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Interviewer: Diane Sands and Nancy Owens

Interviewee: Ellen Kreighbaum

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Diane Sands: This is Diane Sands and Nancy Owens. It's August 8, 2004. We have the Feminist History Project and we're about to interview Ellen Kreighbaum from MSU about the early lawsuit between MSU and the women faculty. Ellen why don't you just start by talking a little bit about what you do and who you are now?

Ellen Kreighbaum: I came to MSU in 1965 and was hired to teach activity courses and direct the Women's Athletic Association, which was at the time what women's intramurals was. There was no athletic about it. No competition or anything. The women had two hours, one day a week, to do all of their intramural activities; Thursday nights from seven to nine pm. That was it.

So that's what I directed. From that, I developed and initiated a women's competitive basketball team with the cooperation of other people in the Montana University system and private colleges. So I believe it was Judy Barkley of the University of Montana and Zona Linderman (?) was there later. Donna Wallace from Western Montana College, Peg Sarsfield from Tech. I don't recall who was at Eastern at the time. Rocky Mountain College was involved.

So we kind of got started and formed the Montana Women's Sports Association. We developed by-laws and had policies, procedures, had annual meetings. This was all under the radar screen of any men's athletic program, under the radar screen of any of the college or University administrators. We just worked along and established ourselves before anybody knew we were there.

Nancy Owens: That must have felt needed by all of the women in all of the other institutions as well at that period, for them to come forward so quickly, probably; to pull that together.

EK: Yes, it was just a phone call: "Hi how are you? I'm Ellen at Montana State. Are you interested in having a competitive women's basketball team?"

"Sure."

"Okay."

Then we all hung out signs. We were having tryouts and I had about 35 women show up. We had tryouts and we had a varsity and a junior varsity team. The other schools did the same thing. We started traveling around and competing with each other. We went over to the bookstores and got t-shirts and had the pennies of course, the pinafores with the numbers.

NO: Just like the Farmerettes had before.

EK: That's right. Like the Farmerettes. Speaking of the Farmerettes, I used to call myself the first women's basketball coach, but then I saw the 1904 team and decided that I shouldn't be doing that anymore. The interesting part is that when I said that, either the people didn't know about the 1904 team or I looked old enough to be that coach.

DS: How did you fund this?

EK: The Women's Athletic Association [WAA] was given \$500 a year. This was the intramural part. So I used some of that money. All of the women that were on the basketball team were also WAA members too. Eventually I went to the [Associated Students of Montana State University] ASMSU group; various clubs would go to them and ask them for assistance. We made a presentation to the Senators there. That was well received. So we maybe got \$500 from them. That's the way we started it. We just traveled around in our cars. A couple of the faculty members would drive the players to the competition and so forth.

NO: Stay with various people, or sleep on floors or drive back?

EK: Sometimes we'd stay with people. Sometimes we slept on floors and sometimes we had motel rooms. We could get good rates on motel rooms. It wasn't really expensive then.

NO: So how have you seen women's athletics change over time?

EK: This was in 1966 or '67.

NO: So it was before Title IX.

EK: Yes. When I arrived at MSU, I was one year out of college. I had my Bachelor's degree. I was working on my Master's. I got my Master's in 1969 from the University of Southern California, which I did in the summertime. Then in 1970, I went to Washington State on a two-year educational leave to do my Doctorate. From the time that I started the basketball team, we started the Women's Sports Association of Montana. We had other sports going. We had volleyball, basketball, gymnastics; which I coached all three of those.

Some women wanted to compete in skiing so I took them up to the University of Montana. I didn't ski myself, which was an interesting thing, but I was their coach. Some of them wanted to have a swim team, so we kind of bootlegged all of this stuff. We'd find various people to coach them. Early in the latter sixties and early seventies, we had a graduate program in physical education. The department head at the time, George Schroeder (?), allowed some of those graduate students to coach the women's teams as part of their stipend for their graduate assistantship. For example, a man by the name of Dave Overly from Billings who just retired as

superintendent, director, supervisor of physical education in the Billings school district. He coached the track team and so forth.

When I left to do my doctorate, all of these teams were established enough so that they had to find somebody. Well, they didn't have to, but he felt obligated to find someone to coach them when I left. So my replacement, my temporary replacement when I left, coached the basketball and volleyball team, I think. As I said, Dave coached the track team. Sherry Spurlock (?) was another woman in the graduate program that coached basketball and gymnastics.

When I returned from Washington State in 1972, the teams were going and the competition was going. Things were well organized. At that point, I just felt that women's athletic programs should be with athletics instead of in an academic department. This was a very controversial issue. I could have gone either way with it. Many of the women in the United States were very opposed to taking on the men's model of athletics. I, in fact, was opposed to a lot of aspects of it, including scholarships and so forth. The other aspect was that I thought that if men were getting scholarships and supporting their education through athletic endeavors, the women should too. So I fell on the side of, "Yes, it should go to athletics." I knew that there would be a down side to that. I knew that it would be iffy. Nevertheless...

DS: What was the other side? What was the non-male model that they were talking about?

