

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH CYNTHIA KASTNER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an oral history interview with Cynthia Kastner on July 14, 2021, with Shaun Illingworth. I'm currently in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and I'm also joined by ...

Charlene White: ... Charlene White. I'm also in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

SI: Thank you very much, Ms. Kastner, for joining us today, and if you could just tell us what city and state you are in today.

Cynthia Kastner: Sure. I'm Cynthia Kastner, and I'm sitting in my home in Jacksonville, Florida.

SI: For the record, can you tell us where and when you were born?

CK: Sure. I was born in Rhode Island, the beautiful state of Rhode Island, in 1948.

SI: What were your parents' names?

CK: Well, my father was Everett Stark, and my mother was Edith Stark. Obviously, my maiden name was Stark, S-T-A-R-K.

SI: We would like to know a little bit about your family background. Was there an immigration story? Maybe we can start with your mother's side of the family. Do you know anything about where the family came from?

CK: Well, I have deep New England roots on both sides. We have family deeds and documents on my mother's side in Rhode Island that go back into the late 1700s, and the same thing for my father, but he was in Connecticut. Well, his family were farmers in Connecticut. My grandfather was in the Connecticut legislature and was on the agriculture committee, obviously, being a farmer. My grandfather on my mother's side was the manager of a textile bleaching company. Textiles were very important in New England back then. My grandmother on my mother's side was from Canada, New Brunswick, Canada, and her father was a ship captain. Interestingly enough, her family got to Canada from the United States at the time of the revolution. They were Tories, and they moved from the United States up to Canada, where who they considered the true king would continue. So, that's a little bit about my family history. [Editor's Note: Tories were American colonists who sided with the British during the American Revolution.]

SI: What do you know about your parents' early lives before they met and married? Of course, World War II had a big impact on their life, but do you know anything about that?

CK: Oh, definitely. My mother was a registered nurse and was taking care of an older gentleman in Connecticut. My father had served in World War II. He was a forward spotter that calls for where the shots were supposed to be fired. He had the usual Purple Heart. I think everyone came back wounded from World War II in one way or another, but he lost much of his hearing. He came back to the farm, met my mother, who was single and in the town, and they ended up marrying. Then, he, on the G.I. Bill, got his--actually, I don't know whether he had his

undergraduate degree when he went to war or not or whether he got it when he came back, but he went to Ithaca College, got a degree in phys ed. Subsequent to that, he went to Columbia University in New York City, got a master's, and then ended up teaching phys ed, physical education, and my mother continued as a nurse. They had me. My mother developed multiple sclerosis, unfortunately. She became quite quickly paralyzed from it, which really did shape a lot of our lives and what we did thereafter.

SI: I would imagine there were not the same kind of treatments they might have today.

CK: No, they didn't. Today, there are fairly effective treatments, particularly for remissions and things like that, putting people into remission, but not back then. It was basically physical therapy, which worked out well with my father being a phys ed instructor. He worked. He went from teaching in a school to working at a YMCA in Fall River, Massachusetts. We lived in Rhode Island. It was really very nice. Subsequent to that, maybe when I was in sixth grade or seventh grade, he got transferred from the Massachusetts YMCA to one in New Jersey, and there my contacts with New Jersey began.

SI: Your father served in World War II. Do you know which theater he served in?

CK: He was in the Battle of the Bulge in Europe. Now, I probably could do some research and find out what regiment, but I know he came home an officer. He was a first lieutenant when he came home. What he went in as, I don't know. I know he did much of his service as a forward spotter for the guns. Eventually, as I said, he lost most of his hearing and became decorated for that. He did have other decorations also, but he didn't talk a lot about his military service.

SI: I was curious to know if in addition to the hearing loss if his service continued to affect his life.

CK: I don't think so. The main residue from it was his hearing loss.

SI: You grew up in Rhode Island for the first eleven years of your life.

CK: Yes, something like that.

SI: What was your town like? What was your early life there like?

CK: All right. Well, most of my that-I-can-remember life was in Tiverton, T-I-V-E-R-T-O-N, Rhode Island. Tiverton was on Narragansett Bay. We lived in a house that was within walking distance of the water. We had basically a small rowboat with an outboard motor, and my father loved to fish. We would go clamming. We would go scalloping. To this day, I enjoy the water, love swimming, picked it up there, love fishing. I like going scalloping. Here in Florida, you can do that. Clamming I like, but we don't really have a place here where I can get clams, which is a shame. Yes, that sort of formed some of the things that I like. I'm fairly athletic because my father was fairly athletic, although as he got older, he developed knee problems. I don't know whether that was from being the physical director at the YMCA or what it was from, but he did develop knee problems in addition to his hearing problems. He was always very, very

supportive, kind, dedicated to my mother, so that was good. Frankly, they always wanted to shield me from as much of the burden and the problems that they were having. So, I think I probably led a sheltered life, I don't think by my choice but by their choice.

SI: What did you think of your early education in Rhode Island?

CK: I think it was actually very good. Our house was literally next door to the elementary school. That's where we had a big baseball-softball field. The Little League played there. I actually got to be a pretty good baseball player. I played catcher and I played center fielder, which is quite a combination but part of having a father who is a physical director and living next door to the baseball field, not that I'm a tomboy or anything, but yes.

SI: Were you actually on a Little League team, or would you just play on your own with friends?

CK: No, I just played. Also, my neighbor had a lot of kids, and we would just play pickup when the field wasn't being used. The only time I played on an organized team was later in life when I was in New Jersey, the AT&T law department had a women's softball team and I played for them.

SI: Was the YMCA a big part of your life growing up, not necessarily the one your father worked at, but maybe a local one? Would you go to activities there?

CK: No. Actually, it was not a big part of my life. You might think it would be, and I guess that would make sense, but, at the time, no. I mean, that was work. About the only time I actually used the Y was in New Jersey and we had a sixteenth birthday party for me at the Y, a pool party. No, I didn't use it a lot. Interestingly enough, when I got married much, much later in life, I was looking for a place to exercise, and lo and behold, I ended up joining the Summit, New Jersey YMCA. So, it was like a homecoming in the sense that I knew a lot of the positions and the jobs and who did what. I didn't know any of the people, but it was quite familiar when I joined it later in life.

SI: When you moved to New Jersey, was that any kind of cultural shock for you? Was it a big change in your life?

CK: Not a big culture shock, no. I was impressed with how friendly some of the kids were in the school. I was expecting to be sort of the outsider, and they were actually very welcoming, which made me very happy, much better than I expected. I was a little bit apprehensive about transferring into a new school. So, that was good. What the school did was they, I think, assigned another student to me to be a mentor, and she did a lovely job. So, that helped tremendously. Also, we were not living within walking distance of the ocean anymore. What I did had to change a little bit, and we were in the city. That was Irvington, New Jersey, and Irvington, New Jersey was pretty different from where we used to live. Really, the move was fairly easy for me.

SI: What about school? You would have been going into junior high.

CK: I think it was seventh grade I went into. It was in Irvington, and, here, again, the people were quite welcoming. So, it was not a terribly difficult transition. I was a good student, and I've got to say my Rhode Island education had been very good. So, I was at least up with the rest of the kids in the class, if not better.

SI: What did you gravitate towards in school in the classroom or in extracurricular activities?

