

Women's Activism and Oral History Project

Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College
Northampton, MA

CHRISTINE SHELTON

Interviewed by

Christine Stine

November 13 and 18, 2008
Northampton, Massachusetts

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Narrator

Christine Shelton grew up in Maryland, graduated from Madison College in 1970 with a B.S. in Physical Education before becoming active with the Peace Corp in Venezuela. Shelton was then employed at West Springfield High School, in Virginia, where she was involved in filing a Title IX suit. She has a background in gender equity training, and continues to be involved with international organizations that concern women in sport. Shelton is a professor and coach at Smith College, where she also serves as director for the Project on Women and Social Change.

Interviewer

Christine Stine (b. 1986) is a history major at Smith College.

Abstract

In this oral history Shelton talks about her involvement in sports as child. She talks about her experience of implementing a physical education program in Venezuela with the Peace Corp, her experience as a high school teacher (where she filed a Title IX suit), and her experience as a professor and coach. She describes her roll creating a program to teach gender equity, and in educating physical educators and administrators of its importance. Chris talks about her international work, and the work she has done within the Smith college community.

Restrictions

None

Format

Recorded on Digital Audio MiniDisks. Two 60-minute disks.

Transcript

Transcribed by Christine Stine.

Bibliography and Footnote Citation Forms

Video Recording

Bibliography: Shelton, Christine. Interview by Christine Stine. Audio recording, November 13 and 18, 2008. Sophia Smith Collection. **Footnote:** Christine Shelton interview by Christine Stine, audio recording, November 13, 2008, Sophia Smith Collection, tape 1.

Transcript

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Women's Activism and Oral History Project
History 372, Fall 2008
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Transcript of interview conducted November 13 and 18, 2008, with:

CHRISTINE SHELTON
Northampton, Massachusetts

By: CHRISTINE STINE

STINE: So I'm here with Christine Shelton at her office at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. It is November 13, 2008. My name is Christine Stine and I'll be interviewing Chris. So I thought we would start out with a little bit of the beginning and your childhood, and I was wondering when you first started with sports – how did that happen?

SHELTON: That's a very good question. I think there are two marks for me. One was, ahh a Physical education teacher named Mr. Bell and the other was second grade teacher named Josephine Teresina. And if you remember elementary school sometimes you didn't have a physical education teacher, but we did and we saw Mr. Bell maybe once a month or once every couple of months. It wasn't that often because he probably had three or four other schools, but at the end of the spring he would have a play day and I remember that in the play days that – the one play day that I remember I won all of the races against the boys and the girls and I won the throwing events. I remember my father coming over to watch this and Mr. Bell saying to him, "there's going to be a Junior Olympics downtown in Baltimore and Dundalk and I think you should go to that and see how Chris does." And my dad was very enthusiastic about sport – he'd been in the Turnburine gym in Baltimore which is another whole historic piece of my life – the German Turnburine -- and he was quite a competitive person, a diver and just a very all around good athlete and I think he wanted to see what would happen. So Mr. Bell and my dad collaborated in this and down we went to Druid Hill Park in Baltimore and there was for me an amazing assortment of people there. So it was probably the first time that I'd been the minority because most of the people who were there were African American and they were faster than anyone I'd ever seen run and all new there times – how fast they ran. I remember this, it was a 50 yard dash and they all were saying they ran in 6.6 or 6.4 and I was saying I ran it in 6.4 – I didn't have a clue how fast I ran it but I saw the backs of most of them in the first – actually in the first heat I got second and I got to go to the next round but by that time I was way toward the back and very upset because I never lost, you know I always won against everyone. So my dad said, "no come on now were going to go

over and throw because you gotta really strong arm,” and over we went. And I just shot through the -- it was a soft ball throw -- and I won a medal, I don’t know if it was first, or second, or third, but I remember being really thrilled because finally I was going to win something.

And, um, so that was the beginning and I think if I frame that, so Mr. Bell and my dad are male models for me but there was Miss Terasina who was my second grade teacher and also my fourth grade teacher. And for reasons unknown to me I had a very difficult second grade year. I was very emotional, didn’t want to go to school but Miss Terasina loved sport and we had, everyday we would have a recess and she was a competitor beyond belief, and dodge ball, and anything you can do outside she would keep us for 45 minutes or an hour. And I’ll never forget that at one point I was so uncontrollable with my emotions as a second grader that I couldn’t, I cried didn’t want to go to school – but I loved class. It was such an interesting contradiction. So they decided to put me in a special ed class where people were slower, and I lasted about two days there because the teacher didn’t do recess, and I went right up to the principal and said, “I’m ready to go back to Miss Terasina’s class,” and back I went and that was the end of it, you know. So she was inspiring to me because there was a woman I watched who was really good, let me go all out in everything I did, and that was good.

And from there I moved. My dad and mom both put me in a CYO basketball league, which was unlike any basketball most people had ever seen – there were three aside, you couldn’t cross over the middle line. So I was a guard, I never learned to shoot until I was in high school because all I did was play defense. And I was very successful at that. I just loved it. So I think where I was the least constrained was in physical education classes because no one wanted to compete in my neighborhood. Growing up we lived on a street called Arline Drive. We had a huge wheat field and when they would plow that in the fall we would take and make our own stacks to make football. And so I played football with the guys, and we played tackle. Then in the spring we would make, before they plowed it to grow the wheat again, we would make it into baseball and so we played baseball -- But always in my neighborhood we had games going on. We biked everywhere and it was just a very active youth that I did. My sisters weren’t that way but I was. Some of it innate, some of it encouraged, but those were the beginning periods of it. I think if I take it up to tennis which really became my focus at 11, my dad -- we moved from Arline Drive and I was at a new place, didn’t really have any friends there who were athletic -- and my dad and one of his good friends started playing tennis and he would take me there and I would watch. Then after they finished playing he would let me have his partner’s racket and hit with me, and I’m not sure if I – how this happened, but they agreed that I needed some lessons because there was some natural ability there and um, the lessons were remarkable. This is where everything changed for me and I don’t know if you want me to go into that now or just sort of stop there cause that was-

STINE: That sounds like a good time for that.

SHELTON: It does? Ok. Living in Cadenceville next to the high school, next to all the facilities was a dream if you think about it for me. They had beautiful tennis courts and a very good instructor there. And in Baltimore County unlike many other places in the world physical education was strong, competitive sports were strong. And when I was in middle school I was allowed to go and take lessons during the summer. So I took swimming lessons. My mom would save her food money, tell my dad that my grandmother had given her money to join the swim club, and we would join the swim club and learn to swim. And then we'd learn to swim enough to do some competitive swimming.

With tennis it was very expensive, it was part of the recreation and parks. And there was a really good coach there and his name was Tad, and I can't remember his second name but he was a very good coach who wanted me to learn the game. He taught me as well as he could, and by the end of the summer he wanted me to go play in a tournament. And Tad took me up to the local tennis club which was connected to a church -- but again it was a private club and something my parents would never have been able to afford to join -- but to compete I was invited. And I wound up winning the tournament. And it was sponsored by a couple named Vernier, V-E-R-N-I-E-R, and Mr. and Mrs. Vernier wanted a youth a junior person. I don't know if they wanted a boy or a girl but it was a girl the year I won the tournament. And I suspect I played against boys and girls. I think it was just a really competitive tournament and I got 75 dollars which in that day and age would have made me a professional, but the way they worked was that it went right into the tennis pro's pockets -- well I wanted it so because it was to be used for lessons. Another complicated piece of sport is how you stay amateur in the world. In the 60s it was very difficult to be an amateur. And so for 75 dollars Nick took me on for the next four or five years and I played -- well I'll tell you about my tennis career another time. But in terms of beginning I got a lot of publicity in Cadenceville because I won this tournament. My mother was my biggest promoter -- put my picture in an article in a local paper and embarrassed me no end because when it came out in the newspaper I was just entering middle school and my picture was put on an engagement announcement as engaged to Mr. Schotta, and Mrs. -- the woman's picture was on my article so this was very embarrassing for an eleven year old. (laughter) I was beside myself and you can only imagine my surprise when I walked into middle school and who was my PE teacher but Miss Schotta. So there I am looking at this woman and she went, You, you're picture is on my engagement announcement. (laughter). So it was pretty funny at the time but I -- you know I got a lot of attention for being a tennis player and I was in a middle school that had fabulous physical

education, intramurals. I played basketball, I did trampoline and gymnastics, I did softball and lacrosse and field hockey, and I mean we did everything. And you think about 11, 12 and 13 year olds today, how many sports they're exposed to and I was exposed to soccer and speedball and it was just we had a lot of things that we did. And then when we moved to high school there were competitive sports for me in everything you can imagine. And in 1960 -- I guess I graduated, '62 to '66 I was in high school years. Most other women in the world did not have competitive sports they might have had intramurals, play days, but they didn't have Cadenceville High School against Talson or Dundalk or, so that was a real, for me that was the way it was always supposed to be and the rest of the world it wasn't that way.

