

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH REBECCA LUBETKIN

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kathryn Tracy Rizzi: This begins an interview with Rebecca Lubetkin, on November 18, 2019, in Mountain Lakes, New Jersey, with Kate Rizzi. Thank you very much for having me into your house and doing this oral history interview.

Rebecca Lubetkin: My pleasure.

KR: To begin, where and when were you born?

RL: I always have a problem with this because my birthplace was New York, because that's where the hospital was, but my first home, where my parents lived, was Kenilworth, New Jersey.

KR: What is your birthday?

RL: 12/7/1938.

KR: I want to ask you about your family history. What do you know about your family history, on your mother's side of the family?

RL: Well, I know my mother was one of ten children, five boys and five girls, and they lived in Far Rockaway, New York, which is out on Long Island. My mother was number four. She and two brothers graduated from Cornell. She graduated in 1933. [Editor's Note: Cornell University is an Ivy League university, located in Ithaca, New York.]

KR: How did your mother's side of the family end up settling in Far Rockaway?

RL: You know, I don't know the answer to that. I do know that the tendency was--they were not immigrants--the tendency at that time, which was the late 1800s, was that the immigrants would come in and they tended to live on the Lower East Side and in certain sections of New York City, and as they became established, they moved out, just the way they do today. They moved farther and farther from the city, and the men commuted into the city. Her husband was an attorney in New York City. I don't know why they chose Far Rockaway, but it was the beach and it was a chance for them to live at the beach all year round.

KR: What do you know about your mother's upbringing?

RL: I think it was tough because there were so many kids. They lived in a very large house, an old Victorian house. I don't know what to say about the upbringing. It was like one kid after the other. As I said, she was number four, and kind of the older kids took care of the younger kids. They were not wealthy at all. Even though their father was an attorney, there were so many mouths to feed, et cetera. I know that the emphasis was on school and education, and that, in those days, when most people didn't even have a high school education, every one of those kids had a college education.

The other thing was, there must have been some emphasis on rigor for girls because she was sent to a high school in New York City, which was, in those days, in 1925, she was only thirteen years old, and she was travelling from Far Rockaway to the East Side of New York for Hunter

College High School. It was a girl's school. I imagine that was important to them, but to me it's amazing that when you have ten kids and you want to make sure that one of them at least goes to a women's high school that's two hours each way, three different units of transportation, [it is] amazing to me. I don't think I could've done it to my kids. When she graduated, she got a New York State Scholarship. They expected her to go to Vassar [College], which was, at that time, a women's college, and she felt that she really had not had any experience with boys and wanted to go to a coed school and that's how she ended up at Cornell.

KR: I am curious about that. Do you know which school she went to at Cornell? Did she go to the Agricultural School?

RL: I think liberal arts, because she was a theater and English and speech major.

KR: Two of her brothers went to Cornell also.

RL: Yes, one was the same year she was, and one was two years ahead. So, one of them graduated in 1931 and two of them graduated in 1933. I think what was amazing about that was that their father died in 1930, the beginning of the depression, leaving, in addition to the three at Cornell and the two that had already graduated but were not really settled--one was in law school--there were five at home, little ones even, nine, eleven, fourteen and so on, five of them, and the mother insisted that the three at Cornell stay in school and graduate. At that time, people didn't have cars. It was 1930. Cornell was far from home, like if our kids went to school in California. I mean, it was far. She had them stay and graduate and did whatever she could to be able to support the family. It was very rough, no Social Security. There was no safety net, and she just had to do it. I think that the most significant event in my mother's life was probably the early loss of her father. Then, when she graduated in 1933, her mother died in 1934, so there were still these five kids at home and the older kids had to figure out a way that they were going to bring them up and support them.

KR: After graduating from Cornell, did your mom return to Far Rockaway?

RL: Yes, she did, in order to help her mother, to help with the kids, to help support the family.

KR: What were those depression years like for your mother and for the younger siblings?

RL: I think they were years of deprivation. The normal things that kids worry about or that suburban parents think about, braces, you know, a little girl's first bra, having somebody to go with her, a mother or a mother figure, none of that was there. They were raised by a housekeeper, who, as I understand it, once the mother died, the housekeeper became the boss, and rather than her working for the family, it was like the kids were working for her. She would have them do menial chores around the house, because she wasn't connected to them by love. She was just being paid by the older kids. It was tough for them, for the younger ones, but they all turned out okay. Every one of the boys was drafted for World War II. So, it worked out, but it was a lot of deprivation and oppression.

KR: What do you know about your uncles and their service in World War II?

RL: The oldest in that family was a girl, who married a doctor, and he was a doctor in the military service. The other ones, I think, were just regular infantry. It just happened that the war came at a bad time in their young lives. I don't know much about it.

What happened was then, my mother, when she married, which was in 1936, she was almost immediately bogged down with a lot of kids herself, and she was living separately from Far Rockaway. Transportation and communication were difficult in those days and she didn't have access in the way that she might have if she lived in the same town. She had one kid after another, much like her mother.

KR: I do want to ask you about your siblings, but first I want to ask you about your father's side of the family. What do you know about your family history, on your father's side?

RL: My father was also brought up in Far Rockaway, and his father was also a lawyer. However, he only had one sister. I think they both went to Far Rockaway High School, but eventually, his sister went to Barnard [College], which is where I went, and then she went to Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, the medical school. But my father's father died early too, when my father was eighteen, and he left college to manage a property that his father had left in Kenilworth, New Jersey, and continued to support his mother and his sister through medical school. I don't know much about his father. As I said, his father died when he was eighteen, but his father graduated from Columbia Law School, 1896. Both my mother's family and my father's family had been in this country for a long time, and so they were more like--they weren't like the recent immigrants--they were more like people who had settled and were upwardly mobile.

KR: For the record, what were your parents' names?

RL: My mother was Jessica, and my father, his formal name was Abraham, but he was called Bud all his life. Everybody knew him as Bud.

KR: What is the last name?

RL: Levin, L-E-V-I-N.

KR: What is your mother's maiden name?

RL: Denenholz, D-E-N-E-N-H-O-L-Z.

KR: Your father's sister, what did she do for her career with her medical degree?

RL: Today, we'd call her an ob-gyn. She did really a fantastic thing. Her husband, also a physician, had to go into the Army immediately, and he was stationed in the Far East, in India, and in other places in the East for the duration of the war. She kept his practice alive, even though she herself was producing children and had very young children, so that when he finally

came back in 1945, he had a practice to return to and then she worked with him. They were both ob-gyns.

KR: How did your parents meet?

RL: When my father's father died, he was sent out to Kenilworth, New Jersey, which, at that time, was the boondocks. It was a tiny little town of about nine hundred, farms and major factories, metals, brass, copper, steel. At that time, he was not near any place where he could have a social life, so he didn't have a social life. So, his mother, who still lived out in Far Rockaway, made it her business to try to find somebody for her son, and she knew my mother's family, who also lived in town. She just went there looking for one of the daughters, because she knew they had a big family, and she kind of set it up.

KR: You grew up in Kenilworth in your early childhood.

RL: My early childhood, yes.

KR: When you were growing up in Kenilworth, your father was managing this property.

RL: Yes, he owned a property that made leather products, a tannery. It was called Rawhide Products Company. He later converted it into retail, and it became a furniture store.

KR: What type of business was it? How many employees did he have?

RL: When he had the tanning factory?

KR: Yes.

RL: I don't really have any idea. It was really before my time.

KR: What was it like growing up in Kenilworth in your early years?

RL: I think it was distancing, because we were unlike anybody who lived there. It wasn't a comfortable place to be, not that anybody intended it to be that way, but we were Jewish and there were only two Jewish families in the town. We were observant Jews, so that makes it even more so. There are certain things you can do and certain things that you can't do, and so you don't fit in. The town was overwhelmingly Italian immigrants, and the parochial school, the Catholic school, Saint Theresa's, had more students in it than the public school. The public school was largely Catholic. It wasn't that anybody intended it. I didn't feel anti-Semitism; I just felt like I didn't fit in. On the other hand, we were six kids, and there was a lot of fitting in at home, a lot of companionship, and people to play with and to talk with. It didn't affect me very much; I just didn't connect with school except in an academic sense. It was much more comfortable when we moved away.

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

RL: The oldest was named Pauline and she was born in 1937, my brother and I, his name is Henry (Hank), 1938, a sister Rachel, 1940, a sister, Sarah, 1942. The youngest one has an unusual name--Treasure is her name--and she was born in 1947, so she was kind of like the caboose. It was really just the five of us in my earliest years.

KR: What are some stories you have of growing up that have to do with your siblings?

RL: Loads, loads of beating each other up all the time. [laughter] I think that we were longing for attention. We also had a housekeeper. She was more than a housekeeper. She was what some would regard as a nanny today because her job was us, but we longed to be with our parents and to get the kind of attention that singletons and doubletons get. Of course, it wasn't that there were so many, because six isn't that many, but five of us were born in four-and-a-half years, and so we were all around the same age and really fighting all the time. That's one of the things I remember.

I was very small. I was born small as a twin, an unexpected twin, and about four pounds. So, I didn't get the brunt of the beating up because I think people felt sorry for me. I wasn't important enough to beat up, because I wasn't that formidable. [laughter] Also, I had a twin brother who was very protective of me. I remember not so much being the brunt of things but having to observe it all the time, the kids fighting, lots of fighting. When people complain about sibling rivalry, I think, "Boy, you don't know sibling rivalry," until you've experienced that many kids without really access, the kind of access, to parents that they would like.

Part of the problem was that my mother worked with my father in the same town, right next door, and the result was that she wasn't always available. She wanted to be, but she couldn't be. These were war years. I was born in '38. They were difficult years for everybody. Food was rationed. Gas was rationed. We couldn't get in the car and just go, because you had a certain amount of gas that was allocated. They were hardship years for all Americans, and between that and there being so many of us and being so removed from my parents' roots, it was hard.

The school wasn't at all a challenge, not at all, so much so that I remember, when we moved to Millburn, I was in seventh grade and they gave us [placement tests]. I always speak in plural. I always speak "us" because I never felt like an individual; it was always my brother and me or my brother and my sister and me. When I say "us," Hank and I were the same age. When we came to the school, the school started in seventh grade, and so they gave us placement tests. I deliberately made errors because I didn't want to stand out the way I had stood out in Kenilworth as being smarter than everybody else. I just wanted to be average.

Sure enough, we were put into--there were six tracked sections of seventh grade--and we were put in number six, the lowest level. They didn't know what to make of us, so they put us in number six, which was really boring. Then, after a few days, they said, "You don't belong here. We're going to promote you." So, I, not knowing what they were talking about, I had come from this tiny little school that had two of each grade and I didn't know that there were six sections of seventh grade and that they were based upon previous achievement, and so I thought that they were going to promote us to eighth grade because, "Why else would they be promoting us?" It turned out what they meant was they were going to move us to a higher section because we

didn't belong in number six. It was all because I had deliberately made all the mistakes, just not to be smarter than everybody else. Well, in Millburn, I wasn't smarter than everybody. There was a whole gang of us who were up there. It was a much more comfortable place to be.

KR: Were your siblings good students like you?

RL: Very.

KR: Was there an emphasis on education in your household growing up?

RL: Very, an expectation, yes. I mean, it was like there were no other choices. That was what kids did, study, work hard.

KR: I am curious what you remember about World War II and those years. Are there any historic points of World War II that really stick out in your mind?

RL: A lot of them, some of which I've been told. My youngest sister Treasure and I created, after our parents died, thirty-three years ago, an archive of our parents and grandparents. We took a roomful of cartons, literally cartons of things that they had saved, and over the last thirty-three years, we've gone through them and made binders of documents and photos. So, we have a huge number of binders. We threw away a lot, too. Some of what I know, I know from the archives, the family archives.

One of the high points was--I was really annoyed at my father. See, I was only six when the war ended. I was probably in kindergarten when this was going on. All the kids would buy war stamps and put them in their little books, and I thought my father, he just wasn't with it because he didn't want us to do that. It turned out that he was buying loads of war bonds, and he bought so many. Now, I didn't know any of that.

One day, these military men in uniform with all kinds of ribbons and stuff all over came into my classroom, my kindergarten classroom, and said, "We would like this one and this one," my brother and me. I didn't know what they wanted or why these men who looked so important were asking us to leave the classroom. It turned out that they sent a jeep to the school to take us, just my siblings and I, on a trip through town in honor of the fact that my father had bought more war bonds than anybody else in the county. As a result of his buying the war bonds, they were able to buy some matériel or some equipment that they wouldn't have been able to buy otherwise. I mean, I didn't understand any of it, but it was amazing to me to be honored. First of all, I was honored for something that I didn't do and that I didn't know about. The crowds, it was like maybe a parade or something. There was a banner on the jeep, and people were waving. It was exciting. It was something that I remembered, and I didn't understand it at all. So, that's one thing I remember.

I remember difficulties in being forced to sing religious songs, songs of worship in a tradition that I was told I didn't participate in and I didn't believe in, and I felt that was embarrassing and unfair. I'm trying to think of what else I remember. Being smart, being smarter than everybody else, and that was not comfortable for me. When I think about it, I probably wasn't smarter than

everybody else. It's just that the emphasis was so different in our family than it was in other families, where education was either not valued as much or if they did value it, they didn't know how to express it. They didn't know how to get their kids to [express it], so it just made me feel very different.

KR: What role did religion play in your life when you were growing up?

RL: It was very important in our family, and so I went along with it. It had its positives. I remember, because we were so isolated from other Jews, my parents hired a tutor to come and teach us because we couldn't go to Hebrew School or whatever. I think that I was able to read Hebrew before I was able to read English, just because I had this tutor coming every week. I think religion was isolating for me. I didn't know other people who were the same religion as we were. On the other hand, we had a big family, so there was a lot of positive reinforcement within the family. Millburn did not have many Jews when we lived there, but it was lot more than Kenilworth had had.

KR: When you were living in Kenilworth, did your family go to a temple?

