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Jewelle Taylor Gibbs Interview, Fass & Maslach, Academic Pioneers: Women at Berkeley in the 1970s and 1980s

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JEWELLE TAYLOR GIBBS

Christina Maslach:

Jewelle, we usually just first start off with some basic demographics. Your name, date and place of birth, your early education, things like that before you came to Berkeley.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Okay. My full name is Jewelle Althea Taylor Gibbs. I use my maiden name, Taylor. That's my full name, married name Gibbs. I was born November 4th, 1933, during the depression. I was born in Stratford, Connecticut and grew up in Connecticut, moved to Ansonia, Connecticut, a small town near New Haven, at age 5, and then went to public schools all the way through. In 1951, I graduated from high school and went to Radcliffe College.

Christina Maslach:

Yay.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

I think Christina is an alumna of that school?

Paula Fass:

Very proud alum, a very proud alum.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Yes, of our "no longer in existence" college, right?

Christina Maslach:

Yeah. That's true.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

I will say that my father was a Baptist minister, and that had a profound influence on my life. I think that many of the things I've done, including my career choice, have been influenced by the fact that I am a preacher's kid.

Christina Maslach:

Right. Great.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Okay. I went to Radcliffe and graduated with honors in 1955, believe it or not. That's a while back.

And then for my first job, I went to Washington, D.C. for a job in the federal government. I don't know if Chris remembers, but there used to be a national exam called the Federal Entrance Exam for people who wanted to consider careers in government. It was for college students who were seniors to take. I took it and I passed it and went to work in the labor department for one year. You started as an intern and we had a little taste of several departments. It was very interesting,

but by the end of the year, first, I was going to get married, but also, I decided I never wanted to work in the government because I saw, at that time, it was a very wasteful bureaucracy, really wasteful. I was glad I was going to get married because I was happy to leave the job.

I married a guy named James Lowell Gibbs Jr. He was a graduate student in anthropology at Harvard. And we met there, so I married him a year after I graduated, and that was 1956. And we went off to Africa for 18 months. And that was, again, a trip that had a big impact on me. Getting out of the country, living in Africa, an underdeveloped country, and living in the part that was called the bush, very underdeveloped. And I learned how to be very, you might say, very resourceful, like baking my own bread and washing my own clothes. We didn't have any electric appliances, so I learned to be very resourceful. And it was a very good, but difficult way to begin marriage. But we were together for 18 months with very few Americans around and very few people spoke English. So we became very close friends and confidants. And that, again, had an impact on our marriage. We've been married 65 years.

Christina Maslach:

Yeah, that's amazing, Jewelle. Congratulations.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

I always like to say, "To the same man."

Christina Maslach:

Right. But what country were you in, in Africa?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Liberia, West Africa.

Christina Maslach:

In West Africa, Liberia. Okay.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

And that's one country that has had a lot of American influence, because it's a country where slaves were sent back to Africa to start their own republic. And so, it's one of the early three republics in Africa. The people speak many languages. English is the official language, but there are over 20 tribal languages where we were. We were with one of the largest tribes. My husband was studying the tribal law. And we learned a little bit of the language. And it was very, very different. So anyway, it helped me see life a little differently when I came back to America.

Christina Maslach:

Okay, great. When did you come back to the United States? What year was that?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Okay. We were in Africa from late January 1957 to August of 1958. And then when we came back, Jim was coming back for a year to Cambridge to finish up his doctoral thesis. He was doing his thesis on this study of tribal law in Africa. So, I decided that I would go to the Harvard-Radcliffe Graduate Program in Business Administration. And the interesting part about that was

the business school did not admit women then. Now remember, this was the year 1958. And they allowed women to take a one-year course, and they didn't allow women into the second year. So, the strange coincidence was that at the spring of that year, 1959, we were called in an assembly, the whole group. And we were told that the Harvard Business School was relenting, and they would let us go into the second year if you wanted to go, and we'd then get an MBA. Well, I think two of my classmates actually did go, the rest of us had already made plans to do other things. But they were the first two women to graduate from the business school. And then the next year, they allowed women into the first year. So, it's very interesting. I always say, if I stayed that second year, I would have been one of the first three women to ever graduate from the business school. But I didn't want to stay because Jim got an offer to teach at the University of Minnesota. And I thought it's more important for me to stay with my husband than to stay here a second year. So that was another turning point in my life.

Christina Maslach:

Yeah. But interesting, you were there when history really was being made and the school was going through that change.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Yes. I was. We were...and often when they mentioned the first women to graduate, they don't mention those two, they mention the people who came in the next year. But those two in my class, were the first to get the MBA and they should get more credit.

Christina Maslach:

For doing that. Yeah. Oh my gosh, okay. Okay, so then Minnesota. And how long were you there?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

The Minnesota years, we were there six years, and that was six very happy years of my life, I will say. We had two children, two little boys. And one was born in 1961 and the other in 1963. And in spite of the very cold weather, we really liked Minnesota. It's a very nice state to live in, very family oriented. And at that time, it was very liberal. Senator Hubert Humphrey, remember? He was our senior senator and Senator Gene McCarthy was the other one. I got interested in politics almost the day after I got to Minnesota. We were neighbors of a state assemblyman. And I used to babysit for them. And through them, I met all these people like Senator Humphrey, Senator McCarthy. I met them in a very congenial way. And we were all on a first name basis. They got me active in the local ward club. And before you know it, after about three years, I was very active as a party member of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, they called it. And I was appointed by the governor, four years after we moved, to the governor's Commission on the Status of Women. We actually formed another group called the Minnesota Women for Civil Rights. And I was the co-chair. So I was really active and I wasn't working for money. But I was very active in the party and really enjoying it. And then about in my fifth year there, I decided I wanted to go back to school for the PhD in psychology at that time. And they had a very good psychology department at University of Minnesota, and it was very child psychology oriented. And I decided I wanted to go back. Well, there's a funny story here if we have time...