STINE: It sounds like you had a very fortunate beginning. When did you see, gender inequality in sports, where did that come up?

SHELTON: Been trying to think about the early years and its really -- I as a tennis player if we go into that part of my life, I, Nick Shroder who was my, the tennis pro who took me under his wing had a club in Talson, which is again, 45 minute drive away from my house. To get there every day my mother had to get in the car drive me, leave me, come back and take care of three young children. And Nick was the coach for the Junior Whiteman Cup Boys' Team, so there was also a Junior Whiteman Cup Girls' Team and he eventually got me on that but all my play was with boys, so I competed with them, took lessons with them, with Nick and then I played against all the kind of grey haired tennis women and you know supposed to let them -- no one ever told me I was supposed to let them win but I think I kind of new that and it was always the case with boys, the first gender thing I remember is everyone telling me I should never beat a boy, and how hard that has been all my life to sort of take that and erase it because it was really plastered in my brain, that if I kept beating boys I would never be appealing to them. So, I tanked quite a few things in my life, maybe purposefully but maybe just because that was, you know, you were just trying to follow a norm. That would probably be the earliest one. I will say in terms of gender in my high school, and again this is a very unique thing, but a woman named Leaf Bennett who's about five or six years older than I, got a scholarship to the University of Hawaii to be a runner. And this is like 1962 or '63 and there were random scholarships given. So, she left Baltimore, Maryland and went all the way to Hawaii -- still lives there, still runs there -- and competed very successfully, you know went to Olympic trials, she might of even made it to, no, I don't think she ever made it to the games. So there were women who I saw who were really doing high performance sport and in the tennis world, of course, they've always had scholarships for tennis players at very elite schools, so you

know, I wasn't in the elite. I think class issues were what I noticed more than gender growing up and those were enormous for me.

STINE: How did you wind up at Madison College and decide to major in physical education?

SHELTON: That's a very interesting question to because Madison was a woman's college and my physical education teacher, Ann Clemmet, in high school was my idyll. She was on the, I used to go watch her play a national field hockey tournaments, she was a softball player, and a lacrosse player, and enormously talented athlete, and she encouraged me. She was my field hockey coach, got me a scholarship to go to a summer camp for, up in Maine for field hockey. She had a very close friend with whom she had worked for many years named Jean, what was Jean's last name, I'll think of it – she just passed. But anyway, Jean was a president of the Madison College Alumni Association and they gave scholarships every year for one Baltimore girl to go to JMU. So I went over with probably three, four, or five other young aspiring Madison College girls and they selected me for this one hundred dollar scholarship. And for my parents – I was first generation college – my parents really didn't have a clue. My mother was in the Waves, my father was in the Navy, they were both in the Navy. And so they had the GI bill, my mother started John Hopkins for a course or two but because of raising kids she had to stop. So my mom knew she wanted me to go to college, but how to do it that was a real big question mark. And with this hundred dollar scholarship it gave us enough encouragement to go and look at the school. And all you have to do is go to that school and you fall in love with it. It's very similar to Smith in that regard. It's the most beautiful campus. It's changed a lot but the years that I was there it was just absolutely beautiful, bucolic.

And so, I knew I wanted to go there and in the eighth grade I was in this very advanced class, advanced placement, I think that's what they call it now, but you know advanced class, and we had a sociology class where we had to pick a career and I was too embarrassed to say that I wanted to be a physical education teacher and because everyone else in my class wanted to be engineers and doctors or teachers, and so I said I wanted to be a Peace Corp volunteer. So in the eighth grade I had this paper that I did about Peace Corp, so I had really studied up on that, and what I had discovered was that if you were trained as a physical education teacher you could be a Peace Corp volunteer and teach sport and P.E. in other countries. So, what did I really want to when I went to college? Well, be a P.E. teacher, but I really wanted to be a coach. I mean above all else that was what I really wanted to do. There was no job for women to coach. I could make a living teaching. I was living in an era when teachers were really in demand. They were bidding for us coming out of school, I mean I had three offers it was astonishing. I felt, you know like I was queen for a day here. But once I saw Madison

I only wanted to go there and there was nothing else -- you were either a teacher, or a secretary or a nurse. And at James Madison you taught home economics or physical education, possibly you taught English. There were a few science and math geeks but they were few and far between. And there was a business -- so if you wanted to be a secretary there was a business degree. But most of my friends were home economic majors or they were business majors or physical education majors. So those were the big kind of foci of the institution. Some people went on to do other things but mostly they taught because you were rewarded for teaching. In the state of Virginia if you went to a state college and went back and taught, it was free, you got your education free. For me, that would have never been the case, but I got a scholarship from my dad's company and from the alumni association. That really made all the difference for me. And it was a great school. Every one else was going to Talson and Maryland and there was something about those people that felt different for me -- and I don't know if it had to do with a jock image that I just, I just didn't like, or if I didn't want to go to school with people who I knew because I competed against them -- I never really analyzed it but there was a strong need not to be in school in Maryland for me, so off to Virginia I went.

STINE: And, what was your experience with being on a team like there? What was your relationship with your teammates like?

SHELTON:

I think it was good. They called me the golden girl, which has stuck, unbelievably it has stuck because, again I was in physical education classed with a lot of people from Virginia and New Jersey whose sport experience was zero. They might have had physical education classes but they'd never competed in field hockey, never seen a lacrosse stick. And in going through a physical education curriculum you had to have an activity course, if not two, and ever sport you can imagine, from modern dance, to tap dance, to lacrosse to swimming to synchronized swimming. So, I think, I went in there and there wasn't a sport I didn't have experience with, really, I think the only one was archery, that was the only sport I hadn't had, and we must have had 18 to 20 activity courses over the four years and those were as rigorous as any four credit course I teach here and it was one credit or a half a credit. So, my teammates, field hockey was my first thing, I approached it like I had high school, and I was really tired one day and told my coach, or my class mates to just tell Dr. Morison I had to rest today I was really tired, and she called me up at dinner time and said, "Miss Shelton you weren't in practice today," and I said, "I know, Dr Morison, I was just so tired, I thought I should just rest" and she goes, "you will never do that again, you will come to practice and you-" So there was this level of seriousness that I was willing to do, I did it in tennis, it just never occurred to me I had to do it in field hockey and basketball and

fencing and everything else they did there. My teammates, I still am friends with a lot of them today. Basketball, was probably the hardest for me in college, because like I said, I started with three aside. By the time I was in high school there was a rover, there were still six players, two of them could rove, become defense and then offense, but by the time I got to college it was five aside, no it wasn't, it was still rover, then it was five aside. So, I was going through all these transitions and the game changed a lot and the contact in the game changed a lot, and I realized that I wasn't prepared for the kind of contact that you have in sports. And I did tennis, I was number one on the tennis team and that was easy, I don't think my tennis game got better when I was in college -- there was no competition really. And my last year I fenced, which was really fun, liked that. But I never rode. (Laughter) We had a great equestrian team at Madison.

STINE: So, then you continued at the Peace Corp. And how did you decide to go to Venezuela? Did you have a lot of control over that situation?

SHELTON: I, um, let's see. I don't even remember why this happened but I received an invitation, a letter from the Peace Corp. And I may have sent in a letter of, a form you fill out like join the army, I know I filled out join the army and navy because I just didn't want to teach. I went through four years of college, I student taught, I was certified health and physical education K through 12 and I didn't like it when I student taught. I didn't like checking off showers and having so many discipline problems and so I was looking for an alternative, and one of my good friends and I, I know we filled out something for the army or the navy, and probably we did for the Peace Corp. But I got a letter that invited me to be part of a special group that president, then President Nixon was going to put together and these were teams of physical educators who were going to go to one of three countries, Afghanistan, Morocco, or Venezuela. I had no idea where Afghanistan was, embarrassingly enough, knew where Morocco was, didn't speak French, and I'd had a little Spanish -- French, but I'd had a lot of French and I knew I didn't speak French, but I'd had a little bit of Spanish and really liked it. It was closest to where I lived so I applied and said, Of all the programs you've offered me I would be interested in the Venezuela program. So I got it and within really a month I was on my way. And I had already signed a contract with a high school in northern Virginia, West Springfield High School. I'd received all of the books I was going to use to teach health and driver's ed and you know they were, I was on their pay roll and I had to go and say, "could you kind of hold this job for two years?" I can't tell you, I lost so much sleep over that. Like I told you, It was very competitive, I had people waiting to say where I wanted to teach and when I finally made the decision I was relieved, they were relieved and now I'm just going to say I'm going to put this off two years. So that's how I did it. My dad wasn't in favor, my mom I think was really thrilled the kind of idea of just take your eagle wings

and soar somewhere, go change a world you've never seen, see a word you've never changed. So it was really exciting and unlike today, my training was in Sanecedro California. So you arrived there, you were put up in a hotel for two days and then you were given 50 dollars and told to go into the community and find a place to live. And most was really a wet backed community back then and I remember just going high up on the hill until I found houses that I liked. And I got a great place with another volunteer. We lived in the master sweet in this house for 12 weeks and learn Spanish and cross cultural training but nothing really could prepare you for the in country experience except being there. Yah, so then, on to Venezuela.

