Interview with **Marcia Sells**, Barnard 1981  
mls19@columbia.edu  
Low 302, 10:30, October 2, 2014  
  
MS and my “Higher Learning” seminar  
The question JAM has been on my mind for 30 years

MS Class of ’81; came in Spring 1978 (as starting freshman in January 1978

Unemployment at Dance Theatre of Harlem 🡪 Mother wanted her to go to College   
Had been deferred for another year but Helen McCann welcoming note/Christine Royer #2   
  
JAM meeting with incomers in January – quiet and scholarly ; lovely – “not a flyby”  
Spring 1980 – ran as student rep. at urging of suitemate Ellen Doherty , prior rep.  
Got a dorm room – 616 116th – 4th floor suite -- seen as coming from Cincinnati – already away from home  
Professional Acting School graduate – Glen Moody the principal 🡪 Barnard alumna

First impression positive of Barnard and of Mattfeld – president sat down to talk with us…  
  
Meets Ellen Futter as trustee representative to student affairs – and Victor Futter

MS elected by students – knocking on doors…   
Spring of ’79 – introduced summer 1979 (MS and Marcia Welles)  
Fall 1979 – attending meetings

UVatrustee Scott (early black trustee)

Trustees meetings – tension between JAM and board – she uncomfortable in front of trustees;”in a little over her head… more scholarly focused than the trustees… less comfortable with $$  
  
MS working in medical office and alumnae development office – pretty familiar with workings of College   
Struck by loyalty of Barnard grads working at Barnard; both medical and alumnae office hurting for space; especially medical folks ( Harriet Mogul; Dr. Sheehy)  
Irma Moore/Toni Coffee/Ann Winter – all pressed for funds – getting programs from nothing

BMc – JAM effective/comfortable with faculty; Her whistle cut against her image of the withdrawn scholar   
Paula Franzese, ’80 – a year ahead as president of student government

Spring 1980 – JAM is gone?? ;

[Problem here – JAM fired in June 1980; how could Paula Franzeze be class of 1980 and yet looking to her senior year in the dorms in 1980-81?

Spring 18980 – announcement of too large an entering class – no promised spaces for seniors (including Paula, Marian Lofromento who were about to be denied housing) 🡪 McIntosh sit-in

Jackie had been non-communicative with students on the issue in spring 1980:

EVF left with the problem;  
MS idea of Barnard renting rooms in College Residence 110th St., where MS had been living isince summer 78-79 living on first floor 🡪 1L -- lived there until 1996  
Mr. Erlich, the owner, open to dealing with Barnard [Abby Erlich a Barnard grad]  
MS proposal that Barnard purchase rooms – interim president EVF acts on it/puts EVF in good graces of the students/student leaders

MS at trustee meeting when JAM departure announced—“Woo…”   
Faculty rep. Marcia Welles equally surprised by move

JAM – Would meet with student leaders but not saying much  
McIntosh sit-in in spring – head of housing -- Georgie Gatch/ a family friend from Cincinnati

Trustees saw EVF as able to work with students – familiar with student affairs on the board  
Kaplan/McIntyre/Golden/Horowitz….  
  
EVF likely saw herself as providing the board with a solution

EVF appointment at the time was “interim,” although EVF may have wanted a real look at different job; not assured a partnership at Milbank, Tweed….  
Bill Golden a client of Milbank, Tweed  
BC students opposed to merger worried about EVF’s father’s likely support for merging BC into CC;  
“They’re selling us down the road.” a Rep. Council concern at the time

BMC – Some trustees ready to merge? MS – Some of the men, yes.  
MS – Consistent with JAM staffers’ view that JAM was seen by board an obstacle to merger – had to be put aside if merger to happen  
The occasion for merger would be after bad admissions class for that entering in 1981  
Golden/Altschul/Horowitz – read the financial situation as mandating merger  
Why it didn’t happen;  
1. MS – Good admissions for 1980 and 1981 help turn the situation around – “Barnard is hot.”  
2. Solving the housing crunch in fall 1980  
3. Student/alumnae insistence on avoiding merger - “vehemence” “vociferous”  
 Ellen’s classmates on her case not to merge  
MS view of Columbia College not one that BC students wanted to become part of --   
 Faculty/administrators….BC not shabby looking  
 Barnard students connected to the place and its people 🡪 Ray, the groundskeeper….  
 MS and John Chambers; Twyla Tharp and Julius Held….Kaplan/McIntyre  
  
4. Barnard getting serious in 1981 about Capital campaigning – no more total reliance on annual fund

Selection of EVF  
Trustees can’t conduct search after Peterson and Mattfeld departures  
2. Faculty not trusted with job; Olton viewed as Mattfeld person  
3. Golden suggestion of one of theirs – father tied in to CU; she has law school ties to Sovern  
 Kaplan or McIntyre not interested; EVF could be managed  
  
EVF took interim but not convinced it couldn’t be more…

[May have missed a bit when fire drill called]

MS general remarks about Barnard – faculty, staff --being a place that embraced us as students ; Columbia still less effective in doing so.

Parting line: Barnard needs to do right by Jackie Mattfeld by putting her portrait up in the James Room.

Interview lasted 75 minutes; concuded 11:45  
Transcript sent 1:30 PM  
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