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U.16 Long Civil Rights Movement: The Women's Movement in the South

Interview U-0541
Lillian Mashburn
12 May 2011

Abstract – p. 2
Field Notes – p. 3
Transcript – p. 5

ABSTRACT – LILLIAN MASHBURN

Lillian Mashburn was born in Knox County, Tenn. She was involved with Church Women United and served as Chair of the Economic and Social Justice for Women for the State organization. She was also involved in various loosely organized groups in Knoxville, Tenn. that work to effect change during the early 70's. The interview begins with Mashburn discussing her childhood in a semi-rural section of Knoxville, Tenn. in the 1940s; her family members' view of education for girls; her education at Alice Bell School, Holston High School, and the University of Tennessee; and her family's Swiss heritage. She discusses religious attitudes in her community and how the women in her church took on leadership positions. She discusses her family's view of race and the civil rights movement and recalls memories of blockbusting in African American communities in Knoxville, Tenn. She describes a workshop she went to after she became a teacher; the workshop was on school integration and was led by Dr. Gertrude Norr. She discusses her education at the University of Tennessee; limitations on what college women could do; and the expectations of women. She describes how she came to understand herself as part of a women's movement; her involvement with Church Women United; lobbying for the Equal Rights Amendment in Washington, D.C.; and confronting the anti-ERA movement and Phyllis Schlafly; and her involvement with the Knoxville Women's Center. She discusses her view of Roe v. Wade; her experience of childbirth; and her participation on the board of Planned Parenthood in Knoxville, Tenn. She describes her campaign to run for Welfare Commissioner in Knoxville, Tenn. in the 1970s; her participation in the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce; and her involvement in planning for the World's Fair. She then discusses the formation of the Executive Women's Association in Knoxville in 1979 and her support of women's campaigns for political office, including Mayor Madeline Rogero. She describes her career in public relations and government relations and how she balanced her career and family life. She ends by discussing current political debates over women's issues; women's sports; and perceptions of women's dress. This interview is part of the Southern Oral History Program's project to document the women's movement in the American South.

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FIELD NOTES – LILLIAN TAUXE MASHBURN

Interviewee: Lillian Tauxe Mashburn

Interviewer: Jessica Wilkerson

Interview Date: 12 May 2011

Location: Lillian Mashburn's home in Knoxville, TN

THE INTERVIEWEE. Lillian Tauxe Mashburn was the director of the Office of Federal Relations for the Knoxville Campus at the University of Tennessee. She has consulted with the Howard Baker Center for Public Policy as a Senior Fellow for External Relations. With over 37 years of government liaison experience, Ms Mashburn has been involved with federal, state, and local officials, agencies, corporations, and professional organizations. Her recent responsibilities involved facilitating programs and legislation involving research activities and interdisciplinary research centers. She also dealt with the many of the regulatory issues facing higher education including student aid, information technology, and patent issues. She also has worked to develop new relationships for the University with industry and government agencies, i.e. TVA, DOE, DOD EPA, NASA and various government laboratories. She served as the University of Tennessee's Councilor for the Oak Ridge Associated Universities in 2005-2007. Currently, she is volunteering at The University of Tennessee Health Science Center and serves on the Board of the Friends of the Knox County Public Library and the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church.

Prior experience included serving as executive director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ), director of Public Relations and later corporate accounts officer for United American Bank. Ms Mashburn founded a consulting business, LTM Consultants, in the late 70's primarily assisting technology firms such as CTI, Environmental Systems Corporation,(ESC) and Perceptics, in the Knoxville and Oak Ridge area. Her involvement in the technical community has included technology transfers of laboratory and university developed R&D to manufacturing companies in the Knoxville and Oak Ridge area and the marketing of technical services. She joined The University of Tennessee's College of Engineering in 1987as director of Industrial Relations, and quickly became involved in governmental relations working on federal research projects.

Ms Mashburn worked with many organizations in higher education and scientific research on the national level. She served as co-chairman of the National Association of Land Grant Schools and College's (NASULGC) Council on Governmental Affairs in 2004 and is active in other organizations dealing with higher education and science issues. She was honored in 2005 and 2006 by the NASULGC Council on Governmental Affairs with the Carolyn Cross Distinguished Service Award.

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Active in several technical organizations and societies that have included the American Nuclear Society, Tennessee's Technology Conference (WATTec, The East Tennessee Economic Council,)and the Technical Society of Knoxville, she has served as an officer and a board member. She is currently on the board of directors of the Moses Teen Center and the East Tennessee Quality Growth Council. She has served as president of the East Tennessee Industrial Council and the Technical Society of Knoxville and was the founding president of the Executive Women's Association. She is a graduate of the 1994 Class of Tennessee Leadership and served on its board of directors. During the 1982 World's Fair, she served as chairman of the Community Involvement Committee, working with government and community leaders from a 16 county region to coordinate activities in preparation for the Fair. She ran for Welfare Commissioner of Knox County as an Independent Candidate in 1974 and has given her papers from that campaign to the Baker Center. She served as the East Tennessee Co-chair of the Economic Summit for Women in 2008.

A graduate of the University of Tennessee, Ms Mashburn has also been involved in a leadership role in many civic and social service organizations such as Child and Family of Tennessee, Planned Parenthood, and the Knoxville Chamber Partnership. She is married to John Mashburn, who works for UT Battelle on the ITER project, and has two children, Sam and Laura. Grandchildren are Samantha and Sarah Mashburn and Zoe Parks.

THE INTERVIEWER. Jessica Wilkerson is a graduate student in the Department of History at UNC-Chapel Hill, currently conducting research for her dissertation which will explore social justice activism in southern Appalachia, with special attention to women's activism, in the late 1960s and 1970s.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW. The interview takes place in the living room of Ms. Mashburn's home. We paused the interview once toward the end of the interview, and after starting another conversation about professional women's fashion, I asked if we could re-start the recording so that Ms. Mashburn could explain changes in women's professional culture since the 1970s.

NOTE ON RECORDING. I used the SOHP's Zoom recorder.

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TRANSCRIPT – LILLIAN MASHBURN

Interviewee: Lillian Mashburn

Interviewer: Jessica Wilkerson

Interview date: May 12, 2011

Location: Knoxville, Tennessee

Length: 1 disc, approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes

START OF DISC

JW: This is Jessie Wilkerson and I'm with Lillian Mashburn in Knoxville, Tennessee. The date is May twelfth, 2011. So Lillian, we like to start by asking about childhood. So could you first say when and where you were born?

LM: I was born in Knoxville in 1943, February twelfth, as my grandfather said, born on the birthday of a damn Yankee and a Republican. (laughs) Which was unusual for Knox County. My father was in World War II and was drafted a little while after I was born. So anyway, he was gone for about the first three years of my life, but we lived with my grandparents. So I regarded their home, which is now where 1-640 drives through. (laughs)

I went to Alice Bell School for the first six grades and then Spring Hill was built and I went there for the next two, and then on to Holston High School, which was a brand-new school, and then on to the University of Tennessee where I majored in political science and history. I ended up with my degree in education because back then, women had three choices: you got in front of a blackboard, behind a typewriter, or you carried a bedpan, neither of which totally appealed to me. But I was very fortunate to have been raised in a very liberal household, religiously, politically, and by my grandfather, who strongly believed that women should have as

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much education as possible because he had seen his sister get divorced in the 30s and how hard it was for her without an education. And he had really stressed education for his daughters, one of whom was divorced after a very brief marriage, another one was divorced and later widowed.

