

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



After discovering **asbestos, black mold, and various rodents** in the Women's Studies office in the Benson Building, the IWS was moved to offices in Gilbert Hall on North Campus in Spring 2009.

Later that year, the Benson Building was demolished.

**2009**

**2016-**

In November 2016, the Institute for Women's Studies dedicated the **Patricia Del Rey Seminar Room** and the **Heather S. Kleiner Conference Room** in their Gilbert Hall home to honor the founding director and associate director.

The IWS continues to host a weekly colloquia series each semester, Women's History Month programming each March, the annual Andrea Carson Coley Lecture every April, and the endowed Women and Girls in Georgia Conference biennially in the Fall.

In 2018, an endowed Centennial Professorship in Women's Studies at UGA was created.

As of 2019, **over 5,000 UGA students** have taken our introductory Women's Studies courses.

Since 2002, **over 500 students** have graduated with an A.B. degree or minor in Women's Studies or completed the graduate certificate.



On May 11, 2002, the **first students graduated with an A.B. degree in Women's Studies**. Those students were Lindsay Brown, Margaret Mitchell, Kathryn Rhodes, Lotus Seeley, and Suzanne Scoggins.

**2002**

**2004**

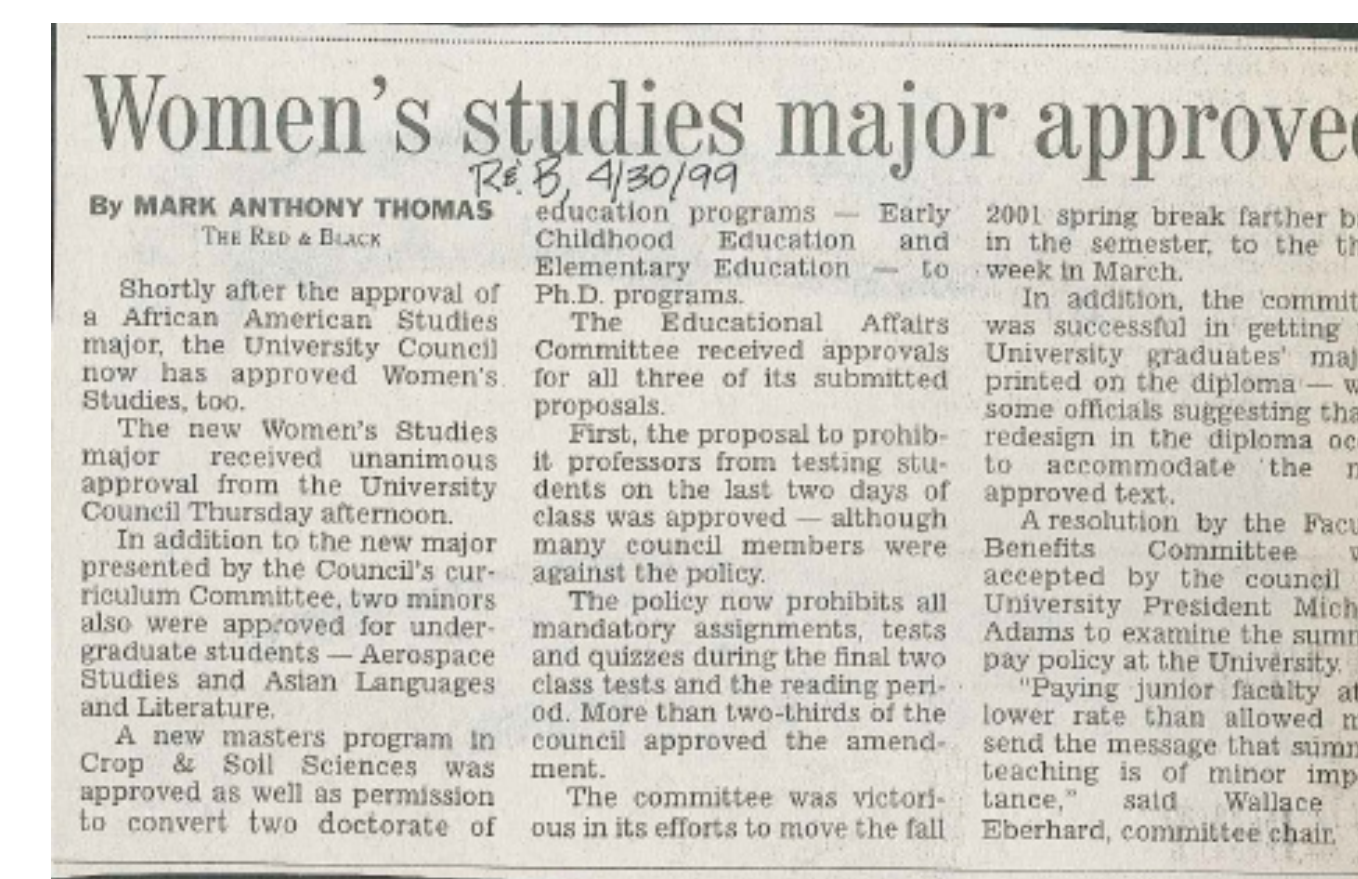
In Spring 2004, the Women's Studies Program gained Institute status and was renamed **The Institute for Women's Studies (IWS)**.