EK: The male model of athletics was that they were scholarship athletes. They got their room and board. They were basically paid to play. Competition was the main order of the program. It wasn't socializing or having fun or some of the other values that were brought forward from the early women physical educators. They just didn't think that girls and women should be competing. It was bad for their character. It was bad for their development. It was bad for their reproductive health. What if they got hit in the breast and couldn't have children and whatever?

DS: Yes, yes.

EK: It was bad for their reproductive systems. If they ran too far they would never be able to have children. I never understood that because the male certainly is a lot more vulnerable, hanging out there to injury than a woman is. A woman is well protected. That was the argument. I had some stiff debates with women in my field in college, women I respected; the grand dames of physical education who just were absolutely against this and didn't think that we should be going over to athletics and going with that male model of athletics. It would be bad for women. Just thinking it through—I thought that in the long run, if women are going to move forward, they have to be given the same support financially, the same support scholarship-wise that men do. As it turned out, that's the way we have it today. We don't have the same, but we at least are under a similar program.

NO: Same paradigm. I think that earlier model—whether you’re looking at it in terms of work or athletics—is really that old protectionist model that women need to be protected. To ensure that their physical bodies are in work so that they can bear children. It always gets back to protecting their reproductive capacity. At that time, there were all kinds of women at the same time and men opposing the Equal Rights Amendment; opposing women working 40 hours a week, or competing in athletics, all because women should be protected to protect that role that they have as a child-bearers primarily.

EK: Stepping away from that, it’s a really very radical thing—

NO: And shouldn’t be mercenary about anything.

EK: We volunteer and we serve, but we don’t work for pay. We don’t play for pay either. That was kind of the attitude. That was the climate at the time. Then in the early seventies I also became aware—when I returned in ’72—I became aware of the Athletic Commission. Actually I had known about it before. The Athletic Commission was an NCAA required body made up of faculty members that would serve as an oversight to athletic programs so that they wouldn’t do any illegal and bad things against NCAA rules.

Well, of course there were all men on the Athletic Commission. They never had any women on there at all. Max Worthington, who was one of the Golden Bobcats on the men’s basketball team—who was then Dean of Students at the time—chaired this committee. He also worked with ASMSU as Dean of Students. I got to know Max through going to ASMSU requesting financial support from them. Max invited me to the Athletic Commission, where I learned that we had one of these and what they did.

Eventually, not too long after, I took the athletic program, the women’s program, over to the men. Tom Perrick (?) was Athletic Director at the time. I said, “Tom, I think that this program is going to grow and it’s going to establish itself as a real athletic program. I think it should be in athletics. Would you take it?” His response was, “Well, I really don’t want it, but yes, I’ll take it.” It meant to me that no, he really didn’t want it, but he would take it because we had some money in it. That could serve him well for his needs too.

But he did take it and quickly the program got into equity problems. I was sorry to see that, but I wasn’t surprised. I still felt that it needed to be over there. We needed to solve the equity problems, not pull the program from the men’s...

DS: So what were the equity problems? Was this again before Title IX?

EK: Well, it was right about the same time because Title IX was in ’72. I returned in ’72. That’s about when all of these things were happening. I remember presenting to the Athletic Commission a model of proportionate participation; I don’t know that, I gleaned that from Title IX. I think I made it up kind of as a parallel thing. I’m not even sure that they had the

proportionality regulation in Title IX in '72. When those clarifications came forward, I'm not sure. I just thought, "Well, okay. We can have proportion that will. We have so many men and so many women. We'll have so many men coaches and so many women coaches based on the student body. We will have so many sports participants."

It made perfect sense to me. I presented that to the Athletic Commission. They didn't really care about anything. It was one of those things that we were so low on the totem pole that nobody took us seriously. Okay, well that's fine. As it ended up, I was elected Chair of the Athletic Commission, like two years later in '74 or '75. I thought that was interesting. All of the former members had turned over and I don't think they really wanted to be on it anymore. We got some good people on there. That was a good feeling. We started to move forward and we started to have discussions, fruitful discussions, and debate issues. So we were established by then. There was nothing they could do to eliminate us.

DS: Was that experience similar to other higher ed institutions in the state? Was this Women's Athletic Association still—Montana—still meeting and having discussions?

EK: We were still meeting.

DS: So were there similar kinds of discussion going on there on those campuses?

EK: Probably. I am not sure how each woman negotiated through their bureaucracy at their campuses. None of the programs ever was eliminated from the beginning. In other words, we still had our competitors and still had teams and so forth. They must have worked it out in some way or another. However, when I returned from my Doctorate—in '72 or '73—a woman by the name of Molly Hatch, woman physical educator, had heard a presentation by the then, I believe, interim President Bill Johnstone.

