

Reflections from the Past: Remembrances of a Past President: Women's Lib

Genevieve Harris Berry (MS), Past President, 1976



In May 1950, my wedding invitations had been mailed and leave approved when I received a call from Miss Earle Gaddis, Associate State Leader for the Mississippi Extension Service. She wanted me to postpone my wedding and attend a special training for a new program Extension planned to have in the county I worked in.

I said "no" and was told that I might not have a job (just a threat). Later, Miss May Cresswell, State Leader, told me "there is still a rule on the books that an Extension Home Economist cannot marry." But I DID!

When I became pregnant with my first child, Miss Gaddis, then the State Leader and Margaret Cresswell, District Agent, told me I had to resign. I talked to my county board of supervisors. The board president called the district agent and state leader and told them that if I had to resign, they could remove the entire Extension Service from Copiah County.

So I kept my job for 35 years, had three children (but was told I better not have any more) and became President of the National Association of Extension Home Economists in 1976.

Talk about "Women's Lib." I started it with Mississippi Cooperative

Extension Service!

