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Interview with Martha "Marty" Grigsby

Martha Grigsby

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**LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**Interview #293
GRIGSBY, Martha “Marty”**

GRIGSBY, Martha “Marty”

Undergraduate student in the Spanish department, English minor

At Winthrop: 1959-1963
Interviewed: December 10, 2012
Interviewer: Robert Ryals
Index by: Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard
Length: 1 hour, 51 minutes

Abstract: In her December 10, 2012 interview with Robert Ryals, Martha Grigsby detailed her thoughts and memories of her time at Winthrop University. Grigsby shares the story of how she was able to attend Winthrop and the members of her community who assisted her in this process. Included are details of working in the dining hall on a scholarship, how relationships were formed amongst students, and how the students navigated Winthrop’s strict rules. Grigsby concludes her interview by stating how Winthrop helped her career as an educator and how she has stayed involved as an alumna. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: Joynes Hall, student life, dormitories, rules and regulations, scholarships, house counselors, alumna, fire escapes, student teaching, teaching, 1960s, work schedule, tuition, reunions, National Defense Student Loans, Dining Room Scholarship

Interview Session (December 12, 2012): Digital File

Time Keywords

00:00:00 *Start of Interview*/Interviewer greeting MG/ Interviewer’s Introductions

00:05:02 *Question:* Permission to record this interview? *Answer:* Yes.

00:05:53 *Question:* Why did you decide to attend Winthrop? *Answer:* MG grew up in Piedmont. Raised by a single parent. Mother wanted MG to go to nursing school. MG did not want to go, but there was no money to go to college. A history teacher encouraged MG to go to Winthrop. The history teacher helped MG apply to Winthrop. Another teacher wanted MG to go to Furman University in Greenville. MG took South Carolina entrance examination at Clemson University. MG accepted to go to Winthrop, but MG did not have the money. MG’s congregation gave MG tuition

- for the first semester. Approximately \$600 for the first semester. The history teacher arranged for MG to get work study. There were no student loans at the time.
- 00:09:45 *Question:* What part of South Carolina were you from? *Answer:* Piedmont.
- 00:10:10 *Question:* Most people in Piedmont worked in the mills? *Answer:* Yes. The village was built by the people who built the mill.
- 00:11:05 *Question:* Did any of your parents work in the mill? *Answer:* MG’s mother did until she retired.
- 00:11:40 *Question:* So it was the efforts of your high school teachers that got you to Winthrop? *Answer:* Yes. Parnice Allen (history teacher). MG still in contact with Mrs. Allen.
- 00:12:25 *Question:* Did Mrs. Allen go to Winthrop? *Answer:* No. Limestone.
- 00:13:00 *Question:* And your congregation helped you in your first semester? *Answer:* Yes. MG talks about her involvement in the church. MG also talks about the faith her teachers and congregation had in her. MG mentions this was not a unique story in the South. Many students had financial problems at the time.
- 00:14:50 **[no question]** MG talks about going to Winthrop. MG assigned to McLaurin, now art department. MG says it was meant for her to go to Winthrop. The only full tuition scholarship offered by Winthrop was the “Dining Room Scholarship”. The girl across the hall from MG got the “Dining Room Scholarship” in Joynes Hall faculty dining room. This girl couldn’t handle the commitment to the scholarship and studying. MG and this girl discussed swapping scholarships. MG talked to Mrs. Roddey, the director of Joynes Hall, about getting this scholarship. Mrs. Roddey went to Registrar’s office to make the switch. That was how MG was able to stay at Winthrop.
- 00:18:00 *Question:* Did you have this scholarship all four years? *Answer:* No. Seniors couldn’t have the scholarship, because they were busy student teaching. MG talks more about the details of the scholarship. MG worked about 4.5 hours a day. MG had Sundays off. Seniors worked in Mrs. Roddey’s office to get 20 hours/week. The National Defense Student Loans (NDSL) started during MG’s Senior Year. MG explains NDSL. After Sputnik, the federal government developed loans for students in critical areas (languages, math, and sciences). MG was a Spanish Major and qualified for the NDSL. Mrs. Roddey talked to the Bursar’s office, then MG went to the Bursar’s office to apply for the NDSL scholarship.
- 00:21:15 **[no question]** MG talks about having Roddey as a mentor. Roddey was a “shepherd” to the Joynes Hall girls. Roddey got “her girls” summer jobs, etc.

