

Women's Leadership Discussion Guide

Overview

This discussion guide is intended to foster discussion in secondary school classrooms about women's leadership and the long fight for equal rights across North Carolina, based on the Southern Oral History Program's interactive map. After students listen to audio clips from oral history interviews embedded in the map, teachers can utilize the discussion questions provided for whole class discussion, small group discussion, and/or writing assignments.

Grades

8-12

Materials

- Mapping Voices of North Carolina's Past: Women's Leadership. Available at: <https://unc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=d7d33f68a1bf48649fecdb895ba94537>

Discussion Questions

General Discussion Questions

- Listening to these voices, what themes do you notice?
- Based on what you've heard, how do you think women's leadership and the fight for equality for women has changed and/or stayed the same over time in North Carolina? Why? What clips can you use to support your answer?
- In many of these clips, women describe the ways in which they took on leadership positions and how they embodied these roles. What similarities and differences did you hear? Did anyone's story resonate with you in particular? Why?
- In what ways do women of different races, ethnicities, classes, religious backgrounds or regions of the state seem to differ from each other and in what ways do they share commonalities with each other in terms of leadership?
- After listening to these clips, have your ideas about women and leadership changed at all? Why or why not?

Biographical Information & Questions for Specific Voices

1. Ann Atwater reflects on her experience working for the NC Fund.

Ann Atwater, a life-long Durham resident, was inspired to help other members of her community after her experience with the North Carolina Fund in the 1960s. The North Carolina Fund, an independent, non-profit, charitable corporation, sought and dispensed funds to fight poverty in the state. The organization forced her neglectful landlord to fix many problems in her home after her repeated requests failed. Ms. Atwater then volunteered for the NC Fund, often walking door-to-door to let members of her community know about the organization.

- What does Ann Atwater mean when she says “I became me?”
- She describes how the NC Fund got started – does this story remind you of any other movement or grassroots organizing? In what way?

Link to full interview:

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/7481/rec/1>

2. Carol Brewington reflects on her view of leadership

Carol Brewington is a community developer for the Coharie Tribe, a Native American tribe in southeastern North Carolina in Harnett and Sampson counties. She grew up adhering to traditional gender roles. Later, she became the only female member on the tribal board. Brewington speaks about the collective, grassroots work of activism.

- What does leadership mean to you? How is it similar to or different from Carol Brewington’s idea of leadership?

Link to full interview:

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/11272/rec/1>

3. Carol Brewington speaks about representing the interests of others, not just your own.

- How does Brewington’s philosophy about representing the interests of others influence her leadership style?

Link to full interview:

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/11272/rec/1>

4. Katharine Everett speaks about paving the way for other women.

Kathrine Robinson Everett, born in Fayetteville, NC was a pioneer in women's education. Educated first at Columbia University in New York City, Everett returned to her home state to become the first woman to graduate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Law School.

- What do you think about Katherine Everett’s remarks about feeling responsible to other women? Do you think this sentiment is still relevant today? Would you feel that way too?

Link to full interview:

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/10321/rec/1>

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5. Gloria McCauley speaks on wanting to help women.

Gloria Harris McCauley struggled with addiction to crack cocaine for 23 years. Through the love of her son, she was able to overcome her addiction, and was inspired to help other women. She created the recovery home, God Did It, in Burlington, NC.

- How does her story compare to other paths to leadership? What makes her approach similar or different?

Link to full interview:

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/17430/rec/1>

6. Gloria McCauley speaks on opening her first recovery home.

- What do you think of the conclusion Gloria McCauley comes to? Why do you think she might feel this way?

Link to full interview:

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/17430/rec/1>

7. Saundra Scales speaks on the changes she made as CEO.

Saundra Scales was the chief executive officer of First Legacy credit union in Charlotte. She addresses unfair treatment of people seeking loans based on gender and appearance, and how she sought to make a change.

- How did Saundra Scales use her position to make change?

