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From Protest to Policy: Women's Social Movement Activities in Los Angeles, 1960-1999

UCLA Center For the Study of Women

Timeline for WSMALA Women and Health in Los Angeles 1960-1999

“From Protest to Policy: Women's Social Movement Activities in Los Angeles, 1960-1999,” a multi-year research project by the UCLA Center for the Study of Women examined the how grassroots advocacy has shaped gender-related public policy in the arts, employment, healthcare, and higher education through an analysis of local women's groups in Los Angeles between 1960 and 1999. During this period, women's community groups organized around gender-based problems their members encountered in their lives, their families, and their neighborhoods. The following timeline represents the key events in state and federal legislation regarding women's health initiatives as well as the development of grassroots organizations in Los Angeles that advocate for women's reproductive health, environmental health, drug and alcohol abuse education and treatment in women and minority populations.

- 1960 FDA Approves First Oral Contraceptive** - On May 11, 1960 the FDA approved the sale of the first oral contraceptive, Enovid, by the pharmaceutical company Searle.
- 1965 Creation of the Commission on the Status of Women** - California Governor Jerry Brown authorized the establishment of AB9, which created the Commission on Status of Women.
- 1967 Abortion Laws Reformed in California** - California Governor Ronald Reagan signed the Therapeutic Abortion Act after having been Governor for six months. While the act does provide doctors the consent to perform abortions it does not mandate them or hospitals to do so, i.e. their right to refuse is maintained.
- 1967 Japanese American Community Services is Established** - Japanese American Community Services (JACS) is established in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles by Mori Nishida and Ron Wakabayashi.
- 1969 Asian Involvement Program Created** - Japanese-American Community Services (JACS) created Asian Involvement (AI) a program that directly addresses the drug epidemic in the Japanese-American Community through peer counseling, outreach and education. Out of AI came Asian American Hard Core, the first self help residential program run by and for Japanese-Americans in the Crenshaw area of Los Angeles.

- 1970 “Abortion Referral Ad” Printed in the *Los Angeles Times* by the Los Angeles Women’s Center** - Los Angeles Women’s Center, advertised its opening by printing “abortion referral ad” in the *Los Angeles Times*.
- 1970 Abortion Seminar at Crenshaw Women’s Center** – In November of 1970, Cherly Libbey held an abortion seminar at the Crenshaw Women’s Center. The seminar covered the ‘abortion situation’ as it pertains to California and what actions can be taken from a feminist standpoint for improvement.
- 1970 String of Drug-Overdoses in the Japanese-American Youth Community** - At least 30 Japanese-American teenagers died from barbiturate overdoses in Los Angeles County in 1970. The deaths were recorded by the Coroner as heart attacks but activists in the Japanese American community were attune to the notion that these heart attacks were not attributable to coronary heart disease but drug overdose.
- 1970 Yellow Brotherhood Established** - Yellow Brotherhood established as a drug abuse self help house that was established by former members of the Ministers, a Japanese American gang in the Crenshaw area of Los Angeles.
- 1970 Los Angeles Women’s Liberation Center Opens** - Los Angeles Women’s Liberation Center opens on Crenshaw Boulevard.
- 1971 Creation of Asian Sisters Program** - Merilynn Quon’s proposal to start a drug abuse counseling and outreach program for young Japanese-American women is accepted by the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). With a monthly stipend of \$400 Quon started the Asian Sisters Program. Asian Sisters was the first self-help drug abuse program run by and for Japanese-American young women. The program offered crisis intervention and individual/family counseling.
- 1971 Creation of Anti-Rape Squad** - Sherry Goldsmith is raped while hitchhiking and friend Joan Robins and other women start an Anti-Rape Squad, inspired by the one that was operating in Berkeley. Political confrontations with rapists, made bumper stickers “sisters give rides to sisters.” The group accompanied survivors to police station and gave speeches to police on how to approach rape cases along with other initiatives.
- 1972 Establishment of the Westside Women’s Center in Venice, California** - Establishment of the Westside Women’s Center in Venice, California in

January of 1972. The Center is located on 218 S Venice Blvd, Los Angeles 90291.