RL: Not really. Synagogues were a distance away. Occasionally, my mother would bring us to one but not on a regular basis. It was very much the home rituals, a lot of home rituals, of observing the Sabbath and celebrating holidays, but it was all oriented to home.

KR: Tell me a little more about those religious traditions that your family carried on.

RL: For instance, the Sabbath, which was Saturday, was a day in which we weren't allowed to do a whole lot of things that we were used to doing, couldn't play the piano, weren't allowed to write, weren't allowed to ride on things, like ride our bikes. To me, the Sabbath was a day that was not something that I really enjoyed, and since the positive parts about it, which would have been in a synagogue or maybe with peers, we didn't have that, so it was pretty much a day in which a lot was forbidden. I think that later on, as we became more a part of the Jewish community in Millburn, it was much better. Also, I think my parents loosened up, so that they became more aware that if you're going to live in a non-segregated environment, you have to make compromises. But the holidays were very positive. Passover was very positive. We used to all cook together and plan together, a lot of family togetherness for holidays, which was good.

KR: With this larger extended family that you had in Far Rockaway, would you visit them on holidays?

RL: No, not at all, not at all. It's hard to believe now, because transportation is so easy and people get in cars, but that was really considered very far away. I mean, it would be like your kids moved to Chicago and you'd see them maybe twice a year. Most of them moved into Manhattan. Most of my mother's siblings eventually moved to Manhattan, and so they would come out to see us more than we would go in. Our going in, because there were so many kids in the family, it was really onerous to get everybody on a train or a bus and those kinds of things, but they would come out to see us.

That was an amazing thing--when my father's sister's husband was in the military for all those years, my mother would have his sister come out with their four kids. Despite having six kids of her own, she would make Sunday dinner every single week while they came out, so that they could come out to the country and play with their cousins and all. Because my father's sister was a physician, she didn't have the gas rationing that most people had, and she was able to drive to places that the average person couldn't, so she'd come out with her family every Sunday. I thought my mother was amazing to do that. If I had six kids, all I'd want to do is sleep on Sunday, but she did it.

My mother was very creative. In spite of having so many kids and being so tasked and overtasked with work, she used to make our costumes. Everybody else on Halloween would go to school with these store-bought costumes, and we'd have the most original costumes because she would think about what we should be and dress us. There were so many creative ways in which she was way beyond where we lived.

KR: You said before that your mother worked next door to your father's business.

RL: In my father's business, which was next door to our house.

KR: Okay, I understand. What was it like for them working together in this business?

RL: My father was difficult. He was overwhelmed with responsibility, short-tempered, and demanding. She just managed him. I wouldn't have. I would've been out of there, but she did. Besides, I guess there wasn't much [she could do]. I think she really loved him and I think getting therapy or the kind of guidance that people get today when they have problems, that wasn't done, so you just kind of managed it. She did, but I think it was hard, very hard for her. One of the best things about moving to Millburn was that we were separate from his business, which meant that we were separate from him. While she would go periodically, like a few days a week to help him out, by and large, we had a separate life from him. He would come home at night like any other father, and that was a lot easier for us.

KR: Why did your family decide to move to Millburn?

RL: Well, we had outgrown the house, and I think that my mother realized that there was really no future for her kids. The high school that we would be going to years later was a regional high school, where kids were bused, and not particularly academically advanced. I think, and I'm not sure about this, but she had a nervous breakdown right before we moved and I think that one of the conditions under which she was going to be able to continue was not to live there, not to live next to the business, not to live in a town whose values were so different from ours. We moved to a big house, that was the house, the one up on top there, a very large house in Millburn that could house us all much more comfortably. [Editor's Note: Rebecca Lubetkin points to a photograph of the family home in Millburn hanging on the wall.]

KR: What was it like growing up in Millburn?

RL: It was a lot better. I found a group that I was comfortable with. I found a best friend that was outside of the family. In Kenilworth, almost everything was directed by the family since we were so different, but in Millburn, I could reach out and be a part of everything that was going on and develop my own talents and not feel constricted by the family. The family had a lot of positives, but there's also a lot of negative when you are so close, close in, and when you're not really part of the community. So, it was good. There were a lot of smaller negative things about Millburn, but most of all it was a good place to grow up and academically so much better, so much more challenging.

KR: When you were in middle school in Millburn, what were your academic interests at that point?

RL: I don't remember. I really don't remember. I just wanted to get through. To me, increasingly, I didn't value what I was learning. It was increasingly a stepping stone to college is what I thought, and it wasn't only in middle school. It was all the way through. I did well and I worked hard, but I can't say that I did well because I was really interested in this stuff. I did well because I knew I had to do well in order to get out and go where I wanted to go. So, it wasn't an intrinsic valuing. Where a lot of people get taken by Greek mythology or Russian literature, I didn't get taken by anything academically. I just did it and did it well, whatever I had to do.

KR: You said before that there were smaller negatives of growing up in Millburn.

RL: Yes.

KR: What were those negatives?

RL: They didn't really bother me at the time and I don't even think I was aware of most of them until after I graduated, but there was kind of a quiet anti-Semitism there, where nobody called names and nobody expressed anything to your face. It was much more refined than that. It was a matter of not including. There were country clubs that didn't include Jews or Catholics. People don't recognize that now because Millburn's a different place. When we lived there, the Short Hills section of Millburn was absolutely restricted, no Jews. There may have been a few Catholics just moving in. They had restrictive covenants. Do you know what they are?

KR: Can you say for the record, please?

RL: In the deed itself, it said, "You may not sell to this, this and this." Blacks were unthought of. That wasn't even mentioned. I remember, in Millburn High, when I was there, there was one black in the whole school and he was from Summit. It turned out, I found out later, that his father, I think, was in the police department in Millburn, so he brought him and he was able to go to school there. But I thought, in my ignorance, that Summit must be a black town and Millburn must be a white town because here's this black kid and he's from Summit. It was so segregated. There wasn't any talk about blacks because that was irrelevant, but there was a lot of anti-Semitism. There was a lot of not including. What happened is that for many of the Jews in the town, they were in the school, but their relationship with the school was more related to their schooling and not to the extracurricular or outside activities, and the Jews in town lived in one

section. We didn't live in that section, but that was rare. There was one section and it was Jewish, and there was Short Hills, which was not Jewish. The rest was somewhat mixed. Of course, it's very different now. When people hear that, they don't really believe it. There are a lot of Jews who live in Millburn now. It wasn't that way.

KR: Was there a synagogue that your family went to when you lived in Millburn?

RL: Yes, they had a tiny little synagogue, and then while we lived there, they built a new one, which is still there and is still being used. They sold the old one to the town. It actually became the Millburn Library. Then after that, a lot of synagogues in Newark moved out to the suburbs, and so there were two other big synagogues that moved out near Millburn and other people joined. When we lived in [Kenilworth], in my later years, say, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, as soon as the war was over and we were able to drive a car, we did belong to a synagogue in Union. So, this business of not belonging to a synagogue, that was pretty much my really early childhood. From, say, 1945 to 1949, before we moved to Millburn, we belonged to the synagogue in Union, and then we belonged to both synagogues in Union and Millburn. [Editor's Note: The congregation of B'nai Israel was founded in 1924 in Millburn, New Jersey. It moved to its current location in 1954. The temple being referred to in Union is Temple Beth Shalom.]

When it became time for my bat mitzvah, girls didn't have bat mitzvahs. My parents, I don't think it was that they were feminists, I think that they felt they wanted to have something for their daughter, and their son, the only son, was ready for bar mitzvah. So, they told the rabbi in Millburn that they wanted to have both of their children participate in the ceremony. The rabbi said, "No, we don't do that." So, we went back to Union, where we had belonged for many years, and had it there because the rabbi allowed it. But he didn't allow it because he believed in it. He allowed it because my parents had been big donors to his congregation and I guess he felt as though it was something he had to do. But he probably thought that this was the boy's bar mitzvah and the girl is just kind of ancillary to the whole thing and he'd let it go.

KR: Did your older sister Pauline have a bat mitzvah?

RL: No.

KR: What about your younger sisters?

RL: They did, but they had it on Friday night. What happened was that as people kept demanding something for their daughters, and as the rabbis didn't want to do it on the appropriate time, which is Saturday morning, they developed a kind of tradition of Friday night, but that was not the real thing. They called it a bat mitzvah, but it wasn't what the boys had and that's what my younger sisters had. Mine was just an accident. In fact, now, there's a lot of celebration over the fact that I had one of the earliest bat mitzvahs. You could pause that if you want to.

KR: Sure, yes, I will pause.

[TAPE PAUSED]

KR: We are back on the record, and Rebecca just shared a photograph taken at her bat mitzvah in 1951, when her brother Hank also had his bar mitzvah, at Temple Beth Shalom in Union. Rebecca also shared a document.

RL: It was not just Hank's. It was ...

KR: Yes, it was your bat mitzvah and his bar mitzvah.

RL: Right.

KR: Rebecca also shared a document. Maybe you can, for the record, talk about this document and the fiftieth anniversary of your bat mitzvah.

RL: Yes, I don't remember what it said. It was kind of the history of it and why it was that I happened to get a bat mitzvah since it was so unusual. Let me just see if there's anything here of interest. It says it was definitely not a reflection of the rabbi's personal conviction; that rabbi never allowed another bat mitzvah on a Shabbat morning. Mine was his first and last. He retired in the early 1990s, forty years later, still not having accepted what had become commonplace almost everywhere else. So, it tells how it came about and all, and I'm going to give it to you.

KR: Great, thank you. For the record, was Temple Beth Shalom a Conservative synagogue?

RL: Conservative, yes. But the rabbis of the Conservative movement, which is between Orthodox and Reform, they took great pride in not--what's the word?--not surrendering to modernity. I mean, the degree to which they could be closer to the tradition made them stand up stronger and better, and so while they had all this pressure from the flock, they didn't want to capitulate. It took something for him to capitulate. He had an excuse though. He could say, "It's because they're twins and I'll never have to do it again." Twins were really unusual in those days. It's not like today where you see five of them in every class. It was something that he could say and get away with.

KR: What was the name of the temple in Millburn?

RL: B'nai Israel, and it's still there.

KR: On that topic, what is it like being a twin?

RL: Well, I think I was very lucky as a child. As I said, my family were physically fighting a lot, beating each other up, and being small and having a brother was very useful. Later on, I was an overly adapted child, and I say that because my brother wasn't. So, he was always getting in trouble with my father, and my father was physically punitive. He would smack him and worse. That didn't happen to me because I would just do everything that they said because I was scared. In school, where my brother was interested in doing what he wanted to do and not necessarily following all the rules, I followed all the rules, and the result was I was embarrassed. I was embarrassed about him because, "Why couldn't he just do the right thing?"

As it turned out, I have to say, and I know this is not in the right order, but he became a brilliant economics professor at Stanford, from 1969 to 1999, for about thirty years. He retired from Stanford, moved to New York, and is now a professor at Columbia and internationally honored by all kinds of things. But that didn't show at the time. At the time, I was the goody-goody; he was the one who was always kind of getting in trouble. I never imagined that it would turn out this way. He got his doctorate at Rutgers, another Rutgers person. Rutgers gave him a big award about thirty years ago, when he was at Stanford, because they considered him one of their graduates that they were proudest of. [Editor's Note: Henry M. Levin earned a master's degree in 1962 and Ph.D. in 1967 in economics at the Graduate School-New Brunswick at Rutgers University.]

KR: What did you do in the summertime when you were growing up, in your middle school and high school years?

RL: A lot of the summers, I had to work with my father. I hated it, but I did it. They thought that was good for us. There were short vacation kinds of things, but almost never did we go away as a family. I might go away because a friend invited me to go someplace. There were short-term summer camps and one long-term one, one eight-week period when I was fifteen. For the most part, it was being around home and working.

When I graduated from high school, my mother said that I had better get a summer job, and I had never thought of that. I got a job as a car hop in a drive-in restaurant, a very well-known one that all the locals went to. It was called Don's Drive In in Short Hills, and I worked for Don for five years. He helped me get through college actually because I needed that money to get through college.

KR: When you were growing up in the 1940s and in the 1950s, what was spoken about or studied about the Holocaust?

RL: One of the things that I remember most during the war, and I was a preschooler during the war, was--and this didn't only have to do with the Holocaust, this had to do with the war--there were periods of time when [my parents] would turn on the radio. I guess it was on the half hour all day, and all of a sudden, everybody would say, "Sh, sh." It was very scary because you knew that there was something important being said, and my parents had to hear what was going on. They had all of these brothers and brothers-in-law in the military. So, I remember that.

I remember another time I was with this woman who took care of us. She was with us for ten years until I was ten. I was walking with her. There was a plane overhead, and it was flying very low. I was scared, and I hid behind her. She said, "You don't have to do that." She said, "Look up at the plane, and if you see a star on its wing, it's ours. Then, you don't have to worry. Then, you know you're being protected." That was so comforting to me to know that there were planes out there that were our planes that were protecting us, they weren't bombing us. So, I know that there was a lot in my childhood, early childhood, that was very scary. There were times when there was what they called a blackout, where we had to turn off all the lights because they were afraid of enemy aircraft and they didn't want to give them a way of finding out where they were, so everybody in town had to turn off the lights, maybe put cardboard on the windows.

That was scary. There's a lot about being a young child during war that's very scary because you don't understand anything, but you can feel the stress.

As far as the Holocaust goes, I don't think I knew very much about it until afterwards. Now, I'm very active in Holocaust work. I'm the co-chair of the Holocaust Council of Greater MetroWest. [Editor's Note: The Holocaust Council, a part of the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ, promotes awareness and education about the Holocaust.]