Our family was very supportive of education. And my father was not able to go to college. Of course, the Depression and all really affected education. My mother went to business college and worked as a secretary until after the war, but later went back to work when I was about in the eighth grade, maybe in high school, I can't remember, but as a secretary with Aetna Life and Casualty. But she became the first woman that Aetna promoted to a claims representative supervisor over outside men. And I've got a picture of her at her class in Hartford. There's a rank of men in the background and she's flanked with guys in suits, and she's the one woman. (laughs)

I guess from a very early stage, my grandfather was very outspoken politically. He was an engineer with Southern Railroad and men in our family were all with Southern Railroad. I thought he went out and gave speeches to people. The only thing I didn't know was he was always giving those speeches just to me. (laughs) And family members about opinions, a great, great believer in Roosevelt. He always preached that trickle-down ain't never trickle-down, that if you don't put resources in at the bottom, economies will never work. I think he's still right.

My grandmother's father had been mayor of Park City, which is the east part of Knoxville, and had also been on the Knoxville City Council. So my political interests I think I came by naturally, and I'm the eldest daughter of an eldest daughter of an eldest daughter, which, as a good friend of mine who's in the family system says, that makes us feel that we've the got to mother the goddamned world. (laughs) And I sometimes think that's true.

JW: How many siblings do you have?

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LM: Just one. My sister was born in 1947. So we're some years apart. She was part of what we call "the terrible 47s." My grandparents had four kids and in '47, all four of them had children, but of course, that was after the war, so the beginning of the baby boom. I'm ahead of the baby boom.

JW: And what are your parents' names?

LM: My mother is Jean Sitton and my father was Sammy Louis Tokes.

JW: And how about the grandparents you were just speaking of?

LM: My grandfather was John W. Sitton and my grandmother Jamie Davis Sitton. My father's father came over from Switzerland. Tokes is a Swiss name and if you're out in that part of the world of Tazewell Pike and all with the Guphons and the Truins and Babeleys were all part of a Swiss community. They started coming here, the Buffetts, in the 1830s and my grandfather came over in the 1890s as a boy. He spoke French in his later years, but that didn't go past that generation, and he married Lillian Smith. The Smith farm was on the corner of Millertown Pike and Loves Creek Road. So if you're familiar with that part of town—

JW: Yeah.

LM: You know right where it is, where the railroad bridge is.

JW: Yeah.

LM: That was their farm.

JW: Can you describe the demographics of that community at that time that you were growing up?

LM: Well, it was semi-rural, but not quite. I mean, my grandfather owned land, some lots and all. There were still some farms right close by. Of course, all of that's no longer farmland. It

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was county, lower middle class in some areas, middle class in others. My grandparents were probably more wealthy, not that they were really wealthy, but in that area.

We went to a church, Spring Place Presbyterian, which was a very old church. 1842 was the founding. That's my history coming out. And that community had been fairly close-knit. People primarily seemed to farm, but they weren't big farms, just small farms. As I was growing up, of course, that was fading rapidly as places were being sold off for subdivisions even in the 50s and began to change. I think my memories of the church I grew up in was a very close-knit, very small church, but a lot of history associated with it and very caring, caring people. It was a fairly liberal, definitely not fundamentalist. I didn't know the meaning of the word until I got to seventh grade. I guess I was more of an outlier in a lot of ways because of my family's politics, my religious convictions.

I remember in the seventh grade, there was a revival at this little church, the Loveland Baptist Church that was there, and everybody was going and getting saved, and I didn't know what that meant because I'd been baptized as a child, as an infant. They kept saying, "You've got to find Jesus." I said, "Well, I never lost him." (laughs) And got into an argument with my seventh-grade teacher that I refused to back down on that the world was not created in seven days, that I did not believe that the Bible was literal. I know they probably thought I was a heathen, but they're, being that I'm now a Unitarian, probably right. And there were very few of us who were not Baptists, and the older I got, the more I saw this.

JW: What about women in your church? Was there a different gender politics as well?

LM: Well, the women in our church were leaders. My grandmother was one of the first elders in the Presbyterian Church. She was an elder and we had quite a few women elders. My mother served as an elder. I never felt that there was a whole lot of the male-female power within

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that church. My grandmother was very much of a leader. The women's association was viewed within the church as strong. We had church suppers to raise money for different things, and I can remember seeing the men washing the dishes, rolling up their sleeves. My grandfather was one that was always into stuff. I just didn't see the male-female roles as strong as maybe you would in a lot of places. That's, I guess, been part of my rebellious attitude with a lot of things, because I don't get it because I didn't see it as much growing up. If it was there, it just went right over my head, because my grandparents and my parents and other family members were very much leaders within the church and the community in some ways. So I just didn't see the differentiation, the hierarchical male-female there.

JW: So you've described your family as fairly liberal in the area. So what about when the civil rights movement really took off?

LM: Well, civil rights was one sticking point. My grandfather, of course, was raised extremely southern. He had a very, very hard time with race relations. I am certain that his family--well, I know they did--in Virginia, the Loyals, his mother's family, owned slaves. And he was brought up, and everywhere blacks were inferior. But my mother was very determined that we would not be raised that way, and I know when I went to a church conference at Maryville College in the late 50s maybe, I don't remember what year it was, the presbytery had integrated. And there were blacks there, and Granddaddy just had a hissy fit.

But when Meredith was trying to get into the University of Mississippi, he was watching some stuff on TV about how blacks were living in Mississippi. And of course, in Tennessee in our part of the state, there was not a large population of blacks, and we were not allowed to say the word "nigger," by the way. That was verboten, not part of our language and not part of his

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language. He had very good relationships with the black community on a one-on-one basis, but it was like a religious experience conversion for him.

JW: When he was watching television?

LM: Right. He realized that he was wrong, and so at the next presbytery meeting that he went to as an elder, he sat next to a black minister. Now that was a major, major change in a lot of ways. And he was belligerent about his conversion after that. He had no tolerance for people who continued to be prejudiced. I think as far as that was concerned, I mean, I was not raised with the racial prejudice, although you saw a lot of it, you heard a lot of it.

JW: And where did you see it and hear it?

LM: Oh, at school. There was no desegregation as long as I was in any educational experience. The university, high school, grammar school, it was all totally segregated.

JW: Were you ever coming into contact with black people prior to the Maryville College Conference?