- 1972 Police Raid on the Feminist Women's Health Center** - The Feminist Women's Health Center on 746 Crenshaw Blvd. is searched by police and investigators from the State's Department of Consumer Affairs. Carol Downer and Colleen Wilson are given warrants for arrest for "practicing medicine without a license."
- 1972 Carol Downer Acquitted** - After being charged with "practicing medicine without a license" Carol Downer is acquitted by a Los Angeles Municipal Court jury in December of 1972.
- 1972 Westside Women's Center Opens** - Westside Women's Center opens March 22, 1972.
- 1972 Los Angeles Women's Liberation Center Closes** - Los Angeles Women's Liberation Center closes in December of 1972.
- 1972 Creation of Asian Women's Center and the Asian American Drug Abuse Program** - Merilynn Quon receives a \$100,000 grant from Department of Health, Education and Welfare (currently the Department of Health and Human Services i.e. DHHS) to expand Asian Sisters into the Asian Women's Center and the Asian American Drug Abuse Program.
- 1973 Establishment of Women's Choice Clinic** - Establishment of Women's Choice Clinic. This was the nation's first all women controlled clinic.
- 1973 Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court Decision** - Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court Decision. Legalizes abortion nationwide by substantiated a woman's right to privacy in determining the fate of her pregnancy.
- 1973 Creation of Los Angeles Commission on Assault Against Women and Los Angeles Rape Hotline** - Joan Robins, volunteers for Westside Women's Center, NOW, and rape survivors call a meeting. Out of this meeting the decision to start an organization centered around a rape hotline is made. The idea was verbally supported by Councilwoman Pat Russell and at one point there was talk to establish the organization as one of Russell's community commissions. Eventually decided against that. Settled on the name Los Angeles Commission on Assault Against Women.

- 1973 Los Angeles Commission on Assault Against Women Conference** - In June, LACAAW held their first conference in church across the street from UCLA. Betty Brooks does a self-defense demonstration. Volunteers for the hotline are recruited at the conference.
- 1973 Joint Hearing on 100-year-old Rape Laws in Los Angeles** - Joint hearing on the 100 year old rape laws. A representative from NOW and the LACAAW testified to have the old laws changed.
- 1974 Establishment of Westside Family Health Center** - A small group of dedicated community leaders and health care providers came together and started the Women's Health Care Project, what is now the Westside Family Health Center, as part of a larger social justice movement in Santa Monica, California. They helped women learn more about their bodies and their health, shared experiences and empowered them through knowledge.
- 1974 Establishment of T.H.E. Clinic** - T.H.E. Clinic (to help everyone clinic) established by a small group of medical volunteers who sought to bring affordable, quality healthcare to uninsured women in the underserved, economically-challenged area of Southwest Los Angeles. The first director of T.H.E. Clinic was Vi Verreux.
- 1974 Stop Forced Sterilization Now! Published** - Committee to Stop Forced Sterilization publishes *Stop Forced Sterilization Now!*
- 1974 Program Created for the Intervention and Treatment of Women Alcoholics** - Los Angeles Gay Community Services Center receives funding from the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism to establish a program geared towards intervention and treatment of women alcoholics. The program consists of a residential rehabilitation program located at 12th St and Alvarado Street in Los Angeles. The director of the program is Brenda Weathers.
- 1974 Creation of Pasadena Rape Hotline** - Pasadena Rape Hotline created by a group of health professionals.
- 1974 California Women's Commission on Alcoholism** - Lillene Fifield becomes the first chair of the California Women's Commission on Alcoholism.

