The decade between 1965 and 1975 was nothing if not volatile. The counterculture had begun and flourished. Seismic events like protests over the Vietnam War, the 1968 Democratic Convention, the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., Kent State, and Woodstock had a big impact on many University of Hartford student leaders. Which led me to wonder...

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

I want to change the body politic. To me, spirituality is the highest form of politics. It’s not about economics—it has to be about the higher good.

Gayle Kelley?

by Paul D. Tieger ’73, ’83
Practically everyone on campus knew Gayle Kelley. She was the president of her dorm and Phi Sigma Chi sorority, worked on the school paper, was a representative to student government, and served as both a resident assistant and a resident director. Now a globe-trotting social activist and documentary filmmaker, Kelley uses the leadership skills she honed at UofH with world-changing effect.

PDT: You were at UofH from 1967 through 1972. What did you major in?
GK: I majored in education and also got a master’s degree in educational administration and supervision. After graduating, I taught for seven years in Connecticut...history, government, theater, [and] public speaking, and coached all-girl sports in middle school and high school.

PDT: What happened after that?
GK: They consolidated the school districts, and I decided it was time to follow my dream, which was to become a singer, so I moved to New York City. My whole family thought I was out of my mind, and my friends asked, “What are you doing?!” But I went anyway.

PDT: How did you break into the singing business?
GK: I visited a lot of different clubs, took acting and singing classes, and started showcasing myself. Later on, I met Jimmy Lockett, who became my partner for the next 10 years. We sang jazz, blues, as well as some original material all over the country...Vegas, Atlantic City, nightclubs...performing with big bands, quartets...lots of different venues.

PDT: Why did you stop? It sounds like you were very successful.
GK: We’d gotten some major record deal opportunities, but they all wanted to split us up. At that time, they didn’t think a white woman and black man would sell. So, we didn’t take the offers. Jimmy started to do Broadway [Lockett eventually starred as Old Deuteronomy in Cats], and I wanted to do some grassroots activism, which was always a big part of me. I got involved with a lot of artist friends of mine who were also looking for a way to give back to the community, and we started an organization called Earth Action. For the next 20 years, we were involved in a lot of grassroots activism efforts.

PDT: What, exactly, is Earth Action?
GK: Earth Action is a not-for-profit, very broad-based community service organization. We had a mobile street-feeding unit...feeding the “mole” people who lived in the tunnels under the subways, worked with homebound Holocaust victims, started Earth Action Clubs at schools. We worked with environmental ethics and developed a curriculum for kids called Finding the Hero Within. We helped provide child care for women with children with AIDS, entertained in hospitals...and other projects.

PDT: What happened after that?
GK: After a few years, we got involved with indigenous people...Native Americans in North America, Zulus, Aboriginals, Maoris, Tibetans. And we became a global organization trying to create bridges between indigenous people and the modern world. Sharing their messages seemed so pertinent and important to our lives.

PDT: But now, most of your time is spent working on A Circle of Women. What is that, and how did it come about?
GK: A Circle of Women came out of my study of living with indigenous people...and with my friends asked, “What are you doing?!” But I went anyway.

GK: A Circle of Women came out of my study of living with indigenous people...and with my study of living with indigenous people. Indigenous people worldwide call this “the time of the woman” and prophesized certain events thousands of years ago. Things have gotten out of balance, and the concerns of the female as the giver of life, the mother, the one concerned with hungry children, peace, abuse, and so forth have not been at the forefront. The woman has to pull her chair up to the table next to the man and let her voice be heard.

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SHARON REIS (A&S, MA) of Alexandria, Va., has been distinguished as one of “15 to Watch: Young Stars of PR” by Phillips PR News, a leading public relations trade newsletter. Reis is a founding partner of Washington-based Garrett Yu Hussein LLC.

1999
JOXEL GARCIA (BARNEY, MBA) of Avon, Conn., who is Connecticut’s commissioner of public health, was recently interviewed by the Hartford Business Journal on a number of issues that affect Connecticut residents and are the responsibility of the commission.

PATRICIA GREY (HARTT, MMus) of Danbury, Conn., joined the staff of Joel Barlow High School, Redding, Conn., as music teacher for the 1999–2000 school year.

PAMELA LLOYD (HARTT, MMus) of Boothbay Harbor, Maine, has joined the Blacksburg branch of the Roanoke (Va.) Music School.

CHRISTINA MORALES (HCW) of Hartford, Conn., is working at Drugs Don’t Work! as an intern.

CLIFFORD RANKIN (BARNEY, MST) of Bristol, Conn., is chair of the state taxation committee for the Connecticut Society of Certified Public Accountants.

2000
JOE BROCATO (A&S) of Laredo, Texas, is sports anchor and reporter for KVTV, Ch. 13, the CBS affiliate in Laredo.

JENNIFER MOAK (ENHP) of West Windsor, N.J., writes that she just got her first job as a conference coordinator for the Lambertville House, a boutique hotel.

RACHEL NOVIN (A&S) of Forest Hills, N.Y., is currently working for D’Arcy Advertising as an associate account manager for Pampers. Novin is planning to attend New York University to pursue a master’s degree.

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now. And if we don’t find peace in ourselves and the world, if we don’t feed the children, if we don’t have a responsibility to future generations then we’re going to lose this planet and the life we have all enjoyed.

PDT: How does A Circle of Women address these concerns?

GK: A Circle of Women’s mission is to educate and promote [woman] as peacemaker, healer, and visionary, and we will launch this “new conversation” with a documentary film that will premiere in September of 2000. It contrasts [tenets of] Western ideology with [the] thinking [of] indigenous [people] and examines the role of the female in the 21st century.

PDT: This sounds like a very big deal.

GK: I’ve been working on the documentary for nine years. The message is urgent for all of us. We have a responsibility not only to ourselves now but to the life on earth and to future generations. At this time, we have circles of women and men—our message is all-inclusive—in eight cities and seven countries. We are just beginning our outreach and plan to have Circles of Women operating around the world very, very soon. Our Web site is just getting up and running. You’ll be able to find us at <www.acircleofwomen.org>.

PDT: Getting back to UofH, do you see a direct link between what you learned as a student and where you are now?

GK: Absolutely! The reason I went to the University of Hartford was because they gave me a full leadership scholarship. They wanted to develop me as a leader, and they did. Today, I’m still teaching and leading but on a more universal level, through filmmaking. The whole idea of bringing together ancient wisdom and the modern world is to remind people to think about who they are and the quality of their relationships, not only with each other but with the world they live in, the environment, and how they treat their children. A lot of who I’ve become has to do with the experiences I had at the University of Hartford.

Little-known facts about Gayle Kelley
First band: Kelley Green
Played: basketball, softball, volleyball
Advisor to Hollywood environmental organization with: Tom Cruise, Jane Fonda, Ted Danson, Ed Begley, Jr., Kenny Loggins, and Glenn Close
Still sees: Kevin Fahey, Debbie Joyce, Jane Sullivan, and Barbara Cavatsos
Most curious about: Jimmy Diamond, Ben Holden, Ed Peletier, and John Seabury
Web site: www.acircleofwomen.org