LM: Well, at church. My grandparents hired people to work, and particularly during the war, I remember there were women who came in and ironed and helped out, and there were workers around, but not a whole lot of exposure. The opportunity just wasn't there. And again, the Knoxville black population wasn't so great that you were constantly--. I was very aware of the high school, Austin East. When I was in college was when the block busting started, when they were tearing down to build the Coliseum, there was some rather unscrupulous real estate people who were block busting out of McCalla Avenue. My mother and I, I had to take her to work as I was driving into the university, and so that was a major discussion that we thought a lot of what was happening was wrong, and it really devastated a whole part of our city. It wasn't until, now, I guess when I first started teaching in '65 was the year that Knox County schools

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desegregated. When we got married, the couple who worked with my grandparents and worked with maintaining the grounds of the church came to the wedding, as a matter of fact. And I considered them a part of the family.

But when I first started teaching, for whatever reason and I've never quite understood it, Mildred Doyle, who was school superintendent at the time and had been a good friend of my mother—mother was president of the Knox County PTA—and when I finished my practice teaching up in Morristown, I discovered I lacked one course. And I thought, "Why am I going to spend a whole quarter at school? I'll just see if they can use me as a substitute." So I called up and talked to Mildred Patterson, who was the assistant school superintendent who we knew, and then I got a call back and said, "Would you be willing to go and teach an elementary class for the rest of the year?" Which probably was the dumbest thing I've ever done because I was not educated to teach that age group, but anyway, I did.

So Mildred Doyle asked me, a fledgling teacher. Now why she did this, I've never understood, but anyway, she sent me down to Chattanooga to a training program they were having on integrating the school system for two weeks. There was a program that was going on in Knoxville and a program that was going on down in Chattanooga. So I got a pass on the railroad and rode down to Chattanooga, was there for a week, came back home, and then went back. It was a really interesting experience. I got exposed to some very interesting people. Dr. Gertrude Norr, who was a nationally-recognized person who had worked in inner city schools, had written a lot about the inner city experience. It amazes me how much this is still true today, kids who are not read to, kids who had never seen themselves in a mirror, kids who are living in the inner city, how handicapped they are when they finally get to school. And I think about that often, and I think we haven't changed much for a lot of children. So it was a very enlightening

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experience. I think if I'd had a few more years of teaching under my belt, I would have probably been more used to the school system.

JW: Was it mostly white teachers who were there or was it a mixed group?

LM: No, it was a mixed group. Chattanooga was integrating at the same time. All of Tennessee was integrating in that fall of 1965. That was a momentous fall when you stop and think about it, because that was the fall the Baby Boomers hit colleges and universities. And that was the fall that they integrated all, tried to integrate all of the school systems.

JW: And what school did you go back and teach at?

LM: I went back and taught at Farragut, seventh and eighth grade social studies. Seventh and eighth grade was still in the elementary school at that time. The middle school had not been built. They had not gone to middle schools. So I was a fresh, young, very green teacher.

JW: And was the school being integrated?

LM: Yeah.

JW: So how was that process, being a new teacher at the same time as integration?

LM: Well, there wasn't much because there weren't that many black students. I had five in the six classes I taught every day. There just weren't that many minority students.

JW: How do you think those students dealt with being such a minority?

LM: I honestly don't know. I didn't see a lot of—they sat together at lunch. I didn't see any real hostility against them. There was more of a class difference with some of the students than there was hostility racially.

JW: And would that class difference have cut across races, so the poorer white kids?

LM: Mmm hmm. Actually we had a family that, I think there were seventeen children in that total family, and for the most part, they were not mentally competent. I have no idea if some

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of them were retarded or what diagnosis you would have, but we had more problems with them from a very low economic situation than we did with, and dealing, finally getting them out into the majority of the kids that our group had to deal with, into a situation where they could be dealt with. So I don't remember. Of course, you've got to remember, this was fortysome-odd years ago. I don't really remember any major negativity racially.

JW: So can we go back a little bit—

LM: Yeah.

JW: To your college years because I'm curious about what that experience was like. What years were you at UT?

LM: '61 to '65. I started out as a freshman in liberal arts and loved college. I lived at home. We couldn't afford. I mean, we were paying seventy-five dollars a quarter, if you can envision that, and that, with the books at all, was a stretch for my family. And I'm glad I lived at home. I don't think I could have tolerated dorm life because the women got locked up at seven o'clock at night and you couldn't wear pants on campus. If it snowed, we had to listen to the radio to see if the dean of students, women, gave us permission to wear pants. People laugh. They don't believe that, but it's true.

JW: They would announce that? They would say, "There's going to be snow. You're allowed to wear pants."

LM: Yeah. "Women can dress appropriately for snow." We had a cohort that went from Holston to the university, and everybody stayed friends. I met my husband the first quarter that I was there. John was from McMinn County, Tennessee. He had finessed, by lying to the new principal, that he got to skip the eighth grade and then went through high school in three years. So he was fifteen when he started at the university. I was going to join the debate team, and they

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were going to have a meeting in Ayres Hall. So when I went in to that meeting, they were in engineering—physics was their major. They were in this classroom studying. So the debating coach asked them if they wanted to stay on and they did. They said, "Oh well, what the hell." So anyway, I dated his brother, who was my age, for awhile, but being both eldest, that was never to be. And John and I were just good buddies until the next year and then we started dating and got engaged very quickly. I had to wait three years to get married because he co-oped and co-ops weren't allowed to get married. I hung out with a lot of men because of my interests. Somehow I ended up hanging out with a lot of the engineering students and a lot in political science, although I had several male friends who didn't think women had any business in political science, politics, and this whole thing was just not for women, which I hotly debated.

JW: And were there many other women in political science and history?

LM: No, no. There were quite a few women in history, I think, but not that they were going to go on and--. I didn't see the focus, as many women as focused. I was not in a sorority. That was not my shtick. I just didn't quite fit. I wanted to get married and the whole nine yards, and I was trying desperately to buy into the "get married, have your little career, and then have babies," and that's what you did.

JW: How were your professors? How did they feel about women in political science?

LM: I think since I was an undergraduate, I didn't pick up any negativity. I wasn't looking at the time to make it a career simply because women didn't do that. I guess my idols were women like Claire Boothe Luce. Her name's going out of my mind. There was a woman broadcaster in the early '60s, late '50s, Pauline Frederick. I don't know if you've ever heard of her. So maybe you should look it up as a historian. And she was a UN correspondent and what-not for NBC. She was somebody that I was really, these were the kind of women that kind of did

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maybe what, Nancy Dickerson, who was another one, Luce had been an ambassador, but there just weren't any women in politics particularly. And so you just really didn't have any. I thought, well, maybe I'd like to be in the legislature. But again, that was just not what women did.

JW: So when did you decide you would become a teacher?

LM: That was the default. I think fairly early on. There just weren't that many other opportunities for women. Like I said, you just didn't have the--. I think I was a pretty good teacher. I got an email not long ago from a former student who had looked me up. I run into one of my former students all the time who's now an attorney in Knoxville, and we're in the Executive Women's Association together. So I'm always, every now and then, running into former students and they remember that I drilled them very hard in the Constitution and how the country was founded and who the founders were and what they believed. They said, "You told the truth." But I think it was the default. If the doors had been more open for women in government, of course, my life would have been very different. I would have liked to have gone to DC and have been a staffer and all of those things, but that was just not on the table. You just didn't think about that kind of stuff. Public relations, I mean, I've owned a public relations company, but again, that was not open to women.

