

Interview

with

FLORENCE GLASSER

July 11, 2006

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The Southern Oral History Program
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FLORENCE GLASSER

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ROBIN PAYNE: This is an interview with Florence Glasser in her home in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on Tuesday, July 11th, 2006. Okay, Florry, if you could begin just by please stating your date and place of birth.

FLORENCE GLASSER: I was born in 1931 in Baltimore, Maryland, and lived there through my elementary school, high school years. I went to Goucher College on completion of high school, and went there for four years. At the end of my sophomore year I got married which is something we did in the '50s. In 1950 I got married to Richard Glasser. Unlike many women of the time I decided not to drop out of school but rather to complete my college education. I'm very thankful at this point that I did that.

RP: And what was it that you were studying at, did you say Goucher College?

FG: I knew that I wanted to be a school teacher, however, I did not want to take education courses not thinking that they were academically challenging, and so I became a history major.

RP: Okay.

FG: I did take education as a minor but took most of those education courses in the summer. Since I was in Baltimore I could go to Johns Hopkins and take some of the education courses. I finished college in 1952. At that time my husband decided he wanted to go back to graduate school, and as is the way, as was the way in those days, I helped put him through five years of graduate school. During those years I worked as a school teacher in Baltimore County, Maryland. For five years I was an elementary school teacher and became a demonstration teacher in my third year of teaching. I finished five years of teaching in Baltimore County schools. At that time my husband

earned his Ph.D. He accepted a position at the University of North Carolina in the physiology department, and we moved to North Carolina at that point.

Those were interesting times. I tried to get a job as a teacher in the Chapel Hill schools when we moved here in 1957. That was not to be. I was [interviewed by the Superintendent of Chapel Hill Schools, Robert Haynes, and asked] what I thought of Negro children going to school with white children, and I told him I didn't think that was a problem. At the time the Pearsall Plan was in effect. North Carolina legislation had been passed that asked black families who thought that their children were not receiving an adequate education to apply to the [local school] superintendent and ask that their children be transferred to a white school. When I interviewed in 1957 only [a few] African-American children were enrolled in any white schools at all. [Two African American students enrolled] at Glenwood Elementary School, and clearly the superintendent was not pleased with that situation and being forced to make that judgment. I can't prove that that was the reason that I didn't get a job as a school teacher, but I did not, and went on to work in the planetarium taking school groups through [clears throat], pardon me, to see their installations exhibit and the Orrery, and so I worked in that way for a while.

I became a member of the League of Women Voters which turned out to be a fine thing to do. There's no better introduction to a community if you're a newcomer than to become a part of the League, so I did that. It was a good way for me to learn not just about the community but organizing skills.

In 1961, sorry, in '59, I had my first child, so first child in '59, second child in '61, third child in '65. I became an active participant in Parent Teachers Association and

school matters as well as being in the League of Women Voters. That pretty much covers, I think, those years. I can get into a lot of what was going on in civil rights, but I think that your interest may be more gender specific.

RP: Right. Although, you had mentioned you felt that one reason you perhaps didn't get a job in the Chapel Hill schools was because of your views on school integration. Was the civil rights movement something you became involved in or were interested in during this time?

FG: I was very involved in the civil rights movement. We actually moved to Chapel Hill thinking we'd only stay a year. My husband signed a contract as an instructor. We didn't want to move to the racist south, but [Chapel Hill] was a fine little community, and we soon discovered there were a lot of people in this community who believed as we did that the schools should be integrated. We joined an organization to do just that, to integrate the schools in Chapel Hill (the Fellowship for School Integration) and we did not leave Chapel Hill. We decided to stay and fight rather than running away.

Those were interesting times. When my husband joined the [UNC] medical school faculty and the dental school faculty (he was a physiologist so he taught at both schools) the medical school had just accepted, I think, their first or second black student, and in the dental school when he went to introduce himself to the dean what he found were two sets of water fountains, one marked white, one marked colored, two free standing signs, one directing white patients in a certain way into the dental clinic, the other colored patients. Both arrows were pointed in the same direction.

Those were the days when Harry Goldman was writing in the *Carolina Israelite* about the ways to integrate the races, and he came up with some absolutely hilarious

ideas, some of which I'm sure you've read about. [For example, Goldman thought one drinking fountain should be covered with an out-of-order sign, thus causing everyone to drink from the other fountain. Likewise, chairs should be removed from restaurants resulting in "vertical integration."] His columns in the *Carolina Israelite* always brought a chuckle, and a lot of wisdom in cutting through some of the silliness that was going on in those days.

So I got even more involved in race issues when I worked for Howard Lee who became the first African-American mayor of a majority white southern city, and I did the precinct organization [for his 1969 campaign]. It was a nonpartisan race. I was not yet at all partisan, but I thought that his issues of social justice were important, and I worked hard to see that he might become a mayor. At the time he campaigned [the issues included] bringing water, and sewer, and roads to the black community, the Northside community. Those people paid taxes but they did not have any of the services that most taxpayers enjoyed. Howard also talked about the lack of public housing in north side. He was an extremely articulate and attractive candidate, and in fact he won the election in 1969.

I went on later in '72 to work [in Lee's] congressional campaign when he ran in the second congressional district against [Congressman] L. H. Fountain. I decided at that time I would work in the field to try to organize black voter registration, and I worked for six months north of Hillsborough, North Carolina. Hillsborough is, after all, the center of Orange County, and there is as much land north of Hillsborough as there is south. We don't realize that here in Chapel Hill. What I did was to use some of the skills and

organization that I had tried out in Howard's mayoral campaign in [rural] black communities north of Chapel Hill.