Christina Maslach:

Sure.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Why didn't I go back? It's another story of how difficult it is for women with children to go back to school. So, my kids were then one and three, I believe. And I had a lady who came in once a week to help with cleaning. And she was American Indian. And so, I asked her, "I need a babysitter. I'm going to class two days a week, and I have to go over to university. And can you recommend someone? Do you know someone?" She said, "Oh, yes. My aunt is a good babysitter," and she was also American Indian. So, I said, "Okay, I'll hire her." So, I started my master's the fall semester, and I was so happy to get out of the house and to finally pursue my graduate work. And my husband was all for it. So, two days a week, I had classes. About a month after I started, my oldest son who was very smart for his age, he talked to her. He was very smart. And he said to me, "Mommy," he said, "Norma was serving milk to Lowell, the baby, in the wrong cup." I said, "Really?" Well, in our house, we had a two-story house, next to the kitchen was the bathroom, on the other side was like a family room. And the baby had all his stuff in the family room, including his playpen. In that bathroom, I had, for boys, I don't know if either one of you had boys, but they had for boys a little thing that if you went in a car, you took it so they could pee in it. Do you know what I'm talking about?

Paula Fass:

I know what you're talking about. I do. I had a boy.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Okay, so you know. It's long, it doesn't look like it's a cup at all, but it looks like a plastic bottle.

Paula Fass:

Uh-huh.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

So I had this on the top of the toilet. Okay. This woman was putting the milk in the peepee pot. And giving it to my poor little baby, the one-year-old. Well, that day when my husband came home, I said, "You know what? I can't do this. I cannot leave my children with people who don't know the difference between a little urinal (and I think it was invented by the French, of course). I said, "I can't let them put the milk in the urinal while I'm going to class." That was the end of my PhD program at the University of Minnesota. And I stayed home, and never regretted it because I didn't know what she was going to do next. So, I said that I better come home. So anyway, I often tell people that story, and say, "It isn't easy for women with children to go back to school."

Paula Fass:

You had an extremely smart, older boy.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Oh, he was very smart. And if he hadn't told me, I never would have known. And she was just putting the milk in there and he was looking. The baby was drinking it. Anyway, I think that is a funny story. Now that it's behind me, it's funny. It wasn't so funny then.

Christina Maslach:

Right. You can look back on it. Okay. So, then what were next steps?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Well, then we went back to Liberia for a year. If you're married to an anthropologist, that's what you do. We had been, I guess, at Minnesota for almost six years and it was time for his sabbatical, so we took a sabbatical. And we had to wait until the baby was two because of vaccinations, and he had a slight allergy. The doctor said, "No, I can't vaccinate him. Wait till he's two." So, at two and four, we take them back to Africa. But we lived in a bigger town and thank God, the Peace Corps was over there. So, again, an interesting turn in my life was our interactions with the first Peace Corps kids to go to Africa. And then we met them, and they were all in the villages and in our village, because actually it was a town in the county seat, so they had a little clinic and a Peace Corps doctor, whom we immediately adopted; he was single. And then he was the doctor for our children for the one year. We were really lucky. He became like a part of our family. We exchanged favors. He gave us treatment for the children, and we gave him free dinners about once every week or ten days. And I think you guys would enjoy the fact that we had a multicultural Christmas that year. Because there were three people from America who were Peace Corps, very young, just out of college. And they were all Jewish and we're Christian. We got together and we had a multicultural holiday. We celebrated it together -- they brought things that they ordinarily would eat, and we had some food that we ordinarily eat, and we celebrated together. It was one of the best Christmases I've ever had.

Christina Maslach:

That's lovely. I like that. Fabulous. Okay, so one year in Liberia, and what happened next?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Well, I should say that, while we were in Liberia, I collected folktales. And I should have published them, and I never did get them published. But I collected folktales and interviewed the women about their daily lives. So I was Jim's unpaid assistant. Because in many societies, women cannot be interviewed by strange men. In both the first trip and the second trip, I was the interviewer for the women. And I had an interpreter. I would go out every day and interview a woman or two, about their lives, about child rearing, about marriage. There, the men have multiple wives, how many they could afford. And I asked them about how it felt to be a wife with a co-wife. And I learned about all kinds of things. About what they cooked, about their religious ideas, about their, what we would call superstitions, which they would call folk beliefs, and about at a certain age, like we have kids who have their first communion or their bar mitzvah. They have similar ceremonies. They initiate girls and boys into adolescence. And they told me some things that were done. And of course, in that society by the way, they were cutting the girls. Yeah, they were cutting the girls' clitoris as part of the initiation rites. And I witnessed childbirth there for the first time in my life. And their practices, of course, are quite different from ours. And I did write an article for the Radcliffe Quarterly at the time about my year in Liberia, and that quest was my first publication, an article in the Radcliffe quarterly about my life as an anthropologist's wife in Liberia.