He had said something in his talk that led Molly to do some research on Board of Regents minutes and on salaries and so forth in the archives. She unearthed some very damaging evidence that women were being discriminated against in terms of salaries. There were, oh gosh, about eight or nine women at the first few meetings that we had. I will tell you, it was Molly Hatch was kind of leading it. Lou Clydesdale (?) was also from the physical education department. Bette Lowery was also from the physical education department. There was Helen Mecklenburg from biology, Sara Lee Vischer (?) from entomology, Rhoda Craig (?) who was the adjunct in chemistry. Her husband was a tenured full professor in chemistry. She never was able to get hired. Probably several—Jenne Claus from nursing—and probably several others that I'm not recalling. We met in a little classroom in Romney Gym. We interviewed attorneys. What did they think and what was their perspective on it? What kind of financial arrangements could we make? We didn't have any money to do anything.

Finally we hit upon Greg Morgan, who was an attorney in Bozeman. He had clerked for Judge Murray, who was the District Judge in Butte, who heard our case eventually. So that was helpful

for him to know Judge Murray and know how he thought and operated. Greg took it on a contingency basis and he was wonderful.

DS: Could you back up? When this new group of women started to meet and talk about this, the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission] EEOC has already happened in the sixties. So was it based on that, or what was your awareness of—the law provided some remedy for this?

EK: Our awareness—my awareness; I'll just speak for myself because I don't know how aware other people were. My awareness—I wasn't aware. I was quite naive about all of this. I've always operated on: if I see something that needs to be corrected, go for it and see what you can find out. That's part of what Greg provided us was—we went through the EEOC. We ended up in a class action suit where five of us represented the class. It was Title VI of the Equal Opportunity—is that right?

DS: Yes, that's Title IV.

NO: And the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission.

EK: I believe that we had to apply to the EEOC and they had to review it and approve it as something that was something that was parallel with the Title VI civil rights.

NO: The reason you'd go to EEOC, in this case, is that the University receives federal funds. Therefore they're under the EEOC. You could consider going under the state, the new Montana constitution?

EK: No, I don't remember that ever being brought up. Although the attorneys and consultants may have reviewed that to see how appropriate it was.

DS: That was the period right when the Montana Human Rights Commission was being set up so it was too new for people to want to go into. (Unintelligible) class action suits across the country at the time. There was a lot of precedent for that.

NO: So you're choosing an attorney?

EK: Yes, and we chose Greg because he convinced us that he thought this was going to be the greatest lawsuit in the United States. He could see so clearly where the University was discriminating. That's why he would take it on a contingency. He felt quite sure that he could win this case and also he knew that Judge Murray—if Judge Murray got the case—Murray was a very, "for the worker, for the underdog" type of judge.

NO: He's a Butte guy.

EK: That's right. He was.

DS: So were the grounds for this lawsuit, and there's obviously plenty of paper on this to follow up on it, but equal pay—was it also promotion and hiring and those other related issues?

EK: Those were not issues in the actual case, but those data did support a discriminatory pattern for the University, which helped support our case.

DS: Then they were all factors in the court order for corrective action that the University then had to live with ever since.

EK: Yes. The University was enjoying from further discriminations. So the suit didn't close it. As far as I know, it goes on forever.

DS: Yes, it's still open. That would really surprise people, I think, to know that.

EK: It would.

DS: That the order still stands, and that the University still operates under that order.

EK: Yes, people have forgotten that. There's a woman in engineering; Alexandria, it's a great name. She has a PhD. She just filed suit against the University again. She had Greg Morgan as an attorney. I don't know where that is right now, but Greg would certainly know that the decision is an open-ended decision.

NO: So when you all met and you decided that you were going to go forward with a lawsuit like this, it certainly must have raised a lot of questions about people's relationships to other faculty members, the administration, relationships to their family, what kind of stress they were going to be under. What was that whole conversation about?

EK: The Administration, or the administrators, were in a very unprepared position to even deal with this case. They had personnel records on three by five cards. It was just awful. There would be no way that they could gather data efficiently to refute what we were saying. Nevertheless, they were pompous enough to think that they would never win this suit and so they just said, "No, we don't have those data. We can't give you that. Well, we don't know." They just kind of ignored it. They never thought it would go this far.

Nevertheless, Greg Morgan happened on a sociologist at MSU named Jack Gilcrest (?). Jack became our statistician and our researcher and our data gatherer. Jack did a wonderful job. We gathered the data. We had average year, time, and rank. I remember very well that the average years that a woman spent in rank was 17 before she got promoted, or if she ever did. The average number of years for a male was five. So that was part of the suit. It wasn't part of the suit, but it was part of the data that were used to show a pattern of discrimination.

When the decision was rendered on the suit, the master plan for remedy included promotion; a lot of changes were made in promotion and tenure procedures—policies and standards. The salary issue—data were presented on the number of women in the sciences like chemistry: zero; all the engineering departments: zero; physics: zero. There were a number of—I might add that a couple of those departments still are at zero. We're coming on the 30 year anniversary and it still hasn't been fixed. We still do not have a central administrator woman.

All of the Presidents, the Provost, all of the Vice Presidents, all of the Associate Vice Presidents and Vice Provosts are men. It's unbelievable. As we got started with Greg, it was about the time that all this stuff in athletics was happening. Athletics was now under Tom Perrick in the men's department. The suit was moving forward. Central administrators then started to get a little worried. So they asked Molly Hatch to serve as the first Affirmative Action Officer for the campus.