- 1975 Creation of Los Angeles City Commission on the Status of Women -** Los Angeles City Commission on the Status of Women created. The Commission assists in assuring to all women the opportunity for full and equal participation in the affairs of City government and promotes the general welfare of women in the Los Angeles community.
- 1975 LACAAW Receives Funding for Two Full-Time Positions -** At the end of 1975, LACAAW received funding from the California Department of Mental Health for Innovative Crisis Intervention Programs 314 D funds. With funding, LACAAW was now able to fund two salaried positions; Director of Education, Joan Robins, and Director of Training, Valerie Nordstrom.
- 1975 First Funding for the LACAAW Rape Hotlines -** First funding for the LACAAW hotline services comes from state grants for innovative crisis intervention. The agency works with and trains at the Spanish multi-service center that aids the Hispanic community. Out of this collaboration grew the East Los Angeles rape hotline. In 1993, Alva Moreno took over as Executive Director of East LA.
- 1975 Raid on the Women's Community Service Center -** Carol Downer, Evelyn Rothman, and Ellen Perkins raid the Women's Community Service Center run by Harvey Karman in Los Angeles. Charges against the three women are dismissed.
- 1975 Women's Community Service Center Closed -** Women's Community Service Center, run by Harvey Karman, is closed.
- 1975 Madrigal vs. Quilligan -** Madrigal vs. Quilligan court case against the USC Medical Center/LA County General on the grounds that the plaintiffs were not properly informed, coerced and/or did not give consent before being sterilized by medical personnel. Commission de Femenil filed the amicus brief for the case.
- 1975 Funding for The County Commission on the Status of Women -** Funding for The County Commission on the Status of women was approved and the Commission was granted a \$66,000 budget. Tom Bradley was seeking the creation of a similar commission for the City of Los Angeles.

- 1975 Creation of the Los Angeles City Status of Women Commission -** Creation of the Los Angeles City Status of Women Commission (LA Times).
- 1975 Lillene Fifield Publishes Paper on Alcoholism and Alcoholism Services for the Gay Community in Los Angeles -** Lillene Fifield publishes *On my way to nowhere: Alienated, isolated, drunk: an analysis of gay alcohol abuse and an evaluation of alcoholism services for the Los Angeles gay community.*
- 1976 East Los Angeles Rape Hotline formed -** East Los Angeles Rape Hotline formed. Irene Mendez (also President of Comision Femenil) and Connie Destito were co-founders.
- 1976 Rape Prevention Workshop in Los Angeles -** Comision de Femenil sponsors a Rape Prevention Workshop that was conducted by the East Los Angeles Rape Hotline staff (LA Times).
- 1976 Hyde Amendment Passes -** Hyde Amendment passes through Congress. This amendment prohibits *federal* dollars from funding abortions. This action primarily affected beneficiaries on Medicaid.
- 1976 LACAAW Open New Offices -** LACAAW opens offices near Pico and La Brea. Previous to this the group met at Westside Women's Center.
- 1977 Official Re-Naming of the LACAAW Rape Hotline to Los Angeles Rape and Battering Hotline -** LACAAW started receiving more calls of rape that were related to domestic violence. As battering shelters started to form, LACAAW started to do referrals and include domestic violence (including child molestation) into their training. In response to this new aspect of their services the hotline officially becomes the Los Angeles Rape and Battering Hotline, connecting the two issues of violence against women.
- 1978 Lillene H. Fifield Named Woman of the Year -** Lillene H. Fifield named Woman of the Year by the Los Angeles gay community.
- 1978 LACAAW Becomes a United Way Agency -** LACAAW becomes a United Way Agency.
- 1979 LACAAW Appoints New Director -** Judy Ravitz becomes director, and along with Krysia Dankowski leads the agency into major growth. The

agency's programs expand to include: monthly self-defense classes, medical in-service training to ER personnel, and the development of our booklet "Survivor Handbook."