Christina Maslach:

Wow. Oh, my gosh. It's amazing because when you think about it, the education you were getting all the way through, in all of these different ways, is remarkable.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Absolutely. And they all had an impact on me. You can imagine.

Christina Maslach:

Yeah. Wow.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

The best impact was this...let me tell you, since we're all women... I noticed that the women there did not complain ever about having the usual problems with the pregnancy, such as morning sickness. So I wondered, "How is it that they don't?" So I would ask them when they were pregnant because they were often pregnant. They would be pregnant every two or three years. And they had very high rates of infant mortality. They would lose one child, and then they'd be pregnant again with another. And so I would say to them, "Don't you ever get sick?" They would say, "What do you mean sick?" I would say, "Well, in the morning, don't you feel bad?" "No. We never get sick. We don't vomit. We have too much work to do." Because women did most of the work, the men sat around and made the legal decisions and everything, but the women did a lot of the work. They led work in the farms. So, I said to myself, "Well you know what? That's interesting." When I came back and got pregnant, I said to Jim, "You know what? I'm not going to have morning sickness." And I didn't. I had two babies and never had one day of morning sickness. And I decided that a lot of it was probably cultural. That if you live in a culture where women don't get sick, then you don't get sick. So then when I came back, sure enough I said when I first got pregnant, "You know what? If they don't get sick in Liberia, I'm not going to get sick." And I never had a day being sick, and that's true. So, you can make of it what you will, but that is what happened.

Christina Maslach:

Interesting. Yeah.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

But, I still feel that some of the morning sickness is cultural. But it's what women expect because other women have it.

Christina Maslach:

Yeah, I never had much either. I remember being asked a lot about how you feel in getting morning sickness, and I rarely had it.

Paula Fass:

I was very sick with both children. And I can assure you, it wasn't cultural.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

See that. I do think this is a subject that should be studied. Why do some women get it, and other women don't?

Christina Maslach:

Yeah. Okay.

So now when you leave Liberia...

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

So what comes next is when we got back from our trip, Jim was happy. And we both really liked Minnesota, but he got an offer to come to Stanford. And we had just bought a house two years before that, a lovely home near a lake in the city of Minneapolis, which has lots of lakes. We were a block from one of the largest prettiest lakes. And we had lots of friends, I was active in politics. And just before we went to Africa, they asked me to run for the school board. And so, I was thinking maybe that's a direction I'm going when I get back from Africa. Anyway, he gets this offer from Stanford. So, he said to them, "Well, my wife has never been to California. I can't take the offer unless you bring her out." So, they brought me out. I got a babysitter within 24 hours. And I came out for two days. We had some friends on the faculty out here who Chris might remember...the Franklins. I don't know, if she remembers Ruth and Marc Franklin.

Christina Maslach:

Yeah, I remember...

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

They were friends in the Law School. He had been at Cornell with Jim. They took us around for two days, took us up to San Francisco for a day. And you know what? We fell in love with San Francisco. We said, "Oh, my God, Minneapolis is nice, but San Francisco looks more interesting." Also, the campus was so beautiful. Everybody wined and dined us for two days. And so we came to Stanford in 1966, just before all the turmoil started.

We came in 1966. The campus was quiet that year, but you all know that later in the 60s, it wasn't so quiet. But I then decided that I'd take a year to decide what I wanted to do and go back to graduate school. And at that point, I was looking at law too. Law or psychology or social work. And because I had the two kids, I thought, "Well, maybe I'll do social work, and maybe later I'll do psychology," and that's what I did. I got admitted to Berkeley in the School of Social Welfare. They admitted me and I asked if I could do it part-time. And they said, "Well, we don't really have a part-time program." But it happened that one other person had asked, also a Stanford wife. And they said, "Well, the two of you can, we'll let you do it on an experimental basis." So, we did three years instead of two. It's a two-year program for the master's. They were very accommodating by helping us to do classes one year and field work internship another year and then the third year we had to do both. So, I had a good friend, and we commuted. Her husband was also an anthropologist and we commuted for the three years and we finished at the same time. And for both of us, it worked out very well. And one of my internships I set up at Stanford, they didn't have an internship. And I was always looking for ways that I could help people do creative things. So, I went to the guy who was head of the health center at Stanford. And I suggested to him, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if you would have an intern from Berkeley? You have some psychiatry interns, wouldn't you like a social work intern?" And I think I talked him into it. Anyway, I got an internship at the Student Health Center at Stanford in counseling, counseling students. And then as I was ready to graduate, they offered me a job. So, I ended up with a part-time job when I graduated. Three days a week, which was wonderful. And it was

within walking distance of our house. And the kids were still young, and in elementary school. So, it was a perfect job for me. I really loved working with students. And that was from 1970 to 1974, and I also published a couple of papers while I was at Stanford on issues of student mental health.

Christina Maslach:

And then what was the next step after all these accomplishments?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Life is funny. And it seems to me that Jim and I are always in a place when things are changing, just as we arrive. That's exactly what our life has been like with interesting things...so we always seem to be on the cusp of some movement, like the Peace Corps or something like that. So when we got to Stanford, as I said, it was quiet at first. The first few years, they were adding minority students because of the civil rights movement. And the minority students, a lot of them were not happy. They felt that the school didn't understand their backgrounds, and some of that is true. And I focused on the minority students in counseling. I saw all the students, but they would request me, and I started seeing their problems. And actually, I wrote a paper on the issues that minority students were facing in predominantly white colleges. And the paper was very well received because Stanford is a top school. So it was published, and it really received a lot of positive attention. And I recommended some steps that I thought colleges needed to take to be able to absorb minority students, especially black minority students. And then I decided, "That would be good for me to do a PhD and look at these issues more deeply." And then in my fourth year, I decided that I wanted to get a PhD. So I did apply to Berkeley again, and I was admitted to the PhD program in psychology, which as Chris knows, is a small program. In my year, Chris, there were four of us.

