Marilyn Linda Salzman Webb

Veteran Feminists of America Pioneer Histories Project Documenting the Second Wave Women's Movement Biographical Information

Activism:

How did you first become involved in the women's movement?

I was an activist before there was a women's movement, but I didn't label it as such. At age nine I protested loudly when I went to try out for Little League and was told girls were not allowed. No one listened to me then, but when I was in college I celebrated when one New Jersey 12-year-old's parents sued Little League and won. Girls sports forever changed. I was unknown but felt avenged.

When I was twelve, I was thrown out of summer camp for another gender protest. This time I had been grounded for being caught kissing a boy. Nothing happened to him, but I made such a scene that my parents were asked to take me home because of it. I never forgot how unfair that was.

My official movement involvement began in December of 1965, at an SDS national meeting at the University of Illinois campus at Champaign-Urbana. While the SDS meeting was going on upstairs in the student union, women drifted down to a big booth/alcove in the cafeteria. Someone, maybe Heather Booth, had received a letter from women in SNCC—Casey Hayden, Mary Varella and someone else, I believe--about issues women had in that organization and they asked us to look at similar issues in our organization. Basically, it said women do the shit work and men get the credit. Men speak and women are shut down.

As I recall, many, many women eventually found their way to that cafeteria, but those I remember were Heather, Barbara Haber, possibly Vivian Rothstein and Lennie Wildflower. We all agreed that it was women in SDS who "manned" the national office, mimeographed leaflets, did the mailings and so on.

But we also started talking not only about how it felt to be silenced at SDS meetings but why we felt that way, and about how we were raised to feel second class in general as women.

When we went back home—I lived in Chicago then and was in graduate school at the University of Chicago—I thought more deeply about that conversation. At the time I had been working with several black welfare mothers in the black community of Woodlawn, adjacent to the University, and was about to co-found a pre-school prior to the launch of national Head Start.

We started that preschool that spring, we received pilot project money from the Office of Economic Opportunity and began in a church that June. I was the director, but instead I discovered the power of black women, much as the women in SNCC had discovered it, and they were not raised the meek way we were. They felt they had power. Together we ran a fabulous pre-school that summer with parent participation, a school that was a model for and preceded Head Start.

I was in graduate school and had professional skills by then, but I envied these women and began trying to dissect how we white women were raised and socialized. After a while, I asked several women to come to a meeting in the apartment of Paula Goldschmidt, who lived downstairs from me. Paula was there, as was Heather, and several others. It was the first women's group in Chicago, as the better-known West Side group came later. We talked about sexism and class; it only lasted for several meeting that year. I had other issues emerging.

I was in a doctoral program in Educational Psychology. That fall of 1966 I finished all my course requirements and passed prelims. I needed to create a dissertation committee to write a dissertation and complete my degree. I intended to do my dissertation on that preschool. In the interim, I had been made director as well of a second preschool in the Woodlawn Community, this one under the aegis of the famous community organizer, Saul Alinsky. It was run in a far more traditional way, though, while

ours was run by a group of welfare mothers who also focused on their own education while teaching and planning for their kids. I wanted to follow and compare the results.

I needed three professors for a committee. When I asked the first one, my mentor, he wanted to come to my apartment to give me baths. When I asked the second, a professor of the moral development of children, he shut his door when I came to his office with my research, lunged from behind his desk, pinned me to the opposite wall, and began aggressively kissing me. He said it was quid pro quo. I intended to ask a third but was told by other female students I was likely to meet the same fate. I had no committee. It was the spring of 1967. I left Chicago abruptly and despairingly, moved what I thought was temporarily to Washington D.C., where my boyfriend – Lee Webb, then the former national secretary of SDS, had moved—and had no idea what to do. I still had my graduate fellowship money, thinking I would finish at some point, and I got several small writing jobs.

Meanwhile, I immediately formed another women's group, mostly of women who were around the Institute for Policy Studies, a New Left think tank where Lee was then a Fellow. The group met in my apartment and received some important press. These women were struggling not just with being "unheard" at the Institute—which was male dominated—but with the socialization of life as a woman. We eventually became what would end up being called a consciousness raising group, the first to form in Washington D.C.