CK: Frankly, gym and activities there. They had cheerleaders, believe it or not, in middle school. I did that and church activities. I was Congregational, which was a big religion in New England and not such a big religion in New Jersey, but lo and behold, Irvington had a Congregational Church. I did that too. So, we joined the church, and I was in the youth group.

SI: What kind of activities would the youth group do?

CK: Oh, the usual, everything from Bible studies to camping to weekly meetings. We would go bowling. We would have discussion groups, things like that. So, it was a combination of social and religious.

SI: Were your parents also active in the church?

CK: Yes, to some extent. My father had been brought up Baptist, and Mother was Congregational. So, I went to this Congregational Church because a lot of my school friends were there, my new school friends were there, and sort of brought my parents along. That's the way a lot of people get brought into church is by their kids.

SI: When you were growing up, would your parents talk a lot about either world events or national events or politics around the dinner table?

CK: Not politics. They were not particularly political animals. Current events, yes. Believe it or not, words and vocabulary were part of our discussions. It would be a matter of if I had read something in a book and I didn't know what it meant, I might ask them at dinner, and somebody might say, "Well, did you look it up?" I would go look it up quickly. Words were, believe it or not, something we discussed, but it was along with current events. My father definitely liked to read. My mother liked to always--as long as she had eyesight. The multiple sclerosis affected her eyesight. She used to use the audio books. I don't know what they were called back then, like books on tape or books on CD now, but she used to listen to books a lot. Oftentimes, there was a book playing in the house. I do like to read.

SI: Charlene, do you have any questions?

CW: Do you have any memorable anecdotes from your time in later elementary school or when you moved to New Jersey?

CK: When we moved to New Jersey, we ended up living, as I said, in Irvington. I remember going house hunting with my parents, and they looked at one house up in Chatham because my

father was working in the Orange YMCA. They looked at one house in Chatham and turned to one another and started discussing, "My heavens, nineteen thousand dollars for a house is just outrageous. How can a house possibly be priced at nineteen thousand dollars?" I look back at that now and say, "I wonder what that house would cost now." For some reason, that one stuck with me.

SI: You said Irvington was more urban, a small city.

CK: Yes.

SI: What do you recall about your particular street or neighborhood in Irvington? What was it like physically? Also, the people that lived there, what were their backgrounds generally?

CK: When I lived in Irvington, we had a fairly large Jewish population in Irvington. They had moved from the Weequahic section of Newark, many of their families, out of Newark. I don't know what year this was. Let's say 1960. A lot of them had moved out of the Weequahic section of Newark into Irvington. All of a sudden, I had a lot of Jewish friends, and I didn't know anybody who was Jewish in Rhode Island. I liked it. It was wonderful because I was learning all about a lot of different things. They were very nice. They included me in a lot of their discussions and their talking, and I got to go to some bat mitzvahs and some bar mitzvahs when they got to be, I guess, twelve or thirteen, some age like about that. I said, "Oh, this is interesting." So, I remember that. I discovered bagels. I discovered lox. I discovered a lot of new foods. That was wonderful. I had friends who were Italian, and there were great pizza places. That was wonderful. So, it was just broadening the horizon a lot. Most of my friends in Rhode Island tended to be Irish, some English, some Scottish, but a lot of Irish kids around. So, anyway, a whole different nationality to learn about.

SI: Would you, maybe with your family at first but then maybe on your own as a teenager, go into Newark or maybe even New York for activities or shopping or anything like that?

CK: Yes. Boy, my memories of early-days Newark, of course, probably like many of the people that you've interviewed, there was the Bamberger's, the Ohrbach's, the Hahne's, and that's where you went to do your good shopping. But this was probably about the '60-'62 timeframe. This predates the Newark riots, but it was a nice place to go shopping. We didn't go there a lot, because that was a special occasion when we went down to Newark.

SI: You went to Irvington High School.

CK: Yes.

SI: How would you characterize the high school? Was it a good education? Was it competitive?

CK: Yes and yes. When I went to Irvington High School, staying on the topic of ethnicity for a while, number one, it was about ninety-eight percent white and two percent black. Even that two percent was something new to me because I didn't have any black friends in Rhode Island.

Going to school with this two percent black was something very different, number one. Number two, I think I already mentioned that I was introduced to Jewish and to Italian people. When I got to high school, I met a lot of Polish, which I hadn't had a lot of in Rhode Island, a couple of German, but, anyway, more ethnicity.

I was a good student, and the high school had tracks, if you will, regular classes, single-star classes and double-star classes. If you are really good in something, English, history, whatever, you would be in a double-star history class or a double-star English class. Irvington High School was a large high school. I think I had someplace between six hundred and a thousand students in my class. So, they could break them up into different levels, and I was in almost all double-star classes. So, we probably had the most homework, the most rigor, and, honestly, we tended to have all the same students in all the double-star classes. So, I pretty much had the same students in the same English class and the same history class. So, it was a fairly small group of students. We were all good and we were all, yes, competitive, but we tended to help one another also. Here, again, it was a good group of students.

I joined and was a part of just about everything, everything from student government to the debating club. I don't know what other clubs there were, but I was in most of them. I was also active in the high school youth group at church. At one point, I think I was the president of the inter-youth group for the City of Irvington. So, I joined a lot of things, and I tended to be a leader in a lot of the activities. So, I was pretty busy basically, between a lot of studying and a lot of activities.

In my junior or senior year, I started working. Friday nights and Saturdays, I worked at Don's Diner, which I think is still there. It was owned by a Swiss family, and that will come back to my Rutgers story in a minute, but it was owned by a Swiss family. I was a waitress Friday nights and Saturday nights. I remember going not to my junior prom but to another fellow's junior prom with him. It was on a Saturday night and I was working, and they really needed me at least to work part of the shift. So, I took my dress to Don's Diner. In the day, I worked most of my shift, went into the restroom, changed into a gown. I looked like Cinderella. I came out of the restroom wearing a prom gown to the applause of the tables that I had just been waiting on, and we left for the prom. That's one of the best anecdotes. Yes, Charlene.

CW: Were there any classes or teachers that made an impact on you while you were in high school?

CK: Yes, but I honestly don't remember all the names. I loved my freshman English teacher. I loved my Latin teacher. I remember I was in Latin when John F. Kennedy was shot. It turned out to be a very memorable class. I loved my history teachers and my biology teachers.

In biology, sophomore year, we had tables or desks with two people at them. They pair you with people. It's not that you choose, and I was sitting with a guy who was sort of a hood, somewhat slicked-back hair. What he was doing taking biology, I guess he had to or something, but he did not particularly like biology and he hated dissecting things. He and I were paired. I fished. I was quite used to cleaning fish and gutting them and all that kind of stuff, so dissecting fish and frogs and things like that didn't bother me in the least. We used to have to dissect things and

keep track of our dissections with pictures. I can't draw to save my life, but he turned out to be a really good artist. Since we were paired, I did the dissecting and he did the drawings, and it worked out beautifully. That was memorable.

The class that I hated the most but loved the teacher, whose name I can't remember, because he was so caring and he really tried to bring me along was advanced calculus. There was no way I should've been in this class except that I had taken every math class in the high school except that one, and so my senior year that was the math class I was in. It was advanced calculus, and I hated calculus and was not good at calculus. He really did try to help me, and one of the guys in the class helped me. They got me through it, but I did not like calculus. I was much more into history, English. Even the biology, chemistry and physics, that was fine, but not calculus.

