

WISCONSIN WOMEN MAKING HISTORY

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ANN D. GORDON

1944

City: Madison

County: Dane

A student activist in the 1960s, Ann D. Gordon became a history professor and an important scholar of women's suffrage in the U.S.

Ann D. Gordon was born in 1944 in Providence, Rhode Island. While majoring in history at Smith College (in Northampton, Massachusetts) in the early 1960s, she became passionate about political issues. She was active in a group called Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and helped organize the first Vietnam War protest in Northampton.

After graduating from Smith College, Gordon entered graduate school at the University of Wisconsin–Madison to study American history of the 17th and 18th centuries. She arrived in Madison in 1966, when radical activist organizations were very active on the UW campus. As she had done at Smith, Gordon worked with SDS, protesting in many demonstrations. One of those was the 1967 protest against Dow Chemical, the company that made napalm for use by the U.S. in war. Gordon was a member of the History Students Association, the Teaching Assistants Association, the Wisconsin Draft Resistance Union, and the Radical Historians Caucus of 1969. She also co-edited Madison's first "underground" newspaper, Connections, as well as Radical America magazine, in which she published the first of her many contributions to the study of women's history.

Gordon earned her Ph.D. in 1975. One of her greatest achievements after that was her thirty-year leadership of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony Papers Project, begun at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and continued at Rutgers University, where she became a research professor in the Department of History. That project culminated in the publication of a six-volume series of books entitled The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. In 2012, Gordon won the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association's Silent Sentinel Award for her important work in helping Americans understand the importance of voting equality.

Gordon, who retired from academia in 2012, is a sought-after speaker on suffragist history.

To learn more, visit womeninwisconsin.org/profile/ann-d-gordon