That summer was an active time against the war in Vietnam. Lee became the director of an effort called Vietnam Summer and we both moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts for the summer. My job was to organize teachers nationwide and to create a curriculum to teach high school students about the war. I traveled, met teachers nationally, and worked with educators to develop this curriculum. Most of the teachers I encountered were women, some of whom were also starting women's groups of their own in the cities where they lived. Others were excited to start doing so after we had talked. And so, we started

an informal network of young, radical women, separate from the National Organization of Women that had already formed.

Luckily, the National Guardian, a New Left publication out of New York, hired me the following fall to set up and report from its new Washington Bureau. I covered national politics as well as the fledgling New Left and women's movement activities in D.C. and nationally. These women's groups grew and stayed in touch. I reported on their events, we sometimes met informally at various marches on Washington occurring at that time, but by the following spring I realized it was probably time for representatives of these groups to meet and share what we were doing and try to create a cohesive politics.

With the help of a few other women in what was then called D.C. Women's Liberation I contacted women from these various groups and managed to set up what was the first national radical feminist conference. It was held spring of 1968 in Sandy Springs, Maryland. It was a small but important group, including women leaders from groups in Boston, Chicago, Gainesville, Baltimore, and Washington. Out of that first meeting we decided to organize a far larger conference, held the following Thanksgiving weekend at a YMCA camp in a town outside of Chicago called Lake Villa.

The Institute gave us office space and equipment to plan that conference. Somehow it was funded. But trust amongst us was raw, as each city group had a different feminist politic and agenda, so four of us were appointed from the Sandy Springs meeting to organize things: two women from New York—Leah Firestone, Shulamith Firestone's younger sister, and Helen Kritzler, and two from Washington, me, and Charlotte Bunch, who had actually moved to Cleveland by that fall but worked with us anyway. I used the contacts I had made through Vietnam Summer, which by then had developed into a larger informal women's network that crisscrossed the country. We mostly communicated via written letters and wrote position papers that were mimeographed and mailed out. From that one Lake Villa conference came a lot of clarity about the various issues and new feminist identities that both divided us and brought us

together. We addressed childcare, abortion, women-identified issues, lesbianism, the male dominated politics of the New Left—including the influence of civil rights and the war—racism, separation from men in organizing, equal work for equal pay and so on. In essence, this conference set a larger agenda for our movement's future.

What were the earliest issues/actions/organizations you were involved with?

Creating Washington D.C. Women's Liberation: I began the first women's group in Chicago in the early winter of 1966, but I moved to Washington soon afterward, where I was instrumental in creating D.C. Women's Liberation. I was considered its earliest leader and spokesperson, but soon we began to realize we needed an overall leadership and organizational structure.

D.C. Women's Liberation was growing so large and so swiftly that we had already informally divided up into various action/study/organizing groups. We then decided to rent an office space and created a city-wide coordinating structure that we called Magic Quilt. We were trying to develop a new form of feminist organization, using women's imagery, as in a patchwork quilt.

Among others, our groups included the following. Representatives to Magic Quilt from each subgroup would rotate on a staggered time schedule so that the group leadership in Magic Quilt leadership also rotated:

- Abortion counseling: This was before Roe V. Wade, when abortion was still illegal, but it could be performed by a medical doctor in a hospital if a psychiatrist deemed it essential for a woman's mental health. Ergo, we set up a system to work with sympathetic psychiatrists and doctors, preceded by a hotline and interviews/counseling by women in this action group.
- Education: We offered courses in women's liberation held at the Institute for Policy Studies.
- Church and suburban outreach.
- College outreach.

- Nurses and healthcare worker organizing.
- Clerical and government aid worker organizing.
- A WITCH action group.

I was also active in the anti-war movement, especially since Washington was host to many national demonstrations during this time. Early on, D.C. Women's Liberation therefore became a point-group for national conversations about how involved or not the burgeoning women's movement should be with the male-dominated New Left. We were against the war in Vietnam, but we argued – as opposed to others (mainly NY Radical Women) in this national debate—that we had to work on both the war and feminist issues. We would later reconsider this, as described further on.