Christina Maslach:

In clinical.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

And I was the oldest. I was like *mamacita*.

Paula Fass:

May I ask a quick question? How many papers had you published by them, Jewelle? Because it sounds to me that they were three.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Well, it helped that I had published three or four.

Paula Fass:

Uh-huh. So, this was well before you went into the PhD program, you had already published three or four important papers?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Well, I had published two at Stanford. One by a single author, and one with the chair of the department. So, I'd co-published that. And then the other one I did publish that out of Liberia, it

didn't count, I don't think, in terms of academic publishing. But I think it was interesting to them that I had published it. So, when I went in, I had three published papers. And I think that helped me get into the program.

Christina Maslach:

Okay. So now you were back at Berkeley and getting your graduate degree...

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

And so I went back. Anyway, I finished my degree in December '79, too late to get the degree. But I got the degree in '80. But I started at Berkeley, I got the job as an assistant professor in July of 1979. So, they knew that I had almost finished.

Christina Maslach:

Wow. That's a different process, from other people who were elsewhere and then find out about the job. And that's one of our questions: how did you find out?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Well, mine was very, very, very irregular and informal. Would you really like to hear about that?

Paula Fass:

Yes.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

I don't always tell everybody exactly what happened. Okay. I had been a student at the school. And I had done well. I mean, I had probably had all A's, always in all except one course. So, I was a good student. And I'd been active with the committees as a master's student. And I had one professor that I always clashed with, though, he was a young professor from the east. And I always thought he didn't know as much about life as I did. He just seemed very naive about everything. And he certainly didn't know anything about minorities. And so, we had discussions in class, and I would speak up, and he and I would get into arguments. And I just didn't really like him. But anyway, I graduated, and went to Stanford to work. So, then I come back for my PhD. Well, you both remember, those little restaurants up above on the north side, you know the restaurants on Hearst? With Top Dog and all those little restaurants.

Paula Fass:

Yes.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Well, when I was a graduate student, I would go up, I never wanted to bring a sandwich from home. Actually, I loved those top dogs, so I would go up and get a top dog and a coke or something else. But this particular day, I was finishing up and I went into the cafe with a porch on Hearst, right next to the place with the garage.

Paula Fass:

Yes. I remember it well, actually.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Yeah, I don't think it's there anymore, there's a bakery there. But anyway, you remember the one, it was very inviting. People would come and spend hours. So, I decided I would eat lunch there that day. And who should be sitting at a table but what we called the good old boys, four of my professors at the School of Social Welfare. They were sitting together, as they had always eaten together all those years when I was in school. The one that I didn't get along with was now the Dean of the School. Okay? So he sees me walk in and he calls me and said, "Aren't you Ms. Taylor?" Which is funny because he remembered my maiden name. I said, "Well, yeah, I'm Jewelle Taylor Gibbs." He said, "Oh, I remember you. You graduated from our school, didn't you?" I said, "Yes." And I was cool because I didn't like him. The others all remembered me; they said, "How are you?" So he says to me, "I noticed you were doing a PhD in psychology. Is that true?" I said, "Yes, I'm finishing this summer." He said, "Well, you know what? We have a job that would be perfect for you. Why don't you call me?" I looked at him and I said, "I've been commuting for years, and I don't want to commute any more. I don't want to commute to Berkeley. I'm going to work down on the peninsula." He said, "Well, just call me anyway." But I didn't call him. Well, about a week later, one of my colleagues who did teach at Berkeley lived in Menlo Park. She called me and she said, "The Dean said, he wants to talk to you about the job opening for next year." I said, "I don't want to talk to him. I don't like him. I'm not going to work for him. And I'm not going to commute anymore." Well, two or three other people called me. They all said, "He wants to talk to you about the job." So, my husband finally said, "Jewelle, are you crazy?" He said, "Someone is calling you from the University of California, at Berkeley, one of the top universities in the country about a job and you don't want to even talk to him." I said, "Well, you know this. I don't like him." He said, "I don't care whether you like him or not. We have a child going to Harvard in September. We need the money." Our oldest boy had just graduated and had just been accepted to Harvard for the fall. So, he reminded me, he said, "You know what? We're going to need the money. You need a job."

Christina Maslach:

Oh, my God.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

So I said, "Okay, I'll go up and talk to him but I'm never going to work for him." I mean, I'm laughing now because of how silly it sounds. Well, I went up and talked to him, and it looked as if the job was made for me, it really was. I could see that. They needed a psychologist to teach a course in psychological assessment, so they had to have somebody with a psychology degree. They needed somebody who also could teach a course on minority mental health, which of course, I had already written a couple of papers on. There was one other thing. They needed someone who could teach a basic course in social work. And of course, that's where I had my master's. They asked me to teach a basic course in social work and a basic course in psychology. So, he said to me, "Don't you see this job is made for you?" I said, "Well, are you doing a search?" He said, "Yeah, we're doing a search, but we want you." Just like that, he said, "We want you because we know you. We know you're a good student. And we think you'd be great for this job." So, you know what? I said, "Let me think about it." I went home and told my husband. He said, "Jewelle, I don't even think you have to worry about getting that job, you just have to apply." So anyway, I called him back and I said, "What do I need to do?" He said, "Well, just come up, spend the day, give a seminar. The graduate students would want to talk to you."