SI: Do you feel like young women were encouraged or discouraged to take courses like that in the sciences and math?

CK: I think they were treated just like the men were or the boys were. I was in almost all advanced classes and we had probably as many women as we did men, even in physics and chemistry and dreaded calculus.

SI: You came of age during the Cold War.

CK: Oh, yes.

SI: You lived through some of the hotter moments, like the Cuban Missile Crisis. Were there ways that it had any impact on your life in particular?

CK: Honestly, no. We never did the drills that you see in the newsreels about taking cover under your desks or learning where the safe rooms were or anything like that. We studied it in history, current events. We discussed it, but it didn't really have, I don't think, much of an impact on me.

SI: You mentioned you were on the debate team. Do you remember what the debates would be about or what you enjoyed most about it?

CK: I remember one of the ones that I was assigned to was euthanasia, mercy killing, and that was really a new topic back then. Later on, we came to have [Dr. Jack] Kevorkian, and some countries now, Switzerland, Belgium, even have legalized euthanasia. Back in the '60s, that was a fairly hot topic. I was assigned to the side of having to argue in support of euthanasia, and forget the religious part of it, but that was interesting. It certainly made one see two sides of the issue being on the debating team and being assigned, "Okay, you're going to be on this side. Whether you like it or not, you're going to do it." Now, it just so happens that I probably have more liberal views on that and some other social issues than I might have had otherwise.

SI: When you were in high school, did you follow news of some of the more social and cultural changes happening, like the Civil Rights Movement?

CK: Oh, yes, definitely, especially with Newark being next door and developing more blackness in Newark. We were sort of watching it happen. We had more black people move into Irvington in the four years I was in high school. As I said, we started high school with very few, and when I ended high school, there were more, although not a huge amount but definitely more. So, social issues were happening. The economic issues were happening too. I could see stores in Newark that just four years ago I was familiar with were not looking so good, and some stores were starting to close. This was like '66. This even predated, I think, the worst of the riots. That was interesting.

When I was in high school, I was going to be either a doctor or a lawyer, because I liked politics also. I like politics. I like economics. I like business. But I also really did like medicine and surgery and things like that. When I went to Rutgers, I didn't really know what I was going to major in. I think what finally turned it was I had two girlfriends that were both pre-med, and I think they were both chemistry majors. Anyway, they had a lot of labs, and they had to spend almost double the time in college in classrooms in the labs than I did. So, I said, "Economics looks pretty good. Maybe I'll be an economics major and not a chemistry major or a biology major." Anyway, yes, the social issues, the current events were very interesting.

I did not join, at least in high school, I was not part of any protests or Young Republicans or Young Democrats or any social action groups like that. Actually, in high school, as I said, I was in a lot of clubs. Small fact, I was actually the captain of the archery team. That was the only team we had, and it really I don't think was a team so much as a club, that had both men and women on the same team. In archery, men and women can compete against one another very easily. That was one of the things I did.

SI: Would you say that your parents were very encouraging of your wanting to go to college to become either a doctor or a lawyer?

CK: Yes, they were very, very good with that. My mother was educated, and my father was educated. So, it wasn't a big thing. The bigger thing was how we were going to pay for my education because Mother, obviously, wasn't working and had medical bills. Father had a job at the YMCA, but he wasn't rich. My grandmother was living with us. Money was always a little bit tight, not poor but a little bit tight. The question was how we were going to pay for college, and that's where the State of New Jersey came in with a state scholarship.

SI: Was there a process of going for the scholarship? Did you have to take a test or anything like that?

CK: No. I think the state scholarship was pretty much based on what your average was in your classes. You didn't have to take a separate test, but if you had whatever the average was that they needed, you were eligible. I definitely had that average. I think I was probably in the top twenty kids in my class.

CW: How did you end up choosing Rutgers?

CK: Okay, let's see. Well, I had applied to a couple of schools that would require me to live away. I thought it would be absolutely wonderful to get away, live in a dormitory, be away from my parents, but my mother was not doing particularly well. My father could use the help, even though they didn't want to ask me, and money was still going to be a little tight and I could take the bus to Rutgers. So, I went to Rutgers-Newark and took the bus to college every day, lived at home, and it worked out fine. I know you'll come to this later; I think I got a good education at Rutgers-Newark.

SI: Let us ask a little bit about that. You started out in more of a science-oriented course and then decided to switch over to pre-law.

CK: Yes. I took a couple science classes in my freshman year, and I liked them. Frankly, I still enjoy science, but I enjoyed the economics classes. I enjoyed the other classes, the more liberal arts classes that I took, and I wouldn't have to do all those hours in labs that my friends did. Basically, I leaned toward economics.

SI: Do any classes or professors stand out? You do not have to remember their names but just your experiences.

CK: I remember a world history professor the first year. He was a relatively young man, I forgot his name, but he was a relatively young man, because to me a professor is always somebody at least thirty years older than I am and he was probably only about fifteen years older than I was. He was walking down the street, and myself and another student were walking with him. We were talking, and he was talking to us like adults. I said, "Oh, this is wonderful to be treated like an adult, not like some kid." That made an impact on me. In that class, I learned not so much the historical events, although I'm sure I learned some historical events also, but he taught everybody how to think and that was an important thing to learn in college. He wasn't teaching facts but how to analyze facts, and that turned out to be very important for law. In law, a lot of it is how to approach things, how to analyze things, how to look at things, and I remember that was a big part of that world history class.

SI: What would a typical day be like at Rutgers-Newark? You were commuting in. Would you have a full day there or just come in for classes?

CK: Well, I'd wake up, have breakfast, walk four blocks to the bus stop, take the number twenty-five bus down Springfield Avenue from Irvington to Newark, get off the bus, walk over to campus. Campus was not as it is now, Conklin Hall and whatever the halls are around their campus. Campus was buildings spread out all over the City of Newark, and so you got off the bus closest to whatever building your first course was in. There was no student center per se. I guess there was a library. There, frankly, was not, my first year, a lot of interaction. I joined a sorority called Alpha Iota Delta, AID, "aid," which was the service sorority. It wasn't a social sorority. It was a service sorority, but that's fine. I'd done a lot of community work, service work through college and through church. Anyway, I met folks there and they had an office in one of the buildings, so that was a hangout place. Sometime when I was there, the student center was created, and that was wonderful. Then, somewhere near the end of college, I actually got a car, and that was wonderful not having to take the bus anymore.

SI: What would you do as part of the service in the sorority?

CK: When we finally had a student center, we were the ones who decorated it for different holidays. We would put up the Christmas decorations. We would put up the fall decorations. Anyway, we decorated the student center. We would do projects for the homeless in Newark distributing sandwiches, things like that. So, it was a variety of things, things we did for the school, things we did for the community. One of the other fraternities--and you probably had them. Did you go to Rutgers, Shaun?

SI: Yes, but I went to New Brunswick.

CK: New Brunswick. I don't know whether you had Alpha Sigma Mu in New Brunswick, but in Newark, it was a fraternity that you had to be a veteran to be in. Consequently, it tended to be older young men. You asked before about the impact of Vietnam, and that fraternity had a lot of people who had served in Vietnam in one capacity or another. For some reason, our sorority used to do a lot of things with the fellows in that fraternity. That was memorable because they were more mature and had, in many ways, a different outlook on life. That, I do recall.

SI: Do you remember if there was significant anti-war activity during your time?

