

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ARLENE NORA

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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SEASIDE PARK, NEW JERSEY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kathryn Tracy Rizzi: This begins an oral history interview with Arlene Nora on January 24, 2019, in Seaside Park, New Jersey, with Kate Rizzi. Thank you so much for having me into your home to do this interview.

Arlene Nora: You're quite welcome. It's very interesting to see what's going to come of it.

KR: To begin, can you please tell me where and when you were born?

AN: I was born in Middlesex Hospital in New Brunswick on August 8, 1938.

KR: What do you know about your family history, on your mother's side?

AN: I know that she was born in Holland and all her brothers and sisters, and they came to the United States. I know quite a bit about that. She came here when she was seventeen because two of her older brothers had come to the United States first, and then they had them, her brothers and sisters, come over a little at a time. She came here, when she was [seventeen]. Then, she met my father years later. He was born in London, England, and he had come to the United States as young person.

KR: Where was your mother from in Holland? What do you know about her life in Holland?

AN: Well, she was from Hilversum. I don't know a great deal. They were a big family. Basically, I know that her brothers came first, and then her sister came. They sort of came piecemeal. Eventually, then my grandparents did come as well. So, they all immigrated to the United States. They lived in the Fords, Edison area, when she first came here, when she first met my father.

KR: When your mother's brothers first came over to the United States, where did they settle?

AN: In that area, in the Fords and Metuchen area, yes. They were in Middlesex County basically, all of them, eventually. Because there was quite a good-sized family, they came piecemeal.

KR: On your father's side, what was your father's life like in England?

AN: I really don't remember any of that, but he came here as a young child, so he was here longer than my mom. His brothers and sisters came. When he had married my mom and her family was here, his brothers and sisters had all moved to California, and he was the only one that stayed here. He didn't want to take my mom away from her family, so they stayed here on the East Coast and they all moved to California. I didn't get to know them as well as I did my mom's family. I have cousins on that side that I'm close with still, but my dad's family was all in California. I got to see them when I was married, and Bob and I went to California and I got to see some of my aunts and uncles out there. They used to come east and see my mom, but my dad died when I was very young. They used to come see my mom, so it was nice.

KR: Where in California did your father's family settle?

AN: In the Pasadena area, Los Angeles area in Southern California.

KR: Your father served in the military.

AN: Yes.

KR: What do you know about his military service?

AN: All I know is that he was in World War I. I don't know a whole lot about it. I'm sure I could look back at some of the records that I have, but all I know is that he did serve in World War I times. He was wounded when he was over there, which, ultimately, the doctors say was what caused his death because he had head injuries. I don't know a lot of the details, since I was only seven when passed away. I didn't get to know him for a long time. [Editor's Note: World War I occurred from 1914 to 1918. The United States entered the war in 1917.]

KR: Do you know the story of how your parents met?

AN: I vaguely remember. They met through my uncles knowing my dad and introducing my mom to them. That's how they met when they were in the Metuchen area at that time, and that's how she met him.

KR: What did your father do for a career?

AN: He worked at Rutgers for years. He worked in, at that time, they had a keys department in the facilities department, because I remember him always talking about keys. They had to make keys for all the rooms, and he was in charge of all that. That's about all I remember, being young.

KR: How did the Great Depression affect your mother and father?

AN: Well, being as young as I was, I don't really know. They struggled like anyone, but my dad always had a job, so we used to have [what we needed], all the kids. He made sure other people were taken care of. My sister worked at Camp Kilmer, which was the facility in Edison [and Piscataway], and every holiday he'd make sure she brought someone home who was stationed there. Most of the time, if they were English soldiers, they came and you'd think my father never left England when he'd start to talk with them. It was great fun to see him interact with these young men. It was really nice. I was really young, but I still remember having them come for dinner. [Editor's Note: Camp Kilmer in Piscataway and Edison served as an Army post and embarkation base from 1942 until 2009. In 1964, Rutgers University acquired 540 acres of Camp Kilmer and constructed Livingston College, which opened in 1969.]

KR: What did your sister do at Camp Kilmer?

AN: In the office she worked. She just worked as a secretary.

KR: What time period was that?

AN: I honestly don't remember. I would have to look back and see how old she was and when she was there. It was during the war undoubtedly, during World War II.

KR: Yes. That leads me to a question I wanted to ask you. What are your memories of World War II?

AN: Because my brother was away in the service, I was aware of the conflict going on, but I was so young that it didn't affect me other than the fact that it took my brother away, who was very special to me. We, like anyone, were rationed on foods, but we all lived comfortably. We were by no means wealthy. Having eight children in the family, you didn't have much money, but we were all a very close-knit and loving family, so we did well.

KR: Your parents had a big family.

AN: Yes.

KR: Tell me about your siblings, their names, what years they were born.

AN: Oh, I'd have to look back.

KR: Sure, as close as you can get.

AN: My oldest sister was my sister Doris. I'd have to go dig out some information to give you all the dates.

KR: Sure.

AN: I don't remember.

KR: Yes, no problem.

AN: Then, my brother, his name was John Richard, but we called him Dick. He was next in age. Doris, Dick, and my sister, Gertrude was next and my sister Florence and then Alice and then, as my mother called us, the little ones, Bob or Robert, Alfred and myself. We were the little ones, the three youngest.

KR: You are the youngest.

AN: Yes.

KR: Was it your oldest sister Doris that worked at Camp Kilmer?

AN: No, it was my sister Gertrude. No, Doris was married when she was eighteen. I was very close to her because she sort of took on the care of me, like she spoiled me. She dressed me and

everything else. My other sisters and brothers were like, "Hm." [laughter] I was like her little girl because she didn't have children for years, so I was her little one when she was first married. She then had a family later on in her marriage, but I was her little girl.

KR: It was your brother Dick who served in the military during World War II.

AN: Yes.

KR: What do you know about his service?

AN: He was in the Navy and I don't actually know where he was stationed or anything anymore, because I was so young then. I have pictures of him and I when he came home on leave in his uniform, but I was so young.

KR: What do you remember about the war ending?

AN: Well, my dad had a little cannon. When it ended, he took it outside and he shot it. I had never seen that, but he shot it off because the war was over and he was so happy because he knew my brother was then safe. I can almost picture that and I don't remember a lot of things, but that's something I can remember him doing because everybody was so happy that the war was over.

KR: Did your brother Dick use the GI Bill?

AN: No. He went to work as an electrician, and he worked doing that the rest of his life. He didn't go to school. My two younger brothers went to college. Thanks to my father working at Rutgers, they had tuition remission. I'm sure people made sure, for my mom's sake, that they got to go to school because he had worked there for a number of years. He was not living at that time, but they did get to go to Rutgers.

KR: That's great.

[Editor's Note: Mrs. Nora's telephone rings.]

[RECORDING PAUSED]

KR: Okay, we are back on the record recording.

AN: Okay.

KR: Where did you grow up?

AN: In Highland Park.

KR: Was it the same house your entire childhood that you lived in?

AN: Yes.

KR: Tell me about the house and where it was in Highland Park.

AN: It was a small house because my mom, being a widow for so long, it was a little house with actually two bedrooms but we made a third bedroom out of the sun porch, that's what they called it. We had three bedrooms. In one bedroom was two sisters and, at some points three sisters, and the double bed. My dad had built bunk beds for my one sister, [who] had the bottom, and the two boys had the upper bunk. I slept in a crib until I was five, I guess, in my parent's bedroom. We were very limited on space, but we were very happy. We didn't do without because my dad always worked. My mom never worked. My father wouldn't let her. With eight children, she really couldn't at that point. It was great growing up.