Several of us during the summer of 1968 began a film series at the Institute for Policy Studies, ostensibly to raise money through viewing charges, to begin a coffee house nearby to talk to GIs about the war. This never happened but we did end up with $400 in the bank. Later, this would be the money used to start the newspaper, off our backs. That same year several of us were invited to go on one of the first SDS trips to Cuba. We were fascinated by the outspoken role of women there and by the international quality of all our women's issues.

Richard Nixon was inaugurated as President on January 20, 1969, and the Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam, the largest national anti-war organization, planned a big demonstration that day and events in D.C. during the surrounding time. Women's liberation groups converged once again on D.C. for this event, as we all had for the many marches and demonstrations prior to that. We communicated city-to-city in the time prior to that and met in person at a large church to plan strategy in the days before.

Several hundred women from groups nationwide were there and they wanted to declare to this large demonstration—the culmination would be an event with speakers under a huge tent on the mall—that the women's movement existed.

The Mobilization had agreed that a representative of the women's movement could speak. On our part, the thought was that we were all still under the umbrella of the New Left but the earlier political differences between city groups—especially New York and Boston, which used the terms women-identified-women, and D.C. and Chicago, which still had strong ties to the anti-war movement—emerged strongly at the pre-event meetings. It was decided that we would have two speakers—Shulie Firestone and me—each of us representing the two political poles. I would go first.

This event has been written about extensively. The tent was filled with thousands of anti-war protesters, many—maybe most—of them men. Dave Dellinger, the MC of the event, said just before Shulie and I spoke, that women had asked men to clear the stage, even the wounded GI who was in a wheelchair, so we could speak. I never heard anyone say this, although someone later said it was likely an excuse because the stage was rickety. The crowd began to roar as the GI in the wheelchair was handed down.

I had never spoken to such a large crowd before, nor had Shulie. I began, a very mild speech at that—I do still have the speech itself—and right then boos broke out as well as cries, "Take her off the stage and fuck her," "Fuck her down a dark alley." Fist fights broke out in the crowd. I went on with my speech, then Shulie tried to give hers. Meanwhile, Dellinger was yelling at us to stop, get off the stage, accusing us of causing a riot. Shulie finally stopped and we both left. The crowd continued yelling and fighting, making for a frightening scene.

I went back to my apartment with several other D.C. women, where I received a phone call. I thought it was from Cathy Wilkerson, the local leader of the D.C. chapter of SDS, because she has a distinctive way of speaking and because she was against separate feminist organizations. She said: "If you or anyone else ever gives a speech like that anywhere in the country again we will beat the shit out of you." I hung up and shared this conversation. From that we decided right there that we had to separate from the male left, that the NY women might have been right, that we needed a separate women's movement. It

was a crucial moment and a crucial decision as it stuck and that is what we ended up doing as a national decision.

Years later, after Cathy had in fact gone underground for her involvement in Weatherman—which I was very much against—and accidently blowing up her father's Greenwich Village townhouse, she told me when I asked her about this that she had never made such a call. It was the height of the government's COINTELPRO program, meant to aggressively split the left, and the consensus after that seemed to be that it was an agent of some sort who made that call. Journalist Clara Bingham is now doing deep research on those FBI files, and I do hope she learns the truth. In any case, the women's movement distanced itself after that from the New Left.

I got pregnant in the spring of 1969 and the building I lived in—Alice Wolfson also lived there--coincidentally began a rent strike. The women's liberation office was up and running and I became a little less involved. I organized a contingent of D.C. women to go to the Miss America demonstration in Atlantic City that September. New York women took all credit for that, and D.C. involvement was never mentioned. In fact, Red Stockings did create wonderfully colorful events there. We just marched around with signs.

Barbara Seaman's book, The Doctor's Case Against the Pill, came out and Alice heard that Sen. Gaylord Nelson was going to hold Senate hearings on the safety of the birth control pill. She wanted us to go there and watch. In January, when they started, we did—seven of us went into the hearings to listen, Alice Wolfson, Jan Fenty, Judy Spellman, Linda Carcione, Caroline Nickerson, Reggie Segal, and me. I was very pregnant. As the testimony went on, we realized there were no women on the committee, no women scientists or doctors testifying, no women speaking who had even taken the pill. We could not contain ourselves and suddenly stood up demanding that women be heard, saying that the high estrogen doses in the pill had serious consequences, using Seaman's extensive research as our resource.