Give a seminar on your research." He said, "I think that you don't have to worry." I mean, he made it clear to me that I did not have to worry, that the job was made for me. And they all wanted me to come. So, you know what? It was a very easy choice. I gave a seminar. The graduate students said they liked what I had to say. And I got the offer. And it was very unlikely, I think, compared to most offers.

Paula Fass:

Jewelle, it's also unlikely because you already had a son going off to Harvard. We often ask people about the way they coordinated their academic life with their family life. But in your case, you actually took your job in part so your son could go to college, which is very unusual.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Well I think the reason I say it was unlike most people, who feel they're competing with a lot of other people. I did not feel I was competing with a lot of other people. And they made it clear that they thought the job fit me and it did, it really did fit me.

Paula Fass:

We should swing ahead to getting tenure, because obviously, you aced this thing. You didn't have to do any...

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

No effort.

Paula Fass:

Was it difficult? Was getting tenure and being with your colleagues, where you had to take in a master's degree, was that problematic for you or was that all...?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

No, actually, it worked out, I even learned to like the Dean because he was so supportive of me. He always was very supportive of me. And he had even apologized to me. Very early the first year, he called me, and he said, "I need to apologize to you." I said, "For what?" He said, "I know that we had some difficult times," and he said, "I think sometimes I said things to you that probably I shouldn't have said," and he was very apologetic. And so, we started off on a good foot.

Christina Maslach:

Well, that's good.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

I think the advantage I had was, I think that I knew them all and I had had good relationships with them as a student. I had been a TA for two of them. And I liked most of them and most of them seemed to like me, so I started off with an advantage that way. And I guess my feeling was that it was almost like I came home. I mean, it really was comfortable for me. One of your questions was, "Were they friendly?" Several of them invited us to dinner. I guess I would say three of them on the faculty became friendly. And they would come down to Palo Alto, and we would go up there, for dinner. They decided to hire two other new hires. And they'd hired one

guy the year before who was a black guy. And the four of us had birthdays in October and November. So we formed a little birthday group where every year we would celebrate our birthdays that were within about two weeks of each other. So it was very collegial. We had a Christmas party every year, or holiday party. And everybody was friendly and nice. It was very collegiate. And I will say that with the exception of maybe one person, I felt really that I was liked and valued. And I think that's important.

Paula Fass:

Very, very important.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Well, the one thing I will say is I've always been, and Chris knows this, outspoken. And I would say what I thought, and some of the things I thought they didn't always agree with, but they would laugh. And they would say, "There she goes. There's Jewelle, she's so outspoken." And I was worried that it might be held against me when I came up for tenure. But the Dean told me that I got a unanimous vote. So, I guess they didn't hold it against me.

Paula Fass:

Jewelle, what about your teaching, when you first arrived?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

I had an agreement with the Dean that I'd only come up three days a week. And the only time I would ever come up more is if we had a famous visitor or something, or when we had the people who came to evaluate the department, but other than that, I wanted to come up only three days because I had children and it was a hard commute. It's an hour, at least an hour. And so he agreed. So I would come up Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. And then on Wednesday and Friday, I would be home doing writing or research or whatever. So, that made it easier for me to separate teaching and research. Because I had two full days at home during the week. And as far as the teaching, I guess I liked teaching. And I had had some experience. I think I had missed two things. I had some experience teaching at a junior college once in Minnesota. I taught an introductory psychology course in Minnesota, at a junior college and then while I was doing my PhD, the psychology department had, I think, a year-long program to help graduate students learn to teach. And I was one of those involved in that program. I don't know if Chris remembers it.

Christina Maslach:

I do. Yes.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Yeah, I was involved. And it was a year-long program and what happened was, it was the year that I was doing my PhD thesis. And you did seminars with the professor about teaching the first semester. And then you actually taught a section of Psychology 1 in the spring. And it was a big section, I had a huge section. And so I had that teaching experience. And at the same time, while I was doing my final year of the program, I taught at a junior college in San José at night for two semesters. I taught Psychology 1 at night. So, by the time I was ready to teach at the School of

Social Welfare, I had taught in three different places.

Christina Maslach:
Right. Yeah.

Paula Fass:
You said something about having children. How old were your children at the time?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:
Well, by the time I was finishing up the PhD, the oldest one was in high school, and they were both in high school two years apart.

Paula Fass:
I see.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:
I finished my PhD the year he graduated from high school. So, it was perfect timing. And then I had to get a job. And then I had one child at home, and he was a junior when I started.

Christina Maslach:
Okay. And then did he leave for college as well?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:
Well, he left for college two years later. Yes.

Christina Maslach:
And so at that point, you didn't have the same kind of taking care of the kids.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:
I didn't have any children at home. Right. I had an empty nest. And they went east, so I only saw them at Christmas time and maybe Easter. But usually just twice a year. So we were really empty nesters. So I didn't have that pressure. But you still have to write to them and talk to them and worry about them.