Those were terrifying times. In fact, in 1969 I was part of Chapel Hillians who went to the Orange County [Democratic] convention at the Hillsborough County Court House. The Democratic Party was having a convention then, and the people who were standing in the back of the court house were carrying guns in holsters and were members of the KKK, and that's who at the time was running the Democratic Party in Orange County. We had enough Chapel Hillians interested in county politics at that point to be able to out vote those people and pretty much take over the Democratic Party in the county, and we did, and we installed our own chairman, Roger Foushee.

In '72 when I worked north of Hillsborough, Foushee appointed the first African-Americans as Democratic judges at the precinct places. [Then] we were able to very much change the numbers in terms of how many blacks were registered and enrolled.

RP: Okay. So clearly you were very involved in civil rights activism throughout the 1960s and 70s.

FG: Yes, very much involved. I got tired of standing with the fringe friends in front of the post office on Franklin Street and decided it was time to stop being nonpartisan and to join the Democratic Party. The League of Women Voters had taught me when I was voter service chairman for them that the people who run the elections are in fact appointed by the parties, and so I decided that was the time to change.

The other movement I was very involved in was anti-Vietnam War, and I became in 1968 the co-chairman (it was still called co-chairman at that time), of North Carolina Citizens for Eugene McCarthy. We were very active in that movement here in Chapel

Hill. Students were extremely active in anti-Vietnam rallies and marches. It was all of a piece, you know. There was anti-war. There was pro-civil rights. All of that ferment going on in the '60s was something we were very much a part of.

RP: So with all of these things kind of converging, and you said in part leading you to become partisan and see yourself as a Democrat, were you also seeing yourself as an activist during this time?

FG: I don't know that I ever said I'm an activist at any point. It just happened. I always was interested in history. I was reading about history. I needed to be a part of the history that was evolving.

RP: Okay. So also during this time you mentioned you joined the League of Women Voters.

FG: Well, the League of Women Voters was what happened when I came here in '59. I joined the Democratic Party late in the '60s to become part of the decision-making of who the party candidate would be for president so we could stop the war.

RP: Okay.

FG: So the race issues, the civil rights issues. In 1965, I became part of an effort by the town to open public accommodations, and we went to Washington to try to lobby our senators, U.S. senators, Sam Ervin specifically, trying to get him to vote for the Civil Rights Act. That was an interesting time, too, and that's a whole other story, but there were a number of us who went hoping that we would have some way to change his mind which, unfortunately we couldn't do. He believed that he was the constitutional expert in the Senate, and his administrative aide wouldn't let us get in to see him. He was not for the Civil Rights Act. Later he was not for the Equal Rights Amendment either.

RP: So were there a lot of women involved in the same causes you were involved in during this time?

FG: Both men and women were involved in the civil rights era. It was interesting to me that later when we began thinking about feminism and gender that many of those males who had been with us in the civil rights movement did not make the easy translation and transition to work for rights for women. I guess Betty Friedan and her book [*The Feminine Mystique*] was, I think, a mobilizing call to women to see that relationship between pushing for civil rights for African-Americans and pushing for civil rights for women in this country.

I have a wonderful—I found a really wonderful picture that I think you might like. Let's see if I can find it. This is a picture. That's me [points to woman in center of photograph]. This is a picture of five of us at UNC at a panel discussing Betty Friedan's book. It was an interesting student sponsored panel, and each of these women was quite active at the time. This is Patricia Stanford Hunt [second from left in photo] who became the [Orange County] legislator in the [North Carolina] House of Representatives, the North Carolina House of Representatives, later a judge. At the time she was still a school teacher, but then she went through law school, and then took these other positions. This is Fran Tomlin [on the far left in photo] who later became part of the Holtshauser administration, a Republican. Notice that we had Republican as well as Democratic women, all of whom believed in this cause. Another Republican, Grace Rohrer [second from right in photo] later became secretary of North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, and later became my boss eventually in the North Carolina Department of Administration in the Martin Administration. This is Shirley Marshall [far right in photo]

who became county commissioner in Orange County. So an interesting and very old picture that brought a smile to my face when I found it.

RP: And so you said this is a panel discussion on Betty Friedan's book?

FG: Yes, at UNC.

RP: Okay, and what was that like?

FG: A very, very interesting discussion. I remember talking about how important that book was and how eye opening it was in terms of what opportunities were available especially to college-trained women. That book let us all know what our potential was and how limited we were in our choices, especially occupational choices. It made us all believe that we were not alone in thinking that we were not fulfilling our potential.

RP: Right.

FG: I remember arguing, however, in the one place when I disagreed with Friedan that she did not believe that—well, she believed that housework was fine but that we were doing too much of it and more than we needed to do. We spent more time on housework than was needed. But I do remember arguing that that should not be in the same category as raising children, and that she seemed to equate child rearing with dusting, and I thought these were two very different jobs.

RP: Right.

FG: She later came out, you know, with a second book which said something similar to that, and then she was roundly criticized by feminists who didn't think that she should renege on that early philosophy. They thought that she had turned her back on feminists. So it was an interesting, very, very interesting time.

I also remember that we decided to found something called the North Carolina Women's Political Caucus, and the person who was the prime mover was a woman named Martha McKay. Martha at the time had been going to New York City and working with Gloria Steinem and Bella Abzug and other feminists to launch a women's political caucus. It seemed to me that she had managed to put into action what all of us were thinking because of the Friedan book.