The event got considerable press coverage but more importantly, it ultimately ended up with a reduction in the dose of estrogen in the pharmaceutical formulas of birth control pills and with a national movement for informed consent. Alice became a spokesperson after that—along with Barbara Seaman and the collective from Our Bodies, Ourselves-- of the nascent women's health movement.

For me, a problem arose. Because I had long been seen as the D.C. Women's Liberation spokesperson, I was asked questions at the post-event press conference. I was also seven months pregnant, so a nice photo target. Tensions had built about individual leadership and subsequently I was asked to leave Magic Quilt and to bow out of any leadership of D.C. Women's Liberation. I was a novice at all this, but they thought I took up too much of the air. I was devastated. I had a different self-image, one far more meek, insecure, unconfident.

I had no idea I was doing that so I left, but since I was also still a reporter and ostensibly the bureau chief of the Guardian, I decided I would just start a women's newspaper. None existed at that time. Some other women from D.C. Women's Liberation decided to start this project with me: Marlene Wicks, Norma Lesser, Heidi and her sister Nan Steffens, Nancy Ferro, and I am not sure who else, but the first collective also included Coletta Reid, Bobbie Spalter-Roth, and Onka Dekkers. In the beginning, we sat around my dining room table in January thinking up a name. Since Stokely Carmichael had apparently once said "the only position for women in SNCC is prone," we thought *off our backs* was most appropriate. It stuck.

I called Margie Stamberg, my coffee house-film comrade who by then had moved to San Francisco, and asked if it would be okay to use the $400 we had raised from those movies (she agreed), I took my Vietnam Summer teachers rolodex plus the new women's liberation contacts I had added to it, used the money to start and the rolodex for our mailing list to ask people to take out subscriptions. Jan Fenty's

husband Phil had made a fantastic feminist poster, which became our first cover, and someone else's husband showed us how to design pages using a Selectric typewriter, mat board, and glue.

And so, *oob* was born. It preceded MS Magazine by two years. We thought it was the first feminist publication but *It Ain't Me Babe*, out of San Francisco apparently appeared nearly a month before, so it got the credit. On the other hand, that publication was very short-lived, while *oob* was published by a variously changing collective for another 40+ years.

Leadership issues became a huge problem in the women's movement, with many of us "offed" speaking of off, and it happened again to me at *oob.* To give it context, few of us had been real leaders before, so we had little experience, and if we had any the only models we had were the male models we were rebelling against. Skill was also confused with dominance. The whole issue of what was good female leadership was just coming into focus. There were also class, educational and race issues related to skill, which we knew little about back then.

The first issue of *oob* appeared at the end of February 1970. My daughter Jennifer was born on March 9, a day after International Women's Day. The newspapers were filled that day with Cathy's dad's townhouse blowing up; the poster Phil Fenty made—a black and a white woman with fists raised and the WL fist and female gender sign included--was placed over Jennifer's bassinette in the hospital. Lee (we had married in November 1967) and I named her Jennifer Brooke (androgenous if she wanted to use it) Stanton (for Elizabeth Cady) Webb. I was still Marilyn Salzman Webb.

The pressure began early on. I was the only one who had journalism experience. I found it easy to report and write. Others wanted me to back off and train other collective members instead of writing myself. I was still asked questions by those outside about D.C. Women's Liberation. I tried to redirect them, but it was hard. Having a newborn exhausted me; I was sleep deprived, less available than I wanted to be. Marlene was at the oob office, hour after hour, day after day, so she assumed the role of manager. I

brought a bassinette to the office but couldn't stay as long as she could. Several women moved to DC from Chicago who had been around for the trial of the Chicago Seven. One later turned out to be a police agent and we didn't know for sure about a second.