Christina Maslach:
Sure. But it's a different kind of thing. Do you want to say anything about the kind of research work that you did when you were starting out in social welfare?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:
Well, in social welfare, I didn't do much research. It was when I was doing my PhD that I did the research. For the master's, I did do a research project for the master's thesis. And, again, it was actually on the adolescent girls in juvenile settings. These are girls who were juvenile and who had problems. And I did a research project, looking at the differences in them.

Paula Fass:
After you'd gotten your degrees, did you do the same kind of research or did you switch your

research subjects?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Well, I stayed with the juvenile delinquents for my PhD, and looked more closely at the cultural and social class differences, and found some real differences. I had a number of scales I used, the psychological assessment interviews, and then histories of juvenile delinquency. And it was really interesting. I found some real differences with social class and cultural differences in the kinds of things they did that were illegal and whether or not they were involved in gangs. And just to give you an example. The white girls were more likely than... They had three groups. One was white, one was black, and the others were Latina. They all lived in San Mateo County. So the county was the same county but different high schools. And there were some who were upper middle class and middle class and then lower, you would say working class. And the girls who were the upper middle class who lived up to the hills in San Mateo, they were more likely to do things like shoplifting. They were not members of gangs. And they were also more likely to take drugs. The girls who were, if you compare them with, say, the black girls, the black girls were more likely to be involved in physical fighting and things like that and early sexual activity. The Latino girls, they were the girls most likely to be involved both with heavier drugs and with gangs. So there were clearly different patterns of delinquency. Some were much more problematic than others. But it was something that I thought that people hadn't really considered, they just lumped all the girls together, put them all in the same institution, but they needed different kinds of interventions. And so that was the finding of my dissertation.

I then got involved, after I did my dissertation on female delinquents, I got more interested in black males and their problems and wrote a whole book on black males and the kinds of problems they were having. And most of the research that I did, for the rest of my career, most of it, but not all of it, was either on black males and some on the black family. And so I wrote a lot about the problems that black males had and I wrote an article on gangs in Los Angeles. I went out and interviewed gangs and that was probably one of my most interesting research projects of all. Over a period of two years, I went down to Los Angeles once a month, and contacted the people who worked with gangs and managed to meet quite a few gang members in groups. And I learned a lot about gangs, and I think I wrote two articles about gangs. And one night, in Los Angeles it is true, they had the Bloods and the Crips. The Bloods wear red and the Crips wear blue. And red is one of my favorite colors. Okay. So, one night, I was down there, and I had a red blazer. And I had worn the red blazer and I was going to a meeting and when I got to the meeting, I realized I was in Crips' territory. Which means if they see you with red, they really may shoot you. So I was so scared I left the red jacket in the car, covered it up and went to the meeting. When I got to the meeting, the man who was organizing the meeting said, "Dr. Gibbs, aren't you cold?" I said, "Oh, no. I'm not cold."

Paula Fass:

Very clever.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Anyway, that was really, probably one of my more interesting adventures and research projects. But I did learn a lot about gangs and what they mean to these kids, and they do function like families. I wrote a lot about, as I said, about black males, about black families. And some of my

pieces were not based on research as much as they were based on, what would you say? My own theories about some of these things and what interventions are needed to change things, to improve conditions in these communities.

Christina Maslach:

Right.

So you've had also an important experience in Social Welfare by being considered for the position of Dean yourself. So do you want to talk about your...

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

I was a candidate. Yeah, I was a final candidate of...there were three of us. And that's a very long story. I'll just comment on this. There were three candidates, I was the only woman, and the School of Social Welfare had never, at that point, had a woman Dean. They had a woman director before it became a school, but after it became a formal school, they never had a woman and all the other schools all around the country had women Deans. Okay? But not Berkeley at that point. So I was the only woman, and then there was a guy who was a Latino guy from, I think he'd been at UCLA, and worked in the government for a while. And then there was a guy from Louisiana State, who was an immigrant from South Africa. Anyway, they interviewed all of us, we all gave presentations. And I can tell you that the students were for me, the students supported me. The current graduate students, the community, people in the community who ran agencies that I had spoken for, or consulted with, they all wrote letters of support. And then the committee wrote a report that said, to the Budget Committee, I guess, the final committee, that all three of us were equally qualified, but we had different strengths and different weaknesses, but we were all equally qualified. And that the Provost could pick any one of us and it would be fine. Well, the Provost picked the one from South Africa, who was from Louisiana State. And the students were very upset. They were not happy. So it was a period in my career, where I was glad I was near the end of my tenure and that I was going to retire anyway. So I retired a couple of years after that, but the process was a very difficult process. And there was a lot going on. Politics and issues of race and issues of sex and gender. All of those issues were very much a part of that process. So, I was not appointed, but I will say there was a lot of pushback afterwards.

Paula Fass:

That's very interesting.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

And that's all I'm saying.

Paula Fass:

Did you do other kinds of administrative things at the university or on the Senate?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Yes. I had done a lot of things. I chaired all the important committees. I was chair of the faculty for one or two years. And as Chris knows, I was very active in the Senate. I was co-chair of the committee on SWEM. The committee on the minorities and women. And I was co-chair with Chris for a couple of years. And then I was chair by myself for a year. And I was active on at

least three Senate committees. And over time, I was active on at least three, but SWEM took up a lot of my time. And Chris and I co-authored a report about the Budget Committee, which again raised some hackles. She can tell you about those. I mean, we were looking at how many women had been appointed to the Budget Committee over the years, and we found very few women and that certain, I think there were five departments that dominated that committee for years and years and they didn't want people even from psychology, which I think had not been on the committee, and the liberal arts had not been on the committee, but it was the sciences and what? And the Law School...