KR: What was the neighborhood like in Highland Park?

AN: It was middle class, had lots of neighbors and lots of kids and fun, because we were all about in same situation. In Highland Park, growing up then, the north side were the wealthy, and we were on the south side. We were not in the wealthy neighborhood.

KR: You were growing up in the 1940s and 1950s.

AN: Right.

KR: What was it like growing up in Highland Park during that time period?

AN: Well, I loved it. We were very happy there. It was a nice community because it was close knit. You had lots of friends, and the high school was small enough so that you knew almost everybody from freshman to seniors. When I was a freshman, my brother was a senior, so I knew people in all the different classes, so it was just a nice close-knit community to grow up in. I loved it.

KR: Was your father's death sudden?

AN: Basically, yes. I'm sure as a child I didn't realize that he wasn't particularly well, but he worked all the time and when he got sick it wasn't that long. He didn't linger a long time then. It's funny how certain things--I mean, my memory has really given me trouble lately--but I can remember the day he died. I can remember my uncle, my mom's brother, was a minister and he brought her home and it was in the middle of the day, so we knew something was wrong because she was always at the hospital. I can remember my one sister was very close to my dad, and once she saw my aunt, she started crying. I was like, "What's happening?" because I was so young. Yes, it was. I'm sure he wasn't well for a while, but he kept going. Once he was in the hospital, it was, I don't know how long, but it was probably weeks or a week. I don't know exactly. I don't remember that part, but I can remember the day that he died because I was so young.

KR: You said your mother never worked outside of the home.

AN: Not until we were all grown up, and then she just did childcare for people, for families, that was what she did. She stayed home. That was one of the things you just knew; once you got to the age of earning money, half your money went home for the family and half was yours. So, everybody did that. My brothers didn't do as much because they were able to go to college, but everybody, that was just how we grew up. You knew that you had to help support mom and the family, so that was how we survived.

KR: You mentioned your mother's extended family in the Middlesex County area. Was there a close-knit family community when you were growing up?

AN: Oh, yes. My cousins and I still are close, my mom's one sister who she was the closest with. The other cousins, I don't see, but my mom's one sister, we, generally, Bob and I go to Aruba every winter. We're not this year because I had eye surgery, but we go with two of my cousins and their spouses. The six of us go every year to Aruba because we were always very close with them and still are. The two sisters were very close, so our families were very close. We did a lot of things together.

KR: What are some memories that you have of doing things with your family members?

AN: With my family?

KR: With the extended family.

AN: Well, we always celebrated birthdays, because my mom's sister had a birthday on Memorial Day weekend, so that was always spent with the O'Sheas. That was always fun. My aunt had, I think, five, but my mom had eight children. My aunt used to take me during the summer for a couple weeks to give my mom a break. [laughter] They were very close. It was fun. Like I say, I still see those cousins a lot. The other extended are scattered all over, but that family, we all remained very close.

KR: What type of family vacations or travel did your mother and your siblings and you do as a child?

AN: Very little because there wasn't money to, but my sister, I know a couple times, rented a house down the shore here and we would go away for a week, my mom and the boys and I. The ones that were working, of course, had to stay home, but my oldest sister used to generally see that mom got a vacation at least during the summer and we would come to the beach.

KR: Which beach town was that?

AN: Generally, in the Lavallette-Seaside area. That was going to the beach for us because that's where we knew. We usually got at least one week, and Dad and my older sister Gertrude used to stay home. My sister Doris would take us to the beach with her husband, all of us. We stayed in little tiny places, but we still got to come to the beach.

KR: When you were growing up and you were in grammar school, what were your interests? What were your hobbies?

AN: Oh, gosh, I don't remember.

KR: Did you join any clubs or sports?

AN: Oh, I was always, once I was in [school] where they offered it--they didn't have it in the elementary like they do now--but always from junior high to high school, I always participated in the sports activities. I was a twirler and I was the leader of the twirlers when I was in high school. I was always very active in high school. I enjoyed being in different activities, so I did a lot of that.

KR: What was twirling?

AN: With the baton.

KR: Was that marching band?

AN: Yes, we were the head, in front of the marching band all the time, at all the games and parades. The twirlers were in the lead.

KR: What other sports did you play?

AN: Well, we had intramurals, and I did that. I loved sports. Well, I grew up with two brothers right next in age to me, so I was always competing with them. [laughter] I enjoyed playing different sports, intramurals. I enjoyed sports. We played baseball [and] whatever was the season and whatever was in gym class, and they used to have a sports club that we could join, so I was very active in that type of thing.

KR: I am always interested in hearing stories about women playing sports in the years before Title IX.

AN: We did it as, what they called intramural in the school and sometimes with other schools but basically always in any sport in school I loved it. I loved phys ed [physical education]. A lot of girls didn't like it. I loved it because I loved playing all the different sports and being active. I guess that was from growing up with two brothers next in age to me. [laughter]

KR: Your father worked at Rutgers. You grew up across the river from Rutgers. What are your earliest recollections of Rutgers and the Rutgers community?

AN: My dad worked there, my uncles worked there, so I knew of Rutgers a lot, then, of course, my brothers going to school, and me, as soon as I went to work, I went to work at Rutgers because generally you went to J&J [Johnson & Johnson] or you went to Rutgers and I chose to work at Rutgers. I worked at Rutgers from the time I got out of high school in different offices. I was in graduate admissions before I went to the IRW [Institute for Research on Women]. I

worked there for a number of years, and that's where I retired from. [Editor's Note: The headquarters of Johnson & Johnson is located in New Brunswick, New Jersey.]

KR: What did your uncles do at Rutgers?

AN: They worked in the same area, like my dad, in maintenance.

KR: Those were your mom's brothers.

AN: Yes, my mom's brothers. Uncle Jasper, I don't know where he worked. He ended up being the custodian at our church in New Brunswick. Of course, her older brothers and sisters lived out in Fords. I don't even know what my uncles did. My mom never drove, so we used to take buses to Fords to visit relatives. We didn't go too often, but we did. We got around. My mom and I went to lots of places together, being the youngest.

KR: You mentioned a church in New Brunswick.

AN: Yes.

KR: What church was that?

AN: The Second Reformed Church on College Avenue. I was a member there until I moved down the shore, from the time I was born, I was baptized there. [Editor's Note: The Second Reformed Church on College Avenue is now called the College Avenue Community Church.]

[Editor's Note: Mrs. Nora's telephone rings.]

KR: Let us pause.

AN: No, that's all right.

KR: What role did religion and the Second Reformed Church play in your life growing up?

AN: We went every Sunday. My mom didn't always get to go because she didn't have someone to take her all the time, but we took the bus on Sunday mornings. My brothers and I would take the bus to Sunday school every Sunday morning, and sometimes they made me walk back because they wanted to save the bus fare and I was little. As lovely brothers, the bridge going across from New Brunswick to Highland Park had wood slats, and they knew I was afraid to walk. So, they'd run across and they'd leave me, and I'd stand there until they'd come back and get me. They were charming. My mom made sure we went every Sunday. Sometimes, some of my relatives would bring us back home. For the most part, the three of us would go off every Sunday morning. My mom made sure we did that. It was always a big part of our growing up was our church.

