolyne Sherif and umm, Lena Astin and umm, I don't remember we were also the older cohort, so maybe it was, some of us were students when it all started so. Well they were in the middle and well I always think of myself as sort of an activist at that time when I was trying to develop this field, I wanted it to be, a research field and so, you know, we focused on research a lot and then umm, you know, focused on starting the journals, Psychology of Women Quarterly and there was you know a lot of discussion on what to call, whether it was psychology of women, I mean at that time, gender hadn't leaked into the vocabulary yet, it was called the psychology of women or something else.

A: Was the word feminist ever used?

M: Yah well, that's umm, lets see.. I don't remember whether when we were forming the journal, I really don't remember, but we did have arguments about umm, whether there were, how we should use the word feminist and I've always felt that the word was destroyed by you know, all the negative and somehow, I don't like to blame the media for things, but somehow when it got into the public domain, it was totally misinterpreted, you know, in fact, but I did write articles about feminist psychology of women, umm a number of times, variations of, but with the journal we decided that, but I don't know.

A: Tell me a little bit about where your, what your research was, what was your research centered around at this time, I know you've done a lot of work on achievement, motivation and fear of success.

M: I didn't do too much work on fear of success, but actually, the first thesis that I did was with a masters student at Howard was on fear of success and umm, Peter Weston, he's at Brooklyn College, I don't really hear much from him lately, but umm, but I actually, umm, started working with students, I got a grant from the Department of Labor had a umm, it's called CETA, it had, it had a unit that had grant money and I got a department of labor grant and early on when I started at Howard, of looking at race, race and achievement, race and achievement and career aspirations and umm, using, I didn't use fear of success so much but what are the determinates of aspirations that was, you know and with that, Gwen Keita did her masters with me on that and she was my assistant and umm, and I worked on those kinds of things with the students at Howard and they were quite, two generations of students at Howard who were interested in what I was doing and that was a big stimulus for me was getting students to work with me on this kind of…

A: can you tell me a little bit about what it was like to be at Howard?

M: Well that's a whole other story. Well it was, I don't know, I just did what I had to do, well, do you know Veronica Thomas? She's at well, back up a little bit, I was president, while I was president of division 35, I had moved to the University of Connecticut and I was heading a women's studies department there and professor of psychology with tenure.

A: And you were thinking that it was going to be a permanent move at the time?

M: Yes and I was going to resign from Howard at the time and my chairman, Les Hicks, may he live to eternity, said, you don't have to retire, take a leave, see how it is. It felt a little bit unethical, but I decided to do that. So I stayed there for two years and it was mainly that it wasn't a place for me and you know it's a very isolated part of Connecticut, I don't know if you know it at all, it's like, a hundred miles from Boston, a hundred miles from New York, I don't know, sixty miles from New Haven, but it's in the country, and I guess I'm sort of urban. But apart from that, at that time I was president [of Division 35] and I held a meeting in Storrs. We held this conference, everyone came and set up so that my colleagues from everywhere would come and see where I was and got everybody involved, it was really wonderful, you know, at that time, I had asked one of my students at Howard, Saundra Murray**,** to set up a Committee on Black Women and what you know, to look into what we can do, and I wrote about that, did I write about that in, in that, I wrote about it one of the , one of the articles and she got a few women together and you know I was thinking we haven't really, umm, I mean there were a lot of things we didn't think about, but being at Howard, I was very conscious and aware that some things are the same, but a lot of things are different and so, Saundra Murray and another group, because she's very serious kind of person, she came up with a long report which was culminating in asking for a full-fledged committee on black women in psychology which you may have noticed we have, and at that time we had a rule that there wouldn't be any free-standing full committees except Membership and anyway, that was, we started out that way and I can't remember the rationale, but you can see the rationale, anyway, so

that's what they asked for and that was this huge, that meeting is the first, is like the mid winter meeting, is this huge battle about instituting a committee.

A: What were the positions for and against?

M: Well number one we said we wouldn't have any committees, we don't want these power bases developing , most of it was about power and who gets to decide, who gets to decide what they do and what rights, what you would expect, you know, small groups I think are just as likely to have these kinds of battles even when they have less real power, they still have these battles and then finally, now it's a section, right, so quite a number of my former students, umm, became involved in that and I think it was a very good thing and one of those, Veronica Thomas**,** who is now pretty active in APA. She's on this committee and that committee and I do think in that sense that I did a lot of mentoring, you know, because they just watched what I was doing.