I didn't know much about it, but I did hear from my parents that they had saved a family, a family that they didn't know. Because their families had been here for so long, they didn't know anybody [in Europe]. Almost every Jew in this country had people that they lost in the Holocaust, people who were still in Europe, but we didn't. Suddenly, they got a claim from a family in Vienna, Austria, saying that they were distantly related and, "Please, please, please, could they help them get out?" In order to help, you had to go to the authorities and you had to say that you were going to sponsor this family. Sponsorship meant that you would guarantee to the government that these people would never be dependent on the government, that whatever they needed, you were going to provide. This was still the depression. There weren't jobs. This was 1938. My mother was pregnant with my brother and me. She had a one-year-old, and she had to go into New York and stand on line week after week after week, trying to get the office that was responsible for immigration to put this family of four on the list to come. Eventually, they were successful, and the family was saved. That meant that the family was not only saved for themselves but all their future generations. In fact, I just want to show you something.

KR: Sure, of course.

RL: It became so well known in our family that our granddaughter, who's sixteen, just wrote a blog called, "Raising My Hand High."

[TAPE PAUSED]

RL: I found that out later because, as I said, my mother was expecting my brother and me at the time, but I did tell our children and grandchildren about it. I have the entire correspondence, which we've given to a museum, the entire correspondence from these people, saying, "Please, please, please, you don't know what's happening." They could see what was happening. They had to get out, but they didn't know how. [My granddaughter] just wrote about it in her blog, and I was so proud of her for doing it. It became kind of a backdrop to her childhood.

KR: Where did the family settle?

RL: They settled, originally, here. Ultimately, they were able to get jobs and they moved, I think, to Indiana, and we lost touch with them. I don't believe that they were ever traceably related. In this case, my parents were heroic going to bat that way for people that they didn't know and didn't know how they were related.

KR: Do you know what community in New Jersey they initially settled in before moving to Indiana?

RL: No, but I imagine they came and we probably found them a place near us in Kenilworth because it was that time, yes. I've never traced them, but we have the entire correspondence.

KR: Your family was helping Jews escape Europe before the Holocaust.

RL: No, not before the Holocaust. The Holocaust started in 1933 [and lasted] to 1945. Hitler pronounced these Nuremberg Laws, which successfully said Jews couldn't have jobs in the civil service. You couldn't go to a Jewish doctor. Jewish kids couldn't go to school, couldn't go to the movies. No dogs, they didn't allow them. Children couldn't have their bikes. It was a succession of moves, working up to the Final Solution, which was the extermination. People were experiencing all of that, and many people thought that it would just pass. Nobody dreamed it would get so bad that he'd go into extermination. It looked like deprivation and forced labor and discrimination. When they saved this family, it was pretty clear, not that he would go for the Final Solution, but that things were very, very bad.

KR: When you were coming of age, in the late '40s into the '50s, did your mom and dad ever discuss with you the Final Solution?

RL: Very little, very little, and it's surprising because they were both religious. I think they felt somewhat disconnected from Europe, although they shouldn't have, because it wouldn't matter, if this happened here, if you were Jewish, you'd be exterminated no matter how long you'd had been in this country. In fact, Germans and Austrians, who had been there for five hundred years and thought that they were well established, had fought in World War I with honors, definitely felt that they were German, it didn't matter. There wasn't a lot of talk about it. I think one of the reasons I became involved with the Holocaust Council is a kind of feeling that I wanted to be, that they may have felt distanced--although I can't really say they felt distanced because they did save a family--but they felt distanced from the immigration experience. I didn't want to feel that way. These were human beings, and they were just like us. They happened to be in Eastern Europe instead of here. I'm very involved in that. It's one of the main things that I do.

KR: What do you do as a part of your work with that group?

RL: Almost all of my activities, for the Veteran Feminists of America, the Holocaust Council, almost everything that I do relates to archiving and memory. For the Holocaust Council, one of our programs is called Survivor Speaks and we still have enough survivors, although they're disappearing. It's a generation that's dying. We still have enough to be able to bring them to schools and to libraries and to the public, and they tell their story. I'm very involved in that. I moderate sessions. I'm also writing a book with two others, editing a book, of the experiences of the survivors from this area. Again, there's a sense of urgency, just as there is with Veteran Feminists of America. It's the same generation. It's the generation that came of age in the '30s, '40s, and they're dying now but have a story to tell. One thing I'm sure of, if *we* don't tell their story, if they don't tell their story in their own voices, historians are going to get it wrong. I feel this urgency to capture their voices. We've got to capture their stories, both the Holocaust survivors and the veteran feminists, so that years from now, these stories will be genuine and accurate. One of my activities, just an aside, until very recently, there was no museum of the

second wave experience of [feminism]. Do you know what the second wave is? [Editor's Note: The Veteran Feminists of America (VFA) is a non-profit organization that seeks to document and preserve the histories of men and women who were involved in second wave feminism.]

KR: You can say it for the record.

RL: The second wave is the activity of feminists beyond suffrage. It mostly took place in the late '60s, '70s and '80s, but it transformed the society. Almost everything that we have now that we didn't have then was due to the activism of feminists of the second wave. With women being half of the population of the country, in the whole country, there was no repository for the artifacts. Now, I'm not talking about papers because there are lots of museums and libraries that'll take papers. But I'm talking about exhibits, artifacts, the stories, the photos, the headlines, the poetry of this period, and so I worked, all over the country, trying to find a museum that was willing to become a repository and finally was able to support the establishment of one at the New York Historical Society. That's very important to me because what that means is that when activists are downsizing or dying and saying, "Oh, I have this little collection of stuff, but nobody would want it." No, we want it and we want it to be in the museum and be available for future generations. What I'm talking about is things, not papers, things that could be exhibited. [Editor's Note: The Center for Women's History at the New-York Historical Society Museum & Library explores women's history through programming, exhibits, scholarship and multimedia.]

KR: I am going to pause.

[TAPE PAUSED]

KR: Okay, we are back on the record. When you were in high school, what were your family's college expectations for you?

RL: It's interesting, my mother, who was always quieter than my father because he was dominant, she kind of had to encourage us quietly. She had hopes for us, but he had a different attitude. He was a conservative before Trump, before it was popular to be conservative. He believed that somehow if we got exposed to college the way she had gotten exposed, you know, going away from home, that we would be exposed to bad influences, communism and "free love." He wanted us to go to school. If we went to school--we didn't have to, we could go into his business if we wanted, which nobody wanted--but he wanted us to go close by, live at home. It had nothing to do with money. It had to do with, he wanted to continue to be the primary influencer, and if we got exposed to all kinds of stuff, God knows what was going to happen. While I think that he was kind of quietly interested in what we did after high school, because he always had his business for us to go into, she was interested in what we did. I think they just went with whatever it was that we wanted. I knew that on the one hand I wanted to go to a good school. On the other hand, I wanted to placate him, so that he wouldn't worry about my getting taken in by all these evil ideas. I decided to go to Barnard because it was close enough, and yet it was a good school and I would be away. [Editor's Note: Barnard College, one of the historic Seven Sister colleges, is a private women's college that is a part of Columbia University in New York City.]

KR: Was Barnard the only school that you applied to?

RL: Pretty much. There was another school that I applied to that I didn't really want to go to, and that was the women's division of Yeshiva University because it was religious. I thought I would get a good background there. It was called Stern College. It still exists. I'm so glad I didn't do that. Barnard was where I really wanted to go. Columbia was all male at the time. Things were so different for our kids. All those all-male schools had become coed when our kids graduated from high school. [Editor's Note: Established in 1954, Stern College of Yeshiva University is located on the Israel Henry Beren Campus in Manhattan.]

KR: What was your freshman year like at Barnard?

RL: I loved everything about Barnard. I just loved the school. I loved being with women. I loved doing whatever I wanted to do. Although I didn't really appreciate it at the time until I got to Rutgers, it was true that everything was available to women. There were no stigmas attached to doing things, nothing that said, "Oh, that's not for girls." Everything was available, and the student body was so alert and alive and bright. It was just really a wonderful experience. I think it changed my life.

KR: What was the student body like in terms of size and demographics?

RL: Our class had 280. It's much larger now. I think it's probably closer to five hundred. The demographics, again, there were not many African Americans, there were some. It was largely an urban, I can't say largely Jewish, because it wasn't, but it had a large minority of Jews and I wasn't used to that, as Millburn had so few. It was just really wonderful, wonderful, and I would've loved our kids to go to a women's college, but they weren't interested. Now, I'm working on this granddaughter here.

KR: I have a cousin who went to Barnard.

RL: Oh, yes.

KR: What was the student life like?

RL: It was very different, depending upon whether you lived there or commuted. At that time, a large percentage of the students actually lived at home and commuted, or they took apartments without telling the college. They just took their own apartments somewhere. So, they were registered as not living on campus, but they were living in the area. For those of us who lived there, there was a very full student life. You had the Ivy League athletics, if you were interested in that, but you also had the ballet and the museums. I mean, it was like a wonderland. For dates, you'd go to a Broadway show. You wouldn't go to a local movie theater in Ithaca, New York. It was unbelievable, and, coming from Millburn, which was, at that time, a quiet town, it was like a wonderland. I loved it. It was far enough away that I wasn't at home but close enough that it was acceptable.

KR: What was your course of study like?

RL: Well, I majored in British civilization, and that was largely British history, English literature, economics of Britain and the empire, the government. The reason I chose such a broad major was I knew I wanted to go to graduate school. I didn't like the idea--there was a beginning trend, that's now an overwhelming trend, of people being interested in going to college to pursue a career. "Oh, I want to go to college because I want to be an accountant." "I'm going to college because I want to be a doctor." I didn't approve of that. My mother hadn't done that. Even though there was a great need in her family, she was not directing herself toward an occupation, and I didn't think that I should. I thought that occupational preparation is what you do in graduate school. So, I thought, "Well, the idea is to get as broad a liberal arts education as you can." If I major in English, there would be required English courses that I had to take, and if I majored in history, there'd be required [courses]. But what if you major in British civilization? You could take whatever you wanted, and as long as it related to Great Britain or its empire, it would count. Other than taking a full year of British history and a full year of economics, there weren't a lot of required courses, and I loved it. I just loved it. I loved the broadness of it. I regret now that I missed a lot of American literature, because I had very little of that.

It's interesting that my brother, same age, went to NYU [New York University], he had the same idea as I did, get away but don't go too far away. He was very career oriented. He majored in business. It was like a form of sexism actually that the boy had to be directed and purposeful. He had to prepare for an occupation, whereas nobody ever said to me, "And what do you want to do with it?" or, "What do you want to do when you grow up?" It would be like majoring in fine arts; it wouldn't matter. But if my brother had done something like that, it would've been, "How's that going to help you?" He once said to me, with all of his great accomplishments, he said one of the things that he laments is that he had to be so purposeful in college. I don't think he attributed it to my parents. I think he attributed it to the society, that he couldn't afford to take all the fine arts courses and the music courses and the literature courses that I took, because he had to be oriented toward an occupation. So, I think, in that case, the sexism worked well for me in terms of broad background, but it didn't work well for me in terms of occupation because I came out of college and I was nowhere in terms of a job, not that I wanted to be because I wanted to go to graduate school. Still, it was totally different, and I believe it had to do with male-female.

KR: When you were at Barnard, what messages were being sent to you from the administration and faculty at Barnard in terms of what you and your classmates could do in your lives?

RL: I think it was very mixed messages. I don't think they ever really thought through what they were doing. Don't forget that I grew up in a large family and with household help rearing us for the most part. I vowed that I would never do that to my kids, that I was going to be the one to raise my family, which meant that I was expecting to not be involved in a career as the children grew up.

I remember the president of the college, Millicent McIntosh, saying--she had five kids, her husband was a physician--and I remember her indicating that, "Yes, you can have a family if you want, but that's not the core of your being. You can also do this," which seemed pretty impossible to me because I knew, from my mother's situation, that you can't do justice to both

the career and to rearing children, especially if you're going to have six of them. So, I vowed I would never do that, and that if any of those faculty, who talked that way, had had the experience that I had growing up, they would know that that's BS. That would never work. Of course, I didn't anticipate feminism coming along and changes being made. So, I was thinking in terms of the restrictions on women, and I just didn't want it. I thought they were wrong. I was absolutely adamant that I would rear my future children myself. It was almost as though the students and the faculty thought they were just modern, you know, "Look, we can do this and we can do that." I thought, "This isn't so new, my mother did this, and badly. I don't want it. I don't want it for my kids." I was, I would say, not a feminist, but I was speaking only about my personal experience. [Editor's Note: Millicent Carey McIntosh was a scholar, feminist, and academic administrator who served as the president of Barnard College from 1952 to 1962.]

KR: I have interviewed some women of your generation who said that when they went to either undergraduate or graduate school, there were traditional, sexist professors who would say things like, "You are just here to get your Mrs. degree," or, "You are here and you are taking the spot of a man." Did you ever have any professors like that?

RL: Never, never. That was a lovely thing. I'm sure Douglass was the same. Some of our professors were actually Columbia professors that were teaching at Barnard too, but I never experienced that. It was really a dreamworld for me. I loved it.

KR: Are there any professors that stick out in your mind?

RL: Well, there were so many good ones. Because I was a British civilization major, those are the professors that I remember. I had an interesting experience though with one of them. He was my thesis advisor and he was the provost at Columbia, but he was teaching British government at Barnard. So, I knew he taught British government over there, too. We could cross register, but if that course was offered at Barnard, you took that course. You only went over there if it wasn't given at Barnard. So, he taught what we call political science now, but British, at both Barnard and Columbia. I knew that we were smarter than they were, the boys, because Barnard was more selective than Columbia at the time, and I wanted to hear that from him. So, I walked up to him. By the way, there were only four British civilization majors, so we knew him really well. I said to him, "You know, I've often wondered, you teach over there across the street and you teach here. How would you contrast teaching young women and young men? What is that like?" He shocked me. He said, "Oh, it's so much more interesting teaching the young men." He said, "I like that so much better." [laughter] So, I was shocked, because I knew we were smarter. He said, "The thing is that when I teach them, they're constantly challenging me and asking questions and telling me I'm wrong and popping out of their seat." He said, "When I teach the girls, their heads are always down and they're taking notes. It's so boring." I thought, "You know, you're right. You're right, that's what we do." [laughter] I never looked at it from his point of view that we weren't very interesting to teach. We always had our heads to the grind. We didn't do that challenging or acting out or acting up, but we did very well, just not very interesting. I hope that's changed. In a coed classroom, it might still be the same, where the women are just sitting there taking notes and the men are all [challenging the professor], but I hope it's changed at Barnard. I was really shocked.

