

Carter, Virginia L. (1936 –) Born and raised in Northern Quebec, Carter served as president of Los Angeles NOW during its explosive growth years, 1970 – 1972. She struggled to find consensus as to the place within the feminist agenda of such issues as the war in Vietnam, lesbianism and CR versus overt public activism. Carter began her career as a research physicist at the Aerospace Corporation (1962 – 1972), a nonprofit adviser to the United States Air Force, Space Division. As L.A. NOW president, Carter's security clearance at the Aerospace Corporation, and thus her career, was placed in jeopardy by the public and heated controversy concerning lesbianism. During her 10 years at Aerospace, she did experiments in vacuum ultra- violet spectroscopy and flew satellite experiments to measure properties of the high atmosphere. In so doing, she became the first woman to have successfully designed and flown a satellite-based experiment. With a B.Sc. from McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and an M.S. from the University of Southern California, Carter is the author of 20 technical papers in the fields of high atmospheric studies and spectroscopy. In 2002 she was granted an Honorary Doctorate in Science from McGill University. In an unusual career change, after meeting Norman Lear through his wife, Frances Lear, Carter became VP of Embassy Television in Hollywood in 1973. Her primary responsibility was to ensure pro-social and accurate feminist content in many hit half-hour comedies being produced by Embassy (a Norman Lear Company). As senior VP, Carter established a Movie For Television division at Embassy. She is the recipient of a number of Emmy and Peabody awards for her work in television. Now retired, Carter serves on the board of the Population Media Center, an NGO that works to reduce population growth and the spread of disease and to elevate the status of women in Third World countries through the design and broadcast of radio or television soap operas.