Link to full interview:

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/26699/rec/6>

8. Isabella Cannon reflects on being mayor.

In a 1989 interview, Isabella Cannon, the first female mayor of Raleigh at seventy three years old, discusses the personal significance to her of being mayor as well as her views on the ability of women to obtain positions of power in North Carolina at the time.

- Why do you think the newspapers always printed Isabella Cannon's age next to her name?
- This interview took place in 1989. Cannon says, "the perception of women as leaders and as trustworthy has not yet come." Do you think that is true now? Why or why not?

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Link to full interview:

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/9968/rec/1>

9. Beth McAllister speaks on the Equal Rights Amendment.

Beth McAllister was involved in efforts to pass the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s. She was part of an organization called “Wives and Mothers for the ERA,” which joined a large coalition of fifty organizations whose goal was to pass the ERA. Here, McAllister describes the organizations and people who contributed to this effort.

- Beth McAllister describes the diversity of the coalition. Why do you think so many groups joined together to work to pass the Equal Rights Amendment? How do you think the diversity of the group impacted their efforts?
- Can you think of any other examples of groups coming together to work towards a particular cause?

Link to full interview: <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/sohp/id/18138>

10. Beth McAllister speaks on faith and activism.

Beth McAllister reflects on her role as an activist in the Women’s Movement and how she reconciles her religious faith with this activism. She discusses how religion is mobilized on both sides of a political debate about women’s rights, and how this debate has split the church. McAllister maintains conviction in religion as a way to practice social justice.

- Can you connect what Beth McAllister discusses about religion and activism with any current events?
- How do you see women’s leadership affected by religion in your community? Has it generally been a positive or negative influence on women’s leadership? Why?

Link to full interview: <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/sohp/id/18138>

11. Patricia Grant comments on the Cherokee Matriarchy.

Patricia Grant describes the impact of Western colonialism on the Cherokee matriarchy. Grant is a Native American community activist from Tennessee; in her interview she reflects on historical trauma experienced by Native Americans, her life on a reservation, and more.

- How does Patricia Grant describe the difference between the Native mindset and the Western mindset? What do you think about this? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?

Link to full interview: <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/sohp/id/17497>

12. Constance Anne Renz describes joining with a group of women to create social change.

Constance Anne Renz, co-founder of the Orange/Durham Coalition for Battered Women, discusses the exciting nature of organizing, and creating services for women, by women.

- Renz says, “It started out with committed people, and I know that’s how social change happens.” What do you think of that statement? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Link to full interview:

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/17436/rec/1>

13. Laura Edwards reflects on the creation of Women AdvaNCe.

Laura Edwards, the founder and board chair of Women AdvaNCe, discusses the organization’s attempts to educate women about such issues as health, economics, social welfare, and jobs, and to motivate these women to vote. She emphasizes the importance of using data and fact-driven, academic work to enable women to vote in their own best interests, and of utilizing social media to reach a broad audience.

- What do you think Edwards means by women were voting “not in their best interests”? Do you agree with her?
- Laura Edwards mentions social media. How do you think social media influences activism?

Link to full interview: <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/sohp/id/19152>

14. Pauli Murray talks about the connection between her poetry and activism.

Pauli Murray, a noted Civil Rights and feminist activist, reared in Durham, NC, reflects on the connection between her poetry and her activism.

- Does Pauli Murray’s connection between poetry and activism remind of you of any contemporary activist-artists?
- How do you think activism and arts are connected?

Link to full interview:

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/11065/rec/1>

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15. Josephine Clement speaks about the origins of her political involvement.

Josephine Clement, of Durham North Carolina, was a member of the city's school board when the courts ordered the city schools to desegregate. In this clip, she talks about her role as a parent, the push to desegregate, and her involvement in Women in Action for the Prevention of Violence and its Causes.

- What do you think is similar or different between what Josephine Clement is describing in the 1970s to now?

Link to full interview:

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sohp/id/10225/rec/2>