STINE: So what was your experience like with implementing a P.E. program there?

SHELTON: It was confusing. I knew how to teach Physical Education. I'd never had any curriculum work. I didn't really have a sense of what facilities were going to be available. And learning to be a physical education teacher you have a background in adapting materials. If you didn't have a ball you'd make it out of your nylon stockings and rubber bands. I mean we did these things, learn how to build equipment that you didn't have. In some way I was ready for this and in another way I had no clue. I mean how do you teach physical education in a school house that's got 11 kids in it that's on a hill that's at a 45 degree angle, I mean no place to play. So think it was probably for me just um, Venezuela wanted this curriculum implemented, there was a part of it I could do and another part that just culturally I wasn't prepared to do. But, I had great help, I mean once the teachers, the elementary school teachers who were sports-minded caught on to this they really went at it, they loved it.

But it was more, and the schools were on strike most the time I was there and there were months on end where there were huelgos and lots of fighting, really fighting. I was in, the first three months I was there I was tear gassed at least three times a week, waiting to go to school. And there was a lot of, Tekovara had just been killed so there was a lot of, people were still in the andien regions near where I lived, so there was a lot of that kind of warring going on but the big conflict was between students and the police and there were always conflicts. And I was too naïve to know how dangerous it was, quite frankly.

But, I you know the teaching, didn't turn out to be teaching little kids it turned out that I was teaching the teachers and in some ways that's much easier because there's no discipline problems, they've got great senses of humor, if I said a word wrong they would get great laughs out of it, they'd correct me. And they were willing, they were willing to do physical education with me but they really weren't willing to do it with there classes because they just didn't feel trained enough. When I would go during the week to their schools I would wind up teaching there kids for them, while they stood in an umbrella out of the

sun (laughter) most of them, 99 percent of them were women so, any way, that's a whole other cultural discussion. But, where I really grew to love Venezuela was through sports, I played on the University of the Andes Volleyball Team, and Tennis Team, so you know I just got to compete and that was great fun.

STINE: So, in 1972, after your years of working there Title IX was passed.

SHELTON: It was.

STINE: What was your reaction to that at the time? What was going on then?

SHELTON: I came back from the Peace Corp and I wrote the people who I had stood up for two years and said, "I'm coming back, I still would love to teach in Fairfax County, and I've always wanted to teach with you." The woman's name was Shirley Duncan, and she was the pillar of the community of Physical Educators, not just in Northern Virginia, but in the state, extremely respected as a coach, as an administrator and as a teacher. And she wrote back and said, "You're in luck, one of the people who teaches in our department is going back for her doctorate so we have a two year position open. Would you like it?" I came back, year one was 72-73. In June '72 the law is passed. By June '73 we are aware of it, so I'm in my second year of teaching and with Shirley Duncan and with the other women in the department we decided we needed to file a Title IX suit. We needed to make a protest because we were, we had extraordinary good girl's basketball teams. It was a period of time in women's history where colleges were beginning -- the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics governed women's sports -- and they were beginning to debate whether or not women could have scholarships to college. In the first years of the AIAW they did not allow scholarships and now they were going to allow them so we needed our basketball girls to be visible, and no one was going to come to the gym where we were playing. Our gym was cement floor with tile over it and when you got to the championships you were now on a wooden floor with glass backboards, things were very different. So we had very humbly said, "could we, before the championship, practice in the boy's gym?" and we were just told, no way, you know that's for the boys. Even though they didn't use it all the time, we would have used it off hours, there was no way. It so, such a sacre saint place. And you have to remember, I don't know if you saw the movie *Remember the Titans*, and Denzel Washington, well West Springfield High School is the high school where they had the riot, So I was there when T.C. Williams and West Springfield High School, when the battle happened in the gym, where the boys had there holy ground. So not only is it holy ground or white, it was just holy ground for white boys, there were no black males, I don't even think in our school practically. So it was a very contentious time, it was a hard time for racial reasons, and for gender it was impossible because we had a very good football team,

very good boy's basketball team, very good baseball team. They just didn't want anything to do – they liked that we were good – but they just didn't want to share there facilities.

So we filed, as far as I know it was the first Title IX suite in Virginia, West Springfield High School challenged Fairfax County. The superintendent in charge of our case was a woman, her husband was the vice principal in our school. You can imagine we did not win that suite. We got a civil rights attorney and we got our own private attorney. I remember we brought Pat Head Summit up to talk with us, to kind of give us some inspiration, this is before she even got the Tennessee job, but she was an Olympian. We had a pretty nasty year, '73, '74, '75 because people didn't like what we did, but as far as I was concerned that was my introduction to Title IX. I had to understand the law, I had to understand that the Office of Civil Rights really hadn't figured out what we were supposed to be doing yet. We were trying to make the rules. The principals had this guideline, but no one had how to implement it.

And in the physical education classes we just exchanged our, I would tare off the top half of my girls roster and give it to you, and you gave me half the boys, and suddenly do I teach fly football or do I teach field hockey to this group? Or what do I do with them? So it was really a challenging time, there were no rules about it and in hindsight, it's always 20/20, but whenever there is a social change law like that there is a fear on the part of the administration that there will be resistance, and there was enormous resistance. But then there's the fear from those people who are most affective, who are the teachers and the students that, are we going to do this right? Because we're really kind of bound by that, you want to do things right for students. So, it was a very tough time, but I found it also exciting, how do you make a coed class work? And you know, it was fun, I actually enjoyed it and made a career out of it actually. You have done your homework, Christine. I'm very thrilled with you, you have done a great job looking though the resume.

STINE: (laughter) I'm trying to skip over stuff too, so we actually will have time.

SHELTON: No, that's ok, we have time.

STINE: So then you went back to do graduate work at James Madison University. Tell me about that experience.

SHELTON: That we were filing this suite became pretty much a public knowledge in Virginia. I don't know if it went nation wide, I really don't remember that, but in the state of Virginia my name was, for men, my name was attached to bra-burning-bitch, and my mentor, Lee Morison, who was my field hockey coach who called me up and told me I should never miss practice again, had followed me through the Peace Corp and I think been a little curious about it and she called me and

said, “if you need to get out of town for a year why don’t you come down and do a graduate degree here.” Because it was a very hostile environment.

I’ll give you two examples. In physical education classes in high school first period is where attendance is taken and that’s a pretty important part of a high school, public high school day. We would be out on the fields, we would come in at 20 minutes before the hour, fill out our things and send them down before the period was over. But, about at about 30 minutes before the class was over, over the intercom, we didn’t even know this because we were out on the field, they would start saying, Miss Duncan, Miss Shelton, you know, Miss Gant, please get, you still haven’t turned in your things, so this went on everyday as if we were being late with something that for years had been the way it was done, and totally acceptable, they didn’t need it. So that was kind of a harassing behavior that was very public. For me, my car tires were slashed. I had a brand new cougar, I was so proud of it and then it was egged you know and that just goes right through your finish. Um, nasty calls to where I lived. I mean, there was a lot that went on that was really personal, and I think because of the suite. I have to think that that was the reason. I don’t think I was giving any provocation to kids to do that kind of stuff.