KR: What activities at the Second Reformed Church were you involved in, Sunday school, youth group?

AN: Oh, yes, I went to Sunday school and youth group, all the time. All through high school, I would go to youth group. Some of my cousins lived fairly close, and they would make sure we all got there. I stayed active in it. I served on the consistory once I was married and Bob joined our church, until we moved down here. Now, we belong to church down here. [Editor's Note: Each church of the Reformed Church of America (RCA) has a consistory, which is a board that includes ministers, along with elected deacons and elders of the church's membership. The purpose of the consistory is to assist in the implementation of the church's mission.]

KR: You mentioned Highland Park High School. What schools did you go to for elementary and middle school?

AN: They were all in Highland Park. I went to Irving School and to Hamilton School and then to the high school. You went from first through sixth in Irving School and then seventh and eighth in Hamilton and then four years in high school.

KR: What teachers stick out in your memory as being influential in some way?

AN: I think I remember some of the ones that were tough more than anything. In high school, well, I had this one teacher who made me do certain things, she was the head of the twirlers, and she made sure I got my driver's license because I hadn't done it and she had driver's ed class. She said, "Arlene, you're going to get your license this year. You've got to take the class." So, she pushed me to do certain things and she was good. She was very good to me.

I had one teacher in elementary school, Mrs. Borden, and she probably [laughter] wasn't a good teacher, but we loved her. Her big thing was nature study. We learned a lot about nature study-- [that was] not so much what we were supposed to be [learning]--but she was a dear lady and she was very good to me. A lot of the teachers knew my family and knew my mom, so they were usually pretty good to us.

KR: You were in high school from 1952 to 1956.

AN: Right.

KR: What messages were being sent to you as a woman from teachers, from people in your community, from your family?

AN: Well, there was not any stereotypes that because you're a woman, you couldn't do things. I think I was more in the period to be able to do what you want, not what you wanted, but that women had a place in society and that you could go as far as you wanted to go and there was not anyone holding you back. I wasn't able to go to college only because of my family situation, but most of my friends did. It was a time where the women were--it was more accepting then for you to further yourself in whatever way you could. Like I say, almost all my friends went to college; they were the people I was with. As a matter of fact, my best friend died when she was fourteen, and her dad had set aside money so that if I wanted to go, I could go and take advantage of starting college. It was very nice.

KR: It sounds like a really close-knit community.

AN: Oh, it was. Highland Park was much smaller than it is now, and you knew everybody in your class because, well, I forget how many [were in] our graduating class. Maybe [there] were a little bit over a hundred then. Now, it's a much bigger school, but you knew everybody from the seniors to the freshman. Everybody knew one another, and of course I had the advantage of having older brothers and sisters. My brother was a senior, as was my husband, who was my brother's best friend.

KR: Ah. [laughter]

AN: He went away to college and came back and found I had grown up. [laughter] It was funny because there were two friends of my brother's, and my Bob said to Lou, "I'm going to ask Arlene out this weekend." Louie said, "Oh, I was thinking about that too, but okay." That was it; he didn't step on Bob's toes at all. It was a small community and very much a community. You knew people from all over town because a lot of my friends were not kids I went to elementary school with but ones I went to junior high and high school with. As small as it was, you just knew everyone.

KR: What happened to your best friend?

AN: She died of cancer. She got leukemia when she was fourteen. Oh, it was so devastating. She had two brothers and she was the youngest, and they adored her because she was so good. She was such a good person. They all got allowances and her brothers always came to her because they spent theirs and she would give it to them, but that was the type of person [she was]. Everyone loved her. They closed school the day of her funeral because that's how [much] everyone loved her. Yes, she was a great kid.

KR: When you were in high school, what did you do for fun in Highland Park and in the surrounding communities?

AN: I was very active in school because I was a twirler. I was always in the girls' sports. So, your activities were basically in town. I mean, you went to New Brunswick to go to a movie or something like that, but for the most part, school activities were what we were always busy [with]. There was always something going on at school then. I was usually involved. I enjoyed being involved in all the different activities, so that's what I did. There were always clubs and sports and stuff, and I went to all the games because my brothers were in it. I just always enjoyed being social. I was always busy in high school.

KR: You mentioned the theaters in New Brunswick.

AN: Right.

KR: Where did you do your shopping?

AN: In New Brunswick, for clothes. Food, of course, was in Highland Park, but P.J. Young's was a big department store there and that's where we shopped. I worked there when I was in high school. So, I got very fond of that. At that time, in New Brunswick, Roselle's was a lesser price, where my mom shopped a lot, and P.J. Young's was a little higher up on the ladder. Then, when I got to work there, I got to buy things there. As a kid, my mom would always shop at Roselle's because that's what she could afford with eight children. I don't think I ever felt deprived because everybody was always close and we did things together. It was a good childhood, even though I didn't have my dad.

KR: What was it like working at P.J. Young's?

AN: Well, I worked in the office, so I liked that because I didn't have to [work on the floor]. I worked on the floor after having left and then went back during Christmas I did that for [a short time], but for the most part, I worked in the office. I liked that because I didn't have to work on the floor and sell. Yes, I enjoyed my work there.

KR: Do you remember how much you made per hour?

AN: Not much, I'm sure, but I don't remember exactly.

KR: Were there other part-time jobs that you had when you were growing up?

AN: Yes, I worked in the five and ten, one of my first jobs. I did that, but then when I got to work at P.J. Young's, that was what I did summers. I worked there after I had worked at Rutgers and then I went back and worked there in their office, but it was just usually part-time things, like for Christmas or something, because I didn't work when my children were little. I went back to work at Rutgers when they were in school full time. I used to just work until two o'clock. I left after they left for school, and I was always home when they came home from school. I just worked part time at Rutgers for a number of years until they were on their own, more or less in high school and could be left alone. Basically, most of my employment was through Rutgers. Like I said, I worked little odd jobs at different places, but most of it was at Rutgers.

KR: I want to ask you about your brothers, Bob and Alfred. Going to Rutgers, what did they study?

AN: My brother Alfred was in education, and he ended up being a high school football coach and [into] sports. He was very active in sports, so he became a high school teacher. He got his master's. Then, my brother Bob became a dentist. He kept going with his education. He became a dentist. So, they both did well.

KR: Did they commute to Rutgers?

AN: Yes, because it wasn't that far.

KR: Right about the time you were graduating high school in 1956, it was the Hungarian Revolution, and many Hungarian refugees came through Camp Kilmer. Many of them ended up settling ...

AN: Well, in New Brunswick.

KR: Yes, many of them ended up settling in the Hungarian communities in New Brunswick.

AN: Yes.

KR: What recollections do you have of that?

AN: Very little really. I knew about them because of going to church in New Brunswick. The Hungarian church there, most of them went to the Hungarian [Magyar] Reformed Church there. We didn't have a whole lot of interaction with them at our church. I remember it happening but not any specifics.

KR: What did you do after you graduated from high school?

AN: I went to work at Rutgers. I worked for the Football Hall of Fame for a while, and then I worked in graduate admissions. Then, when I came back to work, after having my family, is when I worked for the IRW.

KR: How did you get the job at the Football Foundation and Hall of Fame?

AN: Just applying to Rutgers. That's the job I was offered, and that's what I took.

KR: What did you do in that job?

AN: I was the secretary, and as it grew, I had other people under me. I was the head of the office. We started out small, and then we ended up with three or four women working in the office when I was there. It grew and I grew. Then, of course, I left when I had my children.