Molly was very pleased to be asked, and yes she would. Well of course immediately, she's pulled out of the suit. She was like the chair of this group up until that point. She was pulled out of the group and went over to the other side. We always said she got bought off with a desk and two chairs and an office. Now Molly is working for them and trying to disprove all of the data that she had gathered.

NO: That is bizarre, Ellen.

EK: So right before the suit was filed and we moved forward, Molly called me to her office. I had known—I had been an office mate with her in physical education a few years before and I had known her. She said to me, "Sit down. They would like to appoint you as Dean of Students."

I said, "'They' who?"

She said, "Well, they think that you would be very good as Dean of Students."

I said, "I don't know anything about that."

I had just gotten my doctorate in biomechanics. I mean you can't get any further than that. "Well, yes you would do a very good job," and so forth.

So I said, "Who is 'they'? Tell me who 'they' is."

"Well, the Vice President and the President."

I said, "Well, I have to think about this." So I left and I thought, "This is weird."

In just a flicker of being proud that somebody could think I could do this, be a Vice President when I had just gotten my doctorate—I was young. I was 32 or 33 years old. I thought, "That's a

dead end job." I'm never going to go anywhere. Once you become Dean of Students, you're not going to go anywhere. So I went back and I said, "No, I've thought about it."

"Oh, but you'd be so good."

I said, "No, it's a dead end job. I don't want it. I want to do my biomechanics. I want to do research and so forth."

That worked out really well for me. I went through the Biomechanics Organization and ended up to be President of the International Society and I made a lot of good friends in that area, and so forth. I am so glad that I didn't fall into that. That was their last hope to break this thing up. But it didn't work. Greg decided who he thought would make the best plaintiffs. There were five of us. It was myself, Bette Lowery, Jenne Claus, Eleanor Pratt, and Helen Mecklenburg. For some reason that I can't remember at this point, Helen Mecklenburg's name went on the suit. It was titled Mecklenburg versus Montana State University and the University System. We moved forward. That was probably the end of '74, and we went through, we had the hearing and then the trial up in Butte and it was pretty scary. The president of the university is there, your dean is there, your department head is there. All of those men that were making those salary decisions. You had to step up and testify against them, and they were sitting right there. I don't think I was tenured. In fact, I know I wasn't tenured at the time. I was too naïve to even think that they could do anything to me, you know, that they wouldn't give me tenure because I was doing this. I was suing the university. Very Pollyannaish attitude, I'm afraid. I have to say that after the suit, I was appointed to the president's executive committee; I was the only woman there, except for the dean of nursing, appointed to the faculty council and the faculty affairs committee that dealt with policy on promotion, tenure, and so forth, and was appointed to a lot of things where we could make some change to the positive. There was only one person that I encountered to my face that was negative. He just told me flat out that I was going to be the ruin of this university and that he couldn't do any of his academic things and he had no budget because these women—you—are taking all of this money. It was an eight million dollar judgement, I think. So forth, just yelling at me, and I thought, "Well, I wonder what's wrong with him?" He was the only one, and I really did not feel like there was any retribution towards me at all.

NO: And what about the other key women?

EK: No, I don't think Bette Lowery felt that, I never heard that Jenne Claus, and she was from nursing, felt that. I don't know about Eleanor. It seems to me that Eleanor told me at one point that she had had some problems. Then people like Rhoda Craig and Saralee Visscher had wonderful cases, but they were afraid and basically they didn't...Rhoda wouldn't go as a plaintiff. She wouldn't stay with the suit because she was too afraid of retribution, and Saralee, the same thing. Saralee was a very good researcher. They call her the grasshopper lady. She studied grasshoppers in the entomology department. She was an excellent researcher, and I

think that she had some problems with tenure and reviews and salary reviews and that kind of thing. She wasn't a plaintiff but—

DS: Were these mostly women who were untenured? I mean you said one was—

EK: Helen Mecklenburg I'm pretty sure was tenured. Jenne Claus was tenured, I'm pretty sure. Bette Lowery was not, and I was not. Eleanor...I'm not sure what department Eleanor was with. I know she ended up to be an affirmative action officer after Molly.

NO: So she moved into that position?

EK: Right, but that was after the suit so—

DS: What happened with the eight million dollars, how did that get allocated?

EK: The judgement was three years back-pay adjustments for every woman on campus who had worked on campus in the last three years. So a woman who left campus two years ago still got a judgement and the compensation for that. As I mentioned, Don Clark was appointed by the president to develop the master plan to correct the situation. Part of it was how are we going to decide how much pay is due each of these women? We decided on a matched pair system. You would find, if you could, a male in your same department that was equal in degree and had been there about the same amount of time and some other factors. If you couldn't find anyone like that, you would go to the college. If you couldn't find anyone within the college as the librarians and nursing, for example—they couldn't find male counterparts—then they would create a—

NO: Composite person.