A: Well you said that being at Howard had a major impact, and although there are similarities in women's issues that there are also differences…

M: well umm, well I think that the big difference was in black women's relation to work/achievement, and education. And umm, you know it stated that in the beginning, black families invested much more in their daughters than in their men, I mean there's actually some research that was done in that early 50's on you know and ahh, so women were much more pushed by their families, I mean black women will talk to you about this and plus, umm, what I saw pretty quick in the aspiration studies, was that you know women aspired to umm, higher degrees and higher level professions and I'm talking about from you know from a young age, well you know, this, this also umm, um, relates to this other study that I wasn't really essentially involved, study of women in midlife that Sandra Tangri and Veronica Thomas and myself were involved in, you know we tried to find a cohort of women now in midlife or then in midlife, they are now probably pushing 60, these people and you know, when we asked them about their parents, their parents were, I identify with them a lot, because they were working class people who pushed, pushed their children and so these women then in midlife were very high achieving women, even not just among black women, but were very high achieving women, so I think there was much more of an emphasis and interest in achieving and I know I saw it at Howard, well, among the graduate students, but even among undergraduates, nobody was going to melt into the background, so that you know, that's a big difference, umm, you know similarities, I didn't study this, but similarities have to do with relationships, what you do with the children, and all of that, but I found that, the case, when I studied the women and that, Gwen Keita did her, let's see, Gwen did her masters I think those were the data we got at Bennet College, we saw that the women were very interested in aspiring you know and achieving and it showed in umm, I cant remember, I cant remember the details of these studies, you'll have to forgive me on that, but yes, you're going to have to remember this stuff.

A: Well you spent a couple of years at Connecticut ….

M: Well, I returned in ’78, at the end of ’77, ’78, was my second year in Connecticut and I returned at the beginning of the ‘78-’79 year. Yeah.

A: Ok, well let me just, I know we are kind of running out of time, I want to make sure cover a number of different things, but umm, can you tell me a little bit about your time on the Committee on Women in Psychology. So this was pre presidential, this is going back a little bit, this was 1974, 1975, you were the committee chair, and umm, of… on the Committee of Women in Psychology, do you remember what kinds of issue…? (Martha is looking through some stuff - she gets up to go and get something).

M: Anyways we worked on a lot of things and you know it was very very young and we had to deal with every board, the big honchos, and you know I was pretty intimidated at times; I have to tell you that. I wouldn’t be now, but … I would probably less so, I am less so now, although I don’t care, as much, but we had umm, we had a committee of umm, I don’t know, its mostly women, you know but I can’t remember who was on when, Eli Rubenstein was one of the guys who helped us a lot. Paul Rozenkrentz kind of, right, he was a little later, and Henry David, and umm, well, of course Jim Bayton was on but he got off after the ad hoc ended. We worked here, they are all listed here, all the different issues but the thing that I did a lot of, when I was chairing the committee, I think I was chairing of the ad hoc and then when it turned into committee, I was chair for the year, we went around to boards to tell them, you have to pay attention, to women’s issue.

A: What was the response to that?

M: Well I remember, I remember this like it was yesterday, George Mandler was on this committee and of course I knew him from Harvard, that’s the thing, I knew a lot of these people, from having been around. And he was sitting there and whispering and pointing at me while I was trying to make this presentation and I thought, he’s not a friend, I said to myself, anyway, you know that was the Publication board and they were the hardest, the hardest people to convince that we should have women editors and it’s still hard, it’s hard for women to do, and I know more, I didn’t realize then as much as I do now about the structural matters, like when you know, like one time, I don’t know if I was really a candidate, what do we call the book review journal now….?

W: Now it is called Contemporary Psychology?

M: Right, Contemporary Psychology, when Janet Spence was finished with it, she asked me would I be interested so I found out right away that I couldn’t get a room in the department because here you have a tremendous amount of stuff and you need someone to work for you. And I found that out right away, so there are structural factors which have to do with where women work, with, in my department was good about this, that’s why I stayed there for so long, they were good about realizing there’s an outside world, but a lot of women work in departments where there’s no recognition that this kind of thing is a big deal and umm, as far as room goes, there’s I mean, so that happens a lot, it just was, in a lot of places, there was no place to put it plus, they don’t want you to use

your time that way. That wasn't true at Howard, but you know, that's a very big thing with the publication board and it shows you have to keep hammering at it, so we did a lot of that, we worked on um, the publication manual, Anita Davido was the woman, she's not there anymore, and and, we , I mean its totally different now, but at that time, the language thing, fight, we had to fight enormously to make some changes and if you look at the old edition and editions after that, you could see that it took a long time but there has been a lot of progress and APA did more than most other big professional organizations, I can tell you that, and after, and I think it was because we kept pushing for it and then ahh, getting women on boards and committees, that was a very big effort, there was a committee on sexual harassment in therapy and that, I mean we brought, I remember arguing, if it was with council, you know, there was, intrusion on the private, you know private life of therapists and that was like a big no no at the time, and , ahh, that was, we had a committee on that, I think Rosenkrantz was on that committee and Julia Sherman was on that committee, what else?