KR: How did the Football Foundation and the Hall of Fame grow during the time you were working there?

AN: Well, it started small, but one of the bosses, Harvey Harman, had been a football coach and knew a lot of people. This wealthy man from New York came on the board, and he put his money into it and it grew. Then, it spread to the different colleges throughout the United States, so it grew quite a bit. [Editor's Note: Harvey Harman, a college football player and coach, coached the Rutgers football team from 1938 to 1941 and then from 1946 to 1955. The National Football Foundation (NFF) was founded in 1947. In 1951, the NFF inducted the first College Football Hall of Fame class. Chet LaRoche became the first chairman of the NFF in 1955. In 1971, Vincent DePaul Draddy succeeded LaRoche as chairman.]

KR: Who was the wealthy man from New York?

AN: I thought of his name, as soon as. It just went right out of my head. Oh, gosh, what is his name? I could picture him.

KR: Yes.

AN: I'd have to look.

KR: Was it Sonny Werblin?

AN: No.

KR: Oh.

AN: No.

KR: Okay, this is before.

AN: Yes, before Sonny Werblin.

KR: Yes.

AN: He was in on the beginnings of the Hall of Fame. I'm sure it's in all their records.

KR: We can add it to the record later. What did the Football Foundation and Hall of Fame do? What was it all about?

AN: I think it was just preserving the idea of college football, but they got chapters in different colleges all over for the Hall of Fame, so it just kept expanding as it grew. I left once I had a family and didn't do as much with it. It was a big growing time there for them because they started these chapters in college towns and everything, so that helped it expand. It was interesting.

KR: Where was your office?

AN: Well, we were in Winants. We were over on George Street and Seminary. We moved around as we grew. I guess the longest place was probably over on the corner of George and College Avenue.

KR: George and Seminary.

AN: George and Seminary, yes.

KR: Where was the actual Hall of Fame?

AN: I can't remember now where it was.

KR: What were the yearly ceremonies like when members were inducted into the Hall of Fame?

AN: I didn't do a whole lot with [that]. The different head honchos did all that. I didn't. I did paperwork. [laughter] If I can remember, they were, I don't know if they took them into New York for that. [Editor's Note: The National Football Foundation Annual Awards Dinner took place at the Waldorf Astoria in New York.]

KR: What were your interactions like with Harvey Harman?

AN: Oh, yes, he wasn't my first [boss]. George Little was my first, but Mr. Harman, I got along real well with him. He and I got along fine, and his wife. They lived right near campus there. I got along real well with him. He was good to me, and I enjoyed working with him.

KR: Did you go to football games during this time?

AN: Some of them. I went to the high school ones more than I did to Rutgers games. When I could get tickets, I would go. Because of growing up with brothers, I always loved going to football, so I did go whenever I could. I enjoyed the game.

KR: Then, you said you worked in graduate admissions.

AN: Right.

KR: This would have been in the late 1950s that you were in graduate admissions.

AN: Let's see, no. It would have been later than that because my children were born in the '60s. It was once they were in school. So, it was '60s and '70s because Alyson was born in '66, yes, so it was in the '70s.

KR: You worked in graduate admissions and then you moved to the Institute for Research on Women.

AN: I'm trying to think what the progression was there. I'd have to look back. What do you have date wise?

KR: In your pre-interview survey, you wrote that you worked at the Institute for Research on Women from 1975 to 1996.

AN: Yes, because I knew it was after the kids were in school. That's right, yes, it was once they were back to school. I worked from nine to two when they were younger and then went full time.

KR: You said before that you met your husband Bob, that he was your brother's best friend.

AN: Yes.

KR: You mentioned that he went away to college. Tell me a little bit about your husband Bob and his education.

AN: Well, he graduated from the Academy of Aeronautics in New York and worked in the airlines for a few years. He worked as an AMT mechanic and he wanted to fly, but you had to be over six feet tall and he wasn't. Now, of course, they don't have those limitations, but when he wanted to be a pilot, they wouldn't let him fly because he wasn't tall enough. His uncle was a contractor and said to him, "If you want to come home, I have a job for you." He came back home and started to work in the construction industry with his uncle because he couldn't do what he really wanted to do, [which] was fly. Once he came back home, that's when he asked me out because he had been living in New York. [Editor's Note: Aircraft Maintenance Technician (AMT) refers to the license to work in aircraft maintenance.]

KR: What was it like when you were dating? What did you do for dates?

AN: Well, he was pretty good about it. We'd go into New York to plays once in a while, when he had the money to do it, but he was very good about making things that we did interesting. We didn't just go to the movies all the time--of course, we did that too--but we did go into the city, and that was a big event for me because as a kid, I didn't get to do those things. He knew how to sweet talk me. [laughter] He's been very good to me.

KR: When you and your husband got married, where did you first live?

AN: We lived in an apartment in Edison, in a little three-room apartment for a while because friends of ours lived there, so we lived there. Then, once Rob was born, we moved into a two-bedroom in the same area. Then, from there, Bob built our house in North Brunswick, and we moved out of the apartments. When Rob was a little guy, we built the house. We lived there until we moved down here.

KR: When were your children born?

AN: Rob was born in 1962, and Alyson in 1966.

KR: What were those years like raising your children in North Brunswick?

AN: Oh, it was very nice. It was a nice community, and there were plenty of things for the kids. We lived off of 27. North Brunswick was so spread out, but we lived out off of Route 27. It was a great place for them to grow up because there was a park down the end of the next street, so they had plenty of place to play. It was a great community for them to grow up in, and opportunities as they went into school [were] always there. Alyson was more social and in activities. Rob was a little laid back, but he got there. They both graduated from North Brunswick High School. Alyson graduated from Douglass. Rob opted to not do anything when [it came time to go to] college, and so I told him, "If you want to go back, you're going to pay because you've got to decide you're going to study." Well, he didn't at first go back. His dad got him a job as a carpenter and he did an apprentice program and became a union carpenter and

didn't take advantage of his college. He took classes later on, but he didn't do that and then he got married and had five children. Alyson graduated from Douglass, and she's now a special education teacher in Newark.

KR: What school?

AN: In East Side High School. She earns her money, but she likes it. She always says, "Mom, if I can get one of my students a year that can go to college, I'm happy," because she teaches all the special ed kids, and in a city like that, it's tough. She likes it, and that's where she stayed. At the time she was looking for jobs, it was tough. She worked at a restaurant here in the summer, and this man that was her boss was a principal in Newark and he says, "Alyson, if you can't get a job, I'll get you a job." He did, and that's how she ended up teaching in Newark all these years. He found a position for her, so it worked out fine and she's still there. She says to me, "Well, Mom, I have three years, but I'm probably going to stay five years." I said, "Whatever you're happy doing, dear." She still teaches special ed.

KR: Is it okay if we take a quick break?

AN: Sure.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

KR: Okay, we are back on the record. When your kids were in school, you started working part time for the Institute for Research on Women. How did that opportunity come about to work at the IRW?

AN: When I first went back, I was working at graduate admissions and I bid into a job at the IRW. What was your question again?

KR: First, you worked at graduate admissions.

AN: Yes.

KR: What was your job there?

AN: I was a secretary. I got assigned to the one fellow who was in recruitment. I worked there until the job at the IRW was posted, and I bid into it.

KR: Why?

AN: It just was a little step up and sounded interesting.

KR: I am wondering what you remember about your interview at the IRW. Do you remember who interviewed you?