EK: —composite person to represent. Now, Bette and I, coming from physical education, we had a good match with a man by the name of Gary Evans who had...I had arrived in '65, Gary came in '67, as did Bette Lowery. He had his doctorate, and we had our doctorates so that was our match. I received about 8,000 dollars for my compensation relative to what he was paid.

DS: That's pretty significant, especially back in those days. That was quite a bit of money. So do you think in the long term, what kind of impacts has that suit had in terms of the campus and gender issues?

EK: The first and foremost impact it has was to change the promotion and tenure system. Pre-suit, the department head would decide when and who would go up for tenure. We had none of this AAUP [American Association of University Professors] business with seven years and you have to go through tenure at seven years and it's tenured or out. We had none of that. It was very loose system. The department head, male of course, would decide and would vote to tenure you. The he would go to the dean and he would put on his college hat with the dean,

and the two men would then agree yes. Then if the two men agreed yes, it would go to the third man, the vice president of academic affairs, and those three men would all agree, and then if you passed muster in all of those levels of male review, you would get tenure. There was no checks and balances whatsoever. Well, of course, that's why women weren't promoted. They could just rot in their position, and they never captured notice of anybody to start this process.

The most significant thing was that when I was then serving on the faculty affairs committee through faculty council, Irving Dayton, who later became commissioner of higher education was the vice president of academic affairs at that time. He worked with me and my committee to develop standards and criteria. Eventually the system evolved to a faculty committee at the department level and the department head: separate reviews. A college committee at the college level and the dean: separate reviews. We have now four bodies having input into somebody's future. From there it went to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. They had a representative from...I'm not sure it was each of the colleges but a pretty good representation across the university. They would vote. If a woman started through and got booted out at some level, it was always flagged. Then the affirmative action officer required some documentation and defense of that decision to move the woman out or to not tenure her or whatever. You had to have a good case. It couldn't just be a whim or negligence. I think that was the most significant outcome.

Also, all of the salaries, not only the back pay but the current employees—the current faculty—had salary adjustments to their salaries so that in 1976, '77, when the judgement came in... I think it was March 6 of 1976, but I'm not quite sure about that. From then on, everybody was supposed to be at an equal playing field. It had all been reviewed, everybody starts out. Then the next thing is, we were into this merit pay now, and I think several things got out of kilter pretty quickly because of the merit pay. The merit pay came in in '77 with Bill Tietz becoming president. I thought the merit system was really good, but introduced in the merit system was comparable-worth stuff and what would you get out in the market. Well, the market it discriminatory, we know that. We know that elementary school teachers and nurses, at the time—although they've corrected that quite a bit—nurses, at the time, and librarians, the typical women's fields, were all low-paying jobs. Well, when you went up for merit, your merit—not an individual's merit, but a person in that group—was based on work-force comparable-worth kind of thing with the work force.

NO: With job segregation—

EK: That's right.

NO: —and stuff.

EK: I argued that this is fine to have a merit system because women will...but you can't introduce the workforce data into it to make comparisons because it's discriminatory. Well,

they did anyway, and that's...you know. Now we have English professors making a lot less than...English and music and education making a lot less than physics and chemistry and so we're kind of back where we—

NO: So as women are aggregated in still the fields that have predominantly been women...I mean, there are some fields that have been predominantly women, some that have some mixed, and some that are still predominantly male.

EK: Yes.

NO: So that merit pay comparable to the public market means that, in fact, women in the system are probably, as a whole, receiving less pay.

EK: Yes, and as the men...A department like physical education that has equal male-female representation, those males are making less than a professor in chemistry, psychology, also. So it has worked against them, but just the factor of when we started that everything was level playing field and then this was introduced again as a justification for paying people less again. The same thing has happened in athletics with the male and female coaches. I served on a salary committee for athletics, and quickly the policy from the affirmative action office came to importance based on the crowds that are drawn to the program. How many people, how public are you? How much do you have to be out in the public and under scrutiny and your job is on the line because of public comment and so forth and so on. Well, the women were never out in public, they hardly got an article in the newspaper if they did something. They certainly didn't travel around the state and talk to the citizens and the booster club, so it builds in a discriminatory pattern. We're still under that.

DS: So how in athletics has that changed over time as a result of between Title IX and the lawsuit, the whole effort to hire women as coaches to have a budget for women's athletics that's somewhat comparable to the male budget? How has that developed at MSU?

EK: As I mentioned, the lawsuit was decided in 1976—the spring of '76. '76, '77 was Carl McIntosh, the president at the time, his last year. He put me on his executive committee, and he really tried...After they lost the suit, he really tried to get me involved in upper administration, important assignments, and so forth. I took that opportunity and I—

[End of Side A]

[Side B]

EK: Carl McIntosh was the president at the time, and he had me on several high-level administrative committees. I had his ear, and he was leaving in '76, '77 so I said, "You know, there's one thing that you could do your last year to really make a big difference, and to show the women on this campus that you really are serious about this. That is to establish a separate and equal women's athletic department parallel with the men, the men's and women's directors reporting directly to the president."

He said, "Okay."

DS: Just like that.

