

Tulane Student Sophi Tomasulo Reflects on Her Internship with Gloria Steinem

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Sophi Tomasulo, a senior at Tulane University and the curator of [Masked Violence](#) is making waves in the world of feminism. Over the summer, Tomasulo worked closely with the archives of renowned feminist Gloria Steinem to preserve the activist's rich history.

Tomasulo, a native New Yorker, and a women's rights activist began her advocacy from a young age.

"I grew up in a predominantly conservative and religious family," Tomasulo said. "I was the outlier growing up. I was always feeling like the odd cousin at Thanksgiving, but I started to lean into that a little bit more."

Tomasulo contributed to many social justice-based organizations during high school, such as [Women for Afghan Women](#), [Hollaback!](#), and [Remember Their Voices](#).

"Growing up in New York City, you get thrown into that stuff pretty easily and pretty early," Tomasulo said.

While social justice is central to Tomasulo, she also maintains a passion for equestrianism. During high school, Tomasulo was a camp counselor at Welwyn Stables.

"I love being like a camp counselor. That's probably my ideal calling in life. But my mom was like, okay, Sophie, it's time to do something in the city," Tomasulo said.

During the end of Tomasulo's junior year at Tulane, she applied to be an intern with [Soapbox Inc.](#) as part of the [Newcomb Institute's Feminist Summer Internship Program \(FSI\)](#).

Newcomb Institute's Feminist Summer Internship Program (FSI) is directed by Clare Daniel, an author and Administrative Associate Professor at Tulane.

"It was our vision that we were helping to cultivate feminist leaders on a national level. We wanted a program where we developed partnerships with national feminist organizations and opened up opportunities for students," Daniel said.

Unbeknownst to Tomasulo, her application to the FSI program would lead her in an entirely new direction.

“When I had thought that I had pretty much gotten [that] job, they were like, ‘Hey, there's an opening for Gloria Steinem's archive collection. Would you be interested in that?’” Tomasulo said.

Gloria Steinem is an American journalist and political activist best known for her leadership in second-wave feminism of the 1960s and '70s. Steinem is a multi-published author, as well as a founder of Ms. Magazine and countless feminist-based organizations.

“So I was like, ‘Absolutely. I love archiving, I love history,’” Tomasulo said.

After accepting the position in Steinem’s office, Tomasulo began one of her first projects.

“I went into transcribing a lot of talking circles that she did. They were like early-wave feminist consciousness-raising groups. She would have a bunch of women, some celebrities, sometimes her friends, come over to her living room, and they would talk for hours,” Tomasulo said.

As Tomasulo’s summer progressed, she was able to form a deeper connection with Steinem’s office and felt as if she were gaining a deeper perspective on archival work.

On one of Tomasulo’s final initiatives, she worked directly with Steinem’s archives to track down information about specific images.

“Gloria has all [of] her personal [photos] in physical albums. The archive team got all of those digitalized and they [were] all in a Google Drive,” Tomasulo said. “A large, large, large majority of it was doing the research and trying to track down the photos.”

Tomasulo expressed that the most gratifying aspect of her internship was engaging in investigative and hands-on tasks.

“I got to go down all these rabbit holes and like email random bookstores in Milwaukee to ask if Gloria did a signing there,” Tomasulo said. “I got to go to their storage unit and look through all the old Ms. Magazine prints.”

Tomasulo said that she had a deeper understanding of archival work after her internship.

“[I'm] sitting here, going through things from so long ago and [thinking], no one's ever going to see this; it doesn't matter. But, once you look at the archive as a whole—this information will be used for people to write papers about [and] to remember that pieces of events existed. Once I saw that there was a bigger point behind it, it felt a lot more meaningful,” Tomasulo said.

Tomasulo attributed the opportunity to the Newcomb Institute and the resources it provides.

“I would have absolutely not gotten it had it not been for the Newcomb Institute,” Tomasulo said.

At Steinem's office, Tomasulo learned a lot about herself and the workplace status quo.

“I'm a super ridiculously sensitive person, [and] I think [that] played to my advantage sometimes,” Tomasulo said. “I didn't have to sacrifice any of my radicalness just to fit into a space.”