**1999-2000**

In April 1999, the **A.B. degree** in Women's Studies was approved.

Later that year, WSP was moved from the main library to the Benson Building on South Lumpkin Street.

By the Summer of 2000, 116 undergraduate certificates, 10 minors, 4 Interdisciplinary Studies major degrees, and 51 graduate certificates had been conferred.



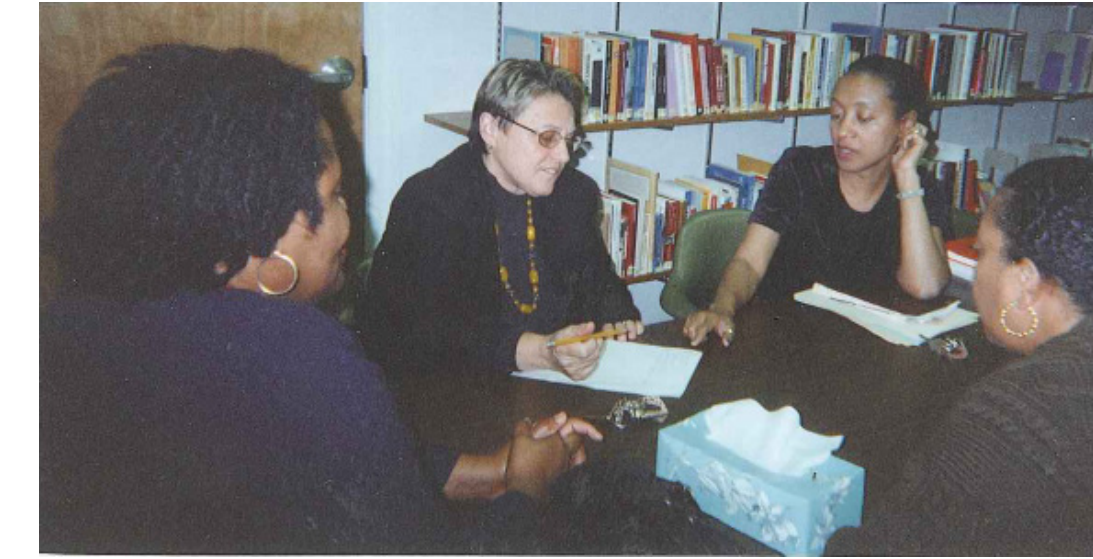
In 1993, the WSP mourned the tragic loss of **Andrea Carson Coley**, a beloved certificate student in the program. With an endowment generously donated by her family, Andrew and Kathy Coley, a lecture series was created to bring to UGA's campus scholars doing **cutting-edge research in the area of LGBT Studies**. The Andrea Carson Coley Lecture Series, which began in April 1995, is the first lecture series in the United States to focus on LGBT Studies.

**1995**

**1991-94**

The **20-hour minor** was offered Fall 1991 and the graduate certificate was implemented in early 1992. The first two graduate certificates were conferred Winter 1992 to Elizabeth Tisdell and Trish Shewokis. Joy Beasley became the **first undergraduate student to complete a minor** in Spring 1993.

The WSP steadily continued to grow in numbers of courses, faculty, and students throughout the 1990s, including the forming of The Women's Studies Student Organization (WSSO) in Fall 1991. The WSP was a **safe space and thriving community** for all UGA students, faculty, and staff who were interested in and passionate about feminism.



In 1990, the **first three core faculty members** with joint appointments in Women's Studies were hired, including Miranda Pollard, Josephine Beoku-Betts, and Cindy Jenefsky. In the next few years, Patricia Bell-Scott, Juanita Johnson-Bailey, and six others were recruited and hired.

**1990**

**1987**

By 1987, a faculty committee began meeting regularly to **develop the groundwork for a revitalization** of the program. As a result, Heather Kleiner was made acting coordinator of the program for ten hours a week. A proposal was submitted to then president Charles Knapp to revitalize the WSP. **It was approved**, and Patricia Del Rey was named director and Heather Kleiner became her associate director. This new Program reported to Vice President for Academic Affairs and found a home for many years on the second floor of the main library.