EK: Yes. He said, "I will put you on a special assignment for spring quarter, and you are to go over to the fieldhouse, find office space, and I will tell the athletic director that you're going to do this and that he's to find office space for the women. You can order file cabinets, desks, chairs, computers, and so forth. You will chair the search committee for the first women's athletic director." I did chair the first search committee, and—

DS: And where did he propose to get the money for this?

EK: I don't know. Wasn't my problem. (laughs) We had the search. We had offices and files and so forth. By that time, the athletic department had the women's program, and as I mentioned earlier, it had started to slide. It wasn't getting the attention I thought it needed, and I knew this would happen when I took it over there but I just felt like in the long run it would be better, and now things are turning the corner and they're going to be positive. We searched. We interviewed two people: a woman by the name of Donna Olson who was from New Jersey. She'd gotten her master's degree at Washington State. I had known her from there. She ended up as associate athletic director at the University of Minnesota, which also has a separate women's athletic department—one of the few in the nation left. And Jenny Hunt. Jenny Hunt was from the University of Michigan at the time, and she was serving as assistant athletic director under the male athletic director at Michigan. She had her doctorate. She wrote her dissertation on the history of women's athletics and the women's sports association—girls' and women's sports so forth. Had her doctorate from UNC-Greensboro. While both of them were very good, Jenny clearly had more experience and a better depth of understanding national issues and so forth. As well, when we hired her, Jenny was president-elect of AIAW.

DS: Which is the American Women's Intercollegiate—

EK: Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women. Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, I think that's right. AIAW was...I see it as an intermediary, intermediate body to the male model, N-C-two-A [NCAA] model that I spoke about earlier, and the "grande dame" physical education model—the "be ladies first" and "don't compete really hard" model. AIAW

was developed to implement competition for women but under the direction of women. It was kind of a best of both worlds. Jenny was president-elect of that organization when we hired her in 1977. During the interview process, I remember that Tom Pereck (?), who was the athletic director, and he was on the committee. I'm not sure he was on the committee, but he was in the interview. Jenny sat down to interview at the head of the table and the first question Tom Pereck asked her was, was she married?

DS: And even in those days, that was an illegal question to ask.

EK: Yes, yes. I'm thinking, oh my gosh, why did...? Anyway, the old boys' network had been going, and he'd known some things about...followed Jenny's career and all of this stuff. As it turned out, Jenny Hunt had been married, and so she said yes, she had been married. I mean, she left it at that. I thought that was so interesting, and Alana Brown in the English Department was also on that committee. I thought she was going to have a stroke when somebody asked that question. (laughs) Anyway, Jenny did get hired and she ended up to be the first women's athletic director of a separate department. Of course, she was a good steward and hired good women coaches. She had male coaches too. I mean, Bill Nevill (?) was there coaching volleyball, and he was very good. Rich Keys, she hired him to coach gymnastics, and he was very good. Whenever possible, she would try to get women coaches. She hired women coaches for volleyball after Bill left, woman coaches for basketball. She did hire a male for basketball, Gary Schwartz (?), at one point, but she was very good at maintaining the strong women support in athletics for the women athletes as well as for coaches and so forth.

DS: Are you leaping to actually saying something that the model of universities that didn't create a separate department, say the University of Montana that just created women's athletics under the male athletic program, were less likely to hire women coaches? Is that what you're suggesting?

EK: Yes. The other part of this is that, in the '60s and '70s, because the women's program had, the competitive program, had moved from this old women's model to a more competitive model, I felt that the women athletes at that point may be better served by...well, obviously any woman athlete would be better served by a better qualified coach. At that point, the males usually had better experience. I thought, if we're ever going to get qualified women into coaching, they've got to have a good experience with their coach and being coached. I hired Neil Aliason (?) for a track coach and Bill Nevill for volleyball coach. I felt okay about that because I knew that those women were going to develop well. Eventually, as Jenny came in and Jenny was connected and we got to the latter '70s and so forth, then we started getting really good women coaches out there, and she specifically went after them.

NO: Also because these programs were then developing and turning out students who had actually had experiences, college athletes themselves which they had not had an opportunity to be before.

EK: She did a really good job and, of course, she and then Doug Fullerton became athletic directors. She and Doug got along pretty well, and they would go to President Tietz and argue their positions and so forth. One other little anecdote here: I also was serving on the president's search committee when Carl McIntosh was going to resign, retire. He appointed me to that committee as he did a lot of committees. When Bill Tietz was interviewing in Bozeman, we were out at the Old Topper for dinner and people were interviewing and asking questions and this and that, and I just said, "I'd like to have a beer with you after dinner in the lounge."

"Okay." So we went in there, and I told him the whole history and that President McIntosh had set up this women's athletic department, and that I for one, on the search committee would like to know what he intended to do about that if he became president. He promised me he would never do it in.

I said, "Okay, you're my choice." (laughs)

DS: Did he keep his word?