So, I remember I went down to James Madison University, they were hosting the first televised AIAW Basketball Championship and it was between Delta State and Immaculata College, those were two of the big basketball programs in the country for women at the time, and I was devastated because Lee Morison was the director of this championship and I was down there to talk to her about grad school and she had no time. So I thought this isn’t going to happen, and I was pretty panicked because I couldn’t stay at this school another year. It would just have killed me I think. But in the long run they not only offered me to go to James Madison for my degree, they invited me to be to tennis coach for the year, which I was thrilled with. They let me teach, not many of the grad students got to teach. So I got to teach badminton, actually one of the guys I taught badminton to was inducted into the James Madison hall of fame with me, we were, so it was pretty cool. And he was, he became a professional NBA coach and anyway so there were, there were a lot of interesting times there because now Madison was a coed university. And it was a great year. I got to meet so many other tennis coaches, realized that was what I really wanted to do, was coach tennis – like basketball, but tennis was really what I loved -- and so within a year I finished the course work for it, went back to Fairfax County, walked in day one and the principal at West Springfield called me in and said “you need to find another place to work, this isn’t gonna work out.” And he suggested that I go to a school called Lake Braddock, which was a new school, it was an open high school. 4000 students and open walls. You remember how they had that in elementary? Well this was a high school with open walls and it was very unique. And I went in to speak to the principal who had a fabulous reputation as a kind of a

spiritual and fair person and the first question he said to me was, "Chris, why should I have you on my staff when you're a trouble maker?" and I said "well I'll tell you what, if there's anything that I'm worried about or confused about you have to know the first person I'm coming to is you, and the only time there'll be trouble is if you can't explain why things are the way they are. That's the only reason. And you know, I'll be on your side and I'll work hard for you. I'll coach for you, you know I'll do what ever you want, but I will not sit around when there's an injustice going on." And I listed the things that were going on at West Springfield -- they were pretty horrible.

As it turned out -- and this is a sidebar about how there is justice in the world -- the principal who really didn't want me back was found to be using money fraudulently from the school and he was given, he was approached by detectives and escorted out of the school within five years of when I left. So he was gone. The football coach who was another just horrible just basher -- he called me every name in the book, lesbian, he bashed us just up one side and down the other -- he was caught taping the pre game talk of Lake Braddock High School, where I was, and using it to coach against the team, because he put tape recorders in the lockers and he got caught and he too was fired. So in this big picture of injustice of the people who gave us the hardest time about Title IX at West Springfield High School at least two of them got pretty serious criminal actions taken against them. It was pretty amazing.

So, at West Springfield High School I also met a great guy, I don't remember Ted's last name right now, but he was the coach at George Mason University, and he really didn't want to coach the women anymore, they were really more than he could handle (laughter.) And so, my year after I finished -- I really didn't finish my degree for a couple years because I had a thesis to write -- I coached tennis at George Mason University, I coached soccer and basketball at Lake Braddock, and I was the Coordinator of Women's Athletics at George Mason, so I had four full time jobs (laughter.) I mean it was amazing, but my goal was to get to George Mason full time. And if I hadn't been the Madison College, or James Madison University tennis coach as a graduate student I would never have had that opportunity. I mean, I think it really would have been hard to get in, but Ted liked me, he liked what I did with the team, and I took over his team. I think the average age the first year was like 33 because many admirals had relocated in the Northern Virginia area and there wives were on the team. Pretty cool. Ok, so now I'm at George Mason University and Lake Braddock High School.

STINE: Yes, ok.

SHELTON: Second year of school.

STINE: And, was, at George Mason, was there kind of a different attitude towards athletics because it was coed compared to your experience at Madison?

SHELTON: I think that the difference was that it was a commuter school.

STINE: Oh, ok.

SHELTON: So there were no residential issues. There was no student life that the college had. The teams were probably one of the few things, I don't remember choral groups, I don't remember plays, it was, it had been a satellite of the University of Virginia and it was a campus that exploded. UVA said go away, just become your own institution. And we had a really wonderful president at George Mason when I was there, George, his name was George (laughter.) I can't remember last names, but in any case, he was really trying to grow the University. He bought a law school that had lost its accreditation, so added that, and that was huge. And then they started thinking about how big Northern Virginia was getting and how fast, and we would need to be able to house students so the years, I was there from '76 to '80, so four years, it was beginning to become a transition.

But I think what was hard for me was I became a person who had to implement new changes in sport policy, so where before we couldn't recruit – it's a very subtle difference but when you recruited under the AIW regulations you had tryouts, you would invite a group of 25 to 30 women to come to campus and play tennis together or play basketball and you had your own little showcase right there and that was legal. You could have them play against your own team and that was legal. And then I had scholarships and they let me have a couple scholarships that our coaches – we had two very wealthy coaches, one in volleyball one in fencing, and they donated a bunch of money so we could have women's scholarships. So suddenly I had money to give away, I mean I didn't know how to do that. So it was a lot of figuring out how to go and I had a great – Haps Bueller was the athletic director, he was a great guy, and very supportive and grandfatherly. He was a baseball coach, played 72 games a year. Can you imagine? His wife made sandwiches, they drove, they drove from Texas, Louisiana, Florida. They played all over the place. They were a really great team. And you know, no baseball field they had to borrow fields from the county. So, while I was at George Mason I started women's softball. That wasn't a sport there. And, started giving scholarships in volleyball and basketball and in tennis. And grew, the fencing team grew a lot while I was there, it was a really good team. And track and field and cross country were good sports too. But I, it still, it was growing. It's huge now. I go back now I can't even find my office it's so amazing. (Laughter.)

STINE: Do you want to tell me a little bit about your experience working with Project TEAM? That's Teaching Equity Approaches in Massachusetts.

SHELTON: About three years into the George Mason experience Haps Bueller got cancer and left. And we had to hire a new athletic director who sold himself as the All-American boy with his blonde hair and blue eyed family and a blonde haired blue eyed wife who was wonderful, and you know I was on the search committee, he gave me the creeps but everybody thought he was Mr. Perfect. We found out that not only was he not Mr. Perfect, he'd lied on his application, and yet we'd hired him. So here he is and he was a creepy man and just a real total creep and he would do things like when I was in the office and shut the door and then open it and say things like, "oh no no no we have to have the door open." And there were all these sexual innuendos with him and I really didn't like it. And I was in a marriage, I was trying to get out of the marriage, so I was, life was kind of confusing. And this opportunity came to teach, to be the specialist in physical education on this project.

The two women who ran the project, one was a prima ballerina from Grosse Pointe, Michigan, the other was from the Boston area. They were both very well educated in Ivy League schools and their physical education experiences were horrible. They got the this grant, because it was a Women's Educational Equity Act Grant but they hadn't a clue about sports, or physical education. So, I just closed down my life in Northern Virginia and moved to South Hadley and worked at University [of Massachusetts] for those years, three years. And we worked with Pat Griffin and Judy Plachek and bunch of the people over there to develop video and curriculum – which I'd done in the Peace Corp, so I knew, at least I knew a little more about curriculum by now, I had my masters degree, and I loved facilitating and doing group leadership, so I learned more about that, how to build workshops and then implement them, how to evaluate them and then redo them. So this was great and we went all over the state and pretty much all over New England, we had, what does it look like to have a gender equitable physical education class? Had a video, and what are the teaching behaviors you should look for? Like, do you always call on the boys to move the equipment? Do you always call on the boys to demonstrate? And do you discipline the girls or just discipline the boys? And so we had a lot of more particular things, and we had – this is now '80, but '72, '73' when I was asking myself that question in Springfield we didn't have the answers to those questions. So everything from the language you use to the sports you select, how you pick teams, you know all that whole spectrum of what does it look like to be gender equitable. What kind of uniforms? Do you make the girls wear something different than the boys? Are they comfortable for both genders? You know, it's just a long, it's a long list of things. It was very successful. We had a half day long, one day workshop, and a three day workshop, and when they, when it was finished, I said "well what are we going to do with this wonderful project we have?" And they were like, Well we're going to get a grant

to do something else. So I had permission to just take it go on the road.

So I did, for the next three years I just did workshops. I was hired by the desegregation assistance centers that had Title VII money, and they too were being asked, desegregation centers were being asked to help vocational education schools be more gender equitable, they were working in sports and they were working in education but most of them, most people who work in gender equity are out of a social science background, they're not out of sport at all, so that was a foreign, that was a foreign language for them. They were very glad to know there was this special program so, I don't know if I have them on my resume but I was all over the place for that. I got a huge contract in the North West, I did Alaska, all the way down to most of Washington state, Idaho, Oregon, I did California, Colorado, Texas, Maryland, I mean I was just everywhere with this and it was really exciting. The great news was I loved the performance and I loved connecting with all these wonderful physical education teachers who wanted to make things better. The downside is I never knew if what we did helped because you go in you do your gig and there was no follow up. There should have been but the de-sex centers would always say well, did sport this year and brought Chris in for three days, so-

STINE:

So, and did the teachers generally, were they excited about this, did they respond well or. . .