KR: You said before that you worked at Don's.

RL: Yes.

KR: Did you work during the summertime at Don's while you were at Barnard?

RL: In the summer, yes. Two years as a car hop. Then, Don took over the concession, the food concession, at one of the swim clubs. So, I worked there as a cashier. Then, I was the assistant manager of the restaurant at the swim club for two years.

KR: Were there any opportunities to travel when you were a student at Barnard?

RL: There were a lot of opportunities. In my junior year, I did. In the summer of my junior year, I went to Israel for the summer, but I really needed money because of the financial arrangement with my father. My father had enough money to send all of us to expensive colleges, but he didn't believe in that. He didn't believe that you should get it handed to you. Now, Barnard was three thousand dollars a year, which was like one of the most expensive colleges. It sounds unbelievable now. Rutgers was probably like fifty dollars a semester, and Barnard was three thousand a year. He said, "I'll give you each a thousand dollars a year, and if you want to go to an expensive school, you make up the difference. If not, any one of the state schools, you'll be able to make money on the deal and probably buy a car with the extra money, so do whatever way you want." I knew I only had a thousand dollars from him, and the school was going to cost three thousand. How was I going to make up two thousand dollars? It seemed impossible.

The thing about working for Don's, especially when I was a car hop, was you're working on tips and you could work very long hours. Saturdays, we were open until two a.m. and Friday nights, one a.m. At Barnard, we had a very long summer, it was like four months. School didn't start until the end of September, and it ended in May, so you had June, July, August and most of September. I really had to have a job like that because minimum wage was a dollar an hour. My friends who had office jobs for the summer were making forty dollars a week if they worked forty hours. I couldn't have survived on forty hours a week. I had to make sixteen hundred dollars in the summer, and so I just worked really, really, really hard. My parents did give me a car, so that I could go back and forth. I made enough money to be able to pay the difference, where a lot of my siblings went to Rutgers, because it was so much cheaper, and lived at home. I didn't want to live at home, so that was another big thing. That was the last thing I wanted to do.

Working for Don's really helped me get through college. During the year, I taught Sunday school, and that paid me enough for my room and board. So, I was able to, between my father and Don's and the Sunday school, I was able to get through. Some of my siblings would run out of money and they'd ask him for money, he'd give them more money, but I didn't want to. I was just too proud. "If you're going to give me the thousand dollars, give it to me at the beginning of the year. Put it in the checking account for me, and then I don't have to go back to you for anything." Some of my friends were given kind of an allowance. They were at Barnard, but they were given two hundred dollars a month or something. I didn't want to do that. That meant

that I would have to toe the line because each month I'd have to go for the money. "Just give it to me and then leave me alone," that was my attitude.

KR: In terms of where your siblings went to college, your twin, Hank, went to New York University.

RL: Right.

KR: Where did your sisters go to school?

RL: My older sister started at Barnard. I don't know what happened, but she transferred out and eventually went to Newark Rutgers. My younger sister, Rachel, went to the American Theatre Wing for two years and then realized she wasn't going to make it in acting and she went to Newark Rutgers. They all lived at home, which I never wanted to do. Sarah also went to Newark Rutgers, and then she got her doctorate in math at Rutgers in New Brunswick. The only one that really went away was the young one, Treasure. She went to Tufts, because, by that time, I had really worn my parents down about wanting her to be able to go away and they went along with it and they didn't do the thousand-dollar thing. I mean, they had really changed a lot, and it made her life better. She is a much better person because of it, in my opinion. I think it enriched her, and it was very good. [Editor's Note: Tufts University is a private university in Medford and Somerville, Massachusetts, just north of Boston.]

KR: What did she study at Tufts?

RL: Child development, eventually became a teacher.

KR: I am curious, when you were in high school, your female classmates, what percentage of them, would you say, went on to college?

RL: I would guess all of them went to college, but a lot of them went to what were called junior colleges. They didn't have academic aspirations. So, they would go to, let's say, Centenary, I don't know if you know that Centenary used to be a two-year college, but it was fashionable, Mount Ida College. They would go away, but they would go away for two years. I don't know what they did. I think they just got married. Everybody in my class either went to a four-year school or a two-year school. [Editor's Note: From 1940 to 1976, Centenary University, located in Hackettstown, New Jersey, was a junior college for women. Mount Ida College, at one time a junior college for women in Newton, Massachusetts, became part of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst as the Mount Ida Campus.]

KR: When you were in high school, what sort of guidance was there? Did you have a guidance counselor who was counseling you about post-high school options and possibilities?

RL: Yes, although I don't think I was very influenced by it. When we were in seventh grade, somebody came from Smith College and they asked all of the girls who were at the top of the class to go and listen. At that point, I hadn't even thought about college, and the only college I had ever heard of was the one my mother went to. So, that was the first time that I thought of it,

but here they were presenting it to us in seventh grade. I thought it was important, but I didn't really listen because I had these constraints from my father: I wanted him to be hands-off, I wanted to go along with him enough that I won't become estranged from the family, and the way to do that was to go to school in New York. Also, his sister had gone to Barnard, so I knew that he would feel it was safer than some other places. His father had gone to Columbia, 1896, so I knew he'd go along. [Editor's Note: Smith College, one of the historic Seven Sister colleges, is a private women's college in Northampton, Massachusetts.]

KR: How did the opportunity come about to travel to Israel during your junior year?

RL: I was active in the student Zionist organization and they were sponsoring a trip, and so I went for the summer. [Editor's Note: In the late nineteenth century, Theodore Herzl began advocating for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, initiating the modern Zionist movement. After the creation of Israel in 1948, Zionism continued as a Jewish nationalist movement, focused on supporting Israel.]

KR: What was that summer like?

RL: Great, I had a great time, loved it. I spent time on a kibbutz, spent time traveling, a side trip to Naples and Pompei. It was wonderful, really wonderful, and for me, who had been working so hard in order to be able to afford college, the fact that I had saved enough to be able to do that really felt like an accomplishment. [Editor's Note: A kibbutz is a communal settlement in Israel focused primarily on agriculture.]

KR: Were you able to speak Hebrew fluently, semi-fluently while you were in Israel?

RL: Understand it, yes, and not speak it fluently but speak enough to get by.

KR: What did you do with the student Zionist organization?

RL: I think I was the social secretary or something. I planned activities for students from Barnard and Columbia, very active in the Israeli dance group. I did that for a few years.

KR: Are there any other memories from your time at Barnard that you would like to share?

RL: I'm trying to think, I mean, it was all so good, really good. I don't know whether women's colleges are still as remarkable as they were, but at that time, it was really different, which I found out when I came to Rutgers. I was a graduate student. Rutgers College was still male, but the graduate schools had some females. Wherever you went, you felt looked at, stared at, catcalled. It was really horrible, and there was nobody who would care to change that. It was just life. So, you're a woman, and this is the way it is and suck it up. In the cafeteria, I would try to eat and there'd be boys, watching, looking, I guess, sizing you up. I didn't like that at all and it was a shock because I guess if I had been at a coed school, maybe I would have experienced some of it, but this was a male school, not even a coed school, and it was just very different.

KR: You said before that when you were studying British civilization at Barnard, you knew that you wanted to go to graduate school. When you were approaching graduation, what were your plans for the future?

RL: Yes, I applied for--what I wanted to do, since I was a Zionist, I wanted to combine my British civilization with that and go to what was called a Middle East institute. There were, at some universities, there were area institutes, like a Far East institute, a Middle East institute, a European institute, where you became a leader in that area. So, I applied to Columbia's Middle East Institute and Harvard, and I got into both of them.

That's the story of how I got to Rutgers. So, I was working at Don's at the swim club, and I'm trying to make as much money as I can. I didn't want to ask my father for a penny. He would've given it to me. I just didn't want to. I didn't want to be beholden to him. So, it was a day in which it rained, and when it rained, the food concession at the swim club was closed. I was talking to my mother. I could've planned on Harvard, where I had gotten in, but I knew I couldn't do it. This was July, and I knew I'm never going to make enough to be able to go there in September. My mother said to me, "I have an idea." She said, "Rutgers is our state university. Rutgers doesn't have a Middle East Institute, but all the elite colleges do. They probably want to start one. What if you could go down there and talk to someone and say if you'll pay for me to go to Harvard, when I get my doctorate, I'll come back and teach here and help you launch an institute." Well, that was farfetched, I thought, but it's raining and I can't go to work today anyway, so I called.

I didn't even know who to call at Rutgers because if you don't have an institute, who's there to call? They had a political science department, and so I called the chairperson of the political science department. He said, "Why don't you come down right now?" and I said, "Fine." I brought my transcript and my bachelor's thesis, which was about British relations with Egypt during the First World War. So, I go down there, and I'm talking to him about what I want to do, this idea that my mother had, crazy idea. He said, "What if I told you that we could use you right here and we will help you get your degree in political science?" So, that wasn't what I came down for. He said, "We'll pay all of your tuition and we'll give you a stipend." I think it was 1,800 dollars a year or something, which doesn't sound like much, but it was enough. I'm thinking dollar signs and I'm thinking, "Harvard or Columbia would cost me six thousand dollars. This guy's going to pay for all of this stuff and it just didn't make sense." So, I thought, "Maybe I'll accept it. What I'll do is I'll save as much as I can and then I'll go to Harvard or Columbia," wherever I wanted to go. Right on the spot, he offered me a research assistantship, and I thought, "Okay." So, I took it, not intending to stay at Rutgers for more than a year and just intending to save as much money as I could and then I was going to do my Middle East institute.

I was there for the first year for my master's degree. Toward the end of it, I got a phone call. I have to tell you that I lived in a very privileged generation, and so a lot of what I'm telling would be impossible now because life has been much harder for the people who came after us. Jobs for us were easy to come by. It was a very prosperous period of time, and you didn't worry about student loans. It was just a better, easier time. I get this phone call, as I'm completing my master's degree, and it was from Don Herzberg. Don Herzberg was the executive director of the

Eagleton Institute of Politics, and he said, "I've heard about you from Dr. Burns and we'd like to offer you a position as an instructor of political science." I'm thinking, "Eagleton Institute of Politics, that's practical politics, that's political parties and stuff," which didn't interest me at all. I was into comparative government and international relations and public policy. I came over to talk to him--they had one woman professor there, everyone else was male--and he hired me on the spot, I think, for about seven thousand dollars a year. It was unbelievable. So, again, I'm thinking, "Okay, I'm going to do this for a year or two. Then, I'm going to get my doctorate in Middle East." [Editor's Note: Donald G. Herzberg served as the director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics from 1956 to 1973. The Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers was founded in 1956 by Florence Peshine Eagleton to foster the study of politics, government and civic engagement.]

So, I was there, I loved it. I loved being at Eagleton. I loved political parties. [laughter] I loved public policy. I loved lobbying, whatever it was, just loved it, and began to forget about Middle East. The story is in the video. In about my third year there, I met my husband and we married. The result was, I left New Brunswick because he was in politics and he had to live in Newark, in a section of Newark, but that was the end of Middle East institute and I've never regretted it. I loved the experience that I had at Eagleton. It's a great place, one of the highlights of Rutgers, it seems to me, and I'm so proud of what they do, wonderful, wonderful work. That was the end of the Middle East for me, no regrets. [Editor's Note: The video refers to Rebecca Lubetkin's video recording entitled "How I Found My Voice," which is a part of the Veteran Feminists of America Pioneer Histories Project.]

KR: Let us go back to your time at Rutgers, when you were studying for your master's degree. You were at Rutgers from 1960 to 1961.

RL: Yes.

KR: Burns was the faculty member who offered you this package to study at Rutgers.

RL: I forget his first name, but he was the chairperson of the political science department, in Bishop House. [Editor's Note: Edward McNall Burns served as a political science professor at Rutgers from 1928 to 1962. He served as chairman of the combined Department of History and Political Science in 1950-'51. Burns helped organize the separate Department of Political Science, which began in 1952, and chaired the department until his retirement.]

KR: Tell me about your course of study when you were at Rutgers.

RL: There was very little Middle East, except for my independent choices. For instance, if I was in an international politics course and I had a choice of what to do my research on, I would pick Lebanon or Syria or something like that, so I directed some work toward the Middle East, but there were no courses at the time. Later, there were. They brought a professor in about 1961 who was a specialist in the Middle East, but I didn't have him. Rutgers was good, but it was kind of easier than what I was accustomed to. It wasn't as much of a challenge, but that was okay.

KR: What did you do for your research assistantship?

RL: I was a research assistant to two professors. One of them was named Norman Stamps and the other one was named Meehan, Gene Meehan, two male professors, and I helped them with their work. Norman Stamps died during the time that I was there, yes, and that was sad. [Editor's Note: Norman Stamps, an associate professor of political science at Rutgers, died unexpectedly of a heart attack in 1961 at the age of forty-two. Eugene J. Meehan served a political science professor at Rutgers in the 1960s, before going on to the University of Missouri-St. Louis, where he worked from 1970 to 1992.]

KR: Was it unexpected?

RL: Yes, so sudden.

KR: I am curious about the faculty. Were there women and men professors?

RL: No, men, only men. I wouldn't say it was a rigorous program, but it was fine.

KR: How about the cohort of your fellow graduate students? What were the demographics in terms of race and gender?

RL: Well, among the research assistants, the six of us, I was the only female, but there were other females in our classes. I don't know whether they were getting their degrees in political science or maybe in something else and they were just taking this course. So, there were some there. The largest cohort of females that I met were in library science. I didn't meet many women in political science or history.

KR: Where did you live?