[Martha] went to her friend [Duke President] Terry Sanford, whom she had gone to UNC with, and she asked him if she could borrow Page Auditorium to hold a conference for women to talk about how we might get together and how we might organize to get the Equal Rights Amendment passed. She had earlier been the women's campaign organizer for Terry Sanford's bid for the governorship. Terry Sanford said, "Sure you can use Page Auditorium." Martha used all of her organizing skill, which were impressive, and all of her contacts across the state and managed to bring together a thousand women in 1972, and this is what pleased me the most. I have found for you a copy of that program of the North Carolina Women's Political Caucus, but I have to find it. Let's see [looking through album]. I saw it in here a little bit earlier. Give me a minute. Old family pictures. Here it is.

RP: Oh, okay.

FG: Here it is. That, I think, is something I think you might want to have a copy of.

RP: Yeah, absolutely.

FG: Martha had not only organized individual women but had gotten co-sponsorship from all kinds of women's organizations, and they're listed here. At some

point during this conference she railed at Sam Ervin for his obstinate refusal to accept the Equal Rights Amendment, and threatened that she would run against him in the next Democratic primary if he didn't change his ways. She got a standing ovation. Everyone stood and screamed with delight at that threat. At this meeting district organizations were formed for the North Carolina Women's Political Caucus, and officers were chosen for each of the congressional districts, so this was a powerful meeting and a powerful force at the time.

It was later in 1976 that Martha came back from New York and said, "In New York what they're doing is deciding that some women have gotten power already, and they have formed a Women's Forum. They formed a New York Women's Forum, and we need to form something in North Carolina along those same lines. We need to argue for doors of opportunity to open for women, and we need to accept the fact that we have power, and that we need to use that power." She also talked about the fact that women, especially southern women, were hesitant to use the word power, and were hesitant to get into politics, and that we needed to take control of our own lives, and one way of doing it was through the political process, so that we needed to run for office, and we needed to get as many women who already held power to do what the men did which is instead of an old boys' network, a new girls' network, a women's network, a new old boys' network that would especially link women who had power to one another. And because women were so much more collegial than men we would use that network to help one another move each one's agenda forward so it would be a composite agenda for women, but there would also be one-on-one help in moving other women's agendas forward.

All of that, the North Carolina Women's Forum began to happen in 1976. We had a board. I was a convener of the North Carolina Women's Forum. There were five of us who met at Grace Rohrer's office. At the time she was secretary of Cultural Resources in the Holtshauser administration in Raleigh. Five of us met in her offices and came up with this idea of the North Carolina Women's Forum. The Caucus was still in existence, but the Forum was there to choose about a hundred women by invitation only, whereas the Caucus you could simply join if you were interested in the movement. You had to be invited to join the Women's Forum. The North Carolina Women's Forum meets to this day so that has had a much longer life than the Caucus. I think there are only two [North Carolina] communities that have a Women's Political Caucus today.

RP: Okay. Before we talk about the Women's Forum I'm just curious if by this point in the 1970s when you've been participating in the political caucus and then helping with the founding of the Women's Forum, did you see yourself as a feminist by this point?

FG: We laughed about the fact that nobody could use the word feminist because there were women who really didn't want to be considered feminist. There are some who to this day see feminism, being a feminist, as a pejorative term. I have never had a problem with that. I simply, when I'm asked to introduce myself do that, and say, "I'm an unabashed feminist." I don't give any excuses for my views. I think anybody who's interested in human rights is a feminist by definition, so I have no problem with that.

When we used to meet as a women's forum we would sit for the first few minutes and go around the circle of those who were there and brag. It was called bragging time because we had to get comfortable with talking about our own accomplishments. As

southern women we were told that that would be immodest, that what we should do is talk about our husband's accomplishments not our own. And even in the Women's Forum with a small number, all of those having reached some degree of distinction, even with that, those women, needed to practice bragging about success and accomplishment. It was a sensitizing and challenging exercise.

RP: Why do you think it was that some women, and I'm assuming you mean some of the women who were involved in the Women's Forum, were reluctant to see what they were doing as feminism?

FG: I think [all the members of the Women's Forum] knew that they were involved in feminism. We had lobbied in the [North Carolina] General Assembly for the Equal Rights Amendment. We had begun to meet in districts to see what could be done to elect women to local office. We'd begun to move forward on running for office. I think there was a great deal of interest in moving women forward and seeing that as our role. I don't think that was a problem. It was this [cultural bias]. It was this feeling it immodest and not very womanly to brag that was the hang up.

RP: Okay. Earlier you mentioned that you thought for southern women in particular this idea of trying to grab hold of power was especially kind of discomforting. Do you think that that kind of went along with these other things you're talking about some of the women feeling that they were being immodest?

FG: Women who were "ambitious" were thought of as unfeminine whether you were ambitious in politics, or ambitious in gaining office, or ambitious in competing with men it didn't matter. It was not supposed to be your role. There were many women who were still used to deferring to men. We were particularly interested in getting women to

think for themselves about voting and who to vote for. Often southern women would, in fact, ask their husbands or be told by their husbands how to vote and who the candidates should be. We certainly wanted [women] to break out of that mold and think for ourselves.