SHELTON:

Um, there were some pretty angry, if they were forced to do this, I would say it was pretty, it was a bad day. It was you know, a you need a martini day (laughter.) But for the most part I think they were curious about it and wanted to make change, most of the people I would say. Would see what they could do in the class room and they always then wanted to see, what can we do in sports? How can we do this better in sports? So that, I'm not sure how to answer that question. There was resistance. I remember one guy said, "I'm Italian. My grandmother told me that boys can do this and girls can do that. Now you're telling me the opposite and this is wrong! You're lying! You're-" And they would just get furious because you're challenging these values that, just as I had gotten about don't beat boys, they had gotten about girls. And it became this whole, I joined an organization that was called, um, what was it called? It was a national, and it was called National- it was a national organization for people who did sex equity in schools. So everywhere, from English, people working with text books to make them gender neutral, it was a whole gamut. And it was an organization. I was probably one of two sports people out of probably 500 but they were very supportive. Very, very supportive and they were also my employers, and I don't know where I was going with that but I had an idea that's slipped through my mind, anyway.

STINE: Well it sounds like you were one of very few people who was able to speak both languages and understand sports-

SHELTON: And gender equity. Yah, and it was a challenge, it was a challenge to do that I think. That was the point. And I know, the death and retirement. In that organization they would tell us that, and I would go to the conference every year and I would go to that because it was where you kind of got recharged. You would hear there battle stories, they would hear your war stories, and then you'd kind of figure out the next steps and the next strategies for next year, or go back and try it again, but we always had this thing, that a lot of this change wouldn't happen until we had D and R. And that meant death and retirement. And I think that's true. I found physical educators, one guy was a football coach, I did an exercise where they had to write a question and put it in and then pull a question out and read it and he didn't read. And everyone knew that in the room, that he couldn't read. He was the football coach and he was teaching physical education. He'd gotten through college and they grabbed the slip out of his hand and read it for him. So, you knew the people were covering for a lot of the older people in education in those days and I would say he was probably one of the more equitable coaches I'd met but I know he couldn't read so you found out things like that that really were shocking. Probably now you wouldn't be shocked about it but it was pretty, pretty crazy.

STINE: Sounds so. And, then you became the Executive Director for National Girls and Women's Sports. 1985 to 1989. What was it like working with such a huge organization?

SHELTON: Oh gosh. Was it '85? No it had to be before. Yah, I guess it was, anyway. When we talk again I will talk about that because the evolution to that place comes out of nothing we've discussed yet. It comes out of my Peace Corp background and working with the State Department to do this huge grant for the Olympic Committee from 1974 to 1986. So, during those years I was the director of this international project for the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport. So, I grew up in that organization with people identifying me with international issues with sport for women. And when I turned 32 they said we want you to run for president. They must have been very hard up for candidates. I didn't have a job. I was making no money as a consultant, enough to live on but no money, you know I didn't have an institution behind me so, I got one, I got elected. The year I was elected president we fired the executive director because of fraud, I mean this was another thing that, this happens in business a lot I guess, but there was no one to do the job. So here I am the president with no one to run the office so I left my consulting business and became the executive director and I was also the president which was a huge conflict of

interest on one hand, on the other hand to keep things going you did that. And it's a wonderful organization because it has a past president, a president elect and a president, so you're on a three year cycle and I had other people who were really supportive. But it was pretty nightmarish. You know, I had to relocate to Northern Virginia again and ay yi yi. But that story is a pretty remarkable story.

Its going parallel with this other life I'm leading with the gender equity and I'm up here in (laughter) at Nelson house at the University and I see that place, its on that back road that goes by Bertucci's in Amherst, and Nelson House sits up there and I'm sitting there and working with some very politically correct valley women. Example: the first day I got something from my students from George Mason, offered it to our business manager, they were chocolate chip cookies – and I debated a long time whether I was going to share these cookies – so I offered to Annette Townley and she looks at me like I have a cigarette in my mouth and she goes, "I don't do white sugar." And I was like, you don't eat chocolate chip cookies? (laughter) You've got to be kidding me! No she didn't. So all the sudden my mind was opened up to this world of feminism and feminist logic and radical lesbian feminist debate and dialogue and ay yi yi. I was the most politically incorrect person they had ever met and I had never met anybody who didn't eat sugar. (laughter) So you can imagine what that was like for me that was really, but, in the mean time these people are also very Eurocentric, so I'm getting calls from Latin America daily because I was still doing work there, and I'm running conferences in Barbados and in Guatemala and Costa Rica on the side with no money, and there like, Is this Venezuela? Who's calling now? This is, I don't even know. Can't they speak English? And I'm like you don't eat sugar but they have to speak English, you know what are we talking about here?

STINE: Wow.

SHELTON: So, it was pretty bizarre. Those were my growing up years. I would have to say that my feminist consciousness was so minimal from my Peace Corp experience, because in Peace Corp, gallee, if you were a white attractive woman in Latin America the world was your oyster. And you were revered and respected and, you know, you didn't need any equity, you didn't need anything you just had the good life so Peace Corp life was very privileged. It wasn't until I came back here I realized I had a lot to learn. So, anyway. Maybe we should stop.

STINE: Yah, lets continue next

SHELTON: Ok, we can continue Tuesday. Oh my goodness you're such a good listener.

END TAPE 1

TAPE 2

STINE: I'm back with Chris Shelton, it is November 17th.

SHELTON: 18th

STINE: 18th, I'm sorry. And, we are going to continue our interview where we left off, but first, we're going to talk a little bit about, Chris wanted to share some stories about her mother.

SHELTON: Thank you. We had talked about role models and I'd talked about teachers who'd been role models and my father who'd been a mentor and a role model and I felt it was really important to talk about my mother who not only had been a roll model but had also been an advocate. I would say that she's a swimmer. At 70 started competing and mastered swimming, she learned to ride and rode for 15 years, had a horse, someone gave her a horse and, was, has always been very fitness oriented, Jackwell Lane in the 40s and 50s and you know just followed a regimen daily of some sort of exercise, especially swimming. Swimming turned out to be the thing that almost killed her because she had a bad swimming accident that caused a brain injury.

But the reason I'm telling you this is that I feel like her dedication to sport was for health and fitness and when she moved into the role of learning how to compete it was a whole other world for her, and probably she would have been quite a good competitor but it was, you know at 70 you have to learn, the learning curb has to be pretty fast. Realized, she realized early on that she wasn't going to be able to go out but what she did was to make it possible for me to do those things, chauffeuring me around at a time where you only had one car for the family. I had two sisters and a brother who needed a lot of attention, they were all younger, and she also got herself on our city council so she could influence what was done to the tennis courts. So for instance we were probably the first courts in Baltimore County to have lights so we could play at night, so my dad and I could go over and play. My mother was probably the only advocate for that, but she won. She had the courts resurfaced on a regular basis and continued to be an advocate in any way she could, so I think that's important because I know in today's world, why girls leave sport is quite often because their friends stop but also because their parental support is either too intense, or there's none. So I had both of my parents really very supportive and enthusiastic, so I wanted to mention that.

STINE: That's wonderful. And then do you want to start back where we left off National Association of Girls and Women in Sport

TAPE CUTS OUT – 8 SECONDS

SHELTON: work if that's ok, because of the international focus Girls and Women in Sport

STINE: Ok, perfect. Well do you want to talk about your experience of joining the Smith faculty in 1988?

SHELTON: I was teaching at Ursinus College coaching the men's team, men's and women's badminton team and had just finished being the executive director and president of National Association for Girls and Women in Sport. It was not a tenure track position at Ursinus because I didn't have a PhD and it was a low paying job in the big scheme of things, so I continued to do my consulting, doing gender equity consulting. And I did a big presentation in Boston, and Carol Newhoff who, was on the faculty at Smith in the Exercise and Sports Studies department, came up and asked if I would be interested in applying for a job. And after presentations a lot of people come up and say nice things, and some people say not so nice things, but you know, you don't get any job offers. And I kind of looked at her and thought about it but I was pretty well situated in Philadelphia and not interested in another move -- if you look at the mobility I'd had, it was pretty, you know every three or four years make a move. I got back to Ursinus and I got a call from Meanie Murray who was the, a very good friend from the AIAW days and the NEGWS days and she reminded me that the position was open, so I thought, Oh I'll just throw my hat in. I was very cavalier about it. They told me to make a presentation when I came up here. I remember leaving Philadelphia about five or six in the morning, getting here and being taken by a wonderful physical plant man who picked me up at the airport and told me, "If you have a few minutes Miss Shelton I'd love to show you something." I'll never forget this, Christine, he took me down and showed me this plot of pristine grass that was near the tennis courts. He asked me if I knew what it was and I said, No, I really didn't, and he said, "This is a croquet court." And that the college received something like 65 thousand dollars to install this, what did I think of that? And I thought, Well, it's pretty impressive but who plays croquet? And he said, "That's my point exactly." But I, really kind of had this really good bond, and then I was down there looking at 12 lit tennis courts and for me that was incredible. At Ursinus we had four courts, they weren't lit.