- 1980 Black Women's Forum Sponsors a Pap Test Clinic** - Black Women's Forum sponsors a Pap test clinic at Martin Luther King Jr. hospital in South LA. The event is sponsored by Community Cancer Control/Los Angeles Inc and funded by the National Cancer Institute (Los Angeles Times 1980)
- 1980 "Women Take Back the Night" March in Los Angeles** - The first 'Women Take Back the Night' in Los Angeles during the month of April. The coalition of women's organizations that sponsored the event coins Los Angeles as the 'rape capital of the world.' (Los Angeles Times 1980). The march starts at the Hollywood Bowl and culminates at the same place with a rally. Over 5000 people were in attendance.
- 1980 San Fernando alley Rape Crisis Service Opens** - San Fernando alley Rape Crisis Service opens.
- 1980 SB 1246 Chapter 146 or, *Domestic Violence Project Centers Funding Passed.*** SB 1246 Chapter 146 or, Domestic Violence Project Centers Funding provided new revenues for local shelters for battered women to be financed by a series of increases in marriage license fees.
- 1980 Jenessee Center Opens** - Jenessee Center opens with Margaret Cambric as executive director and Bernita Ruth Walker as assistant director. The center is dedicated to helping African American women and their children who have experienced domestic violence.
- 1981 Women's Substance Abuse Resource Center Moves** - Women's Substance Abuse Resource Center moves into space offered at the National Council of Jewish Women Los Angeles branch. The director is Leslie Braggs. The Assistant to the director is Maureen Solomon.
- 1981 Jenessee Center Expansion** - Jenessee Center expands to include a shelter for battered women.
- 1981** The South Bay Coalition for Alternatives to Domestic Violence began a publicity campaign of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act of 1980. They planned on doing outreach at local malls in order to let the "wounded walking" have access to the information available.

- 1981 Center for the Pacific Asian Family Established** - Center for the Pacific Asian Family (CPAF) was established as a rape hotline and shelter. The Center for the Pacific-Asian Family was established April 28th, in Hawthorne and was the first of its kind to serve the Pacific Asian population. Counseling and other services were planned to be provided in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, and Philippine dialects.
- 1983 Family Violence: Causes, Effects, Remedies Conference** - South Central Domestic Violence Task force held a conference at the United Methodist Church entitled "Family Violence: Causes, Effects, Remedies." The conference was sponsored by The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Los Angeles Commission on the Status of Women, the Criminal Justice Task Force of the Black Women's Forum and others.
- 1984 Rosa Parks Sexual Assault Crisis Center Established** - Rosa Parks Sexual Assault Crisis Center was established in November of this year as a part of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference on 4182 S. Western Ave. The center was initially funded by an annual \$175,000 grant from OCJP.
- 1984 Sister Diane Donoghue Finds Esperanza** - Esperanza Community Housing Corporation (Esperanza) was established to support the residents of the Figueroa Corridor of South Central Los Angeles, whose homes were being threatened by encroaching construction.
- 1984 Senate Bill (SB) 1472 Passed** - Senate Bill (SB) 1472 (Watson), Chapter 1609 was designed to make police intervention in domestic violence disputes more effective by requiring law enforcement agencies to develop written policies to guide their responses to domestic violence. It also requires statewide training of officers and data collection on domestic violence calls.
- 1985 Proposal for 1700 Inmate Facility in East Los Angeles** - Governor Deukmejian proposed to place a 1700 inmate institution in East Los Angeles, in particular proximity to Boyle Heights, a neighborhood to a majority of low income Mexican American families.
- 1985 Gloria Molina Notifies Residents of East Los Angeles about Proposed Prison** - Assembly-woman Gloria Molina and her staff notify Boyle Heights residents of the state's plans to build a state prison near Boyle Heights.