There were issues too that we were very, very much involved in, the Equal Rights Amendment being one. There were other issues. In those years property could not be held by women. Divorce was a tricky business, and you could be left economically strapped because there was no fair, equitable distribution of the wealth after a divorce. There were many ways that women felt trapped in a marriage that wasn't a good marriage because they could not get a job if they divorced and left their husbands, so there were many issues we were involved in and interested in. Social Security was one of the issues I remember that we were aghast about because, as you know, the Social Security System is set up with the presumption that a single earner, the man, is the one who needs the [money] and his wife, who often had not worked, got short shrift when it came to Social Security and retirement payments.

The other thing we were very interested in was training for good jobs. Women were very much limited in terms of what kind of occupations they pursued. We were interested in seeing more women get into good paying jobs instead of the poor paying jobs, and we were interested in jobs that benefited society like teaching, and social work, and nursing to be better paid. We saw occupational segregation; the more women there were in a particular job category the lower the salary was. The more men there were in a particular occupation the higher the salary. So we became interested in comparable work and studies that were done on that along those lines.

RP: Okay. One thing you mentioned was Betty Friedan's book as something that was really eye opening. Were there other things going on during this time that led you as an individual to become particularly interested in these kinds of women's issues you were just outlining?

FG: I had grown up in a household where the roles between genders were clearly demarcated. When I sat down at the dinner table with my mother and father, (I had one sibling but he was six years older and had already moved off when he was quite young), but when I sat down at the dinner table with mother and father it was interesting to me that my mother would talk to me about [household] topics. My father would talk about the [national] topics of the day. He was interested in newspapers. He would read his *Time* magazine. He would not talk small talk. He left the child rearing to my mother, the disciplining to my mother. He was in charge of going out and earning a paycheck and being what was called a good provider while my mother was supposed to take care of the house and home. I thought that that strict demarcation between the two genders was terrible, and it made for a very uncomfortable situation for me. As an adolescent I had to make a choice of which parent I would want to talk to or which one I could talk to, and there was never a conversation for the three of us.

So it was interesting because much later (after my state government experience) when I went to work for NC Equity, (a private, nonprofit advocacy group for women across the state of North Carolina), I started a center on work and family. What I tried to do was [to learn] how many women had flooded into the workplace, and the question was how to make the workplace supportive of working women, and especially working women who had family responsibilities. In other words, if you see work and family as a

circle, and you put a dividing line between it right down the middle, what I was trying to do was to erase that dividing line and let people live an integrated life so they did not have to choose between their work responsibility and their family responsibility. They could, in fact, manage without guilt to do both. [At that time (1988) family friendly personnel policies were] thought of as very idealistic, but in fact [they have been adopted today by most large employers].

My [job] at NC Equity was to [create] with and organize a [Work and Family] council. The council was made up of vice presidents for personnel from forty [of the] biggest companies in North Carolina, and those happened to be the forty [most family friendly employers]. Those forty human resource professionals got together to do information switching, teaching each other what personnel policies were most supportive of working families.

At the time people thought of on-site child care as the only kind of family friendly personnel policy. What I did was, in getting this council together, let them experiment, create, and then inform others of which were the personnel policies that were the most useful. By that I mean not only child care on site, but resource and referral programs for both child care and eldercare. It meant flexible time schedules which is particularly what was needed by both men and women who were raising families or who had elder care responsibilities. It meant flexible benefits so that if you had two people working from a single household they could use cafeteria style benefits to pick and choose, mix and match the benefits that they and their families enjoyed. It meant employee assistance programs that would help support them when they came through difficult times with their family. There were all kinds of [helpful new personnel policies].

I wrote about that pretty extensively and gave speeches about that pretty extensively, but I think some of the best things that the Working Family Council at NC Equity did was to sponsor conferences, and we invited personnel people from across the state to come, and we were extremely successful in that. So over the course of about eight years we were engaged in experimenting with changing, and hopefully for the better, putting together personnel policies that allowed women to return to work after childbirth more quickly so that it wasn't an all or nothing, you had to be there forty, fifty hours a week or nothing at all. We got that accomplished. We also accomplished a lot in terms of [work schedule] flexibility which people with family responsibilities need. I think we did a tremendous amount.

I will show you the names of the companies that took part in that. All of those companies ended up, after the eight, nine year period with family friendly workplaces. [Council members] managed to, in North Carolina, garner all kinds of recognition from *Working Mother's Magazine* that [annually honored the] most family friendly companies in the United States. [North Carolina was] always among the big winners in terms of the states that had workplaces that were supportive [of workers with families].

The other thing I did, was I had a contract when I was at NC Equity to make government a model employer. I used Babcock Foundation money and got a contract with the state of North Carolina to review what kinds of policies they already had [in place] that were family friendly and to make recommendations about what could become new personnel policies. That was interesting too. I did a lot of focus groups so I talked to lots of employees, state employees, not just in Raleigh, but I had a contract to work in Morganton and did focus groups with them, did focus groups with the disability services

unit of the Department of Human Resources. I would ask women how they managed to balance their work and family responsibilities. That was absolutely fascinating, the enormous pressures that these people were under, enormous guilt feelings about not fulfilling their family responsibilities because of the obligations of work, and they would come up with ideas and recommendations to change workplace policies to make it better, to make it more possible for them not to feel that guilt and to be able to fulfill those responsibilities. I think we accomplished a great deal.

RP: It definitely sounds like it.

FG: I left out the ten years that were probably professionally the most important in my life, and those were the years that I was in state government (1977-1987). I worked in Jim Hunt's first two administrations, and then stayed on for two years with Governor Martin's Republican administration. In the Office of Policy and Planning in the North Carolina Department of Administration the policies I was interested in were policies that dealt with children, youth, and families, and figuring out what family policy was was fascinating in those days. Policy and Planning was a wonderful place to work because you [collected] all the data from everywhere into a central place, and you were then able to [analyze it].