JW: So do you recall when you became more conscious of and began to engage the women's movement?

LM: Well, I don't think in some ways that I ever didn't, because my mother was very much aware, always aware of those issues from a financial point of what women could do and what women couldn't do. I guess the real turning point for me was in 1972, I had been involved with Church Women United. After I quit teaching and had babies, I got involved with a lot of volunteer-type things. I had the opportunity to go to Washington to a women in politics seminar

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that they were running. It was a full week, and there were women from all over the country. I was probably one of the younger women there. I was maybe thirty, maybe twenty-nine. So I teamed up with other women in the neighborhood to take care of the kids. John took two days of vacation, stayed home with the children, and I flew off to DC. I think that's when I got my consciousness totally raised, not that it hadn't been pretty much up there. It just kind of confirmed it. They were getting ready to vote on the Equal Rights Amendment, and I was running around with Molly Todd from Nashville and some of the other women. We met with a group of senators in a conference room. I don't remember what the name of the conference room was, but anyway, I remember being there with all of these guys.

JW: And were they from around—

LM: The operative word was "guys." But we were lobbying for the ERA. I can remember being totally awestruck as we were getting on the elevator of the Senate side and Barry Goldwater gets out of the elevator, and I'm thinking, "Geez." (laughs) "I'm really seeing these people." Never dreaming that one day I would be a lobbyist and spend three-quarters of my life, of my time, up there. But it was really engaging.

It was back during the height of the antiwar movement, and we were to meet at the White House with Mrs. Nixon, and Muskie had spoken to our group that morning. Evidently, that pissed off the White House, and when we went there, some of the women had on buttons that said "peace" on their coats. Now you've got to understand, these were women who were in their 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s. There was a woman in her 70s who wore her fur coat when she was on the picket lines with Cesar Chavez, went to jail with Cesar Chavez. They were upper middle class at a minimum, black, white, and very mixed racially. So two of the women refused to take the buttons off their coats. So they were not allowed in the White House. Several others of us were

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wearing a medallion that said, “War is not healthy for children or other living things.” They didn’t like that either, and we were hustled on our tour.

So when we got back, one of the women from Knoxville that went and I were meeting with the newspaper, the women’s section of the newspaper, giving an interview, and we mentioned that little incident. And that night, I got a call from the Associated Press or the Scripps Howard guy in DC saying he’d talked to the White House and they admitted they’d done that. So anyway, this wire story service goes out with my name, only it was Mrs. John. That was the last time “Mrs. John” appeared in the newspaper.

JW: Oh, okay, because it’s your husband’s name.

LM: Right, because back then it was always “Mrs.” So it became my personal campaign that I would be known as Lillian T. Mashburn and I would not be known as Mrs. John, because John is not a party to this mayhem, and that’s not my name. And that’s a very generational thing. I’ve got an aunt that says, “You just can’t use--.” I say, “Oh yes, I can.” (laughs) So anyway, I think that’s when we began to really understand what needed to be done.

Then I worked, served as chairperson for Economic and Social Justice for Women for Church Women United again. That didn’t evolve as much as it probably could have had we had a little more cohesive organization, but we did work on issues with the legislature.

JW: So when you were in DC meeting with senators, were they sympathetic to your cause?

LM: The ERA at that time was a no-brainer. They passed it about a week or so maybe, I don’t remember, very shortly thereafter. Tennessee was one of the very first states to pass it because they had been the last state to pass the suffrage. And then you started seeing the rise of the Phyllis Schlaflys and the anti-ERA-ers and the armies of pregnant women that were going to

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be marching down the streets. "We're going to have to share a bathroom with men." "The men couldn't wait for the ERA to pass so that they could leave their marriages. Their bags were packed at the door." Just total silliness, and yet I was there in Nashville when Schlafly was preaching all this stuff, and what amazed me is here she had all these kids at home, five or six children, and she was out running around, talking to state legislators. She wasn't staying home with her kids, but that's what she thought we ought to be doing. So after she got speaking, a couple of the guys got up: "Oh, we're going to have to do away with our ERA vote, rescind it, because you poor women, we've got to take care of you."

My response basically, I was there representing Church Women United. I had flown over from Knoxville that day and Sandra Clark, who is now editor of the *Halls Shopper*, was state legislator at the time. Sandra was an old drinking buddy of the chairman of that committee that was there and so she went up and, as a point of personal privilege, wanted me to be allowed to speak, which he later regretted. (laughs) And I've lost a copy of what I said. I have no record of it whatsoever other than one of the things I was pointing out, that the men legislators needed to be concerned with their wives, their daughters, their mothers, and the rights and privileges that the Equal Rights Amendment would afford them. That was probably it in a nutshell.

JW: Did you meet Phyllis Schlafly or speak to her one on one?

LM: I spoke to her very briefly. She was not one who wanted to engage, and that's what I found across the board. Women who were very anti-equal rights, they really didn't want to engage with us.

JW: Was there an anti-ERA movement in this area?

LM: Yeah, there were some women who were very opposed, and it got interesting at times. I never quite understood why they were so negative, because for the most part, if they

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were very outspoken and all on that issue, why, they were out rousing rabble like the rest of us. But there were Church Women United and other groups, the university women's center that was kind of starting at the time, and then the Knoxville Women's Center, which started, were all promoting women's issues. Of course, *Roe v. Wade* got passed. I look back now on how some of us, the assumptions we made about support for those things. We were naive.

JW: Can you say more about that? How were you naive?

LM: I honestly felt that more people were supportive of *Roe v. Wade*. I think there's still tremendous support for a women's right to choose. I just think a lot of people are intimidated from saying so. I don't get this business from Planned Parenthood, about what is it about "planned" do they not understand? One of the things that we were active in was helping women who needed to have abortion go out of state. We could chip in money. Women whose husbands, they needed to have tubal ligation. In Tennessee, you had to have a spousal approval, you had to have had three live births, and that got changed. I think if you tried to do that today, we might not be able to get that changed, but you had to have three live births before you could have your tubes tied. There were women who had had many, many children and doctors were saying, "You can't keep doing this," but the men were not willing to go along with birth control. There was one woman whose doctor told her that if she continued with the pregnancy, she would die because of veins and vascular problems. So there was kind of an underground group that raised money, and we got her out of the state.

JW: Was that group through Church Women United?

LM: It was just ad hoc.

JW: How did you start doing that? How did you find this?

Interview number U-0541 from the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at The Southern Historical Collection, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

LM: Just different women who were part of Church Women United and part of other groups. It was very not organized at all. You just kind of knew each other.

JW: And how did women learn about you?