EK: He kept his word. He did not merge those, even though there was pressure to do so, did not merge those departments. I always appreciated that about him, that he kept his word. Jenny remained as women's athletic director. Then Bill Tietz resigned and Mike Malone was in the presidency. Mike was a good friend of mine and so forth, but he responded to pressure a lot. When there was pressure in talk, "Well, merge the departments because we'll save all this money and during budget crisis all of that." He merged them. That's when Jenny retired because she...First of all it would be clear that at Montana State the man would get the job. Neither did she want to be in that public a role, and with all the social activities and all of that and the boosters, she just didn't want to do it. She left in '91, '91 or 2 ['92].

DS: So what impact do you think that's had in terms of women's opportunities as faculty, access to resources, competition between the male and female programs?

EK: Well, during Jenny's watch, we did eliminate two athletic programs: men's wrestling, but we also eliminated women's gymnastics. Now, today of course, the wrestling coaches association has created all kinds of havoc and is claiming that the women and Title IX is the reason that all these wrestling programs are going under. At Montana State, we got rid of wrestling, but we got rid of a really successful gymnastics program that was just for the women. Jenny did a good job, but as soon as it went back to the men's program again, the awareness just isn't there. The equal opportunities just aren't created, provided—

NO: Well, it's not so much of anyone's focus. I think that's one thing we observe over and over in these different interviews is in the beginning, because it takes so much attention and focus to create these programs and think them through, it is just in the blood of the people who do that work. As we've evolved over these last 30 years, this next generation that takes over kind of

grew up with it, some of them. It's just not in their blood in the same way to be focused on always being aware of that.

EK: Well, and the nuances of the whole thing are very elusive. For example, we were hiring an associate athletic director for women's programs. That's what they all did. When they merged together, they created a senior women's administrator. Of course, you couldn't advertise that it had to be a woman, but you would have in the job description, please respond to these required and preferred criteria. One of those was a sensitivity to gender equity and tell us in your letter evidence that you understand this and that you will work for this. Of course, the men write in, "Well, I coached women's soccer. I coached girls' softball."

I convinced the committee, I said, "This doesn't do it. We have some very discriminatory men out there that coach women's sports. They have got to tell us what they did. They fought for more money, they got uniforms, they did something." We eliminated a lot of people, a lot of males from that search on the basis of that.

DS: It's raining out.

EK: It sure is.

NO: Yuck.

DS: So is there anything else...I mean, there are plenty of other things to talk about relative to that lawsuit. Any other area of that you'd like to talk about? It seems most of the universities in the country went through lawsuits of one kind or another during that time. Yours was strictly faculty. One at the University of Montana was faculty and staff. Yours was simply faculty.

EK: Right. You see, the staff at Montana State is unionized and the faculty is not.

DS: That's the difference between the two institutions right there.

EK: We did bring in some evidence of discrimination with adjuncts and professional people like some of the librarians who were on professional contracts. We brought evidence of that in so that could be addressed in the decision and could be addressed, asked to be addressed in the master plan. This isn't part of the suit, but do something about it because obviously there's something wrong. So there were some fall out—good fall out—from other groups.

DS: When the separate women's athletic department was created, clearly the men's department had to make space for that, both physically and everything—uses of gyms, all the other issues that worked out with. Was there any tension related to that? Did they open up the doors and say, "Welcome, yes, I cleaned out an office. Here's some money." What was that interaction like?

EK: Well, I didn't get into that much. I was over there that one spring quarter dealing with it. Everybody knew that this was happening, that the women were coming over there. I think that they just, you know, stayed away from me. So I didn't have any direct confrontation, but I'm sure that Jenny had lots of battles over those issues. She would be better to tell you what those would be. Another aspect of the suit was that it was written in the faculty policy manual that all search committees; all committees had to be 25 percent women or minority. Of course, we have no minorities, so—

DS: Of course I was going to ask that question. Usually these lawsuits then by osmosis kind of end up impacting other categories of people and MSU has always had a small, at least initially, American Indian population at the university. Did this impact or did any of the Indian women on campus at this point participate or get involved in this?

EK: I don't remember. I don't remember any. Well, I do remember Indian women on campus. One was Elnora Old-Coyote (?) in education. I don't remember her at all being a part of anything related to that. That's the only Indian woman that I remember back then. Of course, Bill Tietz was the one that created the Native American Studies program and was really critical in developing and promoting the American Indian experience on campus. I think that came afterward.

NO: You know, I think these interviews in one way, I really think about them as we're talking to a generation of women that maybe 50 years from now will not have had—that will have very different experiences than we had certainly, going through this, even though our young women these days also don't know this experience. But it's really a chance to talk to them about this legacy and to create this change and live through a lifetime, like your career, of seeing such dramatic change in terms of women's opportunities and higher education as really a phenomenal perspective.

I think one of the final questions I guess I'd ask you is, what would you want to tell young women 50 years from now who would listen to these tapes and want to really know what it was that we think we did? What did we accomplish? What was our hope from all of this? What difference does it make? Because I think sometimes we fall into a little bit of despair now wondering how much difference we really have made, because certainly there are so many things that still have not been corrected and are not as fair as they need to be.