CK: I don't remember significant, but, yes, there was. There were demonstrations. We had BOS, Black Organization of Students. So, we had civil rights-types of demonstrations later also. We didn't have a lot in high school, but we did in college. I think I only participated in one demonstration because I was also a volunteer in college for Newark Legal Services, and the government was cutting their funding. I remember we had a demonstration to restore the funding for legal services, but that's about it.

SI: What kind of work would you do with Newark Legal Services?

CK: Oh, grunt work, research, basically, filing, typing, because I wasn't a lawyer. I was a student. I also worked for Leo Troy, who was the head of the economics department, later on, my junior and senior year. I was his research assistant, and so he would get a grant and I know one of the grants that he got was he was looking at the impact of some program for the poor. The people leading it were black, and he was supposed to be studying the effectiveness of this program. He assigned me to go collect information, facts, statistics, do analysis of numbers, and I remember I did that for him. Then, at the end of it, I wrote my analysis of the program, and I said, "I don't know what you're going to say about how effective the program was. I don't think the program did diddly squat for the poor people that it was supposed to be helping, but I think it did a lot for the people who were the managers of the program and that they learned how to run a program." He just laughed. I never saw what his final report said.

SI: You started at Rutgers-Newark in 1966, and the Newark riots happened in the middle of your time at Rutgers.

CK: I think they did, yes.

SI: Was there an impact that you noticed on the campus? Before and after, were there differences you noticed?

CK: Well, people were certainly a lot more apprehensive walking around the City of Newark, going around to their buildings. A lot more stores were closed. Newark was like a war zone when we were there. Let's see, I think both were in college. I got mugged once, and once I managed not to get mugged by pretty much jumping on a bus. I didn't care where it was going, but it would get me out of where I happened to be with these people around me. So, it was a tense time, and the bus incident, I had a night class. So, I was down there in the evening, and pretty much after that I decided it wasn't worth it to take any classes at night. [Editor's Note: The Newark riots lasted from July 12 to July 17, 1967. They began after the police arrested an African American cab driver, and rumors spread that he had been killed in custody. The riots resulted in over two dozen deaths, more than seven hundred injuries, fifteen hundred arrests, and property damage exceeding ten million dollars.]

SI: Charlene, do you have any questions?

CW: Did you experience any bias as a woman when you were attending Rutgers-Newark?

CK: I don't think I did, one, because I was good, and, two, because I was active in a lot of things. I knew a lot of people, and I was a leader in a lot of things. So, I don't think I was experiencing any bias. I could have been, but I don't think so.

SI: Maybe the legal services work falls in this category, but I was wondering if there were any internships or real-life experience type activities you did, particularly during your later years at Rutgers as part of your education?

CK: Internships. Well, I don't know. I was working on campus, like I said, the last two years for the head of the economics department. I was really doing more, like I said, menial work for legal services. I was doing a little bit of community service through the sorority. A lot of it was walking around Newark observing the city. I always wished that Newark could be better than it was. I would go to other cities and see what they were and see what Newark was declining into, and I always thought it was a shame. I still have an interest in city planning, zoning, things like that, and some of that came from being in Newark and watching its decline. I was there when, I guess, Addonizio was mayor, and there was significant corruption in the City of Newark and I think that continued for quite a while after. I mean, Newark is still not back to being a strong city. I think maybe if I were doing it all over again, I might have gone into city planning or some sort of municipal government, but I don't know that I would have been terribly effective. It interested me, and that grew from being in the City of Newark and watching its decline.

SI: You also mentioned the BOS. Looking back, one of the most famous events was the takeover of Conklin Hall in 1969. Was that a big event at the time?

CK: It was. I graduated in '70. I remember in '70 even, we were having demonstrations, and they canceled our final exams. I thought that was just frankly wonderful. They gave us the

option to go with whatever we had gotten on the midterms, I think it was, or we could take a final exam. You can guess that 99.9 percent of people opted not to take final exams except one person, and you're probably going to be interviewing her, one of my best friends in college who eventually graduated number one. I was like maybe number three or four. She was number one, and she was only going to be summa cum laude if she could get a few more points on her average to go from magna cum laude to summa cum laude. She wanted to do that because she was going to stay in the field of education, and that seemed to be something that was important to somebody. So, the only way she could do that was to take all of her exams and basically ace all of them. She went to all of her professors and said, "I'm going to take all of my exams," and they all had to therefore write exams. I think in most of the exams she was the only one taking them, but she did it. She took them and she aced them, and she did graduate. That was one of my recollections from all of it. [Editor's Note: In February 1969, the Black Organization of Students (BOS) at Rutgers-Newark submitted demands pertaining to issues such as increased minority student enrollment and minority faculty hiring to Malcolm Talbott, Vice President of the Rutgers-Newark Campus. Early in the morning of February 24, 1969, nearly two dozen members of BOS took over Conklin Hall, the main classroom building, calling it "Liberation Hall." The protest lasted for over seventy-two hours until, on the morning of February 27th, Rutgers President Mason Gross agreed to the protestors' demands. This agreement was later rejected by the Rutgers-Newark faculty in a 95-40 vote, leading to the threat of more protests by the BOS. In response, on March 14, 1969, the Rutgers Board of Governors instituted a new program designed to bring economically disadvantaged high school graduates into the State University on each of Rutgers' campuses.]

Honestly, I was not terribly sympathetic to the black students. I have to say I was not sympathetic and would not participate in any of the demonstrations and thought that they were frankly screwing up my education and my classes. So, there were some that not so much disagreed with whatever [their demands were], and I frankly don't even remember what their big issues were, but I do remember that they were disturbing the classes.

SI: I know there were also a lot of shutdowns in 1970 over the Cambodian invasion and the moratorium that resulted and then the Kent State shootings. Do you remember that having an impact?

CK: I remember it, but, no, that didn't have a lot of impact on me.

SI: As you got to the end of your time at Rutgers, were you already looking at law schools? How did that process unfold?

CK: Well, before you leave Rutgers, in the recent alumni magazine, and this may be where you picked me up from, I was asked to write a paragraph on my recollection of an event in--I think I got assigned 1969 or something like that, some year like that. [Editor's Note: This refers to the article "Restive at Rutgers" featured in *Rutgers Magazine* on May 27, 2021.] It was interesting because if you read that magazine, almost all of the people wrote about some negative event, I will say, about Vietnam, about civil rights, something that was pretty negative. I was probably the only one who wrote about something positive, and that was the '69 man walking on the moon and experiencing it with other international students over in Geneva, Switzerland, because I had

been fortunate enough to win an internship from Rutgers at the International Labor Organization. Dr. Troy had suggested that I enter and apply for it, and I'm assuming he was one of my sponsors or proponents because I was the only one from Newark who had applied for it and everybody else was from New Brunswick. I got it, and so I worked the summer of 1969 at the International Labor Organization in Geneva, Switzerland and had the pleasure of going out in the evening to some of the pubs and places and meeting a lot of international students from other countries. There was a bunch of us watching the moon landing, the walk on the moon and cheering. It was really quite a moving event for me, having everybody cheer when they were watching it. I was thinking, "Hey, the USA did it. Let's hear it for us," and thinking, "Well, they're not really cheering so much for the USA. They're cheering for mankind. We did it." Anyway, that was a moving event. Now, what was your question again? I got you off on a sidetrack. [Editor's Note: On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the Moon in NASA's Apollo 11 mission. Michael Collins flew the Command Module Columbia in lunar orbit while they were on the Moon's surface.]