A: Let me ask you a little bit about something that Wade just mentioned, can you recall, within the division, or within just your conversations with other, other psychologists and so on, how the division should handle umm, umm, well, I don't want to … verification of the area, I mean I know the division pressured APA not to hold conventions in State…

M: Miami goes back to SPSSI. Oh yeah. I don't remember that was, within the division and within the committee that was a given, umm, to, I think we called it out of Chicago, umm…

A: How did SPSSI deal with that? Do you remember?

M: Oh SPSSI, oh you probably don't remember but, in going back to Miami, to go south it would have been illegal for African Americans, at that time negro members to go to the back of the train on their way, if they went on the train, so it was no question they pulled out of Miami and that was SPSSI was very much in the forefront of that, so that was kind of , of course you know, when the division of women came up to SPSSI council, that's when it was, you know, I was on SPSSI council then and so was Marcia Guttentag, who was a pretty well known woman and when we, said, we were going to APA council with this request that we want SPSSI to support, there was a lot of resistance because you are ghettoizing the women was what Marsha argued. She was really, I remember her, there were you know, guys sometimes are afraid to say things like that, but she was saying that and you know, I'm not arguing that its impossible that some of this wouldn't happen, but my feeling was always well at least you had to organize and make these demands and then you can talk about integration within the association, is sort of how I felt and I thought the Division was a good idea. They called it the division of women a lot of people and I think that's derogatory, because, that's why I always felt it was the Division of the Psychology of Women and plenty of men joined when I say plenty, 10 %, I don't know, it's 10% now. But I mean, there were always male members in the division, but it's not just for men, and feminism isn't just for women, feminism isn't just for women. So that's umm, it was hard, but in the end SPSSI did vote to support it for council because I think, I argued that this is the time for this and we had, I had some help, some

people came in for that session, like Lena Astin, she was always a good arguer for the cause.

A: Well, historically, even currently there has been a lot of overlap in terms of membership in terms of SPSSI and Division 35. The names of people in SPSSI do include a lot of women from Division 35.

M: Yeah, and with other divisions too, the newer divisions, you would think of all the, I mean those were, I think division 35, I don't think there was any other social issue Division except for SPSSI before Division 35. Then after that there's been, all kinds of other divisions but there were a run of what I would call, social issue divisions and there was a lot of overlap and officers in SPSSI had been very active in what is it called Minority affairs and then other members of Division 35 went. There was overlap.

A: Well I kind of wanted to get to, your now, almost, moved beyond your kind of historical reflections and recollections and move towards your current kind of assessments in terms of how do you think feminism and attention to women's issues in terms of psychology of women, to what extent do you feel its changed psychology on a number of levels?

M: Well you know, it's been ten years since I retired and I've been involved in Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR) which you know is an outside of APA group and ahh, what is this '95? I think in 2003 we ran a conference on gender and peace psychology and we were trying to show that you can't have peace psychology without paying attention to gender issues you know and we umm, we thought we had a wide, that we advertised very widely to get papers and so on in Division 48 (Peace) and advertised in science and in SPSSI and so on and so forth and in the end we got very few, we had to invite people from division 48 to come, you know people we knew worked on these issues, to me that was a bit of a letdown, I was very discouraged, the conference turned out to be very good, people came from all over you know, it was pretty hard for some people from other parts of the world to get visas and so on, but people came from all over to attend that meeting and it was a pretty successful meeting and I'm saying that because umm, people tend to work on their thing and I feel that's gotten more and more that way and you know at one point, I think in social psychology there's been more of a gender orientation and more of an interest and you know then a number of people who pushed that and stressed that in social psychology and you probably know who they are and umm, there's probably been more in that field… and um, and I used,.. I have to go back, you know, Carol Tavris and umm… he worked in APA for many years, Arnie Kahn, and his students and they really have paid a lot of attention. The other divisions, I don't know, I feel pretty, I'm probably maybe more of a negative person than I should be, but you know maybe Marcia was right, there is ghettoization but I don't know if the strength would have developed to push social psych, was pushed on more, I think there were more women who came up and that field , you know, like Janet Spence, at Texas, quite a few of her students came into, like Lucia Gilbert, she is now at Texas and she came up through that. Janet pushed that, pushed her students to a great extent to do that. Well probably Florence Denmark has pushed students in that direction, at CUNY there has

been more**,** I know there was a period , and there are probably papers on this topic that you can check out in the journals and in the books, there was a period where we were saying well, eventually, there doesn't have to be a psychology of women, it would be integrated into every field, so that I think still, well maybe it's too soon, maybe, because you know from 1970 to 2000, how many years, history, for historians it's not a very long time. And oh there is that wonderful woman in history of psychology, Laurel Furumoto**,** she's done wonderful things, her name begins with M… her last name begins with M and she's written, Morawski! Yeah.