Christina Maslach:
Law School was always there.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:
People like that were on the committee. And we exposed the fact that the Budget Committee did not represent all of the university at all. So that was an important report. So I was very active on campus. I was very active in speaking up when I thought things were unfair for women and minorities, I would speak out about it. And I was not shy about expressing my opinion.

Christina Maslach:
Right, which is great. I'm just trying to think were there any things at all that happened where when you say, we ran into some issues around gender and/or race or this kind of thing, anything that stood out for you, either in terms of your teaching or the research you did or work on Senate committees or anything like that? I mean, you've described one right now, which was looking at how the Budget Committee was chosen, or not, to represent the faculty. But were there other things at all that over the course of your career at Berkeley became a particular challenge or an issue that you got involved in?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:
Well, I thought that the Academic Senate was structured in such a way that it was uncomfortable often for women. The meetings. And I remember the year I was made, I think, chairman of SWEM, all the chairmen of the standing committees, were supposed to be part of the executive committee, I'm not sure of the name.

Paula Fass:
It's called DIVCO, Divisional Council.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:
All the members were chairs of all the committees.

Christina Maslach:
Yeah, it was the Divisional Council, but it wasn't actually all the chairs. It was only chairs of some committees. And some elected representatives.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:
See, that was the issue. Anyway, when the meeting was called, I was not invited. So I called the guy who was then head of the Senate, and said that I was now the chair of SWEM. He said,

"Well, I don't think your committee is one that is normally a member." So I said, "Well, why don't you check." Well, then when he checked, he said that yes, we were. I should have been contacted.

Paula Fass:
Really?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Yes. And so at least he said, I should have been contacted. And then he reluctantly invited me to the meetings after that. But I always thought, again, that was a gender issue. I didn't like it. And if I hadn't called him, I would not have been invited to the meeting, that's what I'm saying. And that really bothered me.

But there were several things that happened, I guess, I was there for 20 years, but that one bothered me almost more than anything. The other thing that bothered me is that I just think that for some of the women there was unfairness in the way they were treated in terms of tenure. And there were several famous cases. Chris, you and I, the case in the Law School of the woman who finally got tenure. What's her name? You remember her name?

Christina Maslach:
Eleanor Swift.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Yeah, Eleanor. You remember we were involved in that case. She came to us when she was appealing it, and we got involved in that case, looking at it. But there were several cases of women who probably should have gotten tenure and didn't. And you couldn't always know all the circumstances, but certainly in my department they didn't have to fight very hard. There was one woman who just didn't do the work and she didn't get it. But in my department, because I was on some of the committees, I thought they tended to be pretty fair. But I think that there were departments where people that I knew that would call me because they knew I'd been on this committee, SWEM. And they would complain, and I would try to give them some advice. And I would say that over 20 years, I had calls from at least a dozen women in other departments. And that was when I was not always on the committee. So then, I think that was true that there were some departments that were very hard on women, I mean, in terms of advancing them. And I would say that I think that race and gender were issues in tenure. And I certainly think there were cases where both race and gender were issues. I can't remember all the details, but that was the thing that worried me more than anything, of trying to see that, give people advice and trying to make sure that the process was fair. And it's always hard to know if you're not in the department and if you're not in the field, it's always hard to know what is fair and what is just. Because you may not know the standards that are used because it's something very different, like in sciences. But I would try to give people advice about strategies rather than actual advice about their research, because I wouldn't always understand their research. But I will say that I talked to at least a dozen women over those 20 years.

Christina Maslach:

Wow. Okay. That's an interesting theme that has come up in some of our other interviews of

women -- people noting that they went to somebody else who actually made a difference for them at a critical point in their career, gave them the chance to finish the book in their department, and so on. Or somebody who gave them advice about something, so that, I think there was, I don't know how extensive, because some people would say, "I'd never really known other women at Berkeley during this time." But I think there were quite a few that really noted that this was something that really helped, but it was not something that would be well known, actually, being able to turn to people...

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Well, I know that two or three gave me credit for helping them after I tried to intervene and help them. Two or three did give me credit. But let me tell you one funny story about the Law School. Dean Choper was a friend of mine, and still is. I mean, he was a good friend before we came here because he was at Minnesota with us. We came a year apart, and his first wife and I were very close friends. So, one day he called me and he said, "Jewelle, we have a new young Latina woman on the faculty that we just hired," which I already knew about anyway. I said, "Oh, that's nice." I am wondering, "Well, now why is he calling me?" And he said, "Well, I'd like you to take her to lunch." I said, "Jesse, why do you want me to take her to lunch?" By the way, I was not on the committee then. So I said, "What do you want me to do?" "Oh, I just think you'd be good to take her to lunch and tell her the ropes and explain everything about tenure." I said, "Jesse, I don't know anything about tenure in the Law School." I said, "What about your colleagues in the Law School? What about your male colleagues? Why don't you ask one of them to take her to lunch?" And he paused a long time on the phone, and he said, "Well, you know how it is?" I said, "No, I don't know how it is." He said, "Well, you know, I think it's just harder for a man to talk to a woman." I said, "Jesse, that is so old-fashioned." I said, "She's your colleague." I said, "If you can't talk to her, and tell her about what it takes to get tenure in Law School, who's going to talk to her? I don't know what it takes to get tenure in Law School." I said, "And you also have female people over there. Why don't you ask Eleanor?" Well, he couldn't answer. He could not answer the question.