LM: I guess just through conversations. It was fresher on everybody's mind at that time. I'd always been supportive of birth control, as had my family. But I can remember when I had my first child, I was in the hospital with toxemia before he was born, and back in those days, you shared a room. And so this gal comes in, and this is back in the day when they put you to sleep to have babies. It was just Neanderthal times, but anyway, this guy that was with her I thought was her dad, because back during Vietnam and '68, a lot of the men were gone. It turned out she was twenty. He was forty-five. They were from Grainger County. She was having her fifth baby. Her body was in such bad condition that I had to get up and take the baby away from her one time because she just couldn't hold it from all the drugs and everything they were giving her.

So I asked her. I asked the nurse, "Do I have to go through that afterwards?" And she said, "No." She said, "Her body's in such bad shape from producing a baby every year virtually that," she said, "Eventually, it will kill her." So I was talking to her about birth control. She said, well, she was scared of the pill and her husband wouldn't hear of it, and so that's when I vowed to get involved with Planned Parenthood, which I did and served on the board for about ten years to hopefully provide opportunities for women to control their families.

JW: What years were you on the Planned Parenthood board?

LM: Oh, now you're asking. (laughs) A good part of the 80s. I don't remember.

JW: So you weren't there when the Knoxville Center for Reproductive Health was opening?

LM: Oh yeah.

Interview number U-0541 from the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at The Southern Historical Collection, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

JW: You were on the board then?

LM: I was on the board of Planned Parenthood, yeah.

JW: Okay, because I interviewed the McNabbs yesterday.

LM: Okay, yeah, I know them.

JW: Okay, so about how Planned Parenthood didn't want to throw its support behind a clinic completely or didn't want to open a clinic. They wanted to support somebody else's clinic, but not open their own.

LM: Right, right, and they never did. Actually, I had my tubes tied at that clinic. I can remember talking to Dick. At one point, there was protestors that used to be out there after I started at UT and these guys standing there with their wives thumping their Bibles every morning, and I'd flip them a bird. And he said, "Yeah." He said, "You wouldn't believe the number of women who come in here for abortions."

JW: Who were associated with the protestors.

LM: So they were very courageous, but they haven't had that much problem that I'm aware of over the years. The Volunteer Women's Clinic seems to have had more protestors than they have. I mean, they had protestors for quite awhile, but it didn't seem to slow anything down, and eventually, they seemed to have given up.

JW: So I was curious how you saw the women's movement in those early years. You seemed to have been going to DC with an older generation of women, and at the same time, there are people who are saying they're in a women's liberation movement. There's maybe a younger group of women, women who are in their 20s, early 20s. Did you have relationships with women's libbers, or did you consider yourself a part of that same movement?

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LM: Well, the women's libbers that I ran around with were not in their 20s. They were in their 30s, 40s, and on up. Like I said, there was kind of a loosely-associated group. We were kind of flailing about as I look back on some of it, trying to figure out, expressing frustration.

Now, my situation was that I was married to a very liberated man who was very open, supportive. A lot of this stuff that a lot of other women were complaining about, their husbands—we were members of Second Presbyterian Church at that time, and we had this women's circle, young women's circle. And the wives, some were married in a fairly prominent Knoxville family who will remain nameless, and the guys would go off for a football weekend out of town when UT was playing. And they'd go get drunk, and they wouldn't come home for two or three days after the ball game and wouldn't call. These wives were complaining, and they're complaining about other things, and yet, I never had anything to complain about because John was just not that way. But there was a group. We met at different people's houses, and it was more of a searching, trying to figure how do you operate in the new paradigms, how do you push, what things do you do. But I couldn't sit around bitching and moaning about it. That was just not my--. The other thing is I never assumed, I don't know quite how to put this, that I couldn't do or wouldn't do.

I was very involved with the Homeowners Council with land issues, land use issues, water use issues, some of the stuff that they're dealing with out in East Knox County now, we dealt with out here in West Knoxville. I'd be down at the county commissioner a lot, observing, seeing what was going on, seeing the relationship with the developers.

So in '74, the two political parties traded out offices, and there would be people who would file for an office, but then at the last minute withdraw, leaving a candidate there. And that happened with the welfare commission. I think I was about thirty-one, and I just said, "Okay, I'm

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going to run as an independent for welfare commission." The Democrats had a very weak candidate who happened to be one of my neighbors, and the incumbent Republican, who we knew was as corrupt as they came.

We put together a campaign, didn't have to borrow any money. It was a lot of housewives in West Knoxville here, friends and what-not, and we rented an old house from Highland Memorial that they were going to tear down for a month. While I was out campaigning, a group descended on the place, painted every square inch of it, even the bathtub, and that was our campaign headquarters. There's blank spots in my memory of that summer, but we went around to every horse show, picnic, community fair. My kids just loved it because they got to go eat hot dogs all the time. And running as an independent, I went to everything that the Democrats did and everything the Republicans did. I think there were about twelve people running for governor that year, including Jake Butcher and Franklin Haney and some people that I got to know, Jake, which led to other things in my life.

I got the endorsement of the *News Sentinel*, came in second in the race, and on election night, we went down to one of the TV stations for interviews. So they pulled John aside because they had the weather girl interviewing the candidate's wives and they said, "This is Mr. Mashburn," only they introduced him as "Mr. Lillian Mashburn," which a lot of men would not have tolerated very well. (laughs) But anyway.

JW: So who won that race?

LM: The Republican incumbent won that race. He later went to jail on thirty-five counts of extortion.

JW: Oh my gosh.

Interview number U-0541 from the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at The Southern Historical Collection, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

LM: I'm counting my lucky stars I didn't win, but I learned a lot. There were people who were willing to pay a lot of money. I would take a hundred dollars from anybody because I could always give that back, but I had a guy who was willing, he wanted to own a commissioner, so he was going to give me twenty-five thousand. I had guys who wanted to pay for people to get jobs and give me money so they could get jobs. I think the scariest ones were the fellows that wanted to get back to John Charlton Home, which was a home for children, because they liked the little girls. I mean, these were sleazebags. So it was an education and a half. I stood at a lot of factory gates, and this was back when women weren't running very often. The husbands of these women who were campaigning with me would get up at the crack of dawn, and we'd go down to the factory gates and shake hands. Most of those places, Levi's and Rohm and Haas and all, are still not there like they were, and Robertshaw. I could learn how to tell how a man was going to shake hands from watching the way they walked. And I didn't understand the value of a good, hard handshake, and now I really understand how politicians really relate because they want that physical contact with people, although I have known politicians, some senators from this state, who didn't like it. But I found that that's part of the whole political gig.

JW: So did you learn how to do it?

LM: Oh I knew how to do it, but a lot of men will come and give you this little limp-wristed, barely shake your hand.

JW: Because you were a woman?