That spring, D.C. Women's Liberation leadership decided to have a week-long retreat, choosing three women from each group, which now included Magic Quilt, *oob*, and the anti-war contingent. Two women important to the city leadership came out as lesbians and left their husbands. Rita May Brown moved to town and encouraged more of this. Chaos and confusion arose. I was asked early on to be a keynote speaker for that September's National Student Association national meeting along with Betty Friedan. I said yes. Betty was difficult. She asked to see my speech before I gave it, kept it overnight, asked to go first on our speaking time, and gave the very speech I intended to give. She used mine; I was flabbergasted. But when I got home, I found myself surrounded by new collective members, including the Chicago Seven women. We had no mechanism by which people could join. I was kicked out, once again, this time allegedly for speaking at a national conference without asking. This time I was emotionally flattened. I had no idea what to do, no notion of how to fight back or if I even should, given the developing anti-leadership notion in women's liberation in general.

Coincidentally that summer a group of women students from Goddard College in Vermont contacted me, told me they had protested that spring to have a women's studies program created, and now the college (at their recommendation) wanted to hire me. Would I come? Would I just move to Vermont that fall and start one? I knew of no others yet in the country, I only had a master's degree at the time, and I didn't really know what a woman's studies program would be, but I eventually said yes. I saw it as a gift! Lee, my husband, negotiated a position in a radical studies program there that was also forming. He began in fall semester and found us a house. I stayed in D.C. until winter term began, just after Thanksgiving in 1970.

Historians say that the first women's studies program might have begun at the University of California in San Diego, or perhaps at Cornell. I thought it was ours. Whichever came first, they were all begun at about the same time. We had no contact between us nor any notion of what the others were doing. I wrote a paper to present at the first Women's Studies conference, a paper I am still quite proud of. Like the issue of feminist models of leadership, it proposed a feminist model of teaching as well as looking at the content of what was taught.

The program at Goddard lasted five years, until the college had financial difficulty and decided to cut it, but in that time, we developed a curriculum, created a large regional and national presence, and had as visiting professors some of the important feminist thinkers and activists then around, including Alix Kates Shulman, Rita Mae Brown, and Charlotte Bunch. I was the program's director.

It is hard to describe what courses were offered as there were no women's history books at the time, women writers and artists in the past had yet to be rediscovered, and oral histories of women's lives had yet to be written. I was glad to have been a journalist as it helped me to recreate what now is well known. I had to do a lot of research in creating courses and curricula, and in guiding both students and faculty in what they might teach and learn. Essentially, much of the learning was discovery.

We researched women authors to come up with lists that included Doris Lessing and Virginia Woolf. We created and did oral histories of the older women who lived in Vermont: dowsers, farmers, quilters, those whose expertise were women's arts and cultural crafts. We created hands-on courses of women's work, including weaving and its history, and yes, auto mechanics and the way women learned these skills though grunt work in several past wars. It was exhilarating.

By the time the program ended, in the spring of 1975, we had decided to create a summer intensive institute that would meet in nearby Lynden State College in Johnson, VT. It was called Sagaris. It had a small organizational collective—me, Blanch Boyd, Joan Peters, and several important Goddard

students—and a star-filled feminist faculty, but it barely made it through the summer of 1975 amid splits and accusations having to do with funding from the MS Foundation, accusations by Red Stockings about Gloria Steinem's past connections with the CIA, and a slew of alleged agents working to tear things apart. I still do not know what the truth was, but Sagaris ended.

What organizations/Issues have you been active in (along with your role and dates involved)?

The Senate hearings on The Pill, the Counter-Inaugural Demonstration, Off Our Backs, Goddard's Women's Studies Program, Sagaris Institute. (See dates above.) In my later life I worked as a career journalist at primarily women's publications and/or on what I perceived to be feminist issues, writing for other publications: e.g., Woman's Day, New York Magazine, McCall's, the Village Voice, and so on. I viewed these mass magazines as a consciousness raising national forum for women and chose stories that I thought would be pivotal.

What is the most important thing historians should know about you and your activism?

The Counter-Inaugural Demonstration officially marked feminist women's decision to organize separately from men. Leadership baiting and the role of Cointelpro, etc. in creating chaos within the women's movement is still uncharted territory and I think it is significant.

My understanding of feminism has since extended from birth through death, and I view my work as an activist in birth, midwifery, abortion access, equal pay, etc. in the same way I now view my work in end-of-life issues and how they directly affect women. We live longer than men, we are more often poor, there is no national program to care for the long process of illness and dying—not Medicare or anything—we need homecare just as we need childcare, and the issue of control at the end of life is the

same as it once was in control in birthing. These are still the same lifelong issues I am working on, the issues of who decides.