SI: I was going to ask about law school. Tell me a little bit more about that summer in Geneva. What were you doing there, and in general what was being in Europe at the time like?

CK: Okay. Well, I was at the International Labor Organization, and by then, I had decided to go to law school. I was assigned to the legal department, and I was basically writing research memos, which honestly I don't think were going to do anybody any good. I always had that suspicion. Anyway, that's what they asked me to do, so I did it. There were a couple of students there, one from NYU [New York University] and one from Cornell, also at the ILO, so I got to know them. The ILO supposedly is bilingual, English and French. There's two languages. I spoke English but very little French, and that's when I learned that the world is a much bigger place and you've got to speak something besides English, even though a lot of people speak English. In any event, I got to know other international students. Interesting story, one student I met in a laundromat from Norway, and he happened to be an intern at CERN, C-E-R-N, he was a doctoral physics student, the international nuclear research place. I just recently reconnected with him fifty years later, and hopefully next year we'll be going to Norway to visit him. That should be something that will be very interesting. [Editor's Note: CERN is the Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire or European Council for Nuclear Research.]

SI: Did you get to go to other countries and tour around a little bit, or were you mostly just there?

CK: Oh, I definitely made the most of being in Europe. The thing that Rutgers provided for me was the airplane ticket over, and then the ILO paid me a stipend. So, this was an internship that actually paid money, and I could live on the ILO's stipend. I had a room with an older lady, but, hey, that worked. Rutgers paid airfare, so I got a plane ticket to Europe and home. I went hopping all over Europe by train until I started work in Geneva, and then while I was in Geneva, I would go off on weekends. I went to Czechoslovakia on a weekend from Switzerland just because I had a Czech pen pal. I like to ski too. I went summer skiing on a weekend. The conditions were terrible, but I could say I skied in Switzerland. So, I definitely made the most of being in Switzerland that summer, and I still love to travel. We do a lot of traveling.

SI: Did you face any issues going into a communist country?

CK: [laughter] Yes and no. I'm stupid. I can be really stupid. My pen pal, I don't know, she must have had somebody helping her translate. I had to write in English and she was not an English speaker, and I don't think her English was as good as maybe I thought it was when I'd get letters from her. I had written her, and we'd agreed on a date that I would meet her and I would come to her house at a certain date. I got from Geneva all the way to Czechoslovakia to her village by train, which was an experience. She wasn't home, and I'm in the middle of Czechoslovakia not speaking a word and not knowing anybody else pounding on her door. There was no answer. So, I'm thinking, "What am I going to do now?" Her next-door neighbors came and didn't speak any English but spoke a little bit of French, and I spoke a little bit of French. Basically, they told me that she'd gone away for the weekend. So, I said, "Oops, we have a translation problem here." So, they invited me to stay overnight at their house, which was really very nice of them, and walked me around the village the next morning and put me on a train the next afternoon heading back toward Switzerland. The big thing was they asked me how much money I had with me and told me that I was going to be required to show proof that I had spent so much money--for whatever kind of visa I had--that I had to show proof that I had spent so much money in the country. They said, "You're not staying in a hotel, so you're not going to have a receipt." They said, "You've got to buy something." I remember that, which was weird, that I had to show that I'd spent money in Czechoslovakia.

SI: Tell us about the process of picking the law school you initially went to and what that whole transition into law study was like.

CK: Okay, all right. Well, my husband Bob and I met sometime when I was in Rutgers. I was working as a clerk-typist. Believe me, typing is a skill that you really need or you did need certainly, and it came in handy. I was a clerk-typist at a place down in Newark and living in Irvington. I was taking two buses to get down there. It was on Doremus Avenue out by the port by the Passaic River in the heavy industrial area, and, anyway, I was working out there. He came home from the Navy on leave because he was in the Navy. He came home on leave, he used to work there, came back to visit all the friends where he used to work, met the summer help, me, and that was nice.

Then, the next year I was back typing again, and he had gotten out of the Navy by then. We became friends, "Oh, yes, I remember you from last year." I told him I had to go catch my buses, and he said, "Oh, I don't live that far away." He lived in the Vailsburg section of Newark. He said, "Why don't I give you a ride to and from work?" I said, "Oh, wonderful." This was like a savior, no more two buses. I don't know what happened to my car, but I didn't have a car back then. So, I was back on the buses. Anyway, he drove me to and from work, and we became friends.

My senior year, oh, I guess maybe January, February of my senior year, something like that, we got engaged. However, by then, I had already been accepted to go to Cornell Law School, and I said, "Well, dear, there is probably no chance that you're going to want to work up in Ithaca, New York, and we don't want to be separated. I'll go to Cornell for my first year of law school," because at that point I really did want to go away, "I'll go to Cornell for my first year of law

school. Then, we'll get married at the end of the first year, and I'll transfer back to New Jersey." That was the grand plan.

I went to law school. I enjoyed Cornell. I wasn't quite as stellar as I was in college. The competition in law school was really very intense, and I really couldn't just sort of slide through everything the way I did in college. I mean, it was hard, but my grades were still pretty darn good. So, I did not think I would have any trouble at all transferring back here. I applied to only one school, one law school to transfer to, and, of course, that was Rutgers. I went to Rutgers undergraduate, so I applied to Rutgers Law School. When do acceptances come out? April, something like that? March, April, they came out. Lo and behold, Rutgers did not accept me. I got rejected at Rutgers Law School, and I said, "Oh, shit," or words to that effect.

I had a summer job that I had lined up with an attorney here in New Jersey, Paul Giblin. I guess it was himself and maybe two other lawyers. It was very small, but he did labor law and he used to represent, I think it was, the United Auto Workers in the State of New Jersey. I wanted to do labor law, so I had gotten a job with him. I started working there, still not knowing what I was going to do come September since Rutgers didn't accept me. Anyway, Paul said to me one day, "Well, when do you have to go back to school?" I said, "There's a little problem there. I don't." He said, "What do you mean?" I told him Rutgers didn't accept me, and one of the other partners there--actually the other two, both of them had gone to Rutgers and knew people at Rutgers--and they said, "Oh, we're going to make some phone calls." They did, and they got told that Rutgers was not taking any transfer students into the class, that the first-year class had been much bigger than anticipated and a lot more were accepting Rutgers and so they took no transfers into the second-year class and, sorry, but that was the rule and they couldn't do it.

I think the three lawyers had a meeting to decide what they were going to do about me. Paul said, "Well, I went to Seton Hall. Let me see what I can do with a few phone calls." So, he made some phone calls, and the next thing I knew, he said, "Okay, send your transcript to the dean. He's agreed to look at it." I said, "Oh, okay." I sent my college and first year of law school transcript to the dean of Seton Hall. The next thing I knew, I was invited down for an interview, and they said, "Okay, we'll take you." So, I ended up at Seton Hall, and I was, as you can imagine, very grateful to Mr. Giblin for helping me do it.

Anyway, that's how I ended up at Seton Hall, back into Newark, back on the bus going to Newark. There, I had more night classes, unfortunately. A lot of times, my husband would come and pick me up if I had a night class. We were living in Irvington. My husband and I got an apartment in Irvington. I was very thankful to Seton Hall because, frankly, that changed my life. If I hadn't been a lawyer, I don't know what I would have done.

