

GEORGIA COLLINS: CAREER AND COMMITMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF
GENDER ISSUES IN ART EDUCATION (204 PP.)

Director of Dissertation: James G. Henderson, Ed.D.

The purpose of this case study was to reconstruct the lived experiences, cultural perceptions and social construction of Georgia Collins' experiences as a notable female leader in art education through a narrative inquiry. The methodology of narrative inquiry allowed stories to become the primary data, assigning importance to them as forms of knowledge construction. Through a disciplined study using in-depth interviewing, stories told by Georgia Collins as well as by members identified in her social network served to reconstruct the meaning of gender issues in art education. Through interpretive analysis of the interviews as well as supporting documents, various threads of Georgia Collins' professional and personal life were put together to weave an account of a leader in the field of art education associated with feminism and gender issues.

Six major themes of (1) epiphanies, turning points, and nutrient experiences; (2) synergist relationships; (3) pluralism: transformative personal and professional ways of working; (4) transformative teaching; (5) character and presence; and (6) life after academia: retirement and continuing a life developed through data analysis. Collins' life was put into the perspective of the second-wave women's movement as well as the second-wave women's movement in art. Five members identified by Collins as members of her social network further

enhanced the narrative construction of Collins' contributions and motivations as a female leader in art education concerned with feminism.

Deeper layers of Georgia Collins' experience were discussed as they relate to an exception of status in higher education as well as a reconceptualization of aging and retirement. The case for narrative inquiry as a viable form of research in art education was also argued. A proposed revisioning of how gender issues in art education are viewed was also discussed. Other factors such as race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status were raised as necessary in revisioning how questions about gender issues in art education are posed as well as how those questions are a reflection of our thinking related to diversity. Finally, personal parallels between Collins and the researcher and implications for further research were constructed.