LM: Yeah. They just didn't know how to interface, and there was one guy that I'd gone to high school with that came in, I think I was at Rohm and Haas, and he looked at me and his eyes got big and he said, "You're running for office?" "Yeah." (laughs) But I think the first political thing I did, I was about (**60:14**), was when Kennedy was running and there was a group

Interview number U-0541 from the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at The Southern Historical Collection, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

of us in our high school class who were Democrats, a rare breed. We wanted to volunteer. So I called the campaign headquarters, and they said, "Well, we'll have you come, and would you like to be hostesses when Lyndon Johnson comes to speak at a dinner?" Of course, we did, and we handed out programs and guided people to their seats and everything. And then we were in a position when they left to be one of the first people to shake hands with him and Lady Bird. A lot of people don't realize what a big man Johnson is, and when you shake his hand, you have been shook. That was quite an experience to get to be there. I look back on that now, on the program I've got from that night of all the people that I interfaced with in later years.

But after I ran for office, it was time to go back to work. So I got into a job hunt, and that's when I found that all of the years of volunteering and positions that I'd held as a volunteer, the things that I'd accomplished, didn't mean anything: "Oh, you were a teacher? Well, that was a while ago. What have you been doing?" None of it counted.

JW: So what kind of job were you trying to get into?

[Break in Recording]

LM: I really didn't know, anything faith and interracial opportunity, and value of people of all faiths, people of all races.

JW: So what were your duties when you became director?

LM: Well, we had Brotherhood Week activities, essay contests, art contests. We did programming. One of the things we did in '76, it was the bicentennial year, we did an interfaith program around the city with the Catholic church, the one downtown; it'll come to me. We went to Heska Amuna synagogue. We went to First Baptist. We went to the Greek Orthodox church. We went to churches all around the city and invited the whole community to come and

Interview number U-0541 from the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at The Southern Historical Collection, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

participate in learning about that particular faith, Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, Greek Orthodox. I think that's all.

JW: Did you run into any challenges being a woman and doing that with, I would assume, mostly male-led churches?

LM: Not really. I think I ran into more sexual harassment from Protestant clergy than I did in any other job I've ever had. But no, religion in some ways is okay for women to play in. It depends on how seriously they take you, and I wasn't trying to be a minister, although I did participate with the Knoxville Ministerial Association and served on some committees there. I ended up getting involved with the Chamber of Commerce. In that place, the only way a woman could gain any kind of leverage was to sell memberships, and I ended up being the first woman honorary life member of the Knoxville Chamber and earned my stripes that way. They used to have meetings up in Gatlinburg, annual planning meetings. I was the first woman to go as a participant, and John was the first spouse to go.

JW: And what year was that?

LM: '75, I think. I'm pretty sure it was about '75. And then the World's Fair was getting started, and I had been concerned that a lot of the planning and everything was not really involving the whole community, that it was more the businesses. I said, "If we're really going to make this work, you have to have the full community." I ran into Jake Butcher and Bo Roberts, who was the president of the fair, one day at the Hyatt for lunch and I told them. I said, "Y'all got to engage the full community." And they came back and asked me if I would be the chair of community involvement for the fair, and I said yes. There was a group of us about the same time working on some of the women's issues, a loosely-knit group that I was involved with, and we

Interview number U-0541 from the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at The Southern Historical Collection, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

pushed them to get women on the board of the fair. We had two women on the board of the fair. They weren't of a sufficient level that they could create any trouble, but they were there.

I know when we made our first trip for the fair out to Spokane and Seattle, we loaded up a jet, and I had arranged with Jake to be sure that there was a representative of Knoxville College on board. There were some university people, but I made sure that we had some people that needed to be represented that were not necessarily going to have those opportunities. And so we had hearings around the city. We had what we called the "expo energizers" and community people. We gave presentations all over town. God knows how many of those I gave. One of the groups I worked with was an organization called WATTEC, which was a technical conference that was held in Knoxville every year, and since my husband was involved in a couple of the high-tech professional societies, we gave presentations to the engineers and scientists around. I said, "Well, you've got this organization of thirty-some-odd technical professional societies. If the World's Fair is going to be about energy, we need to hook up." So anyway, I got the next version of the brochure for the fair that I worked on, they were included.

Now intervening in that time period, I left NCCJ and went to work for Jake Butcher, the banker, in the marketing department at United American Bank. Of course, he was head of the fair, and our marketing department did a lot of stuff for the fair.

JW: From the time you ran for welfare commissioner through these years with the fair and the Chamber of Commerce, it seems like you were becoming the first woman to do a lot of stuff or one of the only women breaking these barriers.

LM: The only woman at the table a lot of times.

JW: So what was that experience like? How did people receive you?

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LM: Well, I'm sure publicly they were nice to me. Behind the scenes, they were probably bitching about that broad. My granddaddy called me his "brassy broad." I know there was a lot of undercurrent sometimes. I just made assumptions that I can do and I did. I think you pay for that at times by not getting some of the recognition that comes to later women, but that's okay, because somebody's got to be out there.

In '79, we started the Executive Women's Association in Knoxville. I had been asked to be a judge for the Business and Professional Women's "Businesswoman of the Year" and all a couple of times. When I looked over the resumes, women were either secretaries or teachers. There were no businesswomen in there. So working with a couple of accountants that I knew, there had been a group set up out of Nashville called EWA, and right now I don't remember what it stood for. And there had been a chapter formed here, but several of the women that were in it, number one, didn't have jobs and mostly wanted to sit around and drink and bitch, and that's not what we wanted to do.

So a small group of us had a rump meeting and formed the Executive Women's Association, which we just celebrated our thirtieth anniversary. I was the first president. We vowed no recipes, no fundraisers. This is purely a support network. We drew in businesswomen and professional women. You kept scratching the surface and different people kind of. The lawyers, it was just when women attorneys were just getting their feet on the ground in Knoxville. Accountants were beginning to get their feet on the ground. So things were beginning to change. I remember one time, we had the mayor, Kyle Testerman, come speak. This was in the 80s, and he was just floored when we went around the room and everybody introduced themselves. He said, "I didn't realize that there were this many women lawyers, doctors, and all in town." We'd been kind of this little subgroup, and one of our goals was to try to get women in

Interview number U-0541 from the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at The Southern Historical Collection, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

different positions and get a woman on the board of the Chamber, and making things happen, and we were successful.

JW: How big was that group when it started and do you know how big it is now?

LM: We may have had fifteen, twenty people, and it's limited to sixty at this point. You have to be nominated to join, and it's limited to sixty. I'm an emeritus member at this point. I think we have accomplished what I had hoped we would.

JW: And could you say more about what those hopes were when you started?

LM: The fact that we would get women on boards and get women into positions. We would have a support base for each other such that when we saw opportunities, they would be shared. Women would support women, and I think for the most part, we've done that.

JW: Because I was going to say, if you have a bunch of successful people together, it seems like one problem could be competition.

LM: Well, there's always that, but I think for the most part, we've been fairly successful as a group of really opening up and trying to keep that down and recognizing that we're trying to support each other and support our community.

JW: Have you been able to, or has the group been able to draw from different areas of Knoxville, and is it racially diverse?

LM: Oh it's very racially diverse. There are women retailers. There's women doctors, lawyers, scientists, just a little bit of everybody, university deans, because we have more deans at UT that are women, and not just in the women's areas. I'm very proud of that, and we kept pushing to make that happen.