AN: I'm trying to think who. Let's see, who would've interviewed me there? I'm trying to think who. Who was first there when I went?

KR: Would it have been Mary Hartman?

AN: No. It was either Cate Stimpson or Ferris Olin interviewed me because I started out pretty much when they first started there. It would've been more like Ferris or Carol Smith who were in charge, but I don't honestly remember exactly who it was. [Editor's Note: Mary S. Hartman came to Douglass College in 1968 as a history professor. Hartman founded the Institute for Research on Women (IRW, then called the Women's Studies Institute) in 1975 and went on to establish the consortium of the Institute for Women's Leadership. Hartman served as the Dean of Douglass College from 1982 to 1994. Catharine Stimpson is a feminist scholar who came to Rutgers in 1980 as an English professor and headed the IRW. Subsequently, she became the Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education. She left Rutgers for New York University and is Dean Emerita of the Graduate School of Arts and Science at NYU. From 1985 to 1994, Ferris Olin, DC '70, served as the executive director of the IRW and the Laurie New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies. She went on to become the founding director of the Institute for Women and Art (now called the Center for Women in the Arts and Humanities). Carol Smith, a Professor Emerita of English, taught at Rutgers from 1959 to 2007.]

KR: What did you know about the founding of the IRW when you took the job?

AN: I didn't. I learned that as I worked there.

KR: What is the story of the founding of the IRW?

AN: I know Cate Stimpson was involved, and there were people, different professors, at Rutgers. I mean, it was a women's movement type of thing. Like I say, I was there fairly early, but how they got it all together, I'm not sure.

KR: When you first started at the IRW, where was the IRW housed?

AN: In the basement of Voorhees Chapel. Yes, we had the little offices down there, and women's studies were also down there with us. It was interesting. I think that's what held me there and kept me going.

KR: In those early years when you were in the basement of Voorhees, what did you do for your job?

AN: Well, we had a lecture series, so I had to coordinate all that. Then, as we moved into having scholars come in, that was my job, too, to gather all the information that these people submitted to become a scholar, and then once they were chosen, I had to help them find housing. It was organizing their lives when they came on campus. Some were a lot easier than others because some were from Europe, some were from the United States. It was very interesting. I enjoyed what I was doing. It was busy, and it was very interesting to learn about so many of these people because they came from such diverse backgrounds. It was good.

KR: What anecdotes stick out in your mind about some of the visiting scholars?

AN: Well, I'm trying to think of some. I remember the one couple that came from Sweden. It was nice to learn about the different cultures, and they were so different, some of the scholars, they were just completely different people. It was interesting just meeting different people from all over Europe and all over the United States, whoever was chosen to be scholars. It made it very interesting.

KR: You mentioned the lecture series and the visiting scholars. What are some of the other programs that the IRW put together?

AN: I think information from Ferris would be better on that. I know I had to work on getting different things from the scholars and of course publicity for our lecture series. We had students that came in and worked. I had to take care of the work study students that we had all the time. I always had to make sure they had work to do and got their time in. I was in charge of all the work study students too. It was a busy job, but it was a fun job.

KR: I want to ask you a question that does not have anything to do with IRW.

AN: Okay.

KR: You were living in North Brunswick and raising your children when riots were happening throughout New Jersey in 1967. There were near riots in New Brunswick. What do you remember about that?

AN: Not a great deal, but it was scary because I had young children. Fortunately, we lived out off of Route 27, way out, we were sort of on the boundary with South Brunswick, so we weren't in a busy area, which I liked because I felt more secure. We weren't into any of the city part of anything. We were way out. It was an upsetting time to see these things happen, but it didn't affect my kids or anything because we were away from it.

KR: You were a member of the Second Reformed Church for many years in New Brunswick. How did you see New Brunswick change over the years, during the 1960s and the 1970s?

AN: Of course, being on the Rutgers campus as our church is, you saw the different protests and things happening. Well, it was just progress. It was just the way the country was heading, and you had to learn to live accordingly. You had to protect yourself and my children, but we were away from it enough that I wasn't right in the city, having to face these protests. They were in the news but not directly affecting me.

KR: Did you get involved in any activism yourself?

AN: No.

KR: What are some memories that you have of the directors of the IRW?

AN: I didn't have to deal with Cate Stimpson too much because she wasn't there that long and wasn't there that much. She was a very busy lady. So, I wasn't really close [with her]. Carol Smith was there for a while, and I really got to know her and really like her. As a matter of fact, I still correspond with her. I really enjoyed working for Carol. She was very much a lady and very thoughtful and caring. I really enjoyed her. Now, Ferris wasn't a director, but she was always there. She and I got along really well and went through lots of ups and downs together and stuff. I liked the people I worked for. We had different people come in as directors, but you work with whoever you have to work with. It was interesting. Of course, I worked with all the scholars that we brought in, and it was a very interesting job. I enjoyed doing the things, and it was really great.

What's nice was when my daughter graduated from Douglass, knowing Mary Hartman very well, I had a wonderful seat for her graduation. [laughter] She made sure that everything was fine, so it was nice. She allowed me to go up and give my daughter her graduation diploma, so it had its perks. Yes, I enjoyed my time there; it was really good. I got to meet loads of people, very different, particularly when we had scholars from Europe. You just got to meet so many different types of people, and it was a very interesting job.

KR: I am wondering about the institutional support for the IRW. What was it like budget wise?

AN: Well, we would just wait, we had to work with what Rutgers provided, and then we always did really well because they provided the salaries for our directors because most of the time, they were someone who was on their salaries [and] were working for them anyway. Now, we had this one woman, Beth, who came in as a--I don't know actually what her title was--but she was under the director and of course she was separate. It was provided pretty well. We could do a lot with what Rutgers provided us. I think having the lecture series and bringing these scholars in was beneficial to Rutgers as well because they got to utilize the knowledge of these people that were brought in.

KR: You mentioned working with Ferris Olin and the ups and the downs. What were those ups and downs?

AN: You mean with her and I or with her job?

KR: With the IRW, what were the ups and downs?

AN: Well, making sure that we had support to do all the things that we wanted to do and keeping these scholars happy when they came, because they were coming from all different backgrounds and different countries. So, you had to learn. She and I, I felt, worked well. I didn't have a problem working with Ferris. I thought we got along well. I don't know how she felt, but I think we had a good working relationship. You had to work together to get all these things done, and you were fighting the big bureaucracy of the University there. I think we did well. We all worked pretty well together. Of course, she was the one I worked with the longest. Carol was there a long time, but then there were others after Carol.

KR: What was it like being a working mother?

AN: Well, since I worked only after my children were older, it was fine, and I had an understanding with my bosses that they came first so that if I needed time off for them I got it because they knew that was the most important thing. I think working with women, some of which were mothers, they understood, and we worked very well together.

KR: What type of interaction did you have with University administrators such as deans and provosts?

AN: Well, I didn't so much because they were over on College Avenue, the provosts were. With Mary Hartman, we had a very good working relationship. Our offices worked together on a lot of different things, and she was very easy to work with. Her staff and I worked on a lot of things together. As far as the president's office, they were there, and when we needed something, that was not my position to do, but my boss's. I think we were treated pretty well. Our programs were always funded, and we did a lot. We had a lot of lecture series, we had a lot of different things, and with the scholars coming in and housing them, it was busy. It was good.