Christina Maslach:

Wow.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

So I said, "Okay. Well, I'll tell you what, Jesse. I'll call her one day soon and I'll take her to lunch." But I thought that was the most interesting call that the Dean of the Law School is calling someone in another department to take one of his new hires to lunch. Doesn't that tell you anything?

Christina Maslach:

It says a lot. Oh my gosh, that's incredible.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

It's an incredible story. Because it talks about gender and it talks about the problems of mentoring. I mean, they should be mentoring this young woman who just, a Latina woman who just joined their Law School, but they didn't have anyone that he felt in their department that he could even ask to take her to lunch. And I tell you what? I was surprised that she did eventually

get tenure.

Paula Fass:
That's good.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

I was surprised, because I had the feeling that she was all alone over there. Anyway. And then there's one other thing I do want to say -- that I should have made a complaint about this guy when I was there. There was a guy in the School of Public Health, who was known to be sexually harassing students. Well, that's the trouble. Let me tell you. I had a couple of students who came to me, because a lot of students in social work do that joint program - social work and public health. And in three years, you get a double master's. And it's a very good program. So a couple of students had come to me, I don't know why they always came to me, but they did, and they said that he had harassed them. I said, "Well how," I asked them for details. Well, they're talking about, not just, they said he talks dirty sometimes. So I said, "Well, explain what you mean by talk dirty?" Well, they would explain it and, you know, very inappropriate comments. And one of the students said, "And he likes to get too close," like if you're leaving his office, he manages to always open the door for you and somehow touch you, touch your body. So they asked me what they should do? I said, "Well, I think you should report him." Well, they were afraid to report him because of the grades. I said, "Well, then you wait until you finish, if you're afraid you should report him." Well finally I was on a doctoral exam with this guy, the oral exam. I knew who he was, but I had no one experience with him. And he was very inappropriate to me in comments that he made, and I always wished that I had said something to somebody. But I didn't. And I regret that now. And now he's retired, in fact I think he may be dead. So, I won't give his name. But I think that the women on the faculty should probably report people like that now. I think I should have reported that...it was that time, long before the MeToo movement, there were always expressions of, "Well, will they believe you." And "did you misinterpret it?" And all that stuff. But that's the one thing that I regret that I didn't do, which is to report that guy. I don't know if you heard anything about anybody in Public Health, but if you did, it's probably the same guy.

Christina Maslach:

I understand what you're saying. So now we're going to wrap up, and I just wanted to make sure, is there anything else that you think was important that needs to be put on the record here in our interview that we haven't discussed?

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Oh, I will say that it did not affect me so much because I was in the graduate school, but I did think that the propositions that were passed against affirmative action in the university, and all those propositions that were passed during what? I guess it was the '80s, late 70s, I think they were very damaging to the university. And I do think that it damaged our university because the number of minority students really has gone down. And it's never really bounced back. And I think it's very unfair and just very undemocratic in some ways, that these things have happened. What I'm hoping for, is that when the schools reopen, and we get a chance to think again about what are the criteria that we want for admission, I'd like them to do away with the SAT exam. Because I do think it is basically discriminatory in the fact that middle-class and upper middle-

class kids have so many advantages in taking it, way before with special courses and all those things that poor kids don't have. And it really doesn't measure, it doesn't measure basic ability. It measures what you've been exposed to. So those are the things that at this stage in my life, I'm really concerned about, that the university should take a different approach in terms of looking at the whole student, and what the student has done and what the student is capable of doing. And I don't think that these tests actually measure all that, including motivation to succeed. So I'm hoping that in the next go round, universities will find a better way to evaluate poor students and students who are from low-income backgrounds and different kinds of backgrounds to make sure that they have access to a university education. So that's right now, my major interests and I have two grandsons. One of the things I'm doing is, we play vocabulary games every week. I say they're going to have the greatest vocabulary ever. So that's the one thing, because school is out so I give them vocabulary words and other questions for them to answer every week when I call them. It's kind of fun.

Christina Maslach:

Oh, my gosh, that's great. Thank you for that. I think that's a really important issue. And I'm sure we're going to be hearing more about what's happening or not on that. But just to finish up. Jewelle, this was a remarkable story. I don't think we've had anybody who comes close to having the kind of range of experiences and accomplishments and I mean, it's a really unique path that you've been following all your life. I just want to thank you for sharing that with us. And I also want to thank you, again, for pointing out to us that earlier, there had been a focus on oral histories of African American faculty with a reception in the library, and an exhibit in the library based on those oral histories. And you suggested that we should be thinking about doing that with the archive that we're pulling together on the pioneer women faculty.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Yeah, I think it'll be great. We had the exhibit that was at the main library, and it was a lovely exhibit. They had a reception, and you could invite your family and close friends to the evening. I was a pioneer black faculty too.

Paula Fass:

It sounds like a great idea, a wonderful idea.

Jewelle Taylor Gibbs:

Well, listen ladies, thank you for the interview. And you've made me remember some funny things in my life too. And I've enjoyed talking to you.

Paula Fass:

It's been great for us, Jewelle. Thank you. Thank you.

Christina Maslach:

Thanks so much, Jewelle.

END.