

while she was employed there. Walters resigned from B&G in September, 1981.

There had been tension from the day Walters first arrived at the B&G Main Yard shop on Mount Auburn Street. The one other woman who worked in property maintenance, with whom Walters had discussed the job's responsibilities before applying, was assigned to the North Yard. "I was thrown in, and if they liked me, fine; if they didn't, that was fine too. . . . Tegan took a dislike to me from the moment he met me." During her first lunch break on the job, Walters found that her co-workers "were testing me out; and I expected that, it was all right." But she was surprised when, after lunch, her acting foreman took her aside and told her that in the future she was to sit with the secretary at lunch, since, as he put it, "Girls eat with girls, and boys eat with boys." Her next major hurdle in order to be treated as an equal in the workplace was overcome after more than a month of trying to convince her crew chief to let her leave the stock room to go out on jobs with other property maintenance workers. Walters, who had grown up on farms and worked around automobiles, was "not intimidated by machinery or heavy lifting. . . . I wasn't afraid of getting dirty and I had some mechanical aptitude." While in charge of the stock room, she became familiar with various trades, "electrical, plumbing, etc., and the hardware that goes with these trades. . . . It was all common sense. . . . I don't know what they wanted me to be, some kind of token showpiece that sat in the stockroom all day long."

After five or six weeks, Walters was sent out to the field, first as a helper to other mechanics. Walters perceived what she views as racism in that initially she was sent to jobs with the two white men on her crew but not the one black man. This was how she began to be assigned to work with Tegan and others. The crew's size grew to seven by the time she became acting crew chief. While at times she had to struggle to be treated as an equal, Walters enjoyed the work. "It was a very good entry-level position. It paid well, and it was very interesting, something different every day. I don't like to sit behind a desk. . . . Climbing ladders was always the big question. 'Are you afraid of heights?' I landed up being the sort of monkey on the job, I was always getting into the high spots. . . ."

By mid-1979, as Walters was given more and more responsibility, she began to find herself in the awkward position of being made accountable to her boss, foreman Ken Hinsman, for other crew members' work completion, promptness and so on. This caused resentment among the other crew members, and, feels Walters, rightfully so: "Theoretically, we were equal co-workers." Early in 1980, after Walters told her supervisor that she was being held responsible for her co-workers without having any official authority over them, he asked the others on the crew if any of them were interested in being the new crew chief. Only Tegan expressed interest, so it was decided that both Walters and Tegan would be given a six-week trial period to fill the position before it was to be posted for outside applicants. Tegan's six weeks were first, from January to March; Walters, who began in March, was left as the crew chief into July. The incident with the firecracker occurred during Commencement Week of 1980, and Walters filed her grievance with the Massachusetts Committee Against Discrimination (MCAD) in October of that year.

Tegan's antipathy toward Charlotte Walters was evident to other co-workers, some of

whom told her that Tegan had said that she was a lesbian. Attorney Ladd emphasized the sexist attitude evident in Tegan's assumption: "Any woman who doesn't conform to traditional roles is either considered a dyke or a whore, the two supposedly slanderous categories of womanhood." Walters felt his hostility toward her deepen when she was his acting crew chief, evident on several occasions when he ignored her work orders and was verbally abusive to her directly. Her problem with Tegan were not taken seriously by those she complained to: "A lot of people had seen this whole thing building and knew that it had only been inflamed by [property maintenance foreman] Ken Hinsman; he had only made the situation worse by playing us off each other and wasn't dealing with Jack's [Tegan's] antagonism towards me."

According to Walters and her attorneys, getting Harvard to take discrimination against women and others seriously before events reach a crisis stage is the most important issue in her suit. "I have some [political] awareness and I keep thinking what it must be like for women who don't have that at all. I had a real support system around me . . . my friends and my family were very supportive, they were just afraid that I was going to get hurt."

Walters says she was also encouraged in her struggle against harassment and discrimination as a Harvard worker by Katherine Cevitas, then the only woman in B&G management. Walters, who acknowledges that Cevitas, in deposition, claimed not to remember giving such encouragement, recalls Cevitas telling her that it was important to demonstrate that a woman could perform this [Walters'] job effectively; counselling her that she should not let her co-workers see her upset by the firecracker incident; encouraging her to see Nancy Randolph, but to be careful not to mention her [Cevitas'] name; and reporting to Walters, after she had filed her grievance, that management would try to make things tough on her because, "They want you to quit." Walters, who expected to be ostracized by co-workers after filing her grievance, says it helped her that she received support from her male co-workers at B&G. "They knew, and if anything, I gained

respect from them because I wouldn't take the crap. . . . That was the biggest irony because they [management] were counting on the workers to make it so miserable that I would have to quit." Men at her job told Walters that, "'You're not getting a fair deal. I felt if they could see it, then it had to be fairly blatant.'"