SI: Where did your interest in labor law come from?

CK: I don't really know. I don't know why labor law. It had aspects of certainly unions. It had aspects of HR, human resources, discrimination law, bias law, female bias, ethnic bias, gender bias. All of that was part of labor law. I don't know whether I was affected by the Newark riots unconsciously or what. Partly, I was going to save the world with labor law. But, as it turned out, I got out of law school--actually, while I was in law school, I was working part time for Paul

Giblin, and that was good experience. I got to work doing more legal things. When I graduated, he really didn't need me full time, and I wanted to get broader exposure. So, I went with a sixteen-person law firm in Somerville, New Jersey. As an associate, starting in a law firm, you do a little bit of everything, which turned out to be good because I did do a little bit of everything and found out that maybe I didn't want to save the world with labor law. I did more with business law.

One thing I will mention, I'm very big at paying back. With Rutgers, I've endowed a scholarship, which you probably found this out if you checked my background. I've endowed a scholarship at Rutgers. At Cornell, even though I was only there one year, I did get a substantial scholarship because I couldn't afford Cornell, and I paid that back, if you will, in donations multiple times. At Seton Hall, which I was really very, very appreciative of, I've endowed a scholarship there too. I think paying back is important.

SI: After the smaller firm, you wound up going to what was then one of the bigger corporations in the world. How did that come about?

CK: Oh, yes. Well, as I said, when you're an associate in a firm, they rotate you. You do a little bit of everything, and I was doing real estate law and closings. AT&T was just building its headquarters in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. AT&T executives were looking to move into New Jersey, buying houses in New Jersey, and Somerville is not that far from Basking Ridge. Some of them ended up working with our law firm, and yours truly, the associate, got to do a lot of the closings. I saw that these people from AT&T were, one, generally pretty well educated, pretty well off actually because they were buying very nice houses, and they had a lot of nice things to say about AT&T. One of them, and I don't remember the name, but one of them said, "Hey, we're looking for some lawyers who are admitted to practice in the State of New Jersey, the state we're going to be moving into. We're looking to hire some New Jersey lawyers. Why don't you give me your resume? I'll give it to some people." "Oh, okay." So, I did, and AT&T ended up hiring me.

There, honestly, I think being a woman did help because I graduated--what year was that? '73, I guess it was. AT&T, I found out later, was having some problems with, I guess, the Justice Department or somebody about not having enough women. It was just very convenient for them to hire some women, and I ticked off a number of boxes. There, I won't say I felt discriminated against, but I think the fact that I was female helped.

SI: You joined at the time that they were dealing with the antitrust issue.

CK: Yes.

SI: The breaking up into the Baby Bells.

CK: Yes, I had been doing litigation at the law firm also. That actually is what I was hired to do at AT&T was litigation and working on that antitrust suit, and I think I worked on it for about three years doing a lot of document collection, document analysis, some depositions. I never got

into, unfortunately, the courtroom, which I think would've been a lot of fun, but that went to more senior people than me.

SI: Go ahead with a question, Charlene.

CW: Do you remember or can you talk about any projects you were put on while you were working for AT&T?

CK: Oh, boy. The one wonderful thing about working for AT&T is you could change jobs while still having the same employer, still being in the same pension plan and all of that, but you could work for totally different companies. So, you didn't get bored. If you didn't like the person you were working for, don't quit and go to a different company; just hang in there, this too shall pass, and you'd quietly put out feelers to other subsidiaries of AT&T. It was a wonderful place to work.

I worked on the AT&T DOJ antitrust case. After that, AT&T, as part of the settlement, broke up, of course. The Baby Bells were broken off, but also the part that sold consumer telephones and equipment was broken off. AT&T was just a network company. I mean, phone center stores, telephones, switching equipment, selling equipment to the public, that company had to be formed. It was AT&T Information Systems. I was slated to go over there. So, I spent a lot of time forming the company, which was wonderful. We had to write all new contracts for the company. We had to develop procedures. We were giving birth to a brand-new company, and that was exciting.

In the new company, I became--well, I forgot what my title was. Anyway, I was the attorney for the Northeast region. So, I had responsibility for all the legal affairs from Maine down through the southern border of Virginia. So, New York City was mine. All of those were mine, and I had responsibility for supporting the sales department, all the customer contracts. I had responsibility for dealing with the unions in those states if we had any arbitrations. I had the responsibility for discrimination suits if we had litigation. I had responsibility for real estate leasing. I had the full legal responsibility, and I had a staff, which was nice. I had attorneys working for me--and this was the first time I did--and paralegals. We were busy as all get-out, but it was very, very wonderful. That was, I don't know, four years, five years, something like that, I did that.

SI: Was there any part of that job that was particularly challenging, like dealing with the unions or dealing with any problems that would come up?

CK: A lot of it was new, frankly. I hadn't done any labor arbitration law. I hadn't done a lot of human resources sort of things, discrimination. A lot of that, if anything, I may have seen when I was an associate at the law firm, but I'd spent a couple of years working on the DOJ case and hadn't been involved in it. So, a lot of it was new, yes.

One of the most challenging things was having to develop a whole network of outside counsel, outside law firms, in however many states that is, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, all those states, because I couldn't personally and my lawyers couldn't personally go into those states and go into

those courts. For one thing, we were not admitted in a lot of those states, and, two, there's certainly a home-court advantage in a lot of litigation, having somebody who's familiar with the courthouse, so to speak. So, I needed to develop a network of lawyers in every state from Maine to Virginia and, as things developed, in various counties in those states and figure out how to manage all the legal work in those states. That was fun. It was really fun, because, here, again, you were building something.

SI: In the first ten to fifteen years of your time in the AT&T system, would you often find yourself to be the only woman in the room? Were there increasing numbers of women in these legal positions or other equivalent managerial positions?

CK: They did increase. The women did increase, but it was always interesting when you went to a legal conference and particularly at, I'll call it, the managerial level, when you all got together for the group picture, there would only be a couple of women in the group picture. That's true, but, honestly, as I got there, as I was there more, more and more women did come in, I'm happy to say. They eventually got the message, but it just took a little while. Actually, in my group at AT&T Information Systems, when I started, I had two male lawyers working for me and two female lawyers working for me. So, my group was pretty balanced. If anything, we had more women than men, with me, if you count me, so yes.

SI: It seems like you had a lot to do with the stores.

CK: Yes.

SI: We call them the brick-and-mortar stores.

CK: Maybe that was my next job. I think the title was something like General Counsel or Vice President of AT&T Consumer Products, and those were the stores, the so-called phone center stores. I had to learn a lot about, if you will, retail law, but, here again, AT&T was never boring because you could be in the same company under the same umbrella but working for a different subsidiary and maybe doing different things. There, I was dealing also with more product development. We developed the early mobile phones. We developed your plain old telephones too, but that was patent law. We had patent attorneys, I am happy to say, who were very good, but you still had to have some knowledge of patent law. Totally new to me. The retail was new to me. Being general counsel of that subsidiary, the president of it used his attorney, I'm happy to say, as a sounding board, and included me in the executive decisions and discussions. That part was good. In the executive level, I think we had there two women, me in law, and our CFO, chief financial officer, was a woman. Then, later on, a woman I think came in to head our customer services group. So, there were a few, but for the three women, there were probably ten men.