JW: So how is it now to see the possibility that a woman might become mayor in Knoxville?

Interview number U-0541 from the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at The Southern Historical Collection, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

LM: Oh I think it's fantastic. I supported Madeline before. I don't live in the city, so I can't vote for her, but Madeline and I have been good friends for a long time.

JW: It seems like you helped to provide a foundation for—

LM: I hope so.

JW: For that to happen.

LM: Yeah, I worked on a lot of women's campaigns. But I think the association, the crazy thing that happened when I started working with the energy conference through the fair, when I went to work for the bank, I had developed relationships with some high-tech companies. I guess it was the fall of '77, the people that were associated with the conference, with WATTEC, came to the bank and wanted Jake to chair the public awareness symposium that they were having. And I think of anything that influenced the latter part of my career, this was the turning point. And Jake turned to me and said, "Okay, you're the only one at the bank that speaks engineering." So I was assigned to help make that happen. That involved, we met with the governor's staff in Mississippi and trying to have a governor's conference as a part of that. It turned out that that was during a coal strike, and all manner of mayhem ended up screwing it up. But anyway, I developed a relationship with a lot of the leadership out in Oak Ridge at that time, the head of engineering.

So after the conference was over in February, the leaders went to Jake and said, "This has been great, and we want Lillian to continue working with us." And he said, "Terrific." So that became, from 1977 to 2000—and God knows when we'll finally put the kibosh on the thing, at least 2002, maybe. I either served on the board, was chairman of publicity, was deeply enmeshed in that whole milieu. But they gave me an entree into Oak Ridge, the political side of Oak Ridge as well as the technical side of Oak Ridge, and if I had questions, I could always ask John. But

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the serendipity of our careers has been quite interesting, because when he was changing jobs from TVA and all back to Oak Ridge, it was those contacts that I had.

And so I had started my public relations company in '78 in response to a need from one of the small high-tech companies that United American funded. They were trying to figure out how to get noticed because they were trying for contracts with TVA and so I worked with them on public relations. I had been director of public relations for United American for awhile and was, at that time, in corporate banking. So I started Public Relations Associates to take care of them and then left the bank in '80 to go work for an architectural firm and make more money and left there in '82, took them as a client, and started LTM consultants and continued to build relationships with Oak Ridge and with the university at that time. So in '87, then, the dean of engineering asked me to come and work in the College of Engineering, where I worked for five years.

JW: And were you again one of the only women?

LM: Oh yeah. (laughs) Definitely in engineering and that was an interesting experience. No sooner than I had gotten there than Walter Lambert, who was the head of government relations for the fair, whom I had extensive relationships with over the years through the fair and through just a lot of other things that we had been involved with together, he, Senator Sasser was coming for a tour and Walter wasn't going to be around. So he had me lead the tour and everything. So I ended up doing government relations almost from the very beginning of my time at UT. And so then in '87, no, in '97, then when Walter retired, I succeeded him as the director of federal relations for the university.

JW: And at that point, were things seeming to equalize between men and women or were there things that were expected of you that you think were affected because you are a woman?

Interview number U-0541 from the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at The Southern Historical Collection, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

LM: Well, you're still a woman and the university was still very hierarchical. I think today that is breaking down a lot more, but academia is—I saw it on a national basis because working in the job, I was in contact with people from all over the country, women presidents in a lot of universities, but in Tennessee, women need not apply and I've had women who the president of the University of Cincinnati, the president of Ohio State. When I was chairman of the Council of Government Affairs for the land grants, you were automatically on the board of the land grant board of directors for a year and so I was with the women. There was a woman who was president of the University of Cincinnati and a woman who was president of Ohio State, were on the board and they were sharing with me their frustration of having applied for jobs at UT and been basically told, "Women need not apply."

JW: So when you say that even though you were in these upper-level positions, you were still a woman, what does that—

LM: At UT.

JW: Yeah. So what does that mean?

LM: You're just not going to get the salaries. You're not going to get the same level. I didn't have a PhD. That's another problem. You're just not going to get the respect that men got. Again, I think that is starting to really change, but we still don't have a president and I had to work through two presidents who had major, major problems, Gilley and his girlfriend who wanted my job, and Shumaker, the next guy, who was also not a very good president. That was about as stressful a time as I can ever remember.

JW: So as you were building your career, how were you also managing your family and can you talk a little bit about how you were able to do both?

Interview number U-0541 from the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at The Southern Historical Collection, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

LM: I don't know. You just did it. I had a very supportive husband for whom there's not anything--. Cooking is not his skill, but he can do it, but at least he can change the oil and keep the car running. We just didn't have a whole lot of--. Rules and stuff were just not a big issue for us. I tried to be a good example to my kids about what life was out there. I wanted to raise them to be very independent and stand on their own two feet. I think we did that. My daughter is a controller for (**85:10**). My son is a computer guy, a subcontractor for the Department of Energy. I probably slighted my kids some when I shouldn't have. It's hard to know. It was a time of such change with the lack of role models, but then we had a lot of family support, and I think it was good that my children saw my mother working, and we had a very stable marriage when a lot of my kids' friends did not.

But I don't know. You just did. Somehow laundry got done. Keeping a perfect house is not high on my agenda, never has been, and most of the time we did it without household help. John can run a vacuum. So I don't know. I don't know quite how to--. (laughs) You just did it, and I think a lot of women will say that. You just figured it out as you went. I didn't really start heavy traveling until my kids were older. I think that would be very hard to travel a lot when your children are young, and the heaviest travel, my kids were both out of the house. So that was not that big an issue.

JW: Are there other reflections that you have about the women's movement, especially thinking about it from where you stand now?

LM: I think one of the things that's interested me is how men began to change attitudes as their daughters graduated from college and started looking for jobs. I saw a sea change in attitude because their girls were facing what a lot of the rest of us had faced. I think it became

Interview number U-0541 from the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at The Southern Historical Collection, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

clear that the path was not get a college degree, get married, and have babies. So I think there became a change that started in the late [19]70s and continued. I'm proud of what we did.

I am very disgusted, angry, frustrated over what I see is part of a religious—seeming religious, I guess, I don't know where it's all coming from—of trying to put the genie back in the bottle, trying to put women back into--. And they're using *Roe v. Wade* and birth control and all. I don't know if it's a generational situation where people are fearful, but I feel like some of the things that we accomplished, we're losing. I mean, to pass a bill that requires the IRS to look into the tax situation of women who have been raped, there's something sick going on. When Congress is spending all this time and our state legislature all this time on all of these non-issues, it's like the war on women. That's what some people are calling it, and I think that's very accurate. I think the war on teachers is almost a war on women. You espouse education as important and, yet, you're trying to take rights away from teachers. I don't get it.