**1989**

The **WS prefix** for courses was obtained from the UGA Curriculum Committee in March 1989. Only one full year after the Program was reinstated, 15 undergraduate students were enrolled in the certificate program.

We are inspired by the group of affiliate faculty who stepped forward to develop and teach the first courses before the program had any core faculty. By giving generously their time and energy they **built and strengthened** the program.



**1978-83**

The Women's Studies Program operated successfully on a budget allocated by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, with an administrative structure including the coordinator, a secretary, and a steering committee. It offered 14 courses, a certificate program, and a lecture and colloquia series.

Many, including Jean Friedman, Judith Preissle, and Linda Grant, **held the program together for years** until it was turned over to Arts & Sciences as an Interdisciplinary Studies certificate in 1983. The certificate program stayed on the books at this time, but was **considered on hold** until someone could direct the program on a full-time basis.

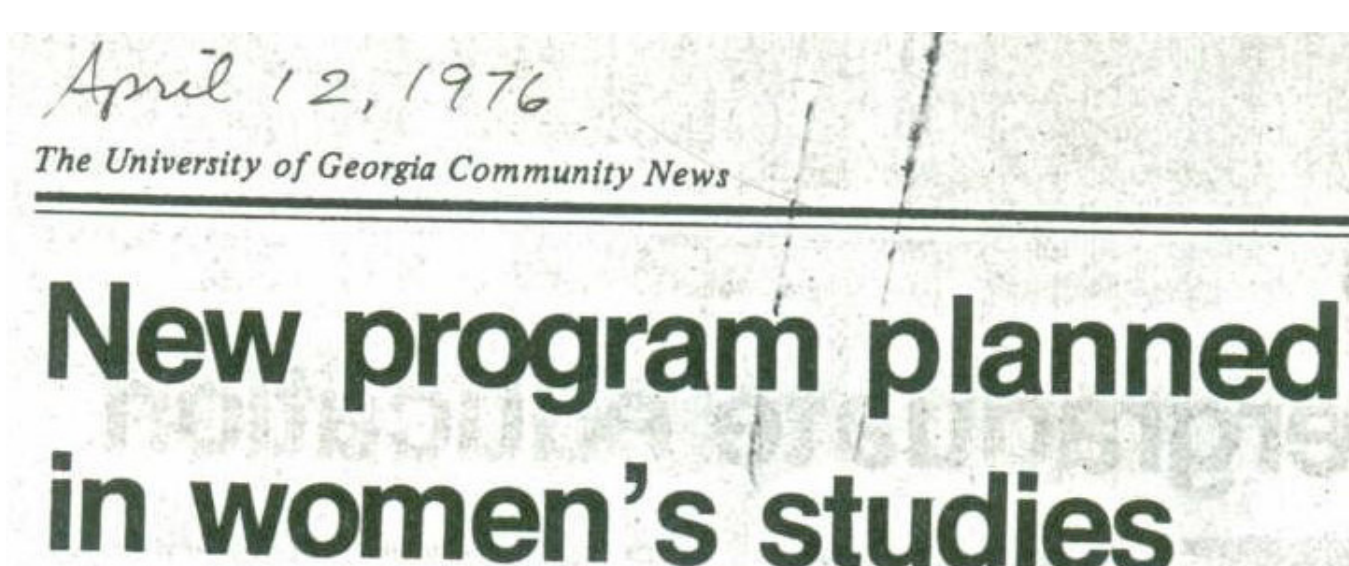
**1978**

**Maija Blaubergs** was assigned coordinator of the Women's Studies Program (WSP) at UGA in 1977. However, she was denied promotion and tenure in 1978, and **subsequently sued the University** for sex discrimination, citing her role in the Women's Studies Program as the reason her promotion and tenure were denied. UGA settled this case out of court.

**1976**

As the Assistant Vice President of Instruction, **the Honorable Louise McBee** assembled an advisory committee to develop an undergraduate certificate in Women's Studies.

A story ran in UGA's *Community News* on April 12, 1976 reporting that a new program in Women's Studies was being developed. However, the certificate program was not to be passed by the Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee until April 20, 1977.



**1975**

As the **academic phenomenon** of Women's Studies spread rapidly across campuses in the United States, a group of faculty members began discussing the need for such a program of study at the University of Georgia. Ideas for the program developed, initial courses were discussed and letters asking for advice and information were sent to other newly formed **Women's Studies** programs.



**Institute for Women's Studies**  
Franklin College of Arts and Sciences  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**