I [wrote] a book on the indicators of [children's] needs in North Carolina. (I don't know where that is, but I could show it to you. Here.) So it was children's needs, but you can see that it was broader than kids, and what I did was, and this was published by the state. . . . I looked at the North Carolina data for the whole state, and then I broke it out for each county, and rank ordered each county on each indicator, so this was a large and difficult effort. I had a graduate student helping me with this. . . . I think [the study]

indicated to me, first of all, that children were poor, that families, many families were poor, were living in a state of the working poor. Infant mortality was one of the highest in the country. That often related to poverty and poor water, sewer, public health conditions.

But here was the big one which very much related to feminism. We had more working mothers than any other state in the union, and when I realized that, you know, there are lots of reasons of saying why is that true? Well, one of the reasons is because men earned so little, and women had to go to work to support—.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

BEGINNING OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

RP: This is side B of cassette one with Florence Glasser. Okay, Florry, we were just talking about the high number of working women in North Carolina and some of the problems that posed, so if you could continue with that.

FG: It's a fascinating subject because when we found out that there were more working mothers in North Carolina than any other state we asked why. One of the reasons is because men earn so little. A second reason is that North Carolina was built around tobacco farming at the time. Remember this was, I went into state government in '77 and stayed ten years, so the three legs on the stool, economic stool of North Carolina were tobacco, furniture, and textiles. There were many, many women working in the mills, and we found that because of all that there were many, many women, especially mothers, in the workforce. That was rather shocking to me, and I realized that it had enormous implications in terms of the need for child care.

In '77 there was no state money in the North Carolina budget to help working parents pay for their child care bills while they worked, and I also realized that the tax breaks did not include breaks to help parents pay for their work related child care. I remember working with Jim Hunt as governor in '77 to put together a package of policy initiatives that he might put forward to the General Assembly and to people across the state that would address some of those problems.

I remember that in Winston-Salem in 1977 soon after I joined state government he held a conference called Raising the New Generation, and that he gave an address [that I had drafted] to four hundred people at Benton Convention Center who had come together for the conference. He talked from that speech about poverty and infant mortality and needing to do something about the terrible number of children who died before their first birthday. He talked about the number of working women in North Carolina, and when he got to that part about the implications for child care he stopped in the middle of the sentence and said, "But I really think one of those parents ought to stay home." He had, after all, grown up in a household and his wife, who was a hard worker but worked on the farm, and he knew his wife had raised their four kids, and she had been there to help with that. What he didn't know because of the circumstances he had grown up in is that life had changed [for most families]. He stopped mid-speech, singled me out in the audience, looked at me and said, "But I really believe one of those parents needs to stay home," and I had to think to myself, what am I going to do about this?

I was asked by the press office to do the next speech because he really liked that theme of "raising up a new generation," and again it was infant mortality, it was child

care, it was reducing the number of drop outs in schools. Those were big issues. I [included in the speech draft] the issue of supporting families.

I had been very much influenced by Carol Stack who was at Duke at the time at the Institute of Policy Sciences and who had thought [a lot] about family policy. As a good anthropologist she thought about class, gender, family as important issues for her. She had started the Center for the Study of the Family at Duke, and I was very much influenced by her. The family policy people at the time were talking about family impact statements, but she was an academic, and I was there in the real world trying to apply some of that knowledge to family policy and figuring out what it was. It was [challenging].

I was asked by the [North Carolina] governmental relations office to do a conference for Appalachian governors, so it was not just North Carolina now. We were spreading the word to all of the Appalachian governors on these topics through the Appalachian Regional Commission. Jim Hunt at the time chaired. It was a rotating chairmanship for Appalachian governors, and he chaired the Appalachian Regional Commission. We did a big conference in Asheville (NC) on these topics. The Appalachian Regional Commission was smart enough to understand that there was a direct relationship between economic development and child care, and so they were willing, and staff was able to pull together, all the Appalachian Governors. [state staff, and policy makers]. They met in Asheville, and we had a fine time of it discussing these topics. Infant mortality was horrible in Appalachia. We discussed, certainly with experts, what could be done about that and what the Appalachian Regional Commission could do about [funding solutions to address the problem].

[Conference planners agreed to invite] the Vice President of the United States, Walter Mondale, who had been the author of and sponsor of the Mondale-Brademas Child Care Bill as our [keynote] speaker; I was able to influence the selection of that speaker. We talked about providing child care, reducing infant mortality, and raising healthy children, and we talked about supporting families at that time, so this was an interesting program. I've got a copy of the program if you would like to see it. Jack Watson came in also. Watson was the secretary to the cabinet and special assistant to the president, so he and Mondale were both excellent speakers, and we had truly wonderful [speeches and discussions].

I think that the Appalachian Regional Commission, (and the map of that group is here), all learned and heard a great deal about this, and we had wonderful support from the Carter administration on this set of issues. So I'll leave that with you as well as leaving with you the programs and the work papers. There is all of this here if you would like to see it, and the Appalachia magazine that went out after the conference indicated that these were topics, not just of prime interest to North Carolina but to [all of the] Appalachian states.

RP: Okay. Thanks.

