

WARN, PATTI

Ask re her leadership of student disaffection against Ed. Faculty which led to formation of V-C's committee enquiry into Faculty.

Interviewed in Canberra April 1981

Student 1962-65

Currently (1981) on staff of Senator Don Grimes.

Born in Tasmania, educated Collegiate Anglican School; a Catholic, child of mixed marriage.

B.A. at Univ. of Tas.

* Did not complete Dip.Ed.

Involved in student politics.

Account of subsequent career in A.B.C. and in Canberra in Whitlam years and as State Secretary of the A.L.P. for 4 years in Tasmania.

027 Family background. "Lower middle class public servant family".

060 Dux of school and Commonwealth scholarship at age 16.

Did not want bond of Ed. studentship although pretty sure she wanted to teach. Did A.B.C. schools broadcasts while at University.

080 Reasons for course undertaken - including Legal History and Political Science - "sounded interesting although I didn't know anything about politics". Family not particularly political.

"Having majored in Political Science I still didn't know much about politics".

Involved in S.R.C. in first year - was the first woman to get elected in first year, and one of only 2 women on SRC.

Interested in Old Nick Co, student newspaper, Abschol, W.U.S.

Abschol, had not previously been on Tas. Uni campus - did a story on aboriginal descendants on Cape Barron Island.

One reason for being involved in student politics was to get free trips to the mainland - "immensely stimulating".

140 Evolution into Labor supporter - mainly on human rights issues.

Significance of new publication The Australian - new slant to news, read by students as alternative to the despised Mercury. "We relied on the world courage of the Australian".

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- 180 "A small insular comfortable campus" - most students not very interested in politics. Faculties all kept to themselves.
- 200 1962. Publication in Tas. student newspaper of item censored in mainland papers. "We were not conscious of the invasion of another person's privacy".
- Contemporaries: Jim Frale??, Gillian Hunter, Pierre Slicer; (latter became Sec. of Communist Party in Tasmania).
- No overt disapproval of (her) political activities. "The Orr case was still around" - efforts being made to lift the black ban. She was not taking sides at that stage.
- Peter Boyce involved in trying to solve problem.
- What issues stirred the student body? Not really any; the Sharpeville massacre stirred some.
- Domestic issues: prices in the refectory - but not in any great way. In a sense a boring time to be at the University. NUAUS became more overtly political from about 1966 on.
- The Dip.Ed. course was appalling - the academic status of the course low, staff lecturing very low standard - so boring to be treated like primary pupils by incompetent faculty.
- * P.W. suggested (being non-bonded and on SRC) that she should do a report on the Dip.Ed. course. "a splendid fiery report" [Is this available anywhere?]
- SRC sent it to the Education Department, the University Council and the Professorial Board - "and I never got my Dip.Ed." - sat for the Professor's subject 2 or 3 years in a row but didn't get it. Had passed everything else in University.
- Bill Perkins was only staff member sympathetic to students and to this report.
- "Considered it a badge of honour not to have passed my Dip.Ed. - in fact I was a damn' good teacher". Taught at Elizabeth High.
- Reactions of Ed. staff to report.
- Impressed by English professor James McAuley - "a superb lecturer and an extraordinary human being".

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Professor Townsley - "I subsequently learned he had got his chair as a reward for being on the University's side in the Orr case" - but charming, and went out of his way to encourage women students to aspire to more than doing just a course.

What foundation did there appear to be for this accusation? "... it was said at the time ..."

Peter Boyce and Ken Fryer - both good on raising third world and developmental issues.

Outstanding staff:

J. McAuley

Sybil Gottfald (?) in German

Malcolm McRae - "an incredible impact on the people he taught".

Bill Perkins

Sam Carey in Geology

The Physics Dept. very highly thought of.

Place of women? Didn't impinge on consciousness then. She herself was "first woman to ..."

Vice President of NUAUS.

Side 2

Advantage of small university in small state - it was easier to become a delegate to national conferences, and "much more exciting things seemed to be happening everywhere else", e.g. delegation membership to Papua New Guinea in 1964.

"There is no doubt the Tasmanian Student body is substantially isolated from what goes on on the mainland - there's a catch up period on involvement issues".

030 Didn't then feel staff was inferior; but in retrospect perhaps yes.

035 Generalisations about Tasmanians.

Denis Altmann - one person who wouldn't want to go home to Tasmania because it was never really home.

THE END