RL: I had two places. I don't think they had graduate student dorms. They may have had married student dorms, but I don't remember this. It didn't occur to me to want to live in a dorm. So, I rented a room in a house, and then I didn't like it there. So, I went somewhere else, where there were seven women graduate students living in a house. The best place was on Suydam Street, where I had my own apartment. That was most of the time and that was really close to Eagleton, so I could just walk up there, walk through the woods and up to Wood Lawn. [Editor's Note: Wood Lawn is the nineteenth century mansion that houses the Eagleton Institute of Politics.]

KR: What was your social life like?

RL: My dating life was not with people from there. The men that I went out with were brought in from outside. [laughter]

KR: I am curious, from this time when you were studying for your master's and at Eagleton, was there any link to later when you came back to Rutgers? When you came back later and you were running the Consortium for Educational Equity, were there any people in common? Were there any connections from these two very different periods of time?

RL: Probably there were, but I didn't develop them. I left Rutgers in 1964 and returned in 1975. At that point, when I came to head the Consortium, I was an active feminist and the people that I was closest to were in a program called--I think it was called the Women's Studies Institute, and that was the precursor of the Institute for Research on Women. They had a little building, a tiny little building, on the corner of George and Jones Street, and those were the people that I was closest to, naming names, Mary Hartman, I'm trying to think of some of the other ones, Margarida West was one of them, this woman that I told you about. I should've told you that she's called Guida, G-U-I-D-A. [Editor's Note: Mary S. Hartman came to Douglass College in 1968 as a history professor. Hartman and others founded the Institute for Research on Women (IRW, then called the Women's Studies Institute) in 1976-'77. Hartman went on to establish the Institute for Women's Leadership consortium and served as the dean of Douglass College from 1982 to 1994. Margarida "Guida" West is a sociologist, activist and author who worked at Rutgers from 1974 to 1989 in the Extension Division. She worked at the IRW as the Special Projects Administrator from 1987 to 1989.]

KR: I learned it from your Veteran Feminists of America video, yes.

RL: Oh, okay, yes. There were a number of women, Jean Ambrose, definitely. Unfortunately, she died about two years ago, but she was fantastic person at Rutgers. It's too bad we can't get her. She ended up being an Assistant Vice President of Rutgers and a close friend. Those were the people that I was closest to.

KR: Is there anything else that you want to add about your time studying and getting your master's degree when you were at Rutgers?

RL: I don't think so, no.

KR: Did you do a thesis?

RL: No, they gave you a choice. You could do a thesis for six credits, or you could take two extra courses and I took two extra courses.

KR: What was it like when you were an instructor of political science?

RL: Oh, it was really fun. I loved it. I did two main things. One is we did research on voting and voting patterns with an attempt to be able to predict. All of this would be done by computer and electronically today, but we had to do it by checking the voting patterns and then comparing them to the past. So, we did a lot of that, but we also had activities for undergraduates. I was, in addition to being an instructor of political science, I was called the Director of Undergraduate Activities. For instance, every year, Eagleton has a post-election party the next morning--they just had one last week--where people come and discuss what happened the day before. I would plan those things. Also, election night, I would plan activities for the undergraduates. Now, these weren't the [Eagleton Fellows]; there are Rutgers scholars at Eagleton who were really seriously involved in getting their degree in practical politics. This was for the undergraduates,

whether they were chemistry majors or whatever. We'd have open houses and have activities, and also we had visiting scholars, visiting politicians, a terrific place to work.

KR: The student body, were you teaching Rutgers College students?

RL: Any students at Rutgers who wanted to, Douglass. We were on the Douglass Campus, so a lot of them were Douglass students, yes. Cook, we were on the Cook Campus.

KR: In the Veteran Feminists of America video, you said that you were doing a policy study when you met your husband.

RL: Yes.

KR: Yes, tell me about that.

RL: It's funny because Eagleton tended to be nationally oriented, but we had a certain interest in local politics and one of them was what was happening in the state legislature. Our director, Don Herzberg, who was friendly with the Speaker of the Assembly and the President of the State Senate, got them to request of us that we study their procedures with an idea of streamlining them, making recommendations, what's working and what's not working, and so all of us who worked at Eagleton were assigned to begin with [interviews]. We were assigned to interview assemblymen, senators and so on, and I was assigned the Essex County delegation. It had twelve members. In those days, they were elected at large by county, not the way it is today, where you have Assembly districts and Senate [districts] and so on. So, I had these twelve. Well, one of them became my husband, who was, at that time, thirty and he was a young assemblyman. So, I was interviewing him, and it was a funny story. I don't think I told it on the video.

KR: No, you did not.

RL: We had developed the instrument, so I had to get through this questionnaire. He invited me to come up on a Saturday morning. He would be in his office. He didn't know me from Adam. Even though I lived in New Brunswick, my parents were in Millburn, so I could manage that on a Saturday. I interviewed him, but we didn't get through the interview. He suggested that we meet at a restaurant in East Orange, I think, the next Tuesday night, and I said, okay, I would do that.

Now, he was single, and he was Jewish. At the time, let's see, it was 1962, I was twenty-three. He was thirty. So, I came up there, and I thought, "I know what I'm going to do." Essex had a very powerful leader. Some called him a political boss. He was the County Democratic Chair. My future husband, Daniel Lubetkin, headed the Essex delegation, so I assumed that political decisions were dictated to the delegation by him, their decisions were kind of made for them or so I thought. This is the largest county in the state, the largest delegation, and he's the head of it. So, I thought to myself, "I'm going to find out what's really happening. I'm going to get this guy drunk, and then I'll be able to go back to my colleagues and I'll say, 'Boy, what I found out about how this place works and how the decisions get done in the legislature,'" and who and what. I was sure. Now, I was twenty-three years old and not a drinker. So, I'm interviewing him, and

I'm figuring I'm going to get him drunk and then he's going to tell me all. As we're drinking, I'm the one that's feeling woozy. He's an old politician. [laughter] He wasn't feeling woozy or drunk or anything, so it backfired on me.

When we finished the interview, I knew that I couldn't get back to New Brunswick. The best I could do is get back to Millburn. I called him, "Mr. Lubetkin," I said, "I don't think I can drive by myself." He said, "I'll tell you what, I'll follow you home to your parents' house." So, he followed me. When we got there, my parents, I don't know if you can see this [pointing to the wall photo], but they lived on Wyoming Avenue, kind of at the top of a hill. There are these cobblestone steps going up, not the safest thing in the world, very rustic. He said, "I think I'd better walk up with you." Well, one of the things about my parents' house was it was never locked because there were all these kids and there was always somebody coming and going. We go up the stairs, and he's following me. We get all the way up, start to walk in, and my mother comes down because she didn't expect me and she sees this strange man. I said, "Mom, this is Assemblyman Lubetkin. He helped me to get home." She didn't know that I had been overdrinking and whatever. She said, "Well, thank you, Mr. Lubetkin." She thought that he had accompanied me home, and he left. That was it. I never got any secrets. I never got a political story, just the interview.

He was the head--that's what it was--he was the head of the Essex delegation, even though he was the youngest member. There were only sixty members of the State Assembly. Twelve of them were from Essex County, so you can see that whatever Essex County did had great influence, and he headed that twelve. I thought I was going to really find out what was going on because I was interviewing all these other people, but they didn't have the stature that he had. But it didn't work, so I never did find out anything.

Then, afterwards, I was interested in him, but I thought he probably thinks that I'm too young for him. I didn't even know if he was really single or if he had a girlfriend, but I decided to invite him to the Paper Mill [Playhouse], which was right in our town, because they had the musical *Fiorello!*, a political musical about Fiorello LaGuardia. So, I thought, "I'll invite him and see what happens." I called him up and I said, "Would you like to go with me to this musical?" He said, "Yes." That was the beginning of our relationship, but it really started with me trying to get him drunk. I never found out the secrets. [Editor's Note: *Fiorello!* is a musical that premiered on Broadway on 1959. It is based on how New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia challenged the Democratic Tammany Hall political machine that controlled city politics. LaGuardia served as the mayor from 1934 to 1945.]

KR: What is your husband's educational background and for how long did he serve in the New Jersey General Assembly?

RL: His educational background was he went to Rutgers, and he went to Rutgers Law School. He was active in politics in Newark, in the South Ward of Newark. What happened was, at that time, you only served for two years, the same as congresspeople now, and there was a really, I don't even remember what the issue was, but the issue was volatile and almost all the Democrats were thrown out, including him, after one term. So, [the Essex Democratic Party Chairman], one of the nice things about [him] is if you lost an election, he would find a place for you because he

had all this patronage. So, he named my husband to a position that was a good position, but it was actual part-time work. It was called secretary to the county council or something like that, and then later Dan became the surrogate of the county. We married, and later, when we started to have children, he quit politics but was still very interested. It's one of the great things we have in common, and he's still a Democrat. I was Republican for a long time, but I became a Democrat because of Trump.

KR: What were the early years of your marriage like? What was your life like then?

RL: Oh, well, we had to live in Newark because of his position. His political position, it was a quasi-judicial position when he was the surrogate, and so we lived there until I got pregnant. Then, we moved to South Orange. Life was good. Life has been very good. I'm very lucky. We had our first child in 1967 and the second one in 1968.

KR: What was it like having young children?

RL: Hard, it was hard, but I had no conflict with employment because I had no intention of working. We just kind of had an agreement, an unspoken agreement, that his job was to bring in the income and my job was to rear the children and I was very happy with it, not at all like a lot of women of my generation who resented it but felt that they had to do it. It was just what I thought I should be doing. I was so close to the children and so connected to them that I started to worry about what's going to happen when they get to the point where they want me to get lost and I don't know where to go. I felt that I needed to pursue something else for their sake, not for mine, because I would've continued, but I knew I couldn't continue with this because I was too connected to them.

I went back toward my doctorate at Rutgers in the [Graduate] School of Education, which I didn't complete, but I came very close to completing it. I was interested in the politics of education, because politics had really gotten to me through Eagleton. It wasn't that I was interested in teaching; I was interested in all the aspects of education that are politically important.

Ultimately, what happened was when they were in preschool, I became a feminist, around 1969-1970. I became active in the local PTA [parent-teacher association]. Even though they weren't in school yet, I looked around and I saw the kinds of things that were going on, the ways in which girls were stereotyped and limited and boys as well, and I thought, "Something has to be done about this." That's where Jean Ambrose came in.

Jean Ambrose was active in NOW. I became a member of NOW. She lived in Westfield. She worked at Rutgers, at Douglass. She announced that she was interested in what's going on in schools and she was going to have a meeting at her home in Westfield for people who wanted to do something about it, provide training in how to provide an understanding of the ways in which schools were limiting kids based upon their gender. So, I went to her house, and I became friendly with her. We began to plan how we could develop workshops for practicing teachers. We could do it through NOW, but it didn't work well because schools had no vested interest in changing anything about the way they were doing it, nor did they think it was valuable, until we

changed the law. [Editor's Note: Jean Ambrose, who graduated from Douglass College in 1954 and Rutgers School of Law in 1981, spent her career as an administrator at Rutgers, beginning as assistant to the dean at Douglass College and eventually serving as Assistant Vice President for Faculty Affairs. An activist and reformer, Ambrose served as the chair of the Education Task Force of the New Jersey Chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and as a consultant to the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) and the Office of Equal Opportunity in the NJ State Department of Education.]

We got Title IX federally and we got a New Jersey law that required schools to do things differently, and when we did that, schools then became receptive--I won't say enthusiastic at all--but receptive to the changes that had to take place, and a lot of changes took place immediately. We also filed innumerable complaints in the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights. One of them was--are you interested in this? [Editor's Note: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination in education programs that receive federal financial assistance. New Jersey Administrative Code 6A: 7 ensures equality and equity in education for all students in accordance with federal and state statutes.]

KR: Please, yes.

RL: One of them was that virtually every middle school in the state, probably in the country, required girls and boys to have differentiated arts, elective arts. They weren't really elective. All girls took cooking and sewing and sometimes childcare. All boys took shop, mechanical drawing, automotive and so on, and you couldn't cross. It was just as though we expected one future for the girls and another future for the boys. Once we succeeded in getting the law, then we filed complaints in virtually every middle school in the state. They were called junior high schools at the time, and we got that changed almost immediately. The decision was made for us that this was a violation, and almost immediately, the schools just changed overnight. They started to call them survival arts and they would have girls and boys in mixed classes go through the whole thing together. So, it wasn't only that boys were now taking cooking and sewing, they were taking it with girls, and girls were taking shop and mechanical drawing with boys. So, they would take, every six weeks, they would move through a rotation, and that revolutionized that aspect, so that in high school, you might elect cooking or sewing or you might elect any of that, but you would elect it, having had some experience with it in middle school, whereas there was no opportunity before that.

We did a tremendous amount of work in athletics. Athletics was ultimately boy territory. Girls had what was called GAA, Girls Athletic Association. They would play intramural stuff if the weather was okay and if there was somebody who was willing to work with them, nothing like what the boys had. That was, I can't say it was changed overnight, because it's still not equal, but schools certainly have a lot more for girls now than they had in those days. Even when my kids went to school--one of them graduated from high school in '84 and one in '86--at the beginning of that, when the kids were younger, so probably in the '70s, our high school only had, for girls, field hockey in the fall, basketball in the winter and softball in the spring. That was it. Boys had twelve sports, and they not only had twelve sports, but for many of the sports, they had four levels, so it was developmental. If you were interested in football, there was a freshman team, a sophomore team, a JV [junior varsity] team, and a varsity team. It was one sport, but it was four

teams, the same thing with boys' basketball. Girls only had varsity level, so that a lot of girls didn't get to play at all. Later, they added tennis and swimming. Swimming was coed. They added a few more things, soccer, but it never came up to the boys' level.

The boys had cheerleaders and they could play at night under the lights, so their parents could come. They had the press. The local press would come out for the boys' games, not the girls. They had the use of the school van, so if they had an away game, they had a way of getting there. In the field house, they had lockers, changing rooms and showers. The girls had to walk back to the high school to get their showers. It was incredible. When people talk about athletics, we're not just talking about the numbers of sports, we're talking about the numbers of teams and all the accoutrements. The girls in one of the schools that we were dealing with, they played basketball in the middle school gym. The middle school lacked a regulation gym, it was a three-quarters, and the baskets, instead of being out from the wall, they were against the wall. If you know what that means, you could really smash your head, if you are running into it.