FG: The other thing that I did after that was to work on what the private sector could do about child care. I wrote a [publication] called *Helping Working Parents: Child Care Options for Business*, and the governor published [it]. It had not my name but his on it, State of North Carolina. That was 1981. We were able to send free copies of this across the country, and thousands of these went out on request [especially] to child care people. What this did was to begin saying that not just the public sector but the

private sector can benefit from offering [child care] of programs, whether it was company owned on site child care or off site consortia model, whether it was voucher programs or vendor programs. [Also included were] other sorts of programs and personnel policies including what to do about sick children. Do you force your employees to lie, or do you let them tell the truth [and take paid time off]? What do you do in response to a parent who's got a sick child?

Resource and referral became a really interesting option. [It was an] interesting option for many companies that didn't want to get into the on site child care business, (that wasn't their business), but did want to offer good advice and referral to [employees] who needed that kind of help. And you'll see here, "Sensitive Personnel Policies." We were just beginning to understand what some of those might be, whether it was flex time, or job pairing, or compressed time, or staggered work hours, regular part-time work with prorated fringe benefits, all of those are outlined here. So this was another piece that [the Work and Family Council] worked on pretty successfully. Governor Hunt also let me organize a governor's business roundtable, and employers got involved. This was very early in all of this, but they began to be interested.

One of the things that I tried to do, whether it was in state government . . . or later at NC Equity when I worked with the Work and Family [Council] . . . was to find the research that could be used by personnel people to market internally these kinds of [personnel policy] possibilities.

The research indicated, . . . that it was in the bottom line interest of the company to change their workplace policies to make them more family friendly. Through the [Work and Family] council members, [I was able] to recruit CEO's from well known,

large companies across the state, CEO's who would agree to write on the bottom line interest of the company. We got a number of these published, and North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry, (which looks like the state chamber of commerce), did publish in its own house organ a couple of these articles. One was, I remember, by the CEO of RJR Tobacco [James Johnston]. One of these was the CEO of Bank of America [Ken Lewis]. We did get some influential businessmen to argue for family friendly benefits.

RP: All of this work that you've been talking about that you did in state politics and later for NC Equity in terms of trying to resolve these kinds of tensions between work and family, would you say that this work you were doing grew out of the North Carolina Women's Political Caucus and the Women's Forum, your work with those organizations or your concerns with women's issues from earlier on?

FG: Well, they came out of my own personal experience which I've told you about. They came out of my interest in children because I had started as a school teacher, and the child care things were related to that. It came out of the awakening in terms of opportunities. It came out of a basic philosophy that I have and that I shared with Jim Hunt, and Jim Hunt used [in his] speeches—speeches that talked about “burgeoning out all that's within you.” That's his philosophy [and it's mine]. It's a Charles Brantley Aycock quote, and what it says is that every human being has potential, [regardless of] whether a man or a woman, an adult or a child, and that that potential should be allowed to develop and be realized. So it's that basic philosophy rather than any single organization's [philosophy].

RP: Okay. To what extent do you feel that feminism and things like the Women's Forum made it possible for women like you to continue this kind of work into the '80s and even today?

FG: What Betty Friedan did and what the Women's Caucus and Women's Forum did was to take women who had been isolated and who had not been talking about these ideas, bring them together, allow a forum to happen, dialogues to happen, and to let women explore those possibilities, the possibilities for women that could be realized. I think we've just gone an enormous way toward allowing women to think in creative and ambitious ways about using their talent. In my day when I was growing up you were either a nurse, a social worker, or a teacher.

Today there are just enormous numbers of opportunities available for women. If you look at the numbers it's women who are the majority in the undergraduate schools. Enormous numbers of women are now preparing themselves to be doctors and lawyers [and business women]. Maybe not so many engineers, but the other schools are full of women. It's women who realize that they'd better prepare themselves for a career because if they don't they're going to be economically dependent, and so I think the whole mindset has changed.

In my day you went to college to find a husband. Today you go to college and get a diploma which becomes a passport to a job and a career, and at different times in your life, at different developmental stages in your life, you need to use talent, experience, and judgment, and all of that can best happen if you've had many different kinds of experiences yourself.

RP: Earlier you had mentioned the Equal Rights Amendment being one thing that the Women's Forum was interested in. Is that something that you became very involved with, the effort to get the ERA ratified in North Carolina?

FG: I did. The North Carolina Women's Forum really believed the Equal Rights Amendment would pass in North Carolina. One of our members, Elizabeth Peterson, a newly minted lawyer, [she had] just got a degree in law from Duke and was a member of the Women's Forum, was asked by Martha McKay to lobby [state legislation] for the amendment. I went with her many a day and watched that debate in the North Carolina General Assembly, an absolutely fascinating debate.

There were all kind of ridiculous and outrageous claims made by the opponents of the Equal Rights Amendment. We would have multi-sex bathrooms, heaven forbid. Think of Calista Flockhart [laughing]. We would have women drafted into the army, heaven forbid. Look at what is the case today, many women serving. All of those things that were waved in front of us by the opponents were used to defeat the amendment.

I remember Sam Ervin's [opposition to ERA. I remember] Phyllis Schlafly coming down to give testimony to the committee, constitutional amendment committee, in the North Carolina General Assembly. I remember her holding up this huge book called *Constitutional Jurisprudence*, (this was to impress those who were in the audience), and talking about the dire things that would happen to the family, to society, to this country. It would be the end of civilization as we knew it as far as she was concerned.

