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Guide to the Sheila J. Counce-Nicklas Interview, 2007

Sheila J. Counce-Nicklas was one of the first women in Duke University's Department of Anatomy.

### Descriptive Summary

**Collection Title:** Sheila J. Counce-Nicklas Interview, 2007

**Creator:** Counce, S. J.

**Extent:** 1 record storage box, 2 itemes, .25 linear feet

**Processed By:**

**Date Completed:**

**Encoded By:**

### Biographical Note

Dr. Sheila J. Counce-Nicklas was born in 1927 in Hayes Center, Neb. She received her BA and MA from the University of Colorado, in 1948 and 1950 respectively. She received her PhD from the University of Edinburgh in developmental genetics in 1954 after serving as a Fulbright Fellow (1950-1951, 1951-1952) and an American Association of University Women Fellow (1952-1953). She was also a Macauley Fellow at the University of Edinburgh (1955-1956) and a National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in Zurich (1956-1957).

After serving as research assistant (1958-1959), lecturer (1958-1959), and research associate (1958-1965) at Yale, she came to Duke to serve as a research associate in zoology. She joined the Department of Anatomy in 1967 as one of the first women in the department and ultimately became full professor in the department in 1978. Her research focused on sex differences among insects, on which she published widely. She also has been active in a number of professional associations, and has served as the director of graduate studies for the department, and on the Appointments and Promotions Committee of Trinity College, and the Admissions Committee at Duke University School of Medicine.

### Collection Overview

Contains audiotapes and transcript of an oral history interview with Sheila J. Counce-Nicklas, one of the first women in Duke University's Department of Anatomy.

### Online Catalog Headings

Counce, S. J.

Counce, Sheila J.

Duke University.

Duke University. Medical Center.

Duke University. Dept. of Anatomy.

Faculty, Medical.

Women in medicine.

Oral histories.

## Guide to the Sheila J. Counce-Nicklas Interview, 2007

Interviews.

Transcripts.

[Related Material](#)

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Detailed Description of the Collection

**Interview on 21 June 2007**

Dr. Counce-Nicklas speaks about her background; her love of science and of learning; her interest in how things work; her Fulbright scholarship to Edinburgh; her professor suggesting she get a PhD instead of diploma at Edinburgh; studying sex-linked lethal chromosomes in fruit flies; ten advantage of being a female in working with males; asking for a promotion in the Duke Department of Anatomy; her reputation in Europe; coming to Duke; other women at Duke: Dr. Lois Pounds, Dr. Jo Rae Wright, Dr. Nell Cant, Dr. Rebecca H. Buckley; women coming in time period of late 1960s and early 1970s; the necessity of self assurance for these women; her husband's work in Duke's Department of Zoology; being the lone woman in the department; not being treated much differently; her continued research on sex-linked lethal chromosomes in fruit flies; this research not enabling her to see the way that the sexes develop, as she had hoped; Duke's increasing emphasis on competing in the research arena; changes in the Department of Anatomy; her research being rewarding; her major contribution as being a two-volume work on insect development; her reputation in Europe as an important factor in her promotion; support from colleagues; the solitary nature of working in the laboratory; the work of other members of the department; teaching; Dr. Montrose Moses; service on Academic Council; the necessity of fairness in appointments; mentors; mentorship; the freedom to explore in her work at Duke; the necessity of grants in research; sharing the workload at home with her husband, Bruce Nicklas; the Promotions and Tenure Committee; the move in the field toward cell and molecular biology; the change in the Department of Anatomy under a new chair; Duke's academic reputation; the increase in the number of women since she first arrived; women in the basic sciences; and being outspoken.

**Box 1**

Interview CD [1 CD (1 hour and 46 minutes total)]

Transcript [41 pages]