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an interview with Rhoda Kadalie

Women's Studies at UWC, commemorating her role, The Gender Equity Unit, on campus are results of securing women's rights the GEU conducted the and many policies for Gender Equity Unit, the establishment of Co-ordinator of the the leadership and Rhoda Kadalie. In vision of the first

personal circumstances and experiences that first led you to feminism?



development of all women at the university. Racial and class divisions among women came later. tackle deeply-rooted obstacles to the full their teaching responsibilities ar child-care, the struggle for liberation too When women academics nearly gave birth in their offices due to the absence of maternity leave, and struggled with most distressing because of the contradictions I experienced there. W and the GEU were formal attempts problems. Long before the Gender Equi Unit and the Women's Commission women academics, administrative an iolence against women were particula against women was considered norma apartheid institution. Yet discriminatior and the legacy of the university as were all consciously opposing aparthe exism, and this was something of culture shock to me. Sexism at UWC w I am one of 9 children; seven brothers and a sister. In my family 1 grew up with a feeling of being more than qual. School and university were the first cretarial staff joined forces to addre . The Women's Commission



before you began teaching the What are your perceptions of GEU: You were a student at UWC changes in women's status

student groups and peers - perhaps because there were so few women at the time. In every class I attended, I was part of a small group of women students. It was in the bigger classes like sociology, the languages, and religious studies that sexism was rife among students and lecturers. l enjoyed my student years at UWC and developed my voice during student struggles. There was a real equality among my

featured in decision-making committees, or as heads of department, or in professorial positions. Staff benefits for women were non-existent. politically reactionary and extremanti-women. The total subordination ised the Research Committees and funding for research. Women academics barely Human Resources Committee was called the Manpower Committee; the men monopo men was evident at different levels. Th by the Broederbond, Political consciousness on the campu ically in response to a univer



thoroughly politicised. The univers grew rapidly, and became more cult By the time Professor Gerwel b Rector, the university had an alarming pace, and this created all ally diverse. Student residents gr

remained unchallenged, and women started demanding more rights and representation on committees. In 1987, when I returned from the Institute for Social Studies in the Hague with a transformation, the position of women did not change concomitantly Conditions of employment for women Women's Studies Degree, I set up Women's Commission to look at the While the university increasingly adopted the rhetoric of democracy and

the discriminatory practices and map proposals to address them. At the tin of women. We fought and made housing subsidy, childcare for womer united across race, class, and occupa We drew up a document listing

While they spoke of political transformation, we made it difficult for them to become more supportive and gender-sensitive in their dealings with women and won one victory after another.

Management was compelled to



position of Director at Gender Equity Unit? What me challenges did you face promoting gender justice at time - both on campus and ne GEU: When did you take up main

Strictly speaking, could be seen to

something like celebration o

s at UWC.



versy, many wanted Anne-Marie Wol recently returned from exile, to get the j From the eighties, the University w

openly aligned with the Mass Democratic Movement, and our students the liberation movement considered themselves the vanguard o

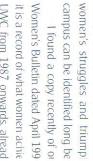
and family life. Women's struggle were generally labelled bourgeoi rights - related to sexuality, bodily integrity and choices about motherhood to the liberation of women. It openly denied women's demands for basic within the MDM at a national lev But this vanguardism didn't exter movement This deep hos

student leaders, and extensive conscientising programmes in the iplinary committees, awareness work shops, education and training o student leaders, and extensive On campus, women tackled this head on. And it took countless public debates, reforms of the student disc residences to transform the climate on

the UDF and other organisations. The provided the strength and courage continue that struggle on campus. It we in UWCO, the ANC Women's Leagu struggles for democracy in South Africa All of this activity was done within context of women

women like Nosipho Kwenatie, Br Nel, Caroline Ntoane, Yvonne Mo Karin Chubb, Miki Flockemann, N Badsha, Denise Jones Hloni, Viv Bozalek and myself who worked and day to create a supportive c for women on campus. And I pay i to them today

GEU: What for you were the greatest triumphs - in terr particular events or ge particular processes?



is no mean feat - given that universities are going through who were involved in only now. It is a record of what women achie UWC from 1987 onwards, alread I found a copy recently of or Women's Bulletin dated April 199

concerning the conditions of serv could boast a Women's Comm By the late eighties, the Uni

maternity benefits for women, any in the country – 5 months full chief invigilation duties for wome housing subsidies for married w The first achie

concerning women in all sphe university life. Ad hominem pron Studies Group, set up to address sion was a very vibrant Wo an educare centre for children of Alongside the Women's Cc posts went to women. We also i and in one instance all the ad ho soon became ad feminam prom could track how long it took for pasis of their qualification eave and funding for wome

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