There's a funny story about that. The weekend after I'd been to that meeting of the General Assembly I was called by a local reporter and asked whether I had seen and

heard Phyllis Schlafly, and I told her I had. I told her she was an Indiana woman with that well scrubbed look, that she had interestingly enough become a lawyer, and therefore probably was a feminist just without knowing it. What I told [the reporter] was that she was a demagogue, [published the next day] in the paper there was this headline, "Schlafly A Demi-God," but it was spelled, D-E-M-I hyphen God, and I had to figure out what to do about that. Do you write a letter to the editor saying that's not what I said, or do you just leave it alone? It was interesting, interesting.

One of the things that I really tried to do was to get women involved in public policy, not just politics, but if women didn't feel eligible or competent to run for office and serve, what could be done that would prepare them for that? The difference being that when men are asked, "I'd like to choose you for a board," they say "thank you very much." When you ask a woman to serve she says, "I don't think I'm eligible. I don't think I'm prepared to do that."

I came up with the idea of a talent bank, and I tried promoting talent banks with the Women's Political Caucus and with the Women's Forum, and to this day I'm doing talent banks at the county level. What a talent bank does is to let women know about all of the many appointed positions available. It puts them in the position of getting themselves prepared and acquainted with the public policy issues the government deals with, and it makes them feel more competent and become in fact more competent so that they're able to move through the ranks and go up to the next step. Talent banks, I think, are extremely helpful and a good way to get more women to participate in public policy and to make public policy.

I have a wonderful button that I'll show you when you go through the kitchen. It says, "Make policy, not coffee," and that is the button that we all got in 1972 at the Women's Political Caucus. We laugh about the fact that we were the ones that always brought coffee to men, and that what we wanted to do was to stop making coffee. Let the men get the coffee themselves and [let women] begin to make public policy. It's just ironic to me that I ended up in the Policy and Planning shop of the North Carolina Department of Administration. It's fascinating.

I should also tell you, I'm skipping around here, the one area I didn't talk to you about was what I did with the Southern Governor's Association and Southern Growth Policies Board. I told you about Governor Hunt's role with Appalachian Regional Commission. He also played a key role as chair of [the] Southern Growth Policies Board and the Southern Governor's Association.

What [the Hunt administration] did was to take the issues that I mentioned to you, the policy issues on children and families, into [meeting of the] Southern Governors. He set up with the Southern Growth Policies Board a board, and delegates from each of the southern states served on it, so rather than calling it Raising A New Generation in North Carolina he called the project Raising A New Generation in the South. I served as the chair of that board, and when [Richard] Riley, the governor of South Carolina, came in [a year later] he appointed me to co-chair and continue in that role. So for two years I worked with southern states, again talking about the problems of southern children and families. I think that we did a lot of sensitizing of southern governors to all of these issues: [poverty, need for childcare, infant mortality, education, and job training.]

Again, it was [especially] a focus on mothers in the labor force, and we found that, like North Carolina, southern states had more mothers in the labor force and needed child care desperately. We had more problems with child health in the early years, with learning and education in the South, with poverty. So all of that came out in publications, and the conclusions were pretty much the same whether it was in southern states, or Appalachian states, or in just North Carolina alone. There are unique ways that southern children and families were not succeeding in life and not making advances that non-southern children did, and it was all directly related to economics. Economic development and education were paired for all of those governors.

We had a big conference in Puerto Rico in those years, the Southern Growth Policies Board, Southern Governors sponsored it. The governor of Puerto Rico convened the conference in San Juan. I remember to this day just an incredible amount of attention, lots of media attention to those issues, lots of publicity about it. We did very well with those issues. I remember having to give the keynote speech at that Puerto Rican conference on this book ["Raising a New Generation in the South"] that I've just shown you and the findings of it, so I think that we did a good job of raising consciousness to not only about what the problems [of Southern children and families] were. Lots of people were good at describing the problems, but what some recommended solutions were.

At that conference I remember Bill Clinton sitting there as the governor of Arkansas. I remember Governors [Bob] Graham of Florida, [William Winter of Mississippi], Riley, of course, of South Carolina. We had the Census South which went all the way from (I think) Maryland (was the most northern) all the way down to Florida

and across to the west somehow including Texas and, of course, Puerto Rico. So I think we influenced quite a few people.

RP: That's great. So you just mentioned raising consciousness among these politicians about not just problems but solutions. Did you ever have a sense to what extent you were also raising consciousness at more of community level?

FG: Yes. Some of the strategies and recommendations definitely were grassroots oriented. If you look at [Governor] Hunt's Smart Start, which is his signature program for child care, what you see is that, (and this was done in his third and fourth terms mostly), it required a task force at the county level of all of the stake holders, and it required that they do a needs assessment at the community level, their county level, put together a proposal for state funding, include both public and private sectors. Everybody was included. It operated much like a foundation.

Smart Start includes, in fact, a public foundation board, and so that was the design. It relied on the community to figure out its own needs. It relied on competitive bidding much the way a foundation would request proposals, and everybody wanted to get in on the act, and everybody wanted the financial rewards, and what it did was to create an awareness at the community level of what the need was because those needs had to be documented and a proposal submitted. So I think [the Hunt administration was] were particularly good at involving the local level on that. It also required a level of cooperation and collaboration between agencies at the community level, and that was also extremely important.

One of the other things I did when I was in state government was to write something called a children's budget in which I identified all the sources of funding by

function, by purpose. Here it is. I think this helped in figuring out how to put streams of dollars together. This is an old, old book. We then sold this idea to the National State Budget Officers, and they did a comparable piece, and we sold the idea to the Children's Defense Fund.

