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The 150 Women Project - Holding Series

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Introduction to the 150W Collection on the History of Women at UC Berkeley

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by

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I Origin and Significance

In 2020, UC Berkeley celebrated the 150th anniversary of women's admission to the university, which was secured by an 1870 Regents' Resolution. Introduced by Regent Samuel Butterworth and approved unanimously by the Board of Regents, the 1870 resolution stated, "That young ladies be admitted into the University on equal terms in all respects with young men." The 150th anniversary commemoration of the Regents' action was initiated by Chancellor Carol Christ, the first woman to head Berkeley's administration, and it was jointly led by Sharon Inkelas (Special Faculty Advisor to the Chancellor on Sexual Violence/Sexual Harassment) and Oliver O'Reilly (Chair of the Academic Senate for 2019-20). Planned as a year-long celebration of Berkeley women's achievements over the last century-and-a-half, the anniversary was officially launched at the January 12, 2020 women's basketball game between Berkeley and Stanford, which commemorated an additional historical first: the world's first women's intercollegiate sporting competition, played in 1896 between Berkeley and Stanford. Planned as the first of many public events in the year-long salute to women's accomplishments at Berkeley, the basketball game was unfortunately also the last to be held in 2020, for two months later the pandemic forced the university to cancel the remaining in-person gatherings.

All was not lost, however, for in addition to planning celebratory events, the anniversary's organizers also proposed a year-long research project on the history of women at Berkeley, to be published on a permanent campus website associated with the celebration. In the fall of 2019, Chancellor Christ had established a Task Force which conceived what came to be known as the "150W History Project" and charged that it "convert this anniversary into a lasting archive for future generations." Throughout the pandemic shut-down, the 150W History Project and the 150W website continued to work energetically. The co-chairs of the History Project, Catherine Gallagher and Sheila Humphreys, worked with their Steering and Advisory committees, as well as numerous other colleagues across campus, to "crowd-source" the history of women at the university. Campus departments, organizations, and individuals were invited to participate in retrieving and documenting the experiences and contributions of Berkeley women historically, including both their many achievements and the struggles and challenges they faced.

Many campus organizations aided in the effort. For example, the Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program, led by Stephanie Eberly, cross-listed projects on UC women's history in order to engage a wide range of student participants. The newly formed Emeriti Academy partnered with the 150W History Project as its first interdisciplinary research project, for which we thank Professor Emerita Angelica Stacy and Cary Sweeney of the Emeriti Association. The Bancroft Library created a webpage with highlights from their collections about Berkeley women's history and made a list of all their oral histories of women associated with the

university. Several organizations—the Chancellor’s Office, the Women’s Faculty Club, the Townsend Humanities Center, and the Center for the Study of Higher Education—hosted online seminars and lectures exploring various aspects of Berkeley women’s history. The Alumni Association devoted the Fall 2020 issue of *California Magazine* to the historical experiences of women students and faculty, highlighting the extraordinary lives and achievements of Berkeley alumnae. A database was also established which allowed members of the public to identify and describe Berkeley women whose achievements and legacies should be preserved.

Among the many who responded to the call for historical information and documentation were academic chairs, faculty, alumnae, staff, and students in dozens of units. Student organizations, women’s groups, and campus publications also joined the effort of retrieving, writing, consolidating, preserving, analyzing, and sharing the history of women at Berkeley. The campus-wide response was extraordinary and was shared not only directly on the 150W website, which published many articles on all aspects of Berkeley women’s lives through the generations, but also on dozens of 150W webpages posted separately on websites across campus. Fifty independently produced 150W webpages appeared in 2020-21, which were made by departments, schools, and museums, and all were then linked to the 150W website, which became the gathering point of an extensive network. The decentralized effort allowed 150W to give detailed information and analyses of the roles women played in the development of numerous academic disciplines and departments. The campus owes profound thanks to the hundreds of individuals who contributed to this effort.

The combined result of all of their work is a large compilation of material illuminating the social, political, and intellectual lives of university women from 1870 to the present. The contents range from overviews of women’s experience in different eras to essays on the achievements of individuals. The academic and social lives of ordinary students, their living conditions, and their clubs and organizations are described as well as the contributions of such highly significant philanthropists as Phoebe Apperson Hearst. The progress and setbacks of the various generations of women faculty, from the first appointed in the early 1900s to the present, are narrated. Profiles are given of former women staff of distinction, and women who were the first to break through gender barriers at the university and beyond. A great deal of original documentation is brought to light, and histories are told of women who were recognized in their own time for their accomplishments and others whose contributions went unheralded by their contemporaries. The collection introduces many Berkeley women from ignored and underrepresented groups, such as students, staff, and faculty of color, and disabled women whose legacies are only now being brought into the narrative of campus women’s achievements. This great variety of content also takes many forms: analytical and descriptive essays, original narratives using previously untapped resources, and individual profiles.

This collection is one of the most extensive efforts undertaken in the last fifty-five years to record and share UC’s history. It is not only the largest to concentrate on women’s history but also the first to explore many of the major institutional changes that took place in the wake of the 1960s. No general history of UC Berkeley has appeared since 1968, the year that Verne A. Stadtman’s *The University of California, 1868-1968* was published to mark the centennial of the university’s founding. Prior to Stadtman’s history, William Warren Ferrier’s *The Origin and*