KR: In a regulation court, the basketball court goes behind the basket.

RL: Exactly. Nobody cared. That's what life was like for girls. As far as opportunities, maybe they would be able to play in college but not if they hadn't had anything in high school. In our town, soccer started at kindergarten in the recreation department, so that boys were playing soccer for, say, ten years before they ever were playing competitively in high school. But girls weren't allowed in that recreation department soccer program. It was amazing. Also, physics, there were very few girls in physics when I was in school. Girls took biology and chemistry. Computer science was just beginning; no girls took it, the same thing with trigonometry and calculus. You took algebra I, geometry, and algebra II, if you were going to college. Maybe you took more foreign languages than the boys took.

Schools have been dramatically changed, as the society has changed, from all of that, and a lot of that came from working with Jean Ambrose and NOW and Guida West and developing workshops for schools. Schools were not receptive. They didn't want it. They not only didn't think it was necessary, they thought it was counterproductive, "Why are you doing this? How is that going to help anybody? Besides, you're taking from the boys in order to give to the girls." It was a big change. It all happened, and it was very satisfying.

KR: How did that change happen? What was the process of getting schools to accept and enact these changes?

RL: I would say primarily two things were happening. One was the law changed and we could point out that schools were culpable, but the main thing was the communities started to change. In the more affluent communities, where people were knowledgeable, they were starting to demand changes for their daughters and their sons, and that mattered.

The other thing in the communities that went really beyond was the economics. In the '40s and '50s and '60s, often one person could make a sufficient income to support a family, and that one person was usually the father, if people were married. The father went out to work, he could support the family, and the woman stayed home and raised the children. But that didn't last.

With the reduction in the power of unions, for instance, where men couldn't command the salaries that they used to be able to command, and with other things that were happening in economics and in society, men couldn't get jobs. They were drafted during the Vietnam War. They were dying. They were getting divorced. I mean, there were all sorts of things that were happening that were making it absolutely necessary for another person in the family to be able to supplement the income, and that had to be the woman. The only reason that we seem to be more prosperous today than we were earlier is that families have sent another person out to work. If you were still dependent upon the income of one person, you couldn't live a middle-class life, and that's almost always true, except in very affluent areas. So, that was part of it, and part of it was women getting more education. That was making a difference.

I don't think there was a lot of goodwill. It wasn't like people were feminists, and they're thinking, "Yes, we ought to do this because this is the right thing to do." Not at all. It was the practical thing to do, or it was the legal thing to do, or it was maybe a self-serving thing to do. You want your daughter to play soccer and she's not allowed to play soccer, so you go screaming to the Board of Education. That helped. What it meant was that in a lot of poor communities, you didn't have the community demand. We really had to help them because they were feeling overwhelmed by life, as it was.

KR: What was it like getting changes enacted in more disadvantaged communities in New Jersey?

RL: It was hard. For instance, on the athletics thing, often, after school, girls had responsibilities at home. They took care of the younger kids. They picked the younger kids up from school. They walked them home. They supervised them. Maybe they made dinner while their single mother was out working at a very low-paying job. Girls may have wanted more, in terms of athletics, but there wasn't a strong feeling on the part of the community.

The other thing is that it gets dark early in the fall and in the winter, and parents in disadvantaged communities don't want their daughters out there in danger. So, there was a lot of that, which you didn't have in the advantaged communities because parents would pick the daughters up and it was a lot easier. So, it really was a matter of helping them along.

Often, girls didn't dream of being able to assert themselves and achieve in their own right. They dreamed of being able to do what affluent girls have always done, find a prince charming and live the charmed life of being able to stay home and take care of your kids. The expectation, the hope became different. "Now, why would you want to do that?" "Well, I'd love to stay home and be taken care of." Their mothers and grandmothers never had any other choice.

I think the hardest thing was getting the law changed, and it had a powerful impact. Even today, they talk about Title IX as though it's about athletics only, but it went way beyond that. It protected girls who are pregnant from being thrown out of school. It made sure that guidance counselors were able to provide opportunities and ideas to kids that maybe they hadn't thought of. It made sure that tests were not biased. So much in the law was responsible [for equity], but the law is only as good as the people who demand compliance with the law. If you have an educated community, they're more likely to do that than a poor community.

I remember, in 1975, when we first started the Consortium [for Educational Equity], the curriculum coordinator who worked for me was named Dr. Frances Kolb. She has died since. This was before the law was passed, or I should say before the regulation. Do you know what I mean by the regulation? When a law is passed, it's not operable until there's a regulation that translates what that means in practical terms. So, the law can say, "There will be no discrimination based upon gender," but in actuality, nobody knows how to carry that out until there's a regulation that says, "In career planning, you have to do this, and in athletics, you have to ..." So, the law passed in 1972, but the regulation didn't pass until '75. This happened in 1975, before the regulation passed. [Editor's Note: Title IX Regulations went into effect in July 1975.]

I was out in a school in Franklin Township. We were going to start a series of workshops in various aspects of changing practices, and it was going to be a series of four workshops. We would negotiate with the school district as to who they were going to send and all that. In Franklin Township, they were going to send only the cream of the crop, not the run-of-the-mill teachers, but the administrators, the supervisors, the guidance counselors, what they called their senior team. So, I thought, "Well, this is good because I'm going to get really good people doing good work," and so on. I walk into the room and I'm walking in with Fran Kolb because she is going to be teaching and I'm just going to introduce. All of the senior team, this cream of the crop, they're sitting in the back. Nobody is sitting in the front. That's a clear message that they don't think what you have to say is important and that they resent being there. Some of them are grading papers and they weren't reading their phones yet--that was too early--but they were doing things like that. They had their backs [to us], and a lot of them were speaking Italian to one another. That was so that we didn't understand.

Finally, we start and I introduce and tell them what I'm going to do. I said, "Now, I'd like to introduce the person who will be leading this workshop, Dr. Frances Kolb." At that moment, from out of the back was a voice that yelled, "Hey, Doc, will you give me an enema?" I was like, "I don't believe this." This is the cream of the crop of Franklin Township having the nerve to say [that]. He apparently resented the fact that she was *Dr.* Frances Kolb and she was going to be telling them what they had to do and he wanted to put her down. I had no way of figuring out how to answer. I never dreamed that anybody would be so in our face that way. Maybe people would think that, but they wouldn't come out and say it. Poor Fran, that was a tough one, but there was a lot of that.

There was a lot of feeling that, "The way we're doing things is the right way to do things and you're coming in and trying to mess it up. You're messing up the kids. You're messing it up for the parents. You're messing it up for the teachers." There was not the receptivity, in the beginning, to what we were doing. I think later what happened was, people began to see that what they thought was two different futures for girls and boys--girls would be going this way, boys [the other]--and therefore everything that they had structured in place was meaningful because there were two different futures, all of a sudden, people started to look at what was actually happening to families. What was actually happening was that the women and the men were doing the same thing. Both of them were rearing the family and both of them were going out and making a living. Why were we educating them for different futures, when in fact they're

both going to have the same futures? I think it took a long time for people to see that this was in their interest. There was a lot of resentment and anger, loads of examples of things like that. It happened, so it's satisfying to be able to feel that what you did had meaning and was worthy.

KR: How was it that the Consortium for Educational Equity was established at Rutgers? It was originally called the Training Institute for Sex Desegregation of the Public Schools.

RL: What happened was, I was still a full-time child rearer in 1975. My kids were seven and eight. A very well-known writer was speaking at Bloomingdale's; a very well-known feminist was speaking there. I decided to go, and I was reading a book called *Dick and Jane as Victims*, which was a very early--oh, boy, the people who wrote that were pioneers and they were in New Jersey. Joan Bartl is the person, B-A-R-T-L, Princeton. So, they wrote this book on looking at the basal readers that children have in first grade, Dick and Jane and Sally. What they did was they actually analyzed the pictures and the stories, and they discovered that boys were the main actors, girls were spectators, that [there were] very few stories about girls. Girls were always passive, and boys did the action, all that stuff. It was very good and very early because no one had ever thought to look at that. [Editor's Note: *Dick and Jane as Victims: Sex Stereotyping in Children's Readers* is a 1972 book by Women on Words and Images. Basal readers are introductory reading textbooks. Dick and Jane were characters in early reader books used in the American educational system during the mid-twentieth century.]

While waiting for the speaker to arrive, a woman came up to me; it turned out to be Guida West. She was working at Rutgers. She said, "Why are you reading that book?" something like that, and I started to talk to her. It turned out that she was starting a series of workshops at Rutgers on the changes that had to take place. This pre-dated the Training Institute. She was doing it for the Women's Studies Institute, and it was a combination of the Women's Studies Institute and the--well, what did they call the Continuing Education department? It was called the Extension Division in those days. It was called the Extension Division because she was actually planning to go out to schools, the way the Agricultural Extension would go out to farms. So, she was doing that, and she was curious about my reading this book. We began to talk. It turned out that she had gone to Barnard herself. Now, I still had these seven and eight-year-olds at home.

Shortly after my meeting with Guida West, the federal government proposed to fund ten centers to assist with sex desegregation, and one of them would be in our region, which was New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The Rutgers Extension Division wanted someone to write the grant. Guida called me up and said, "Will you write this grant?" and I did. We had a week to do it, but I didn't think they'd ever actually get funded. Then, she called me in about July, and she said, "We'd like you to apply for the directorship." "Oh, boy," I thought, "How am I going to do that?" and, "How am I going to tell Danny that I might go to work and I might get hired and all that?" I figured, "I'll be interviewed anyway."

Rutgers got the grant, and she interviewed me. They asked me to do it. It was only a one-year grant. Danny and I talked about it and decided that we could hire a housekeeper and the kids wouldn't suffer too much because she'd be there after school and she'd be able to drive them where they have to go and she'll make dinner and all that. I lived pretty far from New Brunswick, so it was not a matter of rolling out of bed and into the office. It was an hour each

way. But I was able to take the job. The kids didn't suffer too much, although they did suffer. They were used to having me around, but our housekeeper was wonderful and she was with us for three years.

We kept successfully competing for grants. All the way through my tenure at Rutgers, it was one-year grants, so we always had to get into the competition and try to win another year. I never knew whether [I would have a job the next year]. Looking back on it, it looks like I had this clear sailing for twenty-five years, but it wasn't that way. It never looked that way when we were in it. [Editor's Note: In 1975, the Training Institute for Sex Desegregation of the Public Schools, headed by Rebecca Lubetkin as the executive director, began at Rutgers to develop training programs to assist schools in complying with Title IX and eliminating sex discrimination and bias in education. In 1982, the Training Institute for Sex Desegregation of the Public Schools became known as the Consortium for Educational Equity.]

KR: You also had a faculty line.

RL: Yes.

KR: How did that end up coming about?

RL: I'm not really sure. I was hired that way. I was hired as an assistant professor and I worked my way up to full professor and it was almost always a faculty line.

KR: What department was your line in?

RL: Well, originally, Guida was my supervisor, so it was in her program, which was a joint thing between the Women's Studies Institute and the Extension Division, but it later changed to the Institute for Research on Women. That was in '75.

Then, in around 1992, I think it was, this was interesting, Rutgers had decided that it wanted its planning divisions to be all under one roof, so they founded the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy and they hired a new dean named Lapping, Mark Lapping. Mark Lapping decided to go around the University and find those schools, programs and all that really should fit in under planning. He called me up and said, "You know, I know you're with the Institute for Research on Women, but that really isn't the way we want to go here. I'd like to consider you to be in the School of Planning and Public Policy," and that's where it changed, around 1992. [Editor's Note: Mark Lapping served as the dean of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy school from 1992 to 1995. Rebecca Lubetkin is a Professor Emerita in the Bloustein School.]

KR: What was that first year like?

RL: At the Training Institute?

KR: Yes.

RL: Well, I have to say this. In order to get the grant, we had to really scurry to get schools. They would only fund a place that could demonstrate that there were schools that wanted it, that there was a market for this. So, we had to demonstrate that we had ten or fifteen schools that actually asked for it, and because those schools were named in the grant, we went out to them. It wasn't a hard sell for the schools' administration because they had already signed off, and that's why we got it. We called them and we said, "We got the grant. Now, we're ready to do it." They were willing to turn their faculties over, so it wasn't difficult. There was just a lot of resentment and protest from educators about having to sit and learn something that they didn't think was worthwhile and that they certainly didn't think they should change.

In fact, in 1975, when we started, there was a campaign in New Jersey to have a state ERA [Equal Rights Amendment], which failed. People confused what we were doing with those people who were campaigning for the ERA. They used to say these things like, "Oh, here come the dykes who are trying to capture an audience here for their political purposes." They kind of thought that what we were doing, which was to help the schools, somehow connected in with the effort on the part of feminists to get an ERA. "Oh, here come the dykes in combat boots," they'd say things like that. You wouldn't think that teachers would be that gross, but they were. When the ERA lost, then at least we didn't get confused with that. [Editor's Note: On November 4, 1975, voters in New Jersey went to the polls to decide on the legislatively-referred constitutional amendment to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. The state equal rights amendment was defeated, with 868,061 voting against the ballot initiative and 828,290 voting in favor.]

It was a good year. It just took a while for schools to feel that it was in their interest to do anything. Then, there were so many subtleties. Just two weeks ago, I spoke to the League of Women Voters on "Title IX, Then and Now," and I give examples of what things were like then. Okay, so here is the flyer.

KR: I am going to read the flyer for the record. This event was sponsored by the League of Women Voters in Mountain Lakes. The program is called, "Title IX: Then and Now. Sports is only one-tenth of Title IX. Featuring guest speaker Rebecca Lubetkin." Then, it says, "Mountain Lakes resident and champion of the landmark 1972 legislation Title IX, Rebecca will share how women conceived of and advocated for it, what it encompasses, how it was enforced, and how it has transformed education for women." This took place on October 30, 2019, at seven-thirty p.m. at Mountain Lakes High School.