So by 8:30 I was beginning interviews, I was being taken around. At 11 o'clock they put me in front of graduate students who started asking questions. They asked me to make a presentation, which I did. Got to be about 12:30, now I'll remind you that I'd been up since probably five in the morning, I'd had nothing to eat, no one offered me a drink of water, a cup of coffee which I thought was extraordinarily rude and I finally just said, if you have some more questions maybe we could just do this after lunch but I am really hungry. That was how cavalier I was. So Carol Newhoff took me to lunch, maybe had an

interview, another interview, and then they took me to meet the dean, who's name was Fran Volkman. And I met Fran for the first time and talked with her for an hour. She probably spent more time with me than she ever intended and I knew I wanted to work for her. So suddenly this whole [TAPE CUTS OUT – 4 SECONDS] she had such a student focus, she really understood athletics, she was such a feminist, I was, I wanted to work for her. So I left here and went with a woman from the music department named Lucy Faire who was also interviewing, went home, and Don Segal called and offered me the job. My rule of thumb was never accept it right away – I didn't. I was amazed that the salary was so much more than I had been making and I didn't even quibble about the salary, asked for probably some moving expenses and was thrilled that I was going to be here.

You have to understand that I had never been in an academic position, never wanted to be. I'd been an athletic director and I'd taught and those things were important but the academic track that you learn about when you get a PhD toward tenure was not on my radar screen. I had no idea. So when people asked me what I did for research I said well I give lectures I go out and give speeches. And what do you talk about? Well girls and women in sport, and so there was this disconnect on what it means to be a faculty member. And what I understood was my job here at Smith. So they basically had hired me, I think was because I had coaching experience, I had coached men, I knew the women in sport national and international arena and so I would bring that to this department. And so I came here with not the best of understanding of what the real job was, but Fran Volkman did understand it and in my appointment with her she made it clear that without a PhD, that a masters degree is in fact a terminal degree for coaching, and that as long as I made progress in my scholarship and service and teaching that tenure should not be denied me. But, as you probably have heard, tenure can be quite a frightening process. But I have to say that the first three years didn't scare me, I had no clue. I was doing my international work, coming and going, teaching the way I thought I should teach and I had a lot of, a lot to learn. I think my department just had, tried to scratch their head, to think, how do we kind of reel her in, so. Yah, it was a kind of bumpy three or five years while I figured it all out. But I learned, and from Larry Fink and from other people who were here, Sue Freeman, Mickey Glazier all of these people kind of respected what I did and helped me translate that into something that could move into scholarship, that was really helpful, not only to me for tenure, but would contribute, kind of in the big picture of things. So, that's how I got to Smith, and I will tell you that every day I wrote to people and said I have died and gone to heaven. I'm finally in a place that has all the resources to do what I need to do. They set high standards but they give you everything you need to do them. And I still believe that 20 years later. Yah, so it's a great place, I love it here.

STINE: And what as your experience like moving to the Northampton area and-

SHELTON:

It was fun, I was coming back to a place I'd been five years prior. I left in '83 came back in '88 so still knew people here. Lucy Thayer got the job, this woman in the music department. We were both in orientation together so I knew her. The department isn't a social department. They have their own lives and their own families. Coaches were very resistant, there had been pretty much a big divide between athletics and ESS [Exercise and Sports Studies] and it was made very clear to me that part of my job was to try to bridge that gap. So that the coaches would have more respect for what we were doing in ESS and ESS would sort of get a better understanding of what coaches do. So I felt like I did that, but I'm not sure that's part of what people do when they're trying to get tenure. That's like the last thing they do.

But no, it was, I think coming back to the area the other thing was I just went to lectures every, almost every night. I couldn't believe the quality. I went to Carol Newhoff who had been here for 40 years was trying to be very hosting and hospitable and knew about my Latin America connection and invited me to go to the Project on Women and Social Change event where they brought some women from Chiapos, Mexico to talk about co-ops. Well when I was in the Peace Corps co-ops were a big thing for volunteers. So I took myself over there and I never -- I was sitting in Seelye watching three Mayan women from Chiapos, whose second language was Spanish, start off and stay in a very broken Spanish, "Well we thank you so much for having us here. We're not really sure where we are, we know we went through New York, it's the first time we've ever been away from our village, um, we hope that our children are ok." It was really, it was the real thing. You're really watching women who have developed a micro economic business to support themselves and their families, and it was, I was transformed that day. Susie Borque was directing the project with Sue Freeman. They invited me to come to a reception for these women, I talked with them, I just wanted to go to every event I could go to. It was like my liberal arts education my first three years here. I'd gone to state schools, I didn't have a clue what it meant, of course I had a clue, what a liberal art education had to offer was not as clear as it is now, and certainly those first years of just going to everything and listening and through the Project on Women and Social Change, at that time they had what they call works in progress and I would go and listen and ask questions and just try and get involved and that was a very inviting group, they would invite me to go out to dinner with them. The government department was involved so I became friends with people in the government department, so I got -- and Larry Fink, this is the final thing I'll say about this, but Larry Fink had been the athletic director and he after my first year here he called me in and he was back teaching in the education department about to retire and he said if I was going to be successful here I needed to understand what the staff did.

So he wanted me, he was inviting me as the director of summer programs at the time, he was inviting me to do an elder hostile. So for

two summers I conducted an elder hostile at Smith. I will tell you one other story about my trip to Smith and this, Larry Fink was interviewing me to be the person in ESS and he took me aside for another hour and tried to ask me if I would be the athletic director, that I was just what he wanted. They were hiring an athletic director at the time. And I told him on no uncertain terms that I'd had that, I'd been a coach and I needed to try something else, I'd spent the first, you know, 20 years of my career basically with no life, you just worked all the time, and basically didn't perceive that this was quite as much work as it is but it seemed to have boundaries that were, I could create, rather than an athletic schedule creating. So I really turned him down and he's never let me, he's never forgiven me and he reminds me of it every time I see him. And that was very flattering, that he believed in me that much. And so he was a big advocate too -- and the elder hostile lasted two years. I called them the hostile elders. The first person who arrived, I kicked her out because she was so hostile, and I was not suited to that type of work in that time in my career but I did learn a lot about, you know housekeeping and catering and just what it meant to live in one of the houses because I was in there with all these folks. So that was great. How many people on the faculty have that chance to really integrate? And some of the people I met there came and took my tennis classes. So it became this, I just integrated myself in a way that probably other people don't do, and I should have been writing, research, and all that other stuff but I was doing an elder hostile (laughter).

STINE: Ok, but then you became more academically involved as eventually the director of Smith's Project on Women and Social Change in 1996. And I was wondering what importance you see in strengthening the bond between women's sports communities and academic communities.

SHELTON: I can't stress enough how important that is. It seems to me that in the study of women and gender there has been a gap between the understanding of the embodiment of women through sport and the embodiment of women through just plain physical activity. There's a disconnect and I think that disconnect happens around competition. And the frenzy around the capitalism that is in sport is very off putting to a feminist agenda, I think so, and yet in women's sports there are many incredible women doing research about social issues and exercise science issues of a grand order whether it has to do with the connection between contact sports and cancer or, you know there's all kinds of things going on but those communities, the interdisciplinary hasn't happened. I feel like women who do research on women in sport in any area have been pretty much in an isolated place, and when they've tried to move out into other areas like, I'll give myself as an example, I will go for example, for a women's studies event, and I might get three people who would come to a session I would do on any aspect of women's sports. It just wasn't framed in language, it's like we're

talking two different languages. The Project on Women and Social Change really gave a chance to do that.

And I remember I would bring my colleagues from Mount Holyoke and from Springfield over for these works in process and – this is another side bar, but Helen Horowitz was doing her Book on M. Carey Thomas who had been president of Bryn Mawr College, and she was at a stage where she was talking about the chapters and was beginning to deal with homophobia and the sort of issues of sexuality around M. Carey Thomas. And as she presents another work in process one of the chapters was “The Burn” and in sport we talk about the burn as being after you’ve worked so hard that your muscles practically burn, so these other sportswomen and I are sitting there thinking finally we’re going to talk about M. Carey Thomas the athlete and what she was doing physically and in fact there’d been a fire and she was burned. So, we’re sitting there going, oh no, it’s a total different burn (laughter). So, I mean there was that, that’s another example of the kind of disconnect in language, but when they began to talk about sexuality we could identify with that because so many women, sportswomen, have been, have really felt the threat of, censorship and disassociation through the labeling of lesbianism, or whatever, but anything that had to do with the masculinisation of their femininity always felt threatening, so we were really ready to talk about that and yet that wasn’t the language of discussion for M. Carey Thomas. It was more around power and, which, everything is around power isn’t it? But any way, so we came and we figured well we’ve got a lot of their language to learn. I’m not sure any of them were interested in learning out language, but why would they? It’s like two different -- we’re in two different institutions doing similar work. The institution of sport is so much more public, everyone sits in the chair and is an expert in sport and if you ask the same thing about the classics or about neuroscience, nobodies sitting in a chair watching it, you know maybe the Disney Channel or those things, but you know, it’s very different.