Development of the University of California had been published in 1930, giving a detailed description of UC's development up through the 1920s. Both works provide important general context for users of this collection and are well worth reading. But they cover only the first hundred years, and neither has much to say about Berkeley's women. The work collected here certainly points to numerous questions about the earlier years that still require answers, but it even more insistently suggests the need for general university histories of the last half-century: that under-examined one-third of the institution's life during which women had by far their biggest impact on its development. As the bibliography included in this collection shows, important studies of various aspects of UC's institutional progress are available, and many were used in the writing of the essays collected here. Moreover, the Bancroft Library's university archivists have assiduously collected numerous relevant documents. The university's own statistics clearly show the dramatic progress toward gender equity over the last fifty-five years. In 1968, when Stadtman's book came out, women were only 3½% of the faculty (compared to 35% in 2021), 42% of undergraduates (compared to 55% in 2021) and 25% of the graduate students (compared to 48% in 2021). There were no women among the university's top administrators or even serving as academic deans in 1968; today Carol Christ is Chancellor and half of the current Vice Chancellors are also women. The fifty-five years since the centennial have also seen the fastest progress in the university's racial diversity. We now need sustained and systematic historical research and analysis of these changes, which will give us a broader understanding of how they came about and what they have meant to the university and its various academic disciplines as well as to the State of California and the intellectual life of the nation. We believe that this collection will be an invaluable resource for undertaking these tasks.

II Content and Organization

In the fall of 2021, the 150W History Project turned its attention to saving the content that had been collected on both the 150W website and on those pages linked to it. We enlisted the help of Catherine Mitchell (Director of Publishing, Archives, and Digitization at the California Digital Library), who recommended and facilitated two forms of preservation: a web crawl of the website and a curated compilation of writings that had either been posted on the website or were otherwise related to the topic. First, digital archivist Christina Velazquez Fidler of the Bancroft Library used the software Archive-It to crawl and capture the 150W website in September of 2021, including the many 150W linked webpages that were posted on other campus websites. That digital copy is stored on the Internet Archive's "Wayback Machine" in San Francisco, and it can be accessed at this URL: <https://wayback.archive-it.org/16283/20210923232623/https://150w.berkeley.edu/>. The digital copy of the website can also be reached through the UC Library Catalog, under the title "150 years of women at Berkeley".

Anne MacLachlan then arranged for the Center for Studies in Higher Education to host the second mode of preserving the content from the 150W History Project, which is the collection of writings in PDF format introduced here. It is accessible both through CSHE's website and the California Digital Library. Gathered here are many of the original 150W webpages and essays, converted to PDF format by their authors or compilers. The collection does contain most of the content written during the anniversary year, revised and improved

versions of pieces posted on the website, some entirely new pieces that were completed later, and a few that were originally posted elsewhere. It also includes essays from a 1998 collection on the history of women at Berkeley, edited by Carroll Brentano and published in the Center for Studies in Higher Education's series *Chronicles of the University of California* under the title "the Ladies Blue and Gold". These PDF versions are easier to search than the digital copy at the Internet Archive, and they are simpler to download. Moreover, this collection is open-ended, awaiting work from future historians interested in both women's history and general university history. The on-going, dynamic aspect of this collection is particularly important to the 150W History Project, for the preliminary and decentralized nature of its overall organization naturally produced a discontinuous record, rather than a comprehensive over-view of women at the University of California Berkeley. The collection is nevertheless a large step in the process of creating the deeper, more continuous, rigorous, and comprehensive histories to come.

The collection is divided into the two large categories. The first consists of essays on major developments and eras in UCB women's history, arranged chronologically under five headings. 1. An overview of the first hundred years; 2. Undergraduate student life, campus experience, organizations, and political movements; 3. Graduate student education and professional training; 4. Women faculty, researchers, and administrative leaders; 5. Women staff; and 6. Women benefactors and philanthropists. These essays are individually authored and chronologically arranged according to the historical periods covered.

The second section of the collection contains PDF copies of many of the webpages created by campus academic units under the 150W umbrella, which contain essays, reflections, narratives, and profiles about women in various academic disciplines. There are substantial essays by and about individuals as well as explorations of the overall intellectual developments in the fields. Consequently, the material in this section is even more extensive and varied than the number of individual PDFs listed in the Table of Contents might imply. Users are invited to open the individual documents to discover the great variety of voices, themes, and perspectives within. The documents are arranged under the headings of the academic disciplines covered, which are alphabetically ordered.

III Acknowledgements

It would be impossible to acknowledge by name all of the people who worked on this massive project, but our gratitude to every one of them is nonetheless heartfelt. In addition to those we've already mentioned in this introduction, we want to give special thanks to our undergraduate assistants and website builders: Miranda Jiang, Joy Liu, Juliet Pooler, and Mary Tan, at CSHE Natalia Ramirez and Eren Zufikar. In listing the committee members below, we know we're only naming a small percentage of those who were responsible for the success of the 150th anniversary-year celebration of women at Berkeley.

150W Executive Committee

Sharon Inkelas (Professor, Department of Linguistics; and Special Faculty Advisor to the Chancellor on Sexual Violence/Sexual Harassment)

Oliver O'Reilly (Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering; and Chair of the Berkeley
Division of the Academic Senate, 2019-20)

La Dawn Duvall (Public Affairs)

Jill Finlayson (Women in Tech Initiative)

Briana Kaler (Campus Ambassador; Undergraduate Student)

History Project Steering Committee

Catherine Gallagher (Professor Emerita, Department of English) [Co-chair]

Sheila Humphreys (Emerita Director of Diversity, EECS) [Co-chair]

Janet Broughton

Catherine Ceniza Choy

Margaret Conkey

Fiona Doyle

Paula Fass

Lisa Garcia-Bedolla

David Hollinger

Catherine Koshland

Christina Maslach

Kathryn M. Neal

Tianna Paschel

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Cloey Hewitt

Shannon Jackson

Georgina Kleege

Leslie Kurke

Grace Lavery

Marcia C. Linn

Anne Jane Maclachlan

Martha Olney

Mary Ann Smart

Christiane Stachl

Susan Irene Stone

Ula Taylor

Rhona Weinstein

Gia White