If you look here are the categories of function for spending, and then we looked at of this, what percentage of total dollars were spent on kids, young children, and so the focus was always on kids. [The focus was not on spending but rather] on investments in young children to get them ready for school, and ready to learn, and ready to succeed, so I think that this was useful simply as a way [of demonstrating how little state money was invested in young children. This was especially true in child care financing.] You can see these were really limited dollars spent [in child care subsidies], and the federal dollars by far outweighed the state dollars. These state dollars were match money for child care especially for abused [and] neglected children who were in the care of social services, so child care was looked upon as a child welfare service rather than a service that helped their working parents. That was a totally different focus.

RP: Um-hum. Right.

FG: This, I think, really did help us understand that if we were to do this job we would need an infusion of state dollars, and so if you look at this as your benchmark and look at the dollars put into child care by the State of North Carolina today you'll be able to see what's happened.

RP: Right. So looking back would you say at this stage, you know, you're doing all of this work about child care, and work, and family. Was that something you saw as

probably the biggest problem facing women, resolving this tension between work and family?

FG: No, certainly not. The child care issue was one of many issues. I think that economics for women was certainly the biggest issue. They simply did not have enough money to make them financially, economically viable. They were still looked at as a secondary source of income, but lack of equal pay for equal work is something that especially was focused on in a conference the Department of Administration [organized]. I worked simply as [one of] many staff members on that conference.

The woman who put that conference together is now the president of Peace College [Raleigh]. Her name is Laura Bingham, and she, I think, did a terrific job working with the secretary of administration at the time, Jane Patterson. They did a terrific job on pulling together women from across the state, men too, and the conference was on women and girls and the economy. So all of the economic issues, whether it was lack of job opportunities, lack of job training, equal pay problems, comparable work problems, all of those surfaced, and that was an interesting conference that certainly highlighted the problems that women had economically.

RP: And do you see that as a problem that continues today?

FG: Sure. I think we are still trying to take baby steps on that issue. My daughter, (I have one daughter who's a doctor and one daughter who's a nurse). The nurse who works [at UNC Hospitals] is constantly overburdened with too much work. There are too few nurses. It's a dramatic, terrible shortage of nurses. We have a dramatic, terrible shortage of teachers. We have a terrible shortage of social workers. They burn out in three years. Teachers burn out very quickly too. These women who are

really helping society and helping the most needy people and the most vulnerable people in the society are so underpaid and over worked, so you'll see all kinds of efforts supposedly made to help them out, but if you compare their salaries you'll see that they're simply not paid according to what [they should earn]. People who argue for free market say that there's a relationship between supply and demand. That is not the case with women who are in female dominated occupations. They get paid on the basis of their gender.

RP: Right. So although this continues to be a struggle, these economic problems, what would you say are some of the most important accomplishments the modern women's movement made?

FG: Well, I think there are some accomplishments. We have certainly seen an increase in the number of women who serve in the North Carolina General Assembly, but still the percentages compared to their percentages in the population are very small. I can't just blame that on obstacles imposed from outside. It's partly from women themselves not feeling adequate to the job. It's partly from the problems of family responsibility. So those issues remain with us.

In these challenging times it is certainly not an employee's market either, and we're seeing cutbacks in benefits. I think probably today we have a tougher economy for the employee than we did in the years I've been talking about. I think it is a very tough time. Women are afraid of losing their jobs. They're afraid of asking for time off for family leave. They're afraid they may not get back into a job they would like to have because of all the outsourcing that is going on.

These are tough times, too, for women who want to get training. Education has become more costly, and the number of subsidies has certainly not kept up. The role of the federal government in helping with loans has taken a very negative turn as Pell Grants get cut back. I think it's a difficult time for people just starting out to get themselves launched.

RP: So based on all the work you've done in activism, in politics, all these things you've been working on, do you have any sort of suggestions for what direction you think we should head in today of trying to get some sort of gender equality?

FG: I think we have to just keep on keeping on. We do the best we can [under] the circumstances. The group that has impressed me the most in North Carolina is a group called Lillian's List, and you'll talk to Jan Allen about the success she's made. Part of the problem has been not having sufficient funds to run a [political] campaign. Martha McKay said, "Money is the mother's milk of politics," and that is exactly right. If a woman doesn't have her own resources to put into an expensive campaign to challenge an incumbent today she's not able to run. So Lillian's List is an effort to try to help offset that obstacle. I think it's been an incredibly successful effort.

RP: What would you say is the most important thing for us to remember about the women's movement?

FG: Oh, I think we should see it as a human rights movement. I think it is linked in many ways to opening doors for minorities. I think it's a social justice issue. I think there is no question but that we have a [gender] bias. . . .

FG: Give me your question again.

RP: You were talking about seeing the women's movement as a human rights movement.

FG: As a human rights issue, as a political issue. I really think that unless women are well represented in the halls of government, both in legislative, executive, and judicial branches, that the people who are the policy makers lack the background and experience to make wise decisions. The priorities in terms of topics that need to be addressed are different for men and for women because of their life experience, so we need to have representatives who represent the population. Women are, after all, fifty-two percent of the population.

RP: Right.

FG: So we still continue to struggle to make our representatives more representative of the population.

RP: Okay. Those are pretty much all of my questions. Is there anything else you want to make sure we add or cover?

FG: I talked your ear off. Oh, no. I think I've talked your ear off. You're welcome to whatever here you would like to have.

RP: Thank you so much for talking with me. It's been very helpful.

FG: Well, I jumped all around the place so if you need anything from here you're welcome to it.

RP: Okay.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

END OF INTERVIEW