KR: I want to ask you about the Laurie New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies. [Editor's Note: After the Blanche, Edith, and Irving Laurie New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies was established by the state legislature, philanthropist Irving Laurie endowed the chair in 1985. The Laurie Chair was designed to bring scholars of women's studies to Douglass College to conduct their research and interact with students. The chair is now called the Blanche, Edith, and Irving Laurie Chair in Women's Studies at Douglass Residential College and is affiliated with the Department of Women's and Gender Studies and the Institute for Women's Leadership Consortium.]

AN: I had nothing to do with that. Another secretary handled that totally. That, I didn't do at all. I was aware of it, and they had their lectures in our building, but I didn't have anything to do with the administration of that. They had their own secretary.

KR: What role did grants play in the IRW's work?

AN: Now, most of the scholars came with their own. When there was something that they wanted, I had to work on the paperwork part of it. Most of our scholars came with grants, even though we had to provide things for them. I know I helped with some grant writing, but I don't really remember too much about it. I know it wasn't fun. [laughter] They had so many nitpicky things with grant writing. The bosses did the grant writing. I just had to assist.

KR: Ferris talked about how when she first came to the IRW, she was also doing the Laurie Chair.

AN: Yes, she worked on both.

KR: She was the executive officer of both.

AN: Right.

KR: She talked about the Rockefeller grant, and that was being written right when she came in and Cate Stimpson was still in charge.

AN: Cate Stimpson, yes.

KR: Do you recall anything from the Rockefeller Fellows?

AN: Very little, because that was Cate's and Ferris worked with her, but I honestly don't remember now.

KR: You were working at the IRW when your daughter Alyson was going to Douglass.

AN: No, not at first. I was working there when she did go, yes. That was years later.

KR: Okay.

AN: Yes, yes. I was always there for her to come weekly for a handout. [laughter]

KR: I wanted to know what your interaction was with your daughter.

AN: I got a visit, when she ran out of money, she always came to see Mom. She, being on campus, I did get to see her, but not a whole lot. She was a busy gal. She knew where she had to come when she ran out of money. [laughter]

KR: Did she have the benefit of going to Douglass College with tuition remission?

AN: Yes, I just paid room and board because I said to them, my deal with them was, "If you go to Rutgers, you can live on campus and I will pay for that. If you go away to school, then it's a big difference." She did go to Rutgers. I was always there if she needed me.

KR: She ended up studying education.

AN: Yes, yes. She has a master's in special education. My only regret was that my son didn't do the same thing because he's so smart. He's successful in what he's doing, and that's what's important.

KR: When Carol Smith was the director of the IRW, this was the time when the Department of Higher Education funded a half a million-dollar grant through which the IRW was integrating women's studies into curriculum in higher education. What do you remember about that?

AN: I think that was not part of what my job was because it was women's studies. It was Adelina's I guess.

KR: What was the annual lecture series like?

AN: They had themes usually and then brought in different people to speak, and it was usually very well attended. I think we did always very well in it.

KR: Where was it held?

AN: Well, in Voorhees Chapel. There was a room there that we could utilize in the basement of Voorhees. When we moved over to our own building, then we had our own space, but it was in the chapel until we moved into our new building.

KR: What was that like when the IRW got its own building?

AN: Oh, it was wonderful because we had so much more space. A lot of work getting everything, but when we moved over there, the Laurie Chair did too. So, Charlotte Bunch and their group, we were all in one building there. [Editor's Note: From 1987 to 1989, Charlotte Bunch held the Laurie New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies. Bunch went on to found and direct the Center for Women's Global Leadership, which is part of the Institute for Women's Leadership (IWL) consortium.]

KR: That's the two-building complex on Ryder's Lane.

AN: It was one building. I don't know if there's something else there now, but when I was there, it was one building and in that was Charlotte's group and ours. [Editor's Note: This building is the Center for Women's Programs at 160 Ryders Lane.]

KR: That is the building on Ryder's Lane.

AN: Yes, you come down and you'd run into it.

KR: Now, it is a two-building complex, and they are right next to each other.

AN: Oh, okay.

KR: Yes, one of them is called the Ruth Dill Johnson Crocket Building.

AN: That was not there at all when I was there. That's past my time.

KR: Was there a fire? When the new building was being built, was there a fire and the building initially burnt down and then was rebuilt?

AN: You know my husband mentioned that. I don't remember that for some reason. Did Ferris remember it?

KR: Yes, and Mary Hartman did, too.

AN: I don't know why I don't remember it. It's weird.

KR: It was an accident. The construction people left a space heater running.

AN: I vaguely, now, I [remember], yes. I don't know why I don't remember it because those types of things I generally remember. It's funny because Bob remembered it. [laughter]

KR: There was a yearly conference called COW, Celebration of Our Work. What do you recall about that?

AN: I'm trying to think. I think that was when people submitted papers, and they came and presented. That was our big conference. I remember it was a lot of work for me [laughter] because logistics was my job, getting everybody where they were supposed to be and getting the conference set up. Yes, that was a busy time. It was interesting because you got to meet so many different people. That's the one thing I really enjoyed about it. I met so many different people from all different backgrounds, Europeans and people from the United States and scholars. It was a very interesting job.

KR: What did you have to do in terms of fundraising?

AN: It wasn't something I guess that I had to do. That, I don't remember. I don't remember doing that, but I'm sure they had to. Did Ferris say that she had to do a bunch of stuff on that?

KR: Yes, she talked about grant writing.

AN: Oh, yes, grants.

KR: She talked about fundraising and some of the challenges.

AN: I had to do the secretarial part of it, but I didn't have to do the actual fundraising. I wrote lots of grants for them and stuff. I typed them up. I didn't write them. I just did the secretarial part of it.

KR: Over your time at the IRW, you were in the basement of Voorhees ...

AN: On Douglass Campus.

KR: On Douglass campus.

AN: Yes.

KR: Then, you moved to the new building.

AN: Right.

KR: What changes did you see on campus over that time?

AN: Let's see, that was, I'm trying to think what years that was. We moved into the new building in--what year did you say?

KR: In the 1990s.

AN: In the '90s. What changes on campus?

KR: Yes.

AN: Douglass was still the women's college, but there was a lot of programs that were intertwined with the male groups and it just wasn't so solely a women's college. I think their horizons broadened a great deal because it was the coming of the times. I think they had to be more accepting of different things that were changing in society and you had to grow with what was happening. When I first went there and we were over in the chapel, we were a smaller, contained group, but I think we expanded a great deal when we had our own building and we were able to do a lot more things. Bringing in these scholars from all over the world, it was great. It was a big expansion, I think, for the IRW, and it was very interesting. I got to meet all kinds of people, and so it was good.

KR: Over the time that you were at the IRW, the IRW expanded, as you said. The consortium of the Institute of Women's Leadership was established. Women's and gender studies became a department and one of the top programs in the country. How did you feel that you were a part of this growth and expansion surrounding the scholarship of women?

AN: Well, I think when you're just a part of it, you don't think what is happening. I think it was great because it gave women so much more of a say in things that were going on in the world. Of course, I met a lot of different types of people. I met some very aggressive women that were, whoa, and I'm not in that category, but it was interesting to meet all different kinds and to see how the world was changing. Because I had grown up in a household with a mother who was a stay-at-home mother and then to see all these worldly women, it was interesting. It broadens your horizons a lot. I learned a lot. I had a lot of great women that I worked with, I mean, with Carol, and very different, because Carol and Ferris were very different personalities. Of course, I worked with Mary Hartman, and Cate Stimpson was a very strong woman. You met a lot of different types, and it was a very interesting job.