RL: This would take a while to copy, but it gives you a lot of the stuff that you're interested in, telling you [about] the changes that were made. It's a lot of pages. Actually, I can send it to you. The bat mitzvah thing, I don't know if I have on my computer.

KR: Sure, yes. I can take a picture of the bat mitzvah story on my phone.

RL: I can copy it, but it's feeding one page at a time, which is kind of a pain.

I will say that if you look at the League of Women Voters presentation, you'll get a lot of information that you won't have to ask here because it's all in there.

KR: What was your staff like at the Consortium for Educational Equity?

RL: It was almost all women but not all women. Everyone had a specialized job because we did a lot of very specialized things. We couldn't survive on just that one grant, so we would go for other grants, some of them from the State of New Jersey, some of them from corporations, some of them from foundations, and each one was for a very specific--there was nobody who was a generalist--each one was for a very specific thing.

During the '80s, we developed [Futures Unlimited] Conferences for middle school and high school girls (although you have to include boys, if they wish) in careers that require advanced math. We would conduct them at various colleges and sometimes in corporations. What would happen is the girls would come. In the morning, they would go to labs in the college, because in school, they have math or science, but in the science, they might have chemistry and biology, but they don't have the stuff the colleges have, very specialized anatomy and physiology and all of these highly specialized science areas. So, they're fascinated by going into the labs. The instructors, in the lab, were always women, women who were the faculty in that specialty of science. Then, in the afternoon, they would meet women really in private enterprise, working for corporations, who do work that's based upon the amount of math and science that you take in high school. The objective was really for them to see how critical math and science are to almost any future endeavor that they would pursue, even in areas that they think they can escape. A lot of young women think that if they go into arts, the arts areas, design and all of that, they won't need math, but of course they do. You can't escape it, so you might as well learn how to use it. We did about thirty conferences around the state, mostly for young women. That was kind of a specialized area. There were a bunch of things like that. [Editor's Note: The Futures Unlimited conferences were funded by the New Jersey Department of Higher Education's Division of Vocational Education and organized by the Consortium for Educational Equity for students in grades seven through twelve.]

We had one program called Science Teams, which I can tell you about, and a lot of hirings for specific jobs. Physical education, how do you integrate physical education when, in the past, girls and boys had very different phys ed programs? I remember, at Millburn High, which was considered a good school, it was girls separate from boys. We did a lot of folk dancing and social dancing. We did not do a lot of really learning new sports and playing. We didn't do a lot of that, while the boys were out there really doing fun things. We learned the rules of the game, stuff like that, and then we got tested on them. I forgot what that question was.

KR: I asked about your staff and who worked for you.

RL: Yes, yes.

KR: So, Fran Kolb was on the staff.

RL: She was, in the beginning, yes. Then, the most prominent one in terms of being able to do so many different things was a woman who would be worth interviewing, she lives in New Providence, named Arlene Chasek. She was involved in a lot of the things we did. While Guida West didn't work for us, in that sense, she's just a really good interview. [Editor's Note: Arlene S. Chasek served as a program specialist at the Consortium for Educational Equity.]

KR: Yes.

RL: You can see Guida West on the VFA video and then decide if you want to do that.

KR: Yes, and Ferris Olin worked for you for a time.

RL: Very early, yes. What she did--and it was very good--one of the things that, in the very beginning, schools would say is, "Yes, I know we have to have role models for girls and I know we have to have stories about girls, but we don't and we don't know where to get them." So, we compiled these bibliographies of the kinds of books, articles and so on that we hoped that schools would purchase and provide to kind of even out their collections. When we started, there were eight biographies of males for every one of females. It just wasn't thought that women had anything really interesting in their lives, so why do you have to have books about them?

[Editor's Note: Ferris Olin is a Distinguished Professor Emerita at Rutgers University. Olin earned her undergraduate degree at Douglass College and graduate degrees at Rutgers. In 1975, Olin worked at the Consortium for Educational Equity. She later held the position of Executive Officer of both the Institute for Research on Women and the Laurie New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies from 1985 to 1994 and went on to co-found what is now called the Center for Women in the Arts and Humanities in the Institute for Women's Leadership.]

KR: Was the size of your staff determined by the grants that you received that year?

RL: Yes, some of those other grants were not just one year. They could be like two years or so. We were always writing, always proposing ideas because it was what was necessary to keep us afloat. Rutgers didn't pay anything for us. In a lot of departments, they talk about having to get grants, but the essential salaries of the principal people is paid for by the University; and then, if they want to do anything interesting or special, they would seek grants. Everything and everybody, including my salary, was dependent upon outside funding. I think one of the great miracles was that we were able to stay in business for so long.

There were lots of times that we had joint programs. After we were the Training Institute for maybe three or four years, we then spread out. Since we were responsible for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, we developed satellites in the State University of New York in Oswego, which is way upstate, and one at the University of Puerto Rico. We were three universities all working together in our geographic area but doing essentially the same thing. Then, there was a time when we worked with the University of Buffalo, SUNY Buffalo, for New York State, and in New York City, we working with NYU and Columbia. That enabled us to really spread out and get to all the places we had to be.

KR: Where were you physically housed at Rutgers?

RL: We started out being on the first floor and the basement of a building called Federation Hall at the corner of Jones and George. Then, Douglass wanted that building for something else, and so we moved to the barracks. The barracks were on the old Kilmer Campus, Livingston. That

was good because we had a lot of space and the largest library of gender equity, not only gender equity but race, national origin equity, in the country as it related to schools.

KR: When was it that you moved over to Kilmer Campus?

RL: About 1980, and we were at Kilmer all the way through.

KR: What interaction did you have, did the Consortium have, with different units in the University?

RL: Not a lot. We had some with people from the Graduate School of Education because we used some of their faculty as adjuncts, and so that worked out. Some people from the sociology department were adjuncts. By and large, it was really an advantage to be part of the Institute for Research on Women because we were bigger than it was, and the result was that they left us alone. We just did our work. Basically, our work was carrying out what we said we would do in grant applications. So, it was like a Bible. Nobody at Rutgers had to tell us what to do or check on us; we had to write reports, interim reports and final reports to our funders. We had to do what we said we would do. There was nobody looking over our shoulder, and that was great. So, I would say that we had minimal reporting relationships, really minimal. There was no way the Institute for Research on Women could keep track of us. They were smaller than we were.

When we moved over to the Bloustein School, there was more of a connection. I had to attend faculty meetings. When the University was told that all departments had to reduce their budgets by ten percent, I'd be at the meetings and all the guys there would say, "Well, why don't you have to do that?" I thought, "What are you, nuts? We earn our way. If the University gave us anything, yes, we'd have to reduce our expenditures." They really resented the fact that we didn't have to reduce our budget, but nobody gave us anything. It was all earned through competitive grants.

KR: What sort of joint programming did you do with the IRW?

RL: There used to be--I don't have any information about this now. I mean, I do, but I'd have to find it. We used to have [an annual conference]. Ferris would know about this because when Ferris went over to IRW, we worked together for many years on an annual conference in women's studies, but I don't remember what it was called.

KR: COW, Celebration of Our Work.

RL: Celebration of Our Work, yes, we did that every year, and we worked to put that together. There were other kinds of things. For instance, when the dean of Douglass decided that she wanted to have a special residential house for young women who were interested in math and science careers, I wrote the grant for that. There was another grant that I wrote for Douglass, which was a really great idea, but I don't think it ever really worked: a junior year at Douglass. The idea was that this would be made available to students all across the country who didn't have a women's studies department, and Douglass was rich with women's studies people and courses and all kinds of things. It was a great place to be. We came up with this idea that we wanted to

design something so that students from colleges anywhere could come to Douglass for the year and get all of their women's studies and get credit for it. But it didn't get funded. It was a great idea. I think it's still a great idea. It would've put Douglass on the map, which is kind of what we wanted to do, put it on the map as a place for undergraduate women's studies. This was a long time ago. Jewel Cobb was a wonderful dean of Douglass. She was always concerned about STEM [science, technology, engineering and math] careers, and so we did a lot with her on that. There was interaction. [Editor's Note: Jewel Plummer Cobb was a biologist and researcher who served as the dean of Douglass College from 1976 to 1981. Ellen Mappen served as the founding director of the Douglass Project for Rutgers Women in Math and Science, which began in 1986.]

KR: You ended up heading the Center for Math, Science, and Computer Education.

RL: No, I didn't head it. I was the Assistant Director for Equity in the Center for Math, Science, and Computer Education, which still exists. That was a good program. I became the assistant director and, later, the acting director of what was called the [New Jersey] Statewide Systemic Initiative for the improvement of math, science, and computer education, and that did a lot to improve math education in the state, mostly math but also science. What was nice about those grants were they were five-year grants. We got them twice, and they were from the National Science Foundation, NSF, not from the Department of Education. I think a lot of good came out of that, and really the Center for Math, Science, and Computer Education was very much a part of that. The director was, I'm sure he must be retired now, Gerry Goldin. I don't know if you know the name, but some of the people are still there, like I see Yakov Epstein. He was an assistant director with me. I don't know what they're doing now.

Then, later, when I retired, after developing the Center for Effective Schools, I hired my replacement, [Claudia D. Burzichelli]. She became the director and the founding director of what came after that, the Center for Effective School Practices. That still exists at Rutgers, but it's under the Graduate School of Education.

KR: Circling back to the IRW, are there any Celebration of Our Work conferences that stick out in your mind, in terms of the programming that was done or the speakers that were invited?

RL: Oh, I thought they were really all good, really good. I think it's a tribute to Ferris and a few other people, Carol--what was her last name?

KR: Smith. [Editor's Note: Carol H. Smith is Professor Emerita of English at Rutgers. Her career at Rutgers spanned 1959 to 2007. Smith directed the Institute for Research on Women from 1986 to 1992.]

RL: Carol Smith was very good. Those were good conferences. I think, at that time, when Jewel Cobb was around, there was just a lot of joint work being done. Rutgers was really coming into its own in women's studies, and I think Rutgers is doing great in women's studies now, probably one of the areas that we're most well known for. I think women's studies had a hard time at certain points, because when a department was hiring, it wanted to hire in its discipline; and because women's studies is interdisciplinary, it was hard to get departments to

think of women's studies as being important enough to be part of the criteria for hiring. It [did not] have its own department at that time. Rutgers did really well. I think Mary Hartman did well and brought a lot of good people in. I'm trying to think of who else. Now, we have Jacquelyn Litt. [Editor's Note: Formerly a program, the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies became a department in 2001. Jacquelyn Litt has served as the dean of Douglass Residential College since 2010.]

KR: Yes, Jacquelyn Litt is the dean now of Douglass.

RL: The Institute for the Research on Women did really well when it had [the Laurie Chair]-- well, now it has the Gloria Steinem Chair. A lot of good people came. Alice Kessler-Harris was one of them. Yes, Rutgers was a good place to be for that. [Editor's Note: In 1984, the Blanche, Edith and Irving Laurie New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies was established at Douglass College to bring outstanding scholars of women's studies to campus to conduct their research and engage in teaching. Naomi Klein, a public intellectual, holds the inaugural Gloria Steinem Endowed Chair in Media, Culture and Feminist Studies at Rutgers, which was created in 2018. Alice Kessler-Harris taught as an instructor at Douglass College from 1964 to 1965 and graduated from Rutgers with her Ph.D. in history in 1968. She served as a history professor (1990-1999) and director of the Women's Studies Program (1990-1995) at Rutgers. Kessler-Harris is Professor Emerita of History at Columbia University.]

KR: I want to ask you about other directors of the IRW that you interacted with.

RL: A little bit with the woman that died who was from the Ford Foundation, what was her name? She died a few years ago. I don't remember. It escapes me now. I'm talking a long time ago. [Editor's Note: Alison R. Bernstein, who passed away in 2016, directed the Institute for Women's Leadership (IWL) at Rutgers and formerly worked for the Ford Foundation.]

KR: We can add the name to the transcript.

RL: I kind of predate a lot of that, and I'm back to Mary Hartman and Jewel Cobb, both people that I worked closely with.

KR: In her oral history, Ferris Olin talked about an IRW program that was the New Jersey Project Integrating the Scholarship on Gender and they did a Summer Institute.

RL: Yes, I know of it, but I'm not too familiar with it. I wasn't involved in it. All of these things go way back, I mean, like forty years.

KR: Was it precarious or tenuous year to year, knowing that you are writing for grants and waiting to hear if you would receive the grant money?

RL: Yes, for me, it was overwhelming. At one time or another, we usually had about ten people working full time, and in those days, you had secretaries, which you don't have today, three secretaries and about six or seven people who were directing grants. All I could think of is everybody's job depends on me. There was even a time when we did get a grant, but it didn't

have sufficient money to pay both me and a member of my staff. Her name was Marilyn Hulme, and she had just gotten cancer, breast cancer. You know that at Rutgers, unless you're working full time, even if you're working ninety-nine percent time, you don't have health insurance. Marilyn had to work full time in order to be able to get health coverage, especially now that she had breast cancer. There wasn't enough money to hire her full time, so I took a loss. I put myself on eighty percent time in order to put her on a hundred percent time. We should've both been ninety percent or I should've been a hundred and just lowered her to eighty, but I didn't. When I took the loss, I became at risk for not being covered a hundred percent.

What I did was I took various part-time jobs at Rutgers that patchworked me, so that I might be eighty percent on the Consortium and twenty percent on a grant that Douglass was doing or working for Jewel Cobb in some kind of special way or working for the Statewide Systemic Initiative. I took the position of full-time director, it wasn't really full-time, in order to get up to a hundred percent, in order to fund Marilyn. But it was scary. When you have people who are getting sick and you can't really reduce their time, and when you have people who depend on this for their income, it's really, really worrisome because any one of those things could've failed for no reason. I mean, it could be that the funding agency wasn't funding these things anymore, or it could be that somebody else won out over us because all the grants were very competitive. [It was] really, really scary. Looking back, it looks smooth, but it wasn't. It was very difficult.