- 0):21:55 *Question:* Were you assigned to a roommate? *Answer:* Yes, but her roommate left after the first semester. Her roommate got married. MG had to get another roommate to save on rent. Her second roommate also got married. MG’s last roommate was Barbara Thompson.
- 00:23:20 *Question:* What was it like living with Barbara? *Answer:* Closets were a yard wide, because when the dorms were built, students had uniforms. MG mentions studying in the closet to avoid the “lights out rule”. Students lived there. Students couldn’t have cars until they were upperclassman. MG says that’s why students are so close with each other. It was like a sisterhood. MG talks about the 45th reunion – there was a ceremony for students who passed away. MG continues discussing the bonds she and her fellow classmates had.
- 00:26:10 **[no question]** MG talks about creating a committee and establishing a scholarship for her class. MG and her committee has raised over \$50k. MG tells a story about her roommate Barbara. MG used to get dressed in the dark to not disturb her roommate – MG once wore Barbara’s blouse.
- 00:28:25 *Question:* What other activities did you do to bond with other students? *Answer:* Face-to-face. There were Hall meetings dorm meetings. Students were all in classes all day long. The students studied together. Students couldn’t go home on the weekends, because they didn’t have cars.
- 00:30:30 *Question:* Did you play any games? *Answer:* Other students did, but MG didn’t have time with her schedule. There were sing-alongs. Students listened to records together. MG compares socializing in the 1960s vs today. MG was in McLaurin for two years. MG talks about relationships formed in dorms.
- 00:33:20 **[no question]** MG talks about reuniting with Winthrop classmates once a year. MG takes trips across the country with classmates.
- 00:34:05 *Question:* Did you go on any trips while you were enrolled in Winthrop? *Answer:* A lot of people did, but MG worked on weekends, so MG couldn’t get away from campus very often. Students would go home with each other. People didn’t travel that often like they do today.
- 00:35:30 *Question:* Do you remember the first time you went home? *Answer:* Students couldn’t go home for the first 6-8 weeks. Went home for Thanksgiving. MG remembers not having much time to pack. MG worked and had exams. MG couldn’t pack until late the night before. MG put bath powder in her suitcase and all of her clothes were covered. MG says it was nice to be back home. There was a warm welcoming from MG’s community. MG wanted to get a college degree, but MG was looking forward

- to going back.
- 00:37:45 *Question:* Was there a house mother that stood out in your mind? *Answer:* Yes. MG's freshman house mother, Ms. Allen, was "something." MG had room inspections every week. Ms. Allen would leave snide notes. MG mentions that rooms had to be clean. MG talks about curfew. Students would gather in the Parlor to get in the dorms on time. A boy and student were holding hands in the Parlor and Ms. Allen came in and said to the boy, "what are you saving for marriage?" The boy said, "The other hand."
- 00:41:25 **[no question]** MG talks about check-in and check-out. House counselors would check sign-in cards and circle any mistakes. If you had so many circles, then students would get restrictions. Students had to be careful. There was a class for freshman about memorizing a rule book. Students were tested on the rule book. This class lasted approximately a week. The rules were strict. Students had to know where and when they could go. Students spent a lot of their time worrying about rules. There was a phone in every hall. Students buzzed to answer the phone or meet a visitor. Students would all listen in on each other's phone calls. There was no privacy, but MG says it was "ok". When men visited, students would say, "Man on the hall."
- 00:45:20 *Question:* Any strict rules on smoking or alcohol? *Answer:* You couldn't have alcohol. Students could smoke in their rooms.
- 00:46:10 *Question:* Why were there certain places students couldn't go to in Rock Hill? *Answer:* People were concerned about what may happen to students. Students couldn't go anywhere where alcohol was served. Students were not allowed to go to the river. MG didn't go to the river.
- 00:47:10 *Question:* Do you remember the farm? *Answer:* It wasn't a working farm. MG went to the shack. Students could walk out there. It was open land. P.E. students went out there to do archery.
- 00:47:55 *Question:* Did you play sports? *Answer:* There were intermural sports. Students could get on the tennis team. There were teams against other Winthrop teams.
- 00:48:25 *Question:* Other field sports? *Answer:* Field hockey, bowling, tennis, swimming.
- 00:48:40 **[no question]** MG was one of the few students who graduated from Winthrop that could not swim. When MG was a freshman, she had an ear infection. The infirmary put in MG's record that she did not have to take swimming, because of her ear infection. They never took this off her record. MG didn't learn to swim until she was in her 30s.