STINE: Ok, so how do you see the relation between feminism and women’s athletics? Do you think that one has helped to strengthen the other even though there’s still kind of this disconnect happening?

SHELTON: I think feminists, feminism in general has, they call feminism the other f-word. It’s still has become that for a generation of students who have a lot of the rights and privileges that they want and maybe don’t see the ones that they don’t have. And being an advocate for women’s rights and privileges is much -- it’s not a popular thing around some of my students right now. To advocate for both men and women seems popular, but one over the other isn’t. That’s how they perceive feminism. So part of it is a redefinition of feminism, the other part of it is that the feminist agenda in sport has been around Title IX, and that is a sport law. So whenever you put law and sport together or law and any feminism together you’re talking about resistance and you’re talking

about a process that's social change through changing though the law rather than changing though people's consciousness. And so, I'm not sure that many women today in sports do it because they have a feminist agenda even though doing sport is a feminist act, because it's still such a masculine arena. So, you have to pretty much allow that women and girls define what doing sport means for them. And if they don't define it as being feminist maybe they say because it's freeing or they, it gives me confidence. I don't care what label they put on it as long as they parallel what the feminist agenda has been for them. And it is, it's hard when I talk about feminist theory in my women in sport class. People are like, why are we doing this? Why don't we do social theory? [TAPE CUTS OUT – 6 SECONDS] Because there wasn't the civil rights movement to remind people of what feminists, what feminism tries to accomplish and assess whether it's there or not. It's not there. There's no way that there is equality right now through sport, but maybe that's not what we want. Maybe we just want equity – give us the money and we'll make our own world here of sport. So, maybe that's enough about that topic for now.

STINE: Ok, yah. That's great. Do you want to move on to your international work a little bit then?

SHELTON: Sure.

STINE: Ok, so you worked, and continue to work with both the International Working Group on Women and Sport and Women's Sport International. Do you want to talk about those experiences a little bit?

SHELTON: Yah, if I can even go before that, I directed the National, well the Latin America project for the National Association of Girls and Women in Sport for a long time, probably 12 years. We had, I believe had six international conferences or seminars or workshops. We had begun to make inroads into other international organizations and encouraged them to start sections on women in sport. In the organizations, in particular the International Council of Health Physical Education Recreation Sport and Dance – ICH-PER-S-D. We believed that by getting a section on women and sport we would have a right to vote, and so after many years of doing workshops for that organization, getting grants and running the money through that organization we realized we were never going, we could sit at the table, but we had no right, voting rights. And it was in, I remember, it was probably the year before I came here in 1987 that I just said, you know what, I don't know what to do anymore. I can't fight these battles I don't want to do, and get all these women in developing countries organized and enthusiastic about an organization that isn't going to give them the right to vote. So, from '86, '87, after the last conference in '86 I just bowed out, and I didn't really do much international work, I maybe went here and there but it was not purposeful the way it had been. The records of the Latin

America Project are in the archives and I think that I have done a history of that, that would be easy to include with this, and, but you can just tell from, it was a wonderful time and a very disappointing time. The reality of -- I can imagine what Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony must have felt like when they worked so hard and they were joined with these men's groups and then all of the sudden we can't vote on things? Give me a break. That's ridiculous. So, those organizations continued. The women in sport organizations within continue. I don't know whether they have the right to vote or not. I think it's probably all been restructured.

But, I decided to go to a conference in England, called, it was in Brighton, England and it was a, they were touting it as the first international women in sport conference. But I think that other organizations had had many one. The difference with this, was as with the rest of the world, the rest of the world governs sport through ministries of sport, sport and youth, sport in art or in culture -- they have different titles but because there's government control of sport, there's also policy. So, this conference was an invitation only for policy makers and government officials. Now, I don't fit that bill nor do many women, if any in the United States, or men, because there just isn't that connection to government -- there's some, I won't go into that now but -- the Women's Sports Foundation, I served on their international commission for, oh gosh, 25 years. And so as a representative body of sport in the United States we were invited to go to Brighton, England. Some of the people on the committee who are -- Carol Oglesby for instance who should have been speaking on that was not invited individually, decided not to go. For some reason I just decided I was going to go to this event and off to Brighton, England. I'd never been to England before and it really transformed my life, because suddenly the same passion I had for the region of the world I'd worked in, Latin America, was there for all regions. We came out of that conference with a Brighton Declaration. As happens to me quite often, I was the bridge between the English speaking participants and the Latin Americans, and by day two I'd found the Latin Americans we had a blast. There were 13. We partied, we had such a good time. But, again, the English speaking world sort of looked at me as the bridge for that group who did not speak English, well they did but not that well, and I was invited to come to the first International Working Group that was in Canada.

I went to that meeting. I had no idea what I was going to do, why I was invited and Anita White who was going, sort of the mother of this Brighton Declaration in International Working Group, took me aside after 24 hours and said, "Chris, thanks for coming, but we're going to need to uninvite you (laughter) because we've decided that we need to represent America and the government official, Sue Neal, who was in the Ministry of Sport, probably should be the representative of this body because you have no government connections." All I had was Smith College and I. And with tears in my eyes I said, "I certainly

understand that, just anything I can do to bridge the gap with Latin America let me know.” Well, as time went on, Sue Neal moved in to be the Director of the International Working Group and they came back to me and reinvited me to join (laughter). But if you think about it, here’s me representing Hudson Bay to Tiena de Fuego, that is ridiculous for one person but, you know it is what it is. There’s one person for the continent of Africa, there’s one person for Oceania – their what? 5000 islands – and one person for Asia, so we just did what we could do and I have been North American rep for three quadrennians now, that’s 12 years, or off and on for 12 years and finally have gotten them to name a representative for North America who is Latina. And that’s Clemencia Niamia who’s my dear friend, and we started the Columbia Women in Sport Organization together and I am a, what do they call it? A co-opted member for the rest of this quadrant and then Clemencia will take over. So, I’ve tried to make it clear to that group that there’s no way that a white American woman who’s not in government should ever be doing this – I mean I’m sure I’ve done just a fine job, that’s not to say I haven’t, I’ve set up some networks that are going to work – but we need to have someone from Latin America who’s voice they will understand and hear, and hopefully the time is right for that now. We have now -- the francophone countries our representative, I think she’s from Horatia, or Mozambique, one of those countries, you know, representing French speaking Africa so that they’re also represented. So, the International Working Group on Women in Sport is becoming more refined and sophisticated and the conference in Sydney’s going to be absolutely unbelievable. But we’re well on our way to planning that.

And I’ve just sort of moved into the Women’s Sport International because I want to do some more research projects like I did with the, I did an International Olympic Committee project with University of Loughborough. And I’d love to do more things like that. So in order to do that you need your research network. And Women’s Sport International has that and hopefully as soon as things calm down I’ll be off and running with projects for that organization.

STINE: It looks like an incredible organization, I spent some time on their website

SHELTON: Yah, good for you Christine, I’m so thrilled. I’ve got to get you involved in all this

STINE: (Laughter) Really! So do you think that all of you equity training has continued to play a role in this international work?

SHELTON: I think that that’s such an astute question. Yes! Learning how to facilitate groups and bring understanding about difficult issues to think about ways to move people through developmental stages of critical thinking about issues. That really has been very helpful. I wish that I

had done more on my own on cross cultural training and understanding cross cultural differences and how to bridge those gaps. I really think that that's an enormously important -- the work that I did with Peace Corp I still use. A lot of lot of what I learned there. So, yah it helps a lot. It helps my teaching. I think that learning needs to be focused, student focused. I'm sort of the facilitator for learning but not the dispenser of knowledge. I've never taught that way, like that. I try to move into a lecture mode and it doesn't work for me. It's always, it's more of an activity that builds on our own learning. You know we see something, we experience it, and then we talk about what we've learned from it. So, yah, that models really been -- I don't know if it's still going to work ten years from now -- but for right now it works for me.

STINE: And, the work that you did in the Peace Corp earlier, are you able to really kind continue that on a different level through this?