A meeting which Walters had with ten members of management in December 1980 was characterized by what in Walters' words were "intimidation tactics." At this meeting were Bill Lee, Frank Marciano and Ken Hinsman and others representing B&G; Nancy Randolph from President Bok's office; and Ed Powers and Diane Frazier of Harvard's Associate General Counsel. Walters was apparently being taken seriously as a threat. She recalls Powers (whom Randolph had consulted on her behalf in June 1980) asking her to describe exactly what she wanted as redress of her grievance, "'since this was the first he'd heard of this case'; 'They were playing games with my head.'" Walters says that Powers' repeated questions about her legal plans were unethical, since her legal representative was not at the meeting. Powers also, according to Walters, "insinuated that the stress of my case had caused heart problems for [B&G plumber crew chief] Don Harvey. The man had a history of heart trouble, he'd had a heart attack before I ever came to work at Harvard! . . . Of course [others at the meeting] shot him down about that, but the fact that he'd even stoop so low was incredible to me." Frazier, who along with Powers was to represent Harvard in meetings with Walters' attorney in January 1981, insisted to the other management officials and Walters that "this is just a misunderstanding; there is no injustice here, since justice denotes right and wrong."

In January 1981, the legal representatives of both sides met; Walters' attorney Ladd was told by Harvard associate general counsel that she "had no case." Since then, Harvard has called in Ropeson Gray to handle its defense. On Walters' side are attorneys Wendy Kaplan and Holly Ladd; and their consultant, Freda Klein of the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion, who recently played a similar consulting role in a successful harassment case

brought by eight female students against the University of Massachusetts. Says Walters of the legal proceedings, "The attitude we've gotten from Ropeson Gray has been, 'How dare you, an outsider, presume to tell the powers that be at Harvard how to run their university?'"

Despite the recent revelations of the widely-publicized sexual harassment survey, Walters thinks that Harvard's legal defense in her case is "banking on a real conservative trend, and that it isn't such a popular issue; people are more concerned about the economy. Feminism isn't media hype any longer, it's not a fashionable, trendy topic any more."

Yet with the recent victories in the U Mass case and the Clark case, in which Walters' consultant and attorney respectively helped win harassment suits, the legal climate seems to be favoring women's challenges to university systems of which they are a part. The decision at Clark gave the plaintiff two of the things which Walters is now asking for, damages (amounting to \$95,000) and the institution of sexual harassment grievance procedures; in addition, the Clark professor bringing suit was given tenure protection. She is now a tenured professor, and, as an indirect result of the case, Clark's president was forced to leave his post. Walters requests to see a copy of Harvard's sexual harassment policy have been consistently refused over the years, on the grounds that a new draft is being prepared.

Walters' case is now before Judge Garrity, who is perhaps best known for his decisions on Boston school bussing. In recent developments, Garrity ruled that Harvard must release its records of all cases of sexual discrimination and harassment university-wide, with Harvard refusing any disclosure of such records except those originating in Buildings and Grounds. As of early November, Kaplan's office had yet to receive the records of employee complaints.

In addition to claiming personal damages and suing for the introduction of a policy of specific procedures to deal with sexual harassment grievances, Walters is asking the court to have Harvard implement an educational program designed to prevent discrimination in workplaces and departments throughout the university. A proposal to train those who would guide participants in such a program has been worked out by Fred Klein, who has designed other anti-discrimination programs and workshops. The program proposed would begin with a pilot preventive educational program at traditionally all-male B&G, where a few more women have been hired in the past few years, and gradually be introduced into other situations, from food services to administrative offices to academic departments. Klein has offered to run the initial training program.

Charlotte Walters believes that this proposal is the most important issue in her suit. Walters, who lives in Portland, feels that such a program at Harvard could have broad-reaching effects on discrimination against women and other oppressed groups. She says she hopes the preventive educational proposal will receive serious attention and support throughout the Harvard community, "because this could benefit us all."

*In July, Charlotte Walters returned to Boston for more pre-trial proceedings. Harvard released documents pertaining to her case after many months of deposition.*



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