Probably the article I wrote that I am most proud of and that had the largest impact elsewhere is a 1972 piece for the Village Voice about Doris Lessing coming to give a series of lectures at the New School in New York. The piece was based on these talks but it took off, as if a column. It was called “Becoming the Men We Wanted to Marry,” and it created significant, long term interest. It also affected me very much as I began thinking of my own life in a different, more confident way.

Are you currently involved as an activist? If so, please describe.

Yes, I am still involved as an activist, but at the age of 78 I now have a greatly expanded view. I see my work related to women and end of life issues and to that end I have written what I think is an important book: The Good Death: The New American Search to Reshape the End-of-Life. It was published in the late 1990s, and I spoke widely about these issues during the 2000s. I still focus on these issues in my work, but COVID deaths have expanded my view. Modern long-term dying to the return of quick and nasty deaths by infections.

My other work has been in journalism. In teaching at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism I ended up specializing in what I called Independent Journalism, or that field of journalism that produced everything from the Muckrakers in the early 1900s to Izzy Stone in the mid-1960s, to the underground press of the 1970s and on.

To this end, I was asked to start a journalism program in 2001 at a small college in central Illinois, Knox College, where Sam McClure and his buddies came from in the early 1900’s before they began the muckraking gold standard, McClure’s Magazine, home of the writers Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell, and others. This program was established not only in their name but in their journalistic stance. I became the director of this program, commuted regularly to teach there from New York for 13 years, and am now

Distinguished Professor Emerita of Journalism there in continuing to guide that program though these difficult journalistic times.

At 78, my health isn't great nor is that of my husband, John Sheedy, who is 92, but we do what we can. Just recently I challenged the University of Chicago on my sexual harassment saga, convincing them to allow me to use my book, The Good Death, to shape a dissertation. I am glad they were willing to address the stymied educations of women like me, those in my generation, and address openly a way to right the wrongs of sexual assault and harassment and their negative effect on our entire careers.

Other Information (Other interviews you have done in the past, location of your papers, other people who should be interviewed.)

I have done many, many, many interviews, the most important of which—in terms of the historic and foundational books that evolved from them—were with Ruth Rosen, Todd Gitlin, Susan Brownmiller, Barbara Seaman, and just recently, Clara Bingham, who is likely to have a big book. There were also major magazine stories in which I was featured: Ramparts Magazine and Esquire, both early on, as the most significant of these. And Mary Dore's great film, "She's Beautiful When She's Angry." More recently, Nicholas Kristof wrote a great piece in the NY Times on my finally getting my doctorate from the University of Chicago 50-some years post-sexual harassment in graduate school.

My papers are at the Schlessinger Library of Women's History at Harvard University, but they are not all there yet. I am still sorting them out—they consist of many boxes—and I am working on a memoir with them, but I have signed papers to leave them there when I finish.

Background Information

Birth year: 1942

Place of Birth: Brooklyn, New York

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in two apartments in the same apartment house—at 275 Linden Boulevard—in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn. When I was nine, we moved to a ranch house in a suburban housing development in the middle to lower-middle class town of Elmont, Long Island, New York, a town just over the border in Nassau Country from Queens and known mostly as the home of the Belmont Racetrack.

Cultural Background (Include class, race/ethnicity and religion if applicable.)

My family is white, Jewish and of both Russian/Ukrainian and Austrian/German descent, which constitutes a class division in the New York Jewish world. My father's family was Austrian/German, and they considered my mother's Russian/Ukrainian family to be beneath them. I didn't realize it then, but this was my first introduction to issues of class in America. His family was Orthodox Jewish and involved in German Jewish social circles.

My mother's family was culturally Jewish, observing the holidays, but more involved in union organizing, the Yiddish theater, and socialist issues. Her mother ran a laundry and had seven children, only six of whom survived. Her father was the activist, working in the garment business. He was a shop steward for the ILGWU and constantly got fired for his union activities. He also actively organized the Nikolayever Brotherly Benevolent Association, one of the many benevolent organizations that had helped Russian Jewish immigrants settle in America.