SHELTON: I think so. Yes, I, the people, I still work with Belkise Beruke it's been since the 70s that we've worked together and I'm the North American rep for this organization that's called Congesso Par Americano a la Cation Physica, it the physical education association for Spanish speaking Latin America and Belkise is very involved in that. I've known her for so many years, um the work I did in the Peace Corp, I don't know what happened to that, where the physical educators are. I've been back a couple of times but, the country's changed a lot and the developing world as I knew it in Latin America has really changed, it's been changed within the United Nation's definition, it moved up a category, it's not as developing as many African nations.

But I guess the Peace Corp training was what made all the difference in my life because being the other and being quiet and understanding what the world in Latin America does and is, was an important lesson. I mean it's very easy to be the dominate driver when you walk into a group and you're five inches taller than everyone else and your white and light skinned and blue eyed, and you stick out. To try and become almost invisible, to let the work be done by those women is something I learned very early on in the Peace Corp. You have to let that happen. It's easy for you to take center stage because you're so different. In a positive way in most places, I don't know where I'm going with this, but yes. Peace Corp helped a lot and I still try to stay active with the Returned Peace Corp Volunteer Organization, it's a very great lobby group for more opportunity for Peace Corp. I mean Peace Corp used to be just a two year opportunity, some people can't afford to do that, but you can afford four months of you can afford a year to get outside of yourself and your country and look and see what another country's connection is to that country, how they're being harmed or helped by what you think is only helping from U.S. There's so much learning to be had. That's why I encourage everybody to do a junior year away from here. Did you do a junior year? No, that's ok, you'll have chance.

STINE: So how has all of your international work come back and affected everything you've done at Smith. I'm sure that-

SHELTON: That is a very good question. I, I feel like I send out these little flares into the universe about, there are these possibilities, and I haven't quite figured out how to be better at putting the pathway forward. So, how do my graduate students or even my colleagues get involved? I did an international conference here. I got Barbara Brehm Curtis, I got Don Segal, gave presentations, they were big hits. Then I always feel like the ball is in their court, and yet that's probably not true. It probably needs another second, third, fourth try. I encouraged Jim Johnson to do a piece in Greece, it transformed him. He still talks about it and does work with it. So, I know that the power of an international experience will only serve us in a positive way, even if you have a negative experience, we're going to be thinking differently about how we approach our subject area and our students.

And right now I'm about to have a meeting tomorrow with students to talk about going to South Africa for an event the international, the episcopate that I was the president of, IPESGAW, are vice president is having there every four year conference in Steinbau in South Africa so I'd like for interested students to go. And they of course want to make a presentation, and I'm saying why don't you just go and see what's possible, and so I'm not really so clear about that. If I look outside of Smith, I have gotten students who aren't my students who I know through NAGWS and NIG. I've helped them go to events and get involved and start doing research but it's hard to get it to Smith. I think it's because we don't have an undergraduate in exercise and sports studies. I think in a way that's the problem. It's that first question you asked, how do I get students from other subject areas to translate what they're doing into the sport realm and if they're not doing it in their major and they're not doing it because they don't have minor than how do you do it? But maybe this year will be the first year. My dream, my dream was to take a group to see the Physical Education University, in Havana, Cuba, because its, I think they are doing some of the most marvelous work in training coaches in the world. I mean, hands down. I've met their coaches all around the world. They are fabulous they're so well trained they have a PhD, and I thought it would be great for our program to go there. I haven't quite figured that out yet so, whenever you work here in your office and you do the day to day work in your office, to do the international work I have to just set aside a whole day because it's like beginning to talk in the other language, write in Spanish. Compartmentalizing that work is not easy, and it can be a full time job. So what would you like to do Christine, to get involved in international women and sport efforts?

STINE: I don't know, I mean this is just my beginning of learning about it. I mean I'm part of SAAC here on campus,

SHELTON: Are you?

STINE: The Student Athlete Advisory Committee and I've been looking at athletics within Smith but the larger-

SHELTON: Picture, yah, but you know, the global village is right outside our door, if you look at what's at Mount Holyoke, in Holyoke and in Springfield, the great communities that are everywhere, and, so, but I think it would be a good project for SAAC, to think about would it be a trip we might want to do that would connect to another group of likeminded students whether it was in a developing or developed country. And you can just think of a whole bunch of places in England and Spain, I mean it just lets you. Where it all breaks down is, think about this, if you go to a university town in Germany, let's say, or even in Spain, and there are three universities, there's probably only one set of athletic facilities for three universities and we're in a place where there's five universities and all five have, well at least four of the five have pretty amazing facilities for communities that are 35 thousand, Northampton, Amherst, I mean that's, that's privilege beyond most people's wildest dreams. So trying to join with other students is complicated because sport isn't the same for them, sport is a vocation, it's not, I mean it's an avocation its part of life but not a daily part of their life, but that's another whole story.

STINE: Are there any other things that you think would be important to include that we kind of skipped over?

SHELTON: I can't really think of anything. I think the international, I hope that you'll pull the piece out, I'll send you the piece that I did on the Latin America Project and what that was like because, my words can't really, we would have to go through that history and just ask questions from that. And, you know where this all is going is, I'm looking back to find people like yourself who would be interested in bridging what we know in this country and what the rest of the world knows and kind of find common ground for dialogue.

I mean, it doesn't even have to be – now one of the biggest issues internationally is sexual harassment because most coaches, especially in Africa, almost, I don't even want to put a percentage to it but whether its Egypt, or Algeria, or Morocco, or Namibia, coaches are men. And the sexual harassment in those countries that push women either out of sport because they get pregnant by their coach, or because the harassment becomes rape, is a terrible thing or women to want to do sport, or women to want to do sport and have to go connected to a power issue of sex. And in this country I think that issue is more subtle but I think it goes on here too, so those issues are dialogues across countries that would be really interesting I think, for our students.

I think homophobias another one. As we begin to develop a language in developing countries and a way of presenting homophobia in sport and with cultural constructs that can hear it and are safe and not going to get people killed. Like in China, when I was in China, you just don't step outside and say you're a Chinese gay man or lesbian and know that you're not going to have some sort of retaliation. I know that when I was at the, I went to the first world conference on women – what an eye opener for me. Not only about homophobia but all people – Nepalese women who are outside of Nepal now and how risky it was for them to come to China. You just, sort of understanding it all is really challenging and I think Smith women would really thrive on that so, maybe I can talk you into coming with the South Africa conference

STINE: That would be amazing

SHELTON: And just see. Why not? Why not go? The invitation is there. The invitation is there. Dorothy Ainsworth started the organization, I did the fiftieth anniversary conference at Smith, with many helping hands, Susie Bourque and whole bunch of other people helped, but this is the 60th anniversary and we should have some Smith representation there, Christine, so get SAAC to send you I think it would be really great.

STINE: I know! (laughter)

SHELTON: Why not? Seriously. I'm serious, if you're free in July lets just do it. It wouldn't cost that much, they'd put you up, students always get housed and you just go and have a good time so

STINE: Sounds incredible

SHELTON: But I will, this is the other side of the coin, I have a lot of enthusiasm and wonderful stories but I have to be cautious because any travel abroad now, after 9/11, is such a different world. I mean, if you think about me in the Peace Corp, hitchhiking all around Latina America without any fear, any fear. And today you would never do that, you would never do that, I mean it's just another world of caution and, um, there are countries where I go where I tell them I'm Canadian rather than American because there's you know, and Morocco was really scary. There's a lot of anti American sentiment recently when I was there. And I didn't really say I was Canadian but if someone asked if I was American I probably didn't answer it as directly as I normally would. Proud American. What do you think about Americans would be the first question (laughter). But there are times when the travel makes you feel like that so, I can't think of anything else right now. It's a life time in two hours.

STINE: I know. Its so much.

SHELTON: That's ok. It's a beginning and I so appreciate you doing this. It will really help my papers come together if anyone chooses to look at them and having my words probably is an important thing too. What my voice sounds like

STINE: Yah, definitely.

SHELTON: And can't get my expressions but they were pretty animated. My hands have been going a mile a minute (laughter)

STINE: And your stories are just incredible

SHELTON: Oh they are? (Laughter)

STINE: This has been wonderful, thank you so much.

SHELTON: Thank you. Ok, well let me know if there's any words in the transcript you need.

STINE: Definitely

SHELTON: I'll look it through for you.

STINE: Alright.

SHELTON: Ok, Thank you

STINE: Thank you.

SHELTON: Going on to Celinda Lake

STINE: Ok

SHELTON: Thank you Christine, this was wonderful, this was really great, thank you so much.

STINE: I enjoyed this so much.

SHELTON: Where are you headed?

STINE: Well, I have to get a little reading done before my classes.

END TAPE 2

END OF INTERVIEW

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