So I'm very angry about that because I think we're trying to step back to a time--. And people keep talking about, oh, how it was in the [19]50s. Well, bullshit. (laughs) The '50s were not the be [all] and [end] all. I think women were stuck in family situations. They didn't have the independence to get out of abusive situations. There was no women's crisis center, women's sexual assault center. There was no support network in that era. I think you were brought up with this hazy idea of what life was supposed to be like and, in reality, it wasn't. What about all the women who worked as teachers, as secretaries in that era? It's like every woman stayed home and every woman did this and did that. The women who were nurses.

There's this distortion of what life was all about, but the fact that those women were all in what was considered lower-level jobs, and I don't think we have reached the point now where we value the fact that you can have a life and be productive. And I think that's one of the

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problems of getting women into higher ranks in corporations--. The fact that you want to have children and if you step off the rail and want to stay home with your kids for a year or two and get back on, you still can't do that very well. I mean, I was lucky. I had the ability to quit teaching, to develop relationships and a network that enabled me to change careers. It was that network that helped me do that, but it was my involvement in volunteer work and the community that enabled me to do it, and exploiting those relationships. But I had a supportive spouse, and I think a lot of women didn't have that.

A lot of women don't have that today. My daughter is a single mom and it's a scary place to be, but she had the guts to change her life and the ability to do it. And I think it's still a problem for women getting--. I listen to this wanting to cut services off for daycare support, cut WIC. It's like we want women to have the right education, we want women to be able to do and support families, but then we don't do it. Daycare workers are still paid minimum wage, and that's just not right. But I don't know how you get to where families can afford good daycare. We don't have the answers yet.

JW: Is there anything else that you want to talk about or any theme that we didn't cover that you would like to?

LM: I can't think of anything. I probably will think of stuff later. (laughs) It's interesting getting to the age I am because I can't believe I'm sixty-eight. I think about it every now and then. I think, "How in the world did I get here?" Because sixty-eight is not what sixty-eight used to look like or sixty-eight used to be. I think we've made great strides, women have made great strides in our physical health, of staying healthy and working out. Oh, and I think women's sports has made a tremendous difference in our longevity and how women feel about themselves.

JW: And is that something that you--. Did you start playing sports?

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LM: I never had the opportunity to play sports. Growing up out in the country, there just weren't any teams, and I didn't have really anybody to play with. And grace is not my middle name. I'm not very athletic. I have lobbied for Title IX and am very supportive of that, and also the women's athletics at the university and other areas. When I was in school, you played half-court basketball, which was the dumbest thing I've ever seen. You couldn't enjoy the game. You had to run up there and then you had to stop. It was going to damage your reproductive system if you played full-court basketball. And I was just reading something about the women pilots in World War II, that the hierarchy wanted them not to fly before and after and during their menstrual periods because they would not be competent pilots. But that went by the wayside because they didn't have time to fool with it. (laughs) Women were flying no matter what. So I think we've come a long way there. I think Title IX was God's gift to women because you look at girls' soccer, and my granddaughter plays soccer, and the women's basketball. I mean, these are real athletes. These are not dainty little girls dancing around the court. These are strong, strong women. It's something to be celebrated.

JW: Yeah. Was there anything else you would like to talk about?

LM: I can't think of anything right off the top of my head.

JW: Okay. Well, thank you so much for doing this.

LM: Oh, you're more than welcome. I hope I haven't bored you.

JW: No.

(break in conversation)

[After a conversation post-recording, we began recording again to capture another discussion that we had just begun.]

JW: Okay, so we had just started talking about how you learned to dress.

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LM: Well, I think it was in the late [19]70s that I finally really started paying attention, but there hadn't been many opportunities to have clothes, suits and things that worked. And Shriver's here in town started carrying a line of men's business. Suit makers were starting to make suits for women, and so I conducted a little bit of a test when I was on a trip and found out as long as--. You needed to keep your jacket on. You didn't go around with just the blouse or the dress. You kept your jacket on, which really gave you, wearing jacketed outfits kept you more in a professional line. Now this was before business casual, any of that ever came up. So I would always wear a suit with a jacket and in the meetings, I kept my jacket on.

JW: Now, why would you want to keep your jacket on?

LM: Because once you took it off, that took away your authority or something. You could tell it was psychological with guys, but as long as you were wearing that suit jacket and you were at the table, and many times I'd be the lone female in the room, but I always kept my coat on.

JW: Do you think it was partially covering your body, keeping covered?

LM: Yeah, but it was also if you wore a blazer, and most of the jackets I had were pretty much blazer-type professional-looking jackets, that you just were part of the scenery. You were part of the bunch, the group. I always kept long skirts below my knee because you didn't want people focusing on sexualizing you or focusing on what you wore particularly, other than you wanted to be professional-looking. And the areas in which I worked, it was important in banking and other things to look professional. And dealing with a lot of the engineers and what-not, you just needed, that was the persona that you develop is how you want to be viewed and that was important.

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Now by the time I turned sixty, I said, "I've had enough of panty hose and I've had enough of skirts," and so I wore professional-looking pant suits, pants and blazer and all. That really got started as well in DC because professional women didn't want to have to worry about where their skirts were. You see Nancy Pelosi in a pant [suit]. You saw Hillary Clinton in pants. You saw an awful lot of the congresswomen in Washington wear pants and pant suits. They just don't wear skirts, and it's gotten even harder now. When I retired, I had wool gab suits and pants and skirts and all that I'd had for ten years and still in excellent condition. And you take them up to the consignment shops since you're not going to be wearing that anymore: "Oh well, nobody wears that."

I think today, women wear pretty much what they want to and I guess it's because I'm an old lady, but I still say wearing really low-cut stuff to the office and really short stuff to the office is not professional-looking and you're exposed, the potential for exposure of body parts that you probably shouldn't be exposing in a work situation. But again, that's just somebody from my generation speaking, but I've found that you--. And I can remember back when mini-skirts were popular earlier and my mother said the gals would lean over in the file cabinet and she said, "Do they have any idea what all they were exposing?" (laughs) But I do think dress is very, at that time, was extremely important to convey a position of competence, of authority, and I think the way you carry yourself. I learned very quickly when I was working with the Chamber in the beginning and dealing with a lot of businessmen. I'd heard about and all, if you act like you know what you're doing, people think you know what you're doing. I think dress is a part of that.

JW: Were you ever getting involved in the Knoxville Women's Center helping out? Because I know they had a clothing thing.

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LM: Yes, yes.

JW: So did you ever work with them on training women or volunteering?

LM: Yes, yes.

JW: What did you do there?

LM: I helped with some workshops.

JW: Do you remember what those workshops were?

LM: Oh geez. We did some workshops on networking. That was one of the things I did a lot of was workshops on networking, building networks, how to present yourself. And earlier than that, we did some workshops on women's choices and looking for careers. That was back in the early [19]70s.

JW: Okay.

LM: Like I say, things have changed. (laughs)

JW: Yes.

LM: But I haven't put on a pair of panty hose in so many years, it's not even funny, and don't intend to.

JW: Well, thank you for indulging me.

LM: Okay.

JW: In adding that last part.

LM: What were other people saying about clothes?

END OF INTERVIEW

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