A: It seems to me that one of the messages, well, one of the ways that attention to the psychology of women has had the potential to change psychology generally is to reemphasize the power and impact and importance of social context on behavior, right. And I wonder how, when you look at social psychology now, some people would even argue that it has become even more narrowly focused on the individual in some ways.

M: Well psychology is that way. Yes, psychology is intrapsychic. You know that's the way psychology is, and if you look at sociology, they have a totally different perspective and you know, its really hard to, it's hard to do research looking at structural factors and psychological factors, when you talk about psychology of achievement or motivation, it's all intrapsychic. You know I've realized it, but I've also realized how hard it is to, you should read, you probably have read Carolyn Sherif's stuff, a lot of people die too young, like Carolyn Sherif. She was fantastic on just these issues. Did you read her paper on psychology… I have the book I would be happy to give it to you, prisms…it was the paper on psychology that was given at a conference that Julia Sherman organized at the University of Wisconsin where she did this analysis on what had been missing in social psychology…You know she and M. Sherif worked a lot together, and they tried to bring in structural factors and she was very angry at experimental social psychology. It's easier to do research in experimental, I mean, experimental social psychology and experimental psychology which is you know what I did.

A: Let me just look at my notes and make sure, in the meantime if you have anything that I haven't asked about.

M: I know from writing the Tangri about a few people complimented me on that, so that was nice. I didn't get a whole lot of compliments from writing my papers, I got, I wrote this paper about Gilligan's stuff. A lot of people, I have the letters that people wrote to me about that, I brought this folder that I'm willing to give away some of this stuff if you think it would help.

A: The division has their archives…

M: Margaret Madden told me that, I told you, I sent her a folder of stuff that I , I rearranged, ten years after I retired I rearranged my study and I decided to get rid of certain things. A friend of mine who is the brother- in-law of Herbert Kelmen, who knew Sandy, he was on her dissertation committee. He knew Sandy too and Sandy's father too

who was a Yiddish poet and so he, made a special point of telling me that it was very interesting, he didn't know all of that about Sandy.

(Small talk between Martha and Alex about the folder- reprints and so on…).

M: …there is something about Gilligan, I had this, I wrote this book, Woman and Achievement that was a spin-off from the journal, you have the journal… the original JSI, anyways then we did this book and we added more stuff to it. What did I want to say… oh yah so, Gilligan, so ahh, I cant remember how it was that wrote to me, Carol, umm, Carol Tavris, that was before she published Mismeasure of Woman and umm, she said she's working on this book and she read my article and lets, lets hope it does any good, I don't know, I think mostly psychologists were interested in that, but I wrote this book Women and Achievement, edited this book and my friend Barbra Richardson who is a sociologist, a social psychologist, she wrote a book Achievement and Women and at the time, published by Harvard Press and it was at the same time that Carol Gilligan's book first book came out and she said to me, they have Carol Gilligan's book in the front window, it was a big seller and our book is tucked in the back and its not a big seller and its not going to be a big seller, and it was a good book but it was a academic. But Carol Gilligan's book, at a talk I gave at Yale, they had a series and there were a lot of people who were very angry at me at daring to say anything negative about Carol. She left the field for theatre. She's still a guru, she really is. People love it, it's like that book, A Different Way of Thinking, it's in the same ballpark, a lot of people think differently than a lot of other people, it's not just women and men, it depends on a lot of other things that happen to you in your life. Oh yah, and power, so…

A: Do you think that that umm, ahh, I don't know what you say, I won't say feminist psychology, but do you think feminist psychology has been able to impress upon the field the need for more power analysis, or the analysis of how power plays out…?

M: I don't know, the person to talk about this is Alice Eagly. She and I have been at you know, have kind of different points of view about certain things, but she's fantastic. Has done fascinating research, she wasn't involved in organizational work really as far as I know, she never was even on SPSSI council, I don't think, she just does her work. Well, you know..

W: I haven't interviewed her.

M: And she was Kelman's student so, there is this genealogy, psychology genealogy. Do you do that?

A: It plays a huge role, I mean University of Michigan has spun out..

M: That psych department, and there are a lot of Michiganders who got their doctorates and never went into academia. Because they loved being there and that happens in a couple of places, San Francisco and at Michigan. You know, it depends what's important to you. I don't know, I worked with uh, Ernie Harburg for a number of years, that's when

I taught at the University of Michigan, school of nursing. Research methodology, his father was Yip Harburg but Ernie was a very good social psychologist and very interesting and really paid attention to structural factors, but he always worked on soft money, I mean he's like five years older than I am, still kicking, and Yip was a lyricist, e.g., he wrote all the words to Over the Rainbow. Then when his father died, he left money to found a foundation to support American musical theater and Ernie runs that. Ernie with other people, so that's totally different.

End of Tape 1 Side B.