- 1985 Assembly Bill (AB) 573 Passes** - This Assembly Bill (AB) 573, chapter 668 requires law-enforcement officers responding to domestic violence calls to give victims, in writing, the telephone number of the nearest shelter, and information about community services and criminal and civil legal options.
- 1985 Senate Bill (SB) 135 and Assembly Bill (AB) 225 Passed** - These Bills established the Domestic Violence Branch in the Office of Criminal Justice Planning.
- 1985 Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles Founded** - Robin Cannon founds Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles to protect the South Central community against intensive planning, poor environmental policy, inadequate city services and the lack of affordable housing and economic development.
- 1986 Sexual Assault Crisis Program Created** - Sexual Assault Crisis Program started at Compton YWCA on 509 E. Compton Blvd. The program was created to expand awareness in the community on issues related to sexual violence, offers rape survivors the support they need and refer rape survivors to appropriate medical, legal and social services.
- 1986 Mothers of East Los Angeles Founded** - Aurora Castillo and Juana Gutierrez co-found Mothers of East Los Angeles, a group that protested Governor Deukmejian proposal to build a State Prison Facility in East Los Angeles. The name of the group was the idea of Father John Moretta, inspired by 'Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo' of Argentina. The organization now focuses on the environmental integrity of East Los Angeles.
- 1986 No Prison in ELA (East Los Angeles) March** - No Prison in ELA (East Los Angeles) march takes place. Over 2,000 people march from Resurrection Church and goes all the way to the 3rd Street Bridge in Downtown Los Angeles to protest the proposal to build an State Prison Facility in East Los Angeles.
- 1986 Hearing on Dioxin Emissions Associated with Incinerator Building Plans** - Senate and Assembly Toxic Communities have a hearing on the dioxin emissions associated with the plans to build state incinerators, the Lancer Project, in Los Angeles County. Members from Concerned

Citizens of Los Angeles are present and testify against the proposal to build the incinerator.

- 1988 Concerned Citizens of South Central Oppose Down Zoning in Los Angeles** - Concerned Citizens of South Central engaged in an 8 month battle with Los Angeles Planning Department to oppose the down zoning of certain areas of Los Angeles. Down zoning would lower land use density, decrease property values and taken away by-right status of churches.
- 1989 Assembly Bill (AB) 939 Passed** - California State legislature passed AB 939 that established specific recycling mandates and focused on reducing/redirecting household hazardous wastes from the solid waste stream.
- 1989 Office of Integrated Solid Waste Management Established** - The Office of Integrated Solid Waste Management is established by the city of Los Angeles.
- 1990 The National Defense Resource Council on Behalf of Concerned Citizens of South Central and Mothers of East Los Angeles sue the Federal Environmental Protection Agency** - The National Defense Resource Council on behalf of Concerned Citizens of South Central and Mothers of East Los Angeles sue the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in opposition to the proposed incinerator to be built in Vernon, Los Angeles. The groups argued that the EPA failed to properly evaluate the project before issuing a permit and the incinerator would heavily pollute the already polluted, low-income, minority neighborhoods in the surrounding area.
- 1990 Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles and two state legislators file suit against Los Angeles County** - Attorneys from the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles and two state legislators file suit against the County in order to prevent the addition of more jails in downtown, East and South-Central Los Angeles.
- 1991 Assembly Bill (AB) 937 Passes** - California State Legislature passes Assembly Bill (AB) 937. The bill would have required any developer of a high impact development such as a hazardous waste facility to disclose demographic information about the project area as a part of their permit application. The bill was vetoed by Governor Pete Wilson.

- 1991- Governor Pete Wilson Vetoes Five Bills With Environmental Justice Initiatives** -Governor Pete Wilson of California vetoes 5 bills that would have implemented guidelines geared towards environmental justice. None of the bills passed by the California legislature were legal statues, and were instead advisory.
- 1994 President Bill Clinton Issues Executive Order 12898** - President Bill Clinton issues Executive Order 12898, which expands environmental justice obligations of federal agencies. Executive Order 12898 ordered the EPA administrator to convene an Interagency Working Group. It also mandated EPA to develop an environmental justice strategy.
- 1999 Senate Bill SB 115 Signed into Law** - Governor Gray Davis signs SB 115, the first bill to explicitly enact environmental justice into California statute. The bill takes steps to define environmental justice.