My father's mother was a housewife, his father the development director of Yeshiva University and the Albert Einstein Medical School. Early on he was the director of a liberal settlement house/community

center in the Lower East Side of New York, running cultural programs that led toward the "Americanization" of lower-class Jews.

My mother organized the first department store union in the 1930s in New York as a salesclerk at Hearn's Department Store in Union Square and was then promoted to a manager. She was an activist and I suspect this promotion was intended to silence her. She had begun at Brooklyn College, but she stayed home once I was born, continuing to be an activist, suffering through the McCarthy period as friends were threatened, and through the early civil rights movement on Long Island, where the KKK had had a strong presence. My sister was born two years after me. She developed kidney disease when I was thirteen and eventually died of it when I was sixteen. My mother focused most of those years on taking care of her. After that, she finished at Brooklyn College and became an elementary school teacher, luckily because my father died suddenly four years after my sister did. He had a massive heart attack and had no money to leave her.

My father was a talented artist/illustrator. He attended Cooper Union and had intended to work with his maternal uncle, Charles Mintz, upon graduation. Mintz and his wife, Margaret Winkler, were the first producers of animated cartoons and the first employers of Walt Disney. But before that happened Mintz and Disney had a parting of the ways, Mintz died of a sudden heart attack himself, and Disney's competing cartoon business became history. My dad was devastated, went to work for his paternal uncle in the underwear business, and after my sister's death, in my opinion, died a broken man, probably of a broken heart.

Both my parents bore the fearful traces of having grown up in the Great Depression, my mom having to finish high school at night because she was the only one in her family of nine to have a job during those

years, and my dad being unable to strike out on his own during his critical career building time. He was an angry resentful man who was once a carefree jokester.

Gender/Sexual Identification: I am a straight, heterosexual female.

In high school I was a cheerleader—the only athletic activity opened to girls at the time—and most likely because of that, a leader. I was a typical suburban kid concerned with popularity, boys, rock and roll, and clothes. I was also an honors student and wrote a column for the school newspaper, called "See it With Salzman" that ended up winning a state journalism award. I crossed groups—fitting in with both the athletes and the college-bound.

I had a relatively secret life, though, as throughout most of those high school years my parents were occupied with my seriously ill younger sister, who died during my junior year. I didn't talk about it much at school since I was embarrassed at being different and I rarely invited friends to my house. It would disturb my sister. Instead, I read a lot. I loved rock and roll, especially Elvis. Their inattention actually allowed me to develop my own separate life.

I was influenced by a range of characters and people, mostly through reading—from Nancy Drew, the girl detective I idolized, to Brenda Starr, the comic strip journalist I wanted to be, to Lincoln Steffens, the muckraking journalist I coveted, to Sigmund Freud, whose psychoanalytic theories stretched my mind, to Marie Curie and Eleanor Roosevelt, who stretched the limits of so-called femininity.

But having that column allowed me to do additional research, meet additional people. I had an entrée. I saw plays such as A Raison in the Sun, that allowed me to meet actors there and write about racism. I visited museums that were just built, like the Guggenheim, and could interview people and write about how architecture was influenced by the form it was meant to show off (art, for example).

At the same time, other than writing that column, I ended up rarely talking about all this. I was the stereotypical prom queen; my sense of activist grit and an intellectual underside emerged only later. I spent years sorting through my own female identity, so this question of gender and self-identification was a lot more complex than a simple answer makes it seem. I whole heartedly embraced 1950s suburban culture, but I chaffed underneath and searched for other role models. Ergo, the will to try to create a new feminist movement.

Educational Background:(List schools/dates/degrees and courses of study if applicable)

Elementary School:

P.S. 181 in Brooklyn. First through mid-fourth grade

Gotham Avenue School in Elmont, Long Island, finished fourth grade

Dutch Broadway School in Elmont, fifth and sixth grades

Junior High:

Belmont Boulevard Junior High School, Elmont

High School:

Elmont Memorial High School, Elmont, graduated in 1960 with honors.

College:

Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass., majored in psychology and graduated cum laude in 1964, with honors. My dad died during my junior year. Although I was always a scholarship student, I now needed to earn spending money. I became the nightly dorm sandwich girl, a lowly job that ended up teaching me a lot about classism that came in handy in my future life.