KR: What was it like working your way up the faculty ranks?

RL: Well, as I said, I really could pretty much do whatever I wanted without anybody looking over [my shoulder]. I wasn't reporting to anybody, except of course financially I was responsible to the University to not overspend and to not spend on the wrong things, so that was very strict. As far as what we chose to do, what we chose to compete for, we could decide on our own, and so it put me in a different category with faculty, even though I might go to faculty meetings and all. I was just in a totally different category. Mostly, I helped them. They couldn't really help me. I'm talking about in the School of Planning and Public Policy, I'd be on a committee that would be doing something for the school, but there wasn't anything that anybody could do for us. It was very, very hard--when you write a grant proposal, you're writing something that you anticipate will take you a hundred percent of your time or a hundred percent of someone's time, and probably you're writing for something that actually ends up taking 120 percent because you're trying to compete with other people, so you overcommit. But if you could be free to do that, once you got it, that would be great, but you had to be writing grants to get the next thing. Nobody could really do what they had to do a hundred percent of the time, and that meant that most people were overworked and overextended, but they knew that their own jobs depended upon it. So, it was hard.

KR: For the record, you became associate professor and then full professor and now you are Professor Emerita.

RL: Right.

KR: Before you talked about the Center for Effective School Practice. Is that what the Consortium for Educational Equity has become?

RL: In a sense, but it has a different mission. It is, in the sense that I hired somebody in my last year. I was able to get some money from the state legislature to bring someone on to shadow me. Her name was Claudia Burzichelli. I thought very, very highly of her, and I thought if she could shadow me part time, then she could succeed me. However, she couldn't get equity funds. So, what we did was we morphed into something called--I had established something called the Center for Essential Schools, CES, and she made it into the Center for Effective School Practices, CESP. We were able to get money from some national organizations and then she took over after me, but it wasn't focused on equity. She did a very good job. She died. It was very, very sad. Here she is. [Editor's Note: Rebecca Lubetkin points to a photo of Claudia Burzichelli, who was the founder and executive director of the Center for Effective School Practices (CESP) of Rutgers University. She died in 2013.]

KR: Yes.

RL: I think it was 2013. She was a close friend and someone I thought very highly of. She did a very good job. She was young, only about fifty-four. She had a child in high school and a child in college. It was very sad.

KR: What became of the Consortium for Educational Equity?

RL: I retired. I had had twenty-five years, which made me eligible for long-term health benefits, and I didn't like my commute. I'd been doing it for a long time. I probably would've stayed longer. So, I did not compete for a grant for the next year. We had a year to go, and so someone on my staff succeeded me to just carry that on, to finish that up.

In one sense, a lot of programs are doing educational equity as a part of what they're doing. It's no longer the straight number-one purpose, because a lot of what we were talking about, which was anathema to some people in those days, has become accepted. Sometimes, even if administrators are not doing things the way they should, there are people in the community or in the schools that keep them [in line]. There are still a lot of inequitable things going on. It's so amazing. When I was at the League of Women Voters event, they were telling me that in Mountain Lakes High School, which is one of the best high schools in the state, there is a tuxedo fund and people give money to help the boys pay for their tuxedos for prom. Is anybody helping the girls who have to buy or rent expensive dresses? So, there are still things that are going on, and if nobody cares, they just continue.

KR: On the Veteran Feminists of America website, in your articles archive, there is an article from 1987 about the consolidation of the equity centers and how there was an Equity Assistance Center established at NYU. Was that at about this time, when you were leaving the Consortium?

RL: No, because I left the Consortium in 2000.

KR: Okay, I see.

RL: That was a program that we did with NYU. They did race. What happened was, originally, the Consortium for Educational Equity was only for gender equity, and then the Equity Assistance Centers were established for race, national origin and gender. We did gender and NYU did race and Columbia did national origin, which is largely Latinx. It's when kids come here, how are they treated and what are the expectations? It was very important.

KR: What was it like working with NYU and Columbia?

RL: Good. It was good. It worked well.

KR: In the programs that you implemented working with Columbia and NYU, did you find that same sort of resistance that you found in terms of gender equity?

RL: Well, we were still doing gender, but we did a lot with them and there was an advantage there because we cross-fertilized each other, so they were capable of doing race and gender, we were capable of doing race and gender. It worked out well, and so we did a lot of joint things together. Most of our work in Puerto Rico was done jointly, and so it was very useful to have the partnerships.

KR: Now, all this time that you were a faculty member and you were at the Consortium, you were a working mother. What was it like for you being a working mother?

RL: I think it was hard. Fortunately, my husband did a lot of--I won't say he did housework. People don't realize when they think about what women do or don't do, they don't realize how many things can only be done by a parent. You find out that your kid has a birthday party on Saturday, who's going to go and help your kid buy the present? Who's going to wrap the present? Who's going to make sure the card is written just right? It's things that you can't delegate to anybody else, and he was very good at that. He did a lot of the driving and a lot of the comforting, a lot of the parenting. So, that helped.

We, also, in the first few years, probably in the first five or six years of my work, we had full-time help just for them, separate cleaning help, and that helped. I was really out of the house from about seven-thirty in the morning to six at night. It was hard because I wanted to be there for them and then there's a lot of stuff that happens with schools, where you just have to be at school because it's a conference for parents or a recital or something that your kids would be at a disadvantage if you weren't available to them. So, we were a good partnership in that. The regular work that people say that women do, I mostly didn't do. I think I did laundry on Saturdays, but it was more wanting to be there for them, wanting to go to their games, to get them up to the Y for swim team and pick them up at the right time and then to listen to them and all of that. I think it was still hard. You don't have time for yourself, but, as I said, a lot of things that you could delegate to hired help, I was able to do. I just had to do a lot of things that only parents can do, and so did he.

He was also much, much better than most about--if one of our kids needed help with something or if it started to rain suddenly and he'd be sitting in his office and he'd look at his watch and he'd realize that it's raining and she's going to [need a ride], he would just walk out. He'd even walk

out on a client. He'd say, "Excuse me, I'll be right back." His office was in Newark and he'd come back and he'd pick them up and then he'd take them home and then he'd get back into the office. He was very, very aware of them.

Still, there are library books that have to be returned, and who didn't go to the dentist this month? All the think-work that parents have to keep track of, it's still hard. He would be good at being delegated to, if I said to him, "Julie has to go to the dentist this afternoon at four o'clock." But it wasn't scrolling in his brain the way it was scrolling in my brain. I don't know if we'll ever get to the point where fathers are thinking about this the way mothers do, maybe. It's all those little things.

KR: The work you were doing in implementing educational equity, how did you see that manifest in the lives of your daughters and granddaughters?

RL: Well, I think in the beginning, before I was even working, when I became very aware of what was happening in schools, it probably annoyed them that I was sticking my neck out for things. They were probably embarrassed. Now, they look back on it and they're grateful, and I can see it even in our young granddaughter. I can see that she's becoming a feminist. But I think in the beginning, when it was their school that I was focused on, I think they would've preferred me not to.

I would go to the school. At this point, Julie was in first grade, and Erica was not in school yet. I noticed that all of the safety patrol kids, who were then sixth graders, that only boys were on the street corners, and if you go to the school, the school doors and the play areas were monitored by girls. That's the way it was, and only a boy could be captain of the safety patrol. A girl could be lieutenant, but the captain was the only kid in the school who was allowed to ride a bike to school. So, here you have the biggest kids in the school, the kids that everybody looks up to, you have the boys on the street corners and the boy captain, and the girls are lieutenants and they staff the doors. I started to ask questions about that. When I asked the advisor to the safety patrol why there are no girls on street corners, he said, "Well, things can happen. Untoward things can happen, and we just feel it's safer for the girls not to be out there." I said to him, "Do you ever really look at fifth and sixth grade kids? Did you ever think about who's bigger and who's stronger and who's more powerful? The boys are shrimpos. The girls, you wouldn't want to meet them at night somewhere." [laughter] I said, "If anybody can take care of themselves on a street corner, it would be the girls." He had never [considered that]. That was the way he always did it.

Not to allow a girl to be captain--all these things were embarrassing to Julie--she's only in first grade, but I'm thinking, if you spend six years in school and every time you walk to school, you run into a boy who's really in charge on the street corner and he can tell you to go or not or he can bully you or whatever, pretty soon you're going to be thinking that you have to have male secondary sex characteristics in order to be a leader. I didn't want her going through that for six years and growing up that way. I got it changed. The first girl captain of the safety patrol four years later was Julie, which was unusual because usually you work hard for something and it doesn't happen for you. It happens for the next generation. This thing happened for her. There

were a lot of things like that that happened, where I would notice something and they would hope that I wouldn't notice it and just leave them alone.

KR: When you were, for all those years, leading the Consortium at Rutgers, were you going to NOW meetings?

RL: Yes.

KR: What was your activism in NOW like?

RL: NOW was very important to me in those years, all the way through actually. I think you read in the bio from VFA that when I was a homemaker, a child rearer, I read this book, *Black Like Me*, and it changed my life. I became a feminist, but I didn't really know what it meant or what to do with it. I joined a NOW consciousness-raising group, and that also changed my life. It was a group that was supposed to meet for ten sessions, but we actually continued meeting for thirty years. Initially, I headed the NOW New Jersey Task Force on Education, so a lot of these changes took place at that time. NOW was very important. The TV program that I hosted was a TV program sponsored by Morris County NOW, and that went from 1994 to 2018. We have three hundred shows, and they're all on YouTube. [Editor's Note: John Howard Griffin, a white journalist, traveled through the segregated South as an African American man and kept a diary to document his experiences. In 1961, his diary was published as the nonfiction book *Black Like Me*. Rebecca Lubetkin hosted the television show "New Directions for Women," which was produced by the Morris County Chapter of NOW. The interviews appear on YouTube and are archived in the Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History at Smith College Libraries.]

KR: Your local chapter of NOW was Morris County NOW.

RL: Yes. It wasn't originally. When we lived in South Orange, it was Essex County NOW, and I can't take credit for this, except as a member, but our chapter of NOW and its president (Judith Weis, also a Rutgers faculty member) were instrumental in getting Little League to admit girls. We fought the case, we sponsored it and so on, and eventually Little League had to admit girls to play baseball. So, the first thing Little League did was start a softball program.

KR: During the '70s and then as we get on into the '80s, '90s, 2000s, and 2010s, what were the major issues over those decades that NOW was addressing and that you were working on?

RL: ERA, reproductive rights, both really, really important. Everything relating to education was really important. It was a period during which the selective colleges were becoming coeducational. Every year, there were changes taking place. The number of female law students went up; now, it's about fifty percent. All of these things were happening and we were working in all of those areas, but I would say reproductive rights and ERA were critical.

KR: What was your involvement in campaigning for the Equal Rights Amendment?

RL: Well, I was very active as a member of NOW in campaigning, protesting, demonstrating for the ERA, and it was a very sad day when in 1982 the deadline passed and we had only thirty-five

states. Now, we have almost thirty-eight, and now our worry is will they extend the deadline? But there were all kinds of demonstrations in Washington, in Trenton, and I'd bring our kids along, really, really important. At the time that we missed the deadline, I had an event at my home, where Rutgers faculty came, because we were all in mourning about it. I remember Mary Hartman was there and a lot of other people. It was a terrible day. I feel really good now about the possibility that Virginia will vote for the ERA. [Editor's Note: Alice Paul introduced the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1923. In 1972, Congress passed the ERA as a constitutional amendment guaranteeing equal rights regardless of sex. The first of three sections stated, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." The next step was for three-fourths of the fifty states, or thirty-eight states, to ratify the ERA by March 1979. By mid-1973, twenty-eight states ratified the amendment. In 1978, Congress extended the deadline to 1982, and the ERA fell three states short of the thirty-eight states necessary to achieve ratification by that deadline. No amendment prior to the twentieth century had a time limit set on the ratification process. In the 1990s, ERA proponents began the "three-state strategy," advocating that existing ratifications remain legally viable and that Congress has the power to adjust or repeal the previous time limit on the ERA and determine whether state ratifications subsequent to 1982 are valid. Five states have rescinded ratification. Nevada and Illinois ratified the ERA in 2017 and 2018, respectively, with Virginia ratifying the amendment in 2020 in disputed legislative actions.]

KR: What type of work was done in reproductive rights by the Morris County NOW Chapter?

RL: Well, the biggest issue was supporting Planned Parenthood and support for women's right to choose, and that meant to choose birth control, to choose abortion, that it's women's bodies and it's their business and that of whoever they choose to consult with. All kinds of things were done here, even to the point that there were demonstrations where we would go to Planned Parenthood and accompany women to protect them. The antis would decide where they were going to demonstrate and sometimes [it was] at the homes of physicians who were doing abortions, where their children were there and all. Friends of mine who were active members of the Catholic Church would find out their plans and would find ways to wreak havoc on their plans, really kind of like spies, and that was very helpful.

KR: More recently, you had done anti-war protesting, and then in your VFA video, you talked about some international activism that you have been doing. What have you done with your more recent activism?

RL: Well, I'm much more quiet now. I used to actively demonstrate. I would [march] and all during the Iraq War, that's what we did, the "Raging Grannies." Now, it's pretty much things that I do either by signing petitions, writing letters, it's quieter stuff, raising money, and I'm not actually going out on the lines anymore. I'm very concerned internationally about child marriage, about genital mutilation of girls, of course reproductive rights all over, the gag rule and so on. Education of girls is very important because it determines their future. Violence against women is a really big one, nationally and internationally. They're all interests of mine, but I tend to do it in a quieter way now. [Editor's Note: Rebecca Lubetkin participated in the Grandmothers Against the War protests against the Iraq War. In January 2017, President Donald Trump reinstated the "global gag rule," which blocks U.S. federal funding for non-governmental

organizations that provide abortion services, offer abortion counseling or referrals, and advocate for reproductive rights.]

KR: In 