SI: As you got further up in the company, what were the challenges you had to face in terms of initiatives that you had to develop? Like you said, you had this relationship with one person you reported to or worked with that you just were on board with. Were there other cases where people were not as receptive to what you were trying to do?

CK: Yes. Probably some of that was my fault. I probably wasn't pushy enough, but one of the challenges was always developing the relationships, not just the contacts but the relationships, and that really was a constant challenge. There is an old Chinese saying that I can paraphrase, but I don't remember exactly how it goes, something about, "If you control the head of the dragon, you control the dragon." You had to get in with the heads of the company to influence what they were doing, and that is a challenge. That was a challenge.

SI: You mentioned initially you lived in Irvington. Did you move around, particularly as you had these jobs that had responsibilities in other states, or did you pretty much stay in the same area of northern New Jersey?

CK: I am happy to say that I managed to live in New Jersey my entire working career, from Irvington to Hunterdon County to Gillette, which is Long Hill Township. I worked in New York City for AT&T for a couple of years. I took the train into New York City from Berkeley Heights. It was really sort of special when the World Trade Center came down because I had worked right across the street from the World Trade Center, and we used to occasionally go up to the top of the Trade Center to Windows on the World with clients or even just among the group of us for a drink. It was really very moving when I watched the Trade Center come down, having worked right there.

When I was in Gillette, which is Long Hill Township, like I said, I was still busy with church things, but I was also on the town planning board and also on the board of adjustment for zoning. I was doing both, and that sort of brought back my love of city planning and knowledge of real estate. I got a little bit involved in politics, although I never ran for office, but I did campaign for some of the people at the municipal level that I thought were doing a particularly good job.

SI: You were doing this out in Hunterdon County at the time.

CK: Gillette is in Somerset County. No, I'm sorry. It's in Morris County.

SI: Would you say that they preferred a more hands-off approach to zoning issues? Did they want the ability to do what they wanted with their land, or were they kind of receptive to ideas you tried to pass?

CK: Actually, they were very strict in the zoning, very strict. We were suburban-country, and I think by and large most of the people didn't want to see it become a city and didn't even particularly want to see it become densely populated. We did not have in the town very much of any multifamily housing. We tended to have large-lot zoning. We had floor area ratios, and there had to be so much open space, like you could only build on, in some places, fifty percent of the lot. There were side-yard setbacks, front setbacks, back setbacks. A front setback, it was not unusual to have fifty or seventy-five feet requirement. A house had to be set back fifty or seventy-five feet from the street. I live here in Jacksonville, Florida, and my house is set back twenty-five feet from the street, big difference.

SI: Did you have to deal with Mount Laurel issues?

CK: Yes, affordable housing.

SI: Do you think the town was able to manage those issues successfully?

CK: Define success; you have to define success. [laughter] I mean, we managed them. The future only knows whether we were successful in the management, but we managed them. We tried. We had very little affordable housing and probably still do, although I haven't been back there in over twenty years, but my guess is they probably still don't have an awful lot of affordable housing. I look at how much we have here in Florida, in Jacksonville particularly, and they are always bemoaning that we don't have enough affordable housing here in Jacksonville. I think, "My God, that's multiple times more than we had back in Gillette." But part of it is a function of how expensive housing was in New Jersey versus the cost of housing in Florida. [Editor's Note: In *Southern Burlington County N.A.A.C.P. v. Mount Laurel Township* (1975), referred to as Mount Laurel I, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that municipal land use regulations preventing affordable housing opportunities for the poor are unconstitutional. The court ordered municipalities to provide affordable housing for low and moderate-income people. The ruling was reinforced with a second decision in 1983, known as Mount Laurel II. In 1985, the New Jersey Legislature, in direct response to the Mount Laurel decisions, enacted the Fair Housing Act, which created the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) to enforce fair housing standards.]

SI: When did you retire from AT&T?

CK: It was around 2001, maybe September of 2001. One of the jobs I'd had at AT&T was legal support for the IT [information technology] department, and IT had the famous Y2K responsibility. I had the pleasure of being in the bunker. AT&T, not the network group, but the equipment group, which was the former Western Electric, we had the famous bunker, where they had people from various disciplines around screens and we were watching as the year turned 2000 and watching the performance of the networks as it was coming across. Of course, the international date line is off in the Pacific somewhere. That was, I don't know, much earlier. I'd have to do the math, but maybe twelve hours difference, and that would be twelve noon time. I guess we were beginning to get the sense it was going well; everything was functioning and clicking over. It got to Australia and Japan and it's coming across, and we pretty much knew that we were going to be home free and everything was going to work as it was coming across. We knew that Europe would probably be okay. So, we stayed in the bunker until the early morning hours of two, three o'clock, when it came through the U.S. We had a good feeling early on that it was going to work. So, anyway, that was one of the more interesting things I got to do. [Editor's Note: Y2K, short for the year 2000, refers to the computer programming shortcut that was expected to cause widespread problems as the year changed from 1999 to 2000.]

SI: After you retired, did you go down to Florida right away?

CK: No. Heavens, I don't want to leave New Jersey. I love New Jersey. I grew up in New Jersey. Why would I leave New Jersey? I retired just before September 1 and, of course, 9/11 and all that, which was very significant and actually pretty traumatic because I'd worked right there. I'd been there. A lot of my neighbors worked in New York City. I lived in a bedroom

community with trains going into the city. That day, [I was] driving by the train station that I used to take the trains to and seeing all the cars still in the parking lot, and those cars should have been driven home. So, you just know that the people who drove those cars came to no good.

Anyway, the question was--when did I come to Florida? I never intended leaving New Jersey. I stayed in New Jersey until 2004, from 2001 to 2004. My husband's parents had retired many, many years ago to Gainesville, Florida, and Gainesville is in the middle part of the state, home of the University of Florida. They loved the university community. They liked it because it had pine trees and a lot of things to do. They were happy, but they were getting older and they needed more help, more time, needed people to go to doctor's appointments with them. Anyway, they were just getting older, and we found ourselves going back to Gainesville more and more frequently. So, we said, "We probably ought to move closer to your parents because they're not about to move back to New Jersey." We started looking around. We didn't want to be in Gainesville, lovely city, but not near the water. If we're going to move, we're going to move to the water. We had had a summer house down at the Jersey Shore and had a sailboat and a power boat, and we lived on a lagoon. So, we were going to move to the water.

We started looking around, and Jacksonville checked all the boxes. We wanted something with a good airport. We wanted something with a real economy not based on tourists; read Orlando. We wanted something where the traffic wasn't so bad; read Miami, terrible traffic. Anyway, Jacksonville had that, it had museums, it had a symphony, and it has great beaches, but don't tell anybody. [laughter] Let me tell you. I can go out today. What's today, Wednesday? I could go out to the beach today and there's probably, on a one-mile white sand beach, maybe a hundred people in a whole mile, and this is a Wednesday in July. It's wonderful. In any event, that's how we came from Gillette to Jacksonville, and it's worked out well. I'm still active in church. Notice that sort of followed me all the way through. I'm still active in church. Let's see, what else do I do? Well, you probably have never heard of OLLI, O-L-L-I.

SI: Oh, yes. We have one at Rutgers.

CK: You do, okay.