Graduate School:

University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, Educational Psychology. I was in a Ph.D. program but left with just an M.A. in 1967 because I couldn't get a dissertation committee together without giving out sexual favors. I protested over many years and finally was able to finish and get my doctorate in 2019, an event that was written about in several newspapers. My most significant learning experience here involved work with the black welfare mothers in nearby Woodlawn, setting up a community preschool that preceded Head Start, and meeting up with national leaders of Students for a Democratic Society. The national SDS office moved to nearby Woodlawn just as I began in graduate school.

Second Graduate School:

Columbia University, New York, New York. I received an M.S. at the Graduate School of Journalism in 1982. I already had experience as a journalist at small newspapers, the Village Voice, the Guardian, and *oob*, but I felt I needed grounded professional training and a degree.

Work Experiences (List dates and primary responsibilities)

In high school, I babysat, worked as a receptionist and as a camp counselor. I had to make my own money as we were not rich. In college I was a salesclerk in a local department store and sold sandwiches at night in the girls' dorms. In summers I worked as a research assistant.

In graduate school I commuted to southern Illinois to teach English to migrant workers, and I became the director of two different (at the same time) community preschools in the black community of Woodlawn.

In later years, I was the Washington reporter and bureau chief for the Guardian, I wrote for the Village Voice, I was a reporter for newspapers in Vermont and Boulder, Colorado, I free lanced for Redbook,

New York Magazine, and many of the other women's national magazines. I edited two Random House books of talks on creative mind about the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University, and I was an editor at a Buddhist newspaper called the Vajradhatu Sun.

In 1981, I moved to NY and went to graduate school and was later editor—in—chief of Psychology Today, features editor at Woman's Day, senior editor at US magazine, features editor at McCall's, a regular writer for New York Magazine, and an adjunct at the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia from 1990 to 1995.

From 1995-1997 I reported and wrote the book The Good Death. Then I engaged on a lengthy speaking tour at medical facilities and conferences about changes needed in the care of the dying. I was also then a consultant to Bill Moyers' PBS series on death and dying.

In 2001 I created the muckraking-based writing and reporting Program in Journalism at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, and ran it for the next thirteen years. When I retired, they made me an professor emerita. Since then, I have written my dissertation, worked with the University of Chicago on changing rules for older women like me who left earlier in their lives because of sexual harassment, I studied horticulture and landscape design and developed a garden design business focused mainly on help older women create art and beauty in the garden and exercise while doing it. I am also writing a memoir and organizing my papers for the Schlesinger Library of Women's History at Harvard University. These include everything from letters from childhood camps to high school scrapbooks and diaries to notes on SDS, my trip to Cuba early on, and papers and information from the women's movement, Knox College, and life in general. The curators want everything so future histories can see how women in my own generation have lived. I keep telling them they need to include how we survived financially—which was always dire—but they say they are not interested in that. Go figure.

Family/Children (If you have children, please list their names and year of birth)

I was first married to Lee Dunham Webb III, who was the National Secretary of Students of a Democratic Society (SDS) when I met him in Chicago in 1964. Our daughter is Jennifer Brooke Stanton (named for Elizabeth Cady Stanton) Webb, born on March 9, 1970, just after I started ***off our backs***. We separated two years later and divorced in the mid-1970s, about 1976. He married magazine editor Judith Daniels. I had a brief second marriage then divorced again in 1984.

In 1993, I married John Sheedy Jr., who had three children with his prior wife, literary agent Charlotte Sheedy, Ally Sheedy, (an actress, born in 1962), Meghan Sheedy (a pharmaceutical rep, born in 1964), and Patrick Sheedy (a TV/film producer, born in 1967).

All John's children are now divorced. Ally has one child, Beck, a trans male born in 1994, and Meghan has one son, Jack, born in 2005.

My daughter, Jennifer, had been an editor for Random House but then began Pictage, an internet company, with her husband Jason Kiefer during the early 2000s internet boom and sold it at its height. They have been full-time parents to three boys (Lucas, born 2000, Jack, born 2002, and Quinn, born 2005). Jason has been an angel investor ever since and Jennifer serves on various boards.