

## Looking Back at the Women's Center

By Dr. Jane Swan

During the middle seventies, a number of women professors at WCU were besieged with pleas for help from a new type of woman student. The changing climate of economic, social and political pressures were forcing the older or non-traditional student back into college where, to their consternation, they found no support services provided by an institution geared to the normal teenage student usually associated with college years. Some kind of organization was needed to answer specifically their needs. Several of us organized the Women's Center on our own time with the blessing of the college, but almost no support. At the request of my women colleagues, as well as the college's willingness to give me fifty percent released time from my teaching schedule, I decided to tackle the job. I set two goals -- first, decent quarters easily accessible to women students, and second, to accommodate the over-riding demand for a free drop-off babysitting service to be provided for the returning woman student with preschool children. The Spring and Summer of 1978 were spent overcoming endless bureaucratic delays -- vested interest groups with their own needs, college priorities, etc. However, by August we had acquired quarters in the Learning Research Center, room 139.

The new center built its work on a few earlier meetings held in half a room on the second floor of Smith House where there had already been, not only planning sessions, but films, and talks by such specialists as Dr. Gutwirth on sexual harassment, Dr. Arlene Rengert on contraceptives and abortion and a Women's Career Exploration Day, examining such non-traditional women's areas as law, business, politics, journalism, and science. The new center enlarged these offerings with support groups, career examination groups led by Liz Giangiulio, films both fun and frightening, and a newsletter telling of the Center's activities and how it could be used by women.

But the most successful accomplishment in the early days was starting a drop-off center for small children. At first run by sorority girls, then staffed by work-study students, and against horrendous bureaucratic odds, I was able to have the Center officially licensed.

More than one day was spent typing out begging letters to friends and foes pleading for toys, supplies, even cookies and milk, while a tearful child on my lap pleaded for his mommy. Many a time I wished that my mommy were there to help me! Funding was always difficult, but a request to the I.G.A. resulted in our being given a year-to-year budget, which at times was the only support we had.

In the Spring of 1981, I returned to the History Department fulltime and turned over the directorship of the Women's Center to Dr. Joan Hasselquist. At that time, the WC was moved to its present location on the second floor of Lawrence Hall. In 1983, Ms. Mary McCullough, a trained social worker and counselor, became the director. My only hope now is that she will never leave.

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Mmm-Mmm  
GOOD!

Students, Parents, and Staff at the Doc are currently conducting a label-collection drive that promises to deliver valuable educational equipment. As part of a program called LABELS FOR EDUCATION, Campbell Soup Company is offering FREE equipment to Day Care Centers in exchange for labels from their products.

According to Gail Shankweiler, schools may redeem the labels for FREE audio-visual equipment, athletic equipment, storybooks, and teaching aids.

"We hope to collect over 20,000 labels before the drive ends on February 1, 1985. That's how many we will need for a listening center with 8 headphones, a Touch and Tell Computer by Texas Instruments and a Richard Scarry Library. It will just take two labels from everyone on campus to achieve our goal."

Labels from Campbell's Condensed Soups, Campbell's Chunky Soups, Campbell's "Soup for One," Campbell's Low Sodium Soups, Campbell's Bean products, Campbell's Tomato Juice, "V-8" Cocktail Vegetable Juice, "V-8" Low Sodium Cocktail Vegetable Juice, Franco-American products, Swanson Canned and Frozen Food products, and Recipe Dog Food products are all redeemable.

Labels can be dropped off at the DOC or Women's Center. We also have collection boxes in the dorm lobbies.