SI: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

CK: That's it. Our OLLI at the University of North Florida is run by volunteers. We only have two paid positions, the director and her secretary. All the faculty, all the staff, everybody is a volunteer. Nobody gets paid, which is interesting when you don't have any paid faculty. What I do is something called EdVentures. I organize educational trips. That, frankly, takes quite a bit of time. I volunteer in my homeowner's association. I'm on the fines and appeals board. We're not too popular, but I do that. What else? Well, anyway, I do various things.

SI: During your career, had you been involved in any professional organizations like Bar Association committees?

CK: No, I was not active in the Bar Associations, no.

SI: How about corporate attorneys' groups?

CK: No, I just worked.

SI: I always ask lawyers this. What was the bar exam experience like for you?

CK: Oh, wow. That's really traumatic. I mean, you can't appreciate how traumatic the bar exam is until you've actually taken it. I think now it may not be two days, but it was a two-day exam. One day was multiple choice basically, and the other day was essay questions. Mine happened to be down in New Brunswick, good old Rutgers-New Brunswick. I was deathly afraid--I was driving at that point--I was deathly afraid of having a car breakdown, as were some of the students, and for some reason not being able to make one day of that exam because maybe my car wouldn't work. So, a bunch of us students organized a caravan, and we all drove down in our cars together following one another just in case. I mean, that shows you how paranoid we all were about the bar exam.

SI: Charlene, did you have other questions about any aspect of her life?

CW: I think you have touched on a lot of different things, but since you have been so involved with the church, did you ever go on any mission trips?

CK: Well, two, and both of those happened to be within the United States. Actually, they were both to West Virginia, too, to the coal area of West Virginia. We were rehabilitating people's houses. That was really sort of interesting. Parts of West Virginia are like a third-world country, which is a shame.

SI: Is there any aspect of your life that we skipped over that you want to talk about or anything that you think we should know?

CK: The "R" behind you must be for Rutgers.

SI: Yes, I just got this. It is a block "R" made out New Jersey license plates.

CK: Oh, that's what that's made out of. I've been trying to figure out what it's made out of. Sorry, not that I'm not paying attention. I'm really paying attention, but I was just trying to figure that out. [laughter] Okay, that's cool.

SI: Yes, we have a nice shop in my town that does stuff like this.

CK: Oh, very nice. Well, you probably can't see my background, but behind me, the other way, the three pictures are actually pictures that I used to have hanging in my office, but very soon when I started practicing law, I said, "Oh, this is not good. I'd better take them down," because all three of the pictures are of nudes and I figured, "This is not so good." The thing that looks like a diploma--actually, I don't have any of my diplomas hanging around my office anymore--but that one I do still have and that was my admission certificate to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court. I never did. As it turned out, I never had to. When I was working, I was on a

brief that went to the Supreme Court. So, I did get admitted, and that I was very happy with. So, I still have my admission certificate.

SI: Did you ever have to go to court during your career?

CK: Not much. Funny thing in New Jersey, at least when I was there, New Jersey had this way of assigning, not public defenders, because those were for people who had more serious crimes, but if you were looking at jail time, less than a year, you could have an assigned attorney and all the attorneys in the State of New Jersey had to take assigned cases, even me, when I was doing corporate law for AT&T. I mean, every once in a while, I would get an assigned case, and I really, one, felt sorry for my clients, but, two, those cases took more work than you would believe because it would be something that I knew nothing about and I didn't want to commit malpractice and I have high standards. I wanted to represent my client well. So, it took a fortune in time if you were to bill it. It took a huge amount of time.

I had one of the stupidest cases. Actually, it was not an indigent case. It was when I was in the law firm. They'd give an associate the job, but I had somebody driving a Lamborghini on Route 78 and he was clocked for going 120 and he wanted me to fight the ticket. I said to him, "What's our defense? Just tell me how I defend this case," and he said, "Well, you know, it's not really good for a Lamborghini to be driven at slow speeds." I said, "I don't think that's going to cut it with the judge." So, that was one.

When I had one of the assigned cases, it was basically a DUI, driving under the influence, sort of case. It was a young man, and he was absolutely convinced that he was not intoxicated. He had not taken a breathalyzer, that would've been maybe more telling, but he had refused to take it. But he was convinced that he was not drunk. This was when police were starting to videotape things and through discovery found out that the police did have a videotape of him taking his sobriety tests. I arranged for he and I to go down to the police station and sit and watch the whole videotape of his sobriety test, the finger to the nose deal, the walking the straight line deal. You watched him talk and he slurred his words and his eyes were closed. He couldn't even find his face, never mind his nose. He could not walk a line. We watched it, and then we went back someplace for coffee because I didn't have an office I was going to take him to. We went back and we sat in the corner of a diner and said, "Well, what do you think of the videotape?" He said, "Oh, God, that was awful. That was so embarrassing. I didn't realize I was that drunk," and he said, "What are we going to do now?" I said, "Well, actually, I think we ought to save the court some time and the police some time. Why don't we plead guilty, and why don't we put all of our efforts into getting you some help for your drinking and get the court to do something with your sentence that gives you help and not spend any time on whether you're guilty or innocent? I mean, they're going to show that videotape, and you're toast." That's what we did. I didn't follow him for a long time, but I've got to think that I helped him more by trying to fashion a sentence that would get him help rather than trying to fight whether he was drunk or not. Anyway, two interesting anecdotes, but I didn't go to court very much.

SI: One question we have been asking people this last year and a half is how has the pandemic affected your life, if at all?

CK: Well, I've been fortunate. I have not been sick. I've gotten vaccinated, as have my husband, family, friends. I really don't have anyone I know who's gotten terribly sick or died from the pandemic. From that aspect, it hasn't been bad. The good aspect has been when we were in a lockdown here in Florida and pretty much not going out, I loved it. I was having fun because, one, I found myself getting in touch with a lot of old friends. I was stuck at home, so I was on the computer more, on the phone more, and it was nice reconnecting with people, number one.

Number two, I was not as busy as I was. I had been, to some extent am now, had been an officer of just about every club in the neighborhood, the garden club, newcomer's club. I was six years on the architectural review board in the community. I mean, people need our permission if they're going to paint their front door a different color. I went from that to being on fines and appeals. So, you can tell I'm really popular. Anyway, I do a lot of things. Nominations committee, I count the votes. When we have our annual election, I'm on the vote counting committee. I'm not chairman of that anymore. So, I was doing a lot, and a lot at church because I was chairman of the trustees. It was nice to slow down. Basically, all the clubs slowed down or didn't have meetings. We started meeting on Zoom, so I didn't have to spend so much time. We found that Zoom calls, except for this one, tended to be shorter than our regular meetings. So, that was my COVID experience. It was nice to take a breather, and I've tried not to let myself get as over scheduled as I was. Oh, I'm also a gym rat. I go to the gym at least a couple of days a week, two, three days a week, and bike ride and try to stay active.

SI: Well, that's continuing in your father's legacy.

CK: Yes.

SI: All right. Thank you very much. I appreciate all your time today. It has been very interesting. Later on, if you want to add more to the transcript, you can, or if you think of anything else, we can have a brief meeting. Thank you. I really appreciate all your answers and sharing so much.

CK: All right. Well, thank you, Shaun, and thank you, Charlene, for taking your time. I'm afraid we maybe went a little bit over the time you planned, but thank you.

SI: Thank you very much. We will be in touch with the transcript.

CK: Okay.

CW: Thank you.

SI: Take care, bye.

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