KR: What type of camaraderie was there with the staff and the faculty and the directors at the IRW? Would you go out to lunch?

AN: Oh, yes.

KR: Was there socializing?

AN: Oh, yes.

KR: What was that camaraderie like?

AN: I respected their position, but they never treated me like I was beneath them. I was included in a great many things, and it was a great place to work. I just left because I wanted to retire. As far as everything else, I got along well with them and never felt talked down to or anything else. I was included in their discussions and then everything else. I always felt very comfortable there.

KR: You mentioned the good seat at your daughter's graduation and then handing your daughter her diploma, along with tuition remission. What were some other perks of working at Rutgers?

AN: Well, I think just being exposed to all the different things. You could go and learn and go to so many functions and broaden your horizons and meeting so many different people from diverse backgrounds. I never would've met all these international scholars, and they were all so different. It was just a great experience to meet everyone. [Editor's Note: Mrs. Nora's telephone rings.] All day, that phone. Bob says, "This phone never stops and they're all business calls." I said, "I know. What can I tell you?" I've tried blocking some. It doesn't matter. They get through anyway.

KR: You were talking about the perks of Rutgers and meeting international scholars.

AN: Yes, it was an interesting job. It just wasn't, "Oh, I go to work and I sit there and type." I just met so many different [people] and liked some of the scholars. I get a letter from one of our scholars every year at Christmas time. I've kept in touch with a few of them, and it's great.

KR: Who have you kept in touch with?

AN: I had a letter from [Wanda Johnson] at Christmastime. I still hear from Carol. I don't hear from Ferris, but I do hear from Carol and Wanda. She lives out in Oregon, but I get a Christmas letter from her every year, what she and her family are doing. It was fun.

KR: Was Wanda a staff person?

AN: She was a scholar.

KR: Okay. For the record, Arlene is looking through her mail to find the Christmas card.

AN: Carol Smith. Wanda Johnson, she's from the State of Washington. I get a Christmas card from her with a note in it, same as I do from Carol Smith. It's nice. I still have some contact.

KR: What anecdotes do you remember from when Wanda Johnson was a visiting scholar?

AN: Well, she was a mother and left her daughter and her husband at home. She came here. We could talk since she had a child. I got to meet them. They did come East when she was just about finished. It was nice because it was a family type of thing. I got to relate with the scholars a lot because they came to me for the different things that they had to clear through the University, so I got to know them pretty well. Of course, we were right there on campus, so

when they had their lectures and all that stuff, I always had arranged things with them. It was a great place to learn and meet people. It was good.

KR: For the visiting scholars, did you arrange their housing locally in New Brunswick?

AN: Yes. That was one of my chores, let me tell you, try to find housing for them.

KR: Okay, yes.

AN: Yes. If they came alone or if they came with a family, I had different things to do. We had to arrange housing for them because they had to be accessible to campus, so that was part of the job was arranging to find housing for them while they were here.

KR: What was it like arranging housing and schools for a scholar who came with her family?

AN: Well, most of them didn't, but that was their job. I didn't have to do that. I found them a place to live. Then, they had to take care of their family's responsibilities themselves.

KR: Did any scholars want to live in New York City?

AN: I don't remember. Ferris probably would remember that; I don't.

KR: What about other staff people? Who were other people on the staff at the IRW over the years?

AN: I usually had one other secretary that worked with me. Sometimes, they would also work with the Laurie Chair and for IRW, but mainly there was just one other secretary that would help me. We worked closely at times with the secretary from the women's studies because we were in the same building, when we were in the chapel. After that, it was different. Then, we moved over into our own building; they weren't there because Charlotte Bunch was in the same building with her global center.

KR: What was that like, having the Center for Women's Global Leadership and Charlotte Bunch as your neighbors?

AN: Oh, well, it was good. She had different scholars that came. It was interesting to meet some of the international ones that she brought in. They had one floor. We were upstairs, and they were down. It was very interesting because you met so many diverse people, and it was great. If I wasn't ready to retire, I would [have continued], but I left because I wanted to retire. It was always new things happening, and it was a very interesting job, a lot better than admissions, [laughter] though I had a good job at graduate admissions.

KR: Why was it better than admissions?

AN: Well, because it was so different, I met so many people. In admissions, I had a separate boss. I wasn't under the director as much. I did different things for admissions than just applications. It was an interesting job; when I saw it come up, I thought, "It's time to move."

KR: Just curious, who was the Director of Admissions when you were there?

AN: Don Taylor, but I worked for Bob (Stowers?), who had a little separate job and that's who I worked for, but Don was the big boss.

KR: What was that separate job?

AN: I'm trying to think what his title was. I just know that we did a little something different from the rest of the admissions office. It was a separate program or something.

KR: Going back to secretaries of the IRW, do you remember who the secretaries were over the years?

AN: You mean that worked with me?

KR: Yes.

AN: I'm trying to think. She was from East Brunswick. We usually had one other person working, but she was working for Laurie Chair and us. I don't remember all their names.

KR: Marlene Importico?

AN: No, I don't remember her. She probably came after me.

KR: She might have come after you.

AN: No, I don't remember her.

KR: How about the secretaries at women and gender studies?

AN: Women's studies.

KR: Yes.

AN: Well, I worked with Adelina, she was the one who was there. She was still there when I left.

KR: Adelina?

AN: Adelina, A-D-E-L-I-N-A, Rodriguez. It was Hispanic I know, but she worked for women's studies at that time. I worked with her. We were both in the chapel. Women's studies and our office we were in the basement of the chapel for a number of years. She was the one I worked

most with because we were there for a long time. Then, when the Laurie Chair had their own secretary, then I worked with whoever they had.

KR: What was it like when the shift to computers came on?

AN: Well, you had to learn. [laughter] We took some classes, but that was the way you had to go. It made it much easier to me with typing into a computer and having it there, and everything was different than just sitting there, pounding away on a typewriter. It was a great learning experience, and I use it now all the time. I have a husband who knows nothing about a computer. Everything is, "Ar, would you do this?" I said, "Bob, when are you going to learn?" He said, "I don't want to learn." He goes, "I know how to turn it on in the office for what I have to input, and that's it." [laughter]

KR: What did you think about in 2006, when Douglass College became a residential college and stopped being a degree-granting college?

AN: I don't understand your question.

KR: Do you know how now Douglass students live on Douglass campus as a residential college, but it is now a part of the larger Rutgers University?

AN: Yes.

KR: What did you think of that?

AN: Oh, you mean when it was just a women's college?

KR: Right, exactly.

AN: I just thought it was part of the times. Being just a women's college wasn't advantageous. I think it was more advantageous to the students to have the broader field that they could utilize, so that didn't bother me. I thought it was a good opportunity for them. [Editor's Note: Mrs. Nora's telephone rings.] Now who? This is my day. Usually, I just let it ring.

KR: What was it like when you retired?

AN: It was wonderful. [laughter] I got to do what I wanted to do, when I wanted to do it. I keep active. I'm active in our church women's group. I was a member of the Women's Club in North Brunswick, and I used to commute up and do that for a number of years, but I don't anymore. I kept busy. I'm still very busy, active in my church activities in the women's group. The Women's Club, it just got to be too much commuting back and forth. I used to go up by myself, and Bob started objecting. He said, "I don't like you coming back at night all by yourself." It would have meant [for] him, he'd have to go and find something to do the whole time I was up there, so I said, "We'll just stop doing that." We're active down here, and we enjoy it. As a matter of fact, that's what my pen says, "Union Church of Seaside Park." [laughter]

KR: The Union Church of Seaside Park.