- 00:50:00 **[no question]** When MG was sophomore advisor, there was a freshman who was so in love. At the end of the Christmas holidays, this freshman told MG that she got married. MG told the freshman she had to tell the house counselor. The house counselor often had her “do not disturb” sign on her door. MG took the freshman to see the Dean of Women. MG told the Dean that the student married. The Dean talked to the freshman – MG never saw the freshman again. Students could not be married and live on campus. By the time MG was a senior, students could be married and attend Winthrop (couldn’t live on campus). Students who married became town women.
- 00:55:27 *Question:* What about the Blue Line? *Answer:* MG had the Blue Line, but she does not remember doing the Blue Line every Sunday.
- 00:56:32 *Question:* What about gym uniforms? *Answer:* Students had white, pleated shorts and white blouses (key-hole neck). MG says, “It looked awful on everybody.”
- 00:57:20 *Question:* Did you hear any interesting stories in the faculty hall? *Answer:* Mrs. Roddey always gathered students and essentially told them, “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas.” Students were not allowed to repeat stories they heard. Students feared losing their scholarships.
- 00:58:35 *Question:* Any stories you would like to divulge? *Answer:* MG remembers when the first men moved into the dorm. Dr. Daniel was the first man that moved into the third floor of the dorm for faculty. Female faculty were not happy when male faculty moved in. MG mentions a young woman – French teacher – from New Orleans. Female faculty weren’t very happy with this French teacher. This teacher went out with Dr. Daniel a few times. MG mentions the French teacher was teasing Dr. Daniel at the dining hall and flung spinach on the wall. MG mentions that the students never knew how the faculty saw the students. One day, one of the P.E. teachers wanted something in the kitchen and blew her whistle and pointed at one of the students. Mrs. Roddey “let her have it.” The P.E. teacher then apologized to the students. That was the only negative experience MG remembers from working in Joynes.
- 01:04:00 *Question:* What about your personal experiences in the dining hall? *Answer:* There was wonderful food. MG ate breakfast before she served and ate lunch and dinner after she served. MG still has recipes. Governor Hollings came to the dining hall. MG met politicians in the dining hall.
- 01:05:55 **[no question]** MG talks about Mrs. Roddey. Mentions being invited over to Mrs. Roddey’s house. MG got in touch with Joynes girls. MG then assisted in developing a scholarship in Mrs. Roddey’s honor. MG and fellow Joynes girls raised over \$100k. There was a lunch and ceremony in Mrs. Roddey’s honor. Because MG and fellow Joynes girls raised so much money, they were able to name the lobby in Joynes Hall.

- There is a plaque in the lobby that tells the story. The Joynes girls then put together a cookbook. The Joynes girls raised over \$30k. Winthrop gives a cookbook to anyone who has the scholarship or is a guest. MG talks about the community’s involvement in creating these scholarships. MG talks about how she and her classmates bonded.
- 01:11:15 *Question:* How long ago did you graduate? *Answer:* 1963. There is already a committee to start planning for her 50th reunion. MG mentions that Winthrop was important for a lot of students. There were not a lot of rich girls at Winthrop. The girls were all a lot alike. At MG’s 35th reunion, her class leader mentioned that she tried to get rooms on the first floor (there were bushes surrounding the first floor), because in the winter she could hide beer in the bushes. MG tried to get on the first floor so she wouldn’t have to go down the fire escapes.
- 01:14:39 *Question:* Do you remember fire drills? *Answer:* Yes. MG was one of the first people to live in Lee Wicker. MG mentions that people had nightmares about the fire escapes.
- 01:17:25 **[no question]** MG mentions that people would sneak out through their windows – primarily on the first floor.
- 01:18:45 *Question:* Would you and other classmates be interested in viewing 1961 meeting? *Answer:* Yes. Content of this meeting further discussed.
- 01:22:12 **[no question]** MG talks about the Clemson chapter of Winthrop is one of the most active chapters. The Clemson Chapter has been around for approximately 80 years. Winthrop is ambivalent toward alumni chapters. Clemson Chapter has a filing cabinet full of materials. MG talks about donating materials to the Louise Pettus Archives. This Clemson Chapter established a scholarship for Clemson high school students.
- 01:27:28 **[no question]** Talking about interviewing alumni who live at the Still Hopes Retirement Home. Discussion about oral history outreach.
- 01:31:05 **[no question]** MG says her degree from Winthrop helped her get a job. When MG taught for ten years, her jobs came about, because she was a Winthrop graduate. MG thought about working in Washington DC, and they were all interested, because she was a Winthrop graduate. MG worked at Durham. When she interviewed at Durham, she got a job offer right away. Winthrop was a teacher’s college. MG reflects on her education. MG talks about Winthrop’s reputation. Interviewer talks about his grandmother (alumni of Winthrop).
- 01:35:50 **[no question]** MG says Winthrop changed her life.
- 01:36:13 *Question:* Where did you first teach? *Answer:* Wade Hampton High School in

Greenville. MG worked there for two year, married, then worked in Atlanta. That was her first experience with inner-city children. Then MG taught in Durham. MG taught at Lauren. MG went for a Master’s degree. When Winthrop was an all-girl school, MG says it gave women a chance to hone leadership skills. MG speculates that girls would not have stepped up to lead in student groups, etc. Women were allowed to engage in activities that were normally reserved for men.

01:40:35 **[no question]** Interviewer talks about the film from the 1961 reunion. MG and interviewer talk about plans for future reunions.

01:45:30 **[no question]** MG talks about being on the cusp of the uprising in the late 1960s. MG says that she and her classmates were concerned about following the rules. MG says that the Dean of Women would ship students home if there was a gross misbehavior.

01:46:30 **[no question]** MG and interviewer continue talking about what to do for reunions.

01:50:52 *End of interview*