EK: You can wrap it up by encouraging them to always remember things are never what they seem. There are always another perspective that sees things perfectly all right. Well that's perfectly all right. I mean, basically they don't see. They don't see the problems. So while many of the changes took place in our generation and there's much improvement, and the corrections have been made; don't take that as face value. There's always something there that's not right. There always will be. Don't listen to these stories as just ramblings of ancient history. Listen to the stories and see where the women of this generation saw chinks in the

armor. There will be chinks in the armor 50 years from now as well. That's what you have to see in order to make further corrections.

NO: Well, good, from a woman who has worn that armor too. Now you have to live in hope to do this kind of work and have a tough skin sometimes.

EK: Churchill says we all live in hope.

DS: Well, I think sometimes the thing that strikes me most about this is the persistence of those of us who survived all of it. That in some ways it's just persistence over time to continue to work at these issues and just plain not giving up. Someone said to me recently, "You just never just go away." In fact, we just don't go away.

EK: Things like this cannot—change cannot happen with somebody that corrects the situation and walks away and thinks it's going to stay that way. It never will. The other thing that I have observed that I would say to women 50 years from now and hopefully it will change, but it probably—this probably won't change either. That is what Eleanor Roosevelt said, "No one can make you feel inferior without your permission." So many women are made to feel inferior just as I mentioned, the two women who refused to even be part of the suit because they were fearful of their professional lives in the future. They both have PhDs, they both are researchers. They were both doing the same work, if not better than the men were. They were just afraid. It was a self-confidence thing. So I think those two things, it's never perfect. You can always find a little chink in the armor. You've got to get your self-confidence up because nobody can take it away without your permission.

DS: The importance of women acting together, which also comes out so much in these stories. I think a lot of what we see now is that women are told that these things have all been fixed and so if you're having an individual problem here, it's viewed as an individual problem; your inadequacy, your failure. So you pursue it as an individual versus the sense that you all had that as a group of women. You came together to create a change.

EK: Yes, I think that that social support is critical. The woman in engineering right now that's going through a lawsuit, she is the only one. I've had discussions with her and helped her and so forth. Alexandria against all of the men. All of the men have reasons why she wasn't given merit raises. She refuses to believe it. There are a lot of women, even women back during our suit, that said, "Oh well, I didn't get a raise because I'm on too many committees. I didn't get a raise because my work isn't as important as theirs." Women began believing that.

DS: I think that acting together and seeing ourselves as women with common issues that need to be resolved through collective action versus solely individual action—although it certainly requires a great deal of individual courage and initiative to stand in that position, but it's still a group of people standing together that moves issues along.

EK: I just need to record one other incident that happened during the trial. That was that Greg Morgan, our attorney whom I mentioned that was very, very good. During the day, the first day was talking to—he had the President and the Vice President and the Dean and the department head and all of the administrators on the stand. It was Dr. So-and-So, Vice President So-and-So, Professor So-and-So, and so forth. The first woman he got up was Helen Mecklenburg. It was, “Now Helen, tell us this. Helen, tell us that.”

So we went out to dinner that night. I said, “Greg, let me tell you what you did today.” I pointed that out and he just was slap-jawed.

“Oh my gosh, I did do that didn’t I?”

I said, “Yes you did.”

I said, “This is exactly why women feel like they feel.”

The next day in court, he used that in court about himself. “You see, we don’t get it. Even I don’t get it. This is what I did.” From then on, he didn’t do that anymore. I thought that was great.

NO: It’s an excellent example of how pervasive in fact that attitude—

EK: And nobody would notice it. None of the men would notice that. That’s just what they think of us. They never think of us as doctors, professors, no Vice Presidents.

NO: Well there’s work yet to be done. The day we have Presidents of our University systems; we’re a ways from that. No reason why we shouldn’t have it tomorrow.

EK: We have a Commissioner though.

NO: We do have a Commissioner. That’s a significant leap. Sheila Sterns is the Commissioner.

EK: That’s right.

NO: Was she the first ever?

DS: Yes.

NO: The Commissioner of Higher Ed?

DS: Yes. Sheila Sterns. She was also Provost at the University of Montana Western at Dillon.

EK: As far as I can tell, she has gotten far more positive comments than the last male we had.

DS: Oh yes. She’s very good at relationship building, again, as well not seeing it as a numbers crunching thing. That’s a political job that really depends on your ability to work with other people. That’s a really tough decision.

EK: Another landmark decision was made when they hired Sharon Quisenberry as the first woman Dean of Agriculture at Montana State. I couldn't believe it. Agriculture of all things, was the last vast and here she came. The farmers and ranchers really liked her. She was out in the state and she made—she did a lot for them.

DS: Hopefully we move to the point of trying to look at the individual person's abilities instead of just gender. I think that has happened to some degree. It hasn't happened enough, obviously.

Well, I really appreciate your taking the time, Ellen, to try to recall some of this, which is certainly not quite ancient history, but it's not the most current thing in all of our minds. I think it's important to get down people's reflections of it while we still have a memory of it.

EK: Yes and thank you. I appreciate a good interviewer.

DS: Oh good. I think that's a wrap on this on. If you want to hit the off button there, Nancy?

NO: Oh, yes.

[End of Interview]