

**Linda Simmons. "The League Looks at Women's History Month: Oxford Women Maintain the Local History of NOW." *The Oxford Press*. 13 March 2016: A3.**

As we celebrate Women's History Month, it is fitting to recognize two Oxford women who have worked passionately more than forty years for the cause of equal rights for women: They are Jo McQueen and Kathy McMahan-Klosterman. They have been tirelessly engaged in this struggle since the early 1970s. In that decade, the women's movement, begun in the nineteenth century and responsible for women's winning the right to vote in 1920, became energized nationally with new activism. Women saw that they still had a long way to go to end misogyny, discrimination and violence against women in our culture.

In 1974, Jo McQueen, an Oxford businesswoman, and Kathy McMahan-Klosterman, a Miami University faculty member, became founding members of the Butler County Chapter of NOW (National Organization of Women). They helped establish the first operating rape counseling service in Butler County and the first operating shelter for battered women in Ohio. They started a consciousness-raising group for women to share personal stories about sexism and to understand its pervasive, negative impact in our culture.

Seeing a need for a NOW chapter in Oxford to serve the local community, Jo and Kathy started the Miami/Oxford NOW. In 1978, this chapter held the first "Take Back the Night March" in Oxford to demonstrate that women have the right to be safe walking at night in the city and on the campus. More than 200 people joined the demonstration that year. "Take Back the Night" is still held every year jointly by the City of Oxford and Miami University.

For a number of years, Jo and Kathy had radio programs on WMUB, Oxford. Jo hosted a show in which she interviewed local women to highlight their accomplishments; Kathy hosted a live call-in show concerning women and women's issues.

Today, Jo and Kathy, both members of the League of Women Voters of Oxford, are engaged in a project to record and preserve the history of NOW in the organization's national archives. Several years ago, National NOW put out a call for all US chapters to send their local materials to the national office to archive. The national office was inundated, but new digital technology solved the problem.

Over the years, Jo McQueen and Kathy McMahan-Klosterman had painstakingly preserved the history of women's activism in the Butler County area with scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, photos and letters, and with boxes of memorabilia, such as campaign buttons and tee shirts with logos for the women's equality cause. Rather than submit their actual historical items, Jo and Kathy began the important project of digitizing texts and photographic images of all their material through the Miami University Center for Digital Scholarship. They are doing this with the help of the King

Library staff and Miami students who are learning the history of the local and national movements as well as archival techniques.

When completed, the digitized Butler County and Oxford collections will be housed in the National Organization for Women's archives, located in the Schlesinger Library at Harvard University.

As Jo stated in an interview, "We are very excited about the fact that the work that women have done will be available to anyone ... in Oxford, Butler County and worldwide via the internet. What we have done here [locally] is just one piece of the mosaic of the Women's Movement." The original, material artifacts will be housed in the Smith Library of Regional History located in the Lane Public Library in Oxford.