AN: Yes, that's where we are members.

KR: The address is 47 4th Avenue.

AN: Yes, we're members there. Bob served as an officer there, as a deacon in the church, and I'm very active in the women's part of it. We keep busy. We're not ones that just do nothing. We socialize with a lot of other people from the church. We've met a lot of friends, made friends down there, our neighbors, next block over, and we're good friends with them and we do a lot with them and they're part of our church too. The church has been a big part of our life down here because there's not a whole lot other than that to do. We're busy. Bob's eighty-three now and I'm eighty, so we try to keep going. Of course, that's what my daughter always says to me, "Don't you let Dad not let you drive." I say, "Don't worry about it. I get in my car and I go." I have my own. He has his own. We do things. We keep busy because, like I said, "He's working." Everybody laughs, "Bob, you're eighty-three. Why do you work?" He says, "Because I enjoy it." I said, "It's fine." You need a break, and I think that's good for him to get out with other people. We keep very active, so it's good.

KR: When you were part of the Women's Club in North Brunswick, what were some of the activities that you would do?

AN: Well, I was the president of it for a while. I was all along the line. I was the treasurer. I was president of the Women's Club. We brought in speakers to our meetings and we did a lot of charity work. We had fundraisers that we donated everything to charities, and so it was interesting. I enjoyed doing it. We worked hard and made money for others who needed it. People would come to us and ask for help, and we would have fundraisers to provide money for these things. It kept us busy. I liked it. I stayed in for a little while, but it just got too much commuting back and forth, especially at night. When we came down here, we got active in the church, so we do that.

KR: When did you buy this house here in Seaside Park?

AN: Well, we bought the house in '88, but we didn't move here permanently until 2000. Bob commuted up to North Brunswick for a while, and then he finally retired. Yes, we moved here in [2000], so we've been here quite a while.

KR: You would spend summers here in Seaside Park, even when you would still working at the IRW.

AN: Yes, because I had a ten-month job, I spent the summers here. He would not commute every day. He would stay up in North Brunswick and then come down, but then once he retired and we sold the house in North Brunswick, we lived here full time.

KR: I think you said before that you sold the house in North Brunswick in 2000.

AN: I'm pretty sure that's when it was, yes. It was time for him to retire. My goodness, I didn't realize it was getting that late already.

KR: Yes. I am looking over my questions.

AN: Okay.

KR: I want to ask you at this point, is there anything you want to add to the record? Are there any stories that we skipped over or any anecdotes that you would like to add?

AN: I think we covered quite a bit.

KR: We have, yes.

AN: I think what was nice was it wasn't a job you hated to go to. Naturally, everybody likes not having to work all the time, but there was always something interesting going on. It was great meeting so many people, the scholars. It was an interesting job, so it wasn't a chore. That I liked.

KR: What type of travel have you and your husband done over the years?

AN: Well, we've been to Europe several times. We've been to Hawaii and to Alaska. Well, after I retired, I worked part time as a travel agent because my cousin was one and so she kept, "Come on Ar, you get good deals." For a long time, we'd do a lot of traveling because I was a travel agent and could get lots of deals to do things. We've been to Europe a few times. We've been to London, two or three times, and we've been to the Caribbean a number of times and not really South America. I don't think we've done much there, but we did do Europe. We've travelled quite a bit.

KR: I am wondering if you ever travelled to where your father was from in England or where your mother was from in Holland.

AN: [Yes].

KR: What was that like?

AN: I corresponded with a cousin in Holland. My aunt had told me that I had a cousin over there, and I contacted him. When we went, he met us and he took us to the house, the one at least he knew my mom lived. It became a storefront now, but that was where my mom had lived. I did get to see that but not from my father. I didn't have anyone over there who I could relate to. I've been to London and where he was born but not to the house like this cousin did for my mom. That was really nice, and it was nice meeting someone from there. He spoke English. His wife didn't. I get a Christmas card. It's funny, because he just signs it Jaap. His first name is J-A-A-P, and "Greet." That's all he puts on the card. [laughter] His sister, who I met when we were there, she would always write a note on the card. It was nice to travel and meet some people I would never have known. We've travelled a lot, not so much anymore, but we did travel

a great deal for a while. I was fortunate to have a husband who liked to travel, but he likes to do most anything I want. He spoils me a great deal.

KR: How has New Brunswick changed over the years?

AN: Oh, greatly, greatly. It unfortunately went downhill for a while. It used to be a very quiet, small town and then it just expanded and the black population took over a much greater portion than they had and it became more of a city. When I was in high school, I worked at P.J. Young's Department Store, I used to walk from there to the bus stop, take a bus home. I wouldn't do that in New Brunswick now for the life of me. It just grew, which is progress, I realize, but it was not a place that I would be able to do like I did when I was in high school and young and even when I was married and worked at Rutgers. It grew, and, of course, with that comes problems.

It was great. When I was young, because I lived in Highland Park, and I used to walk to New Brunswick and we did our shopping in New Brunswick. Because our church was in New Brunswick, I went there more. Yes, it's a big change from when I was a kid. My dad used to walk from Highland Park to work every day at Rutgers--it just was part of his [routine]--he never drove. He couldn't afford a car. He had eight children, so he didn't have a car. He just walked to work all the time. Yes, it was great area to grow up in. I'm glad I didn't live in New Brunswick. I lived in Highland Park growing up. It was good.

KR: How has Highland Park changed over the years?

AN: Oh, it's grown a great deal. It had a small Jewish population and now has grown a lot. They expanded a great deal. All the ethnicities have changed from when I was a kid, but that's a part of growing. I loved growing up there as a kid because it was a small town. You knew everyone. We had our own high school. We had our own things. It was great growing up in Highland Park, but time passes and that's progress.

KR: What were the predominant ethnic groups in Highland Park when you were growing up?

AN: Well, there was a whole Jewish community. There was a whole Italian section. There were a lot of ethnicities. It was the north side of Highland Park and the south side, and your wealthier lived on the north side and all of us lived on the south side that were not wealthy. When I went to high school, I had friends from all over. It wasn't as if you were made to stay in your economic group or anything. I had friends from all over and some very wealthy, like my best friend that died. Her father was a wealthy man, but that didn't matter. You just had friends from all over. It was a great little town to grow up in, so I was very happy that I had a place like that to grow up in. You had all kinds of opportunities. With New Brunswick and Rutgers being there, you could do all kinds of things.

KR: Well, I have reached the end of my questions.

AN: Okay.

KR: Is there anything else you would like to add?

AN: No, I think we've covered quite a few subjects there, and you said I will get a copy.

KR: Yes, you will get a copy of the audio.

AN: Okay.

KR: You will also get the transcript.

AN: Okay.

KR: You will be able to review the transcript, and then you'll get a final copy or copies.

AN: Okay, yes.

KR: You will be able to share with your family.

AN: Good.

KR: Yes. Well, I want to thank you so much for having me into your home to do this oral history. It has been really enjoyable. Thank you.

AN: Well, I'm glad. I know it was a trip for you, but I'm glad you could come and it made it more relaxed to be able to sit here and do it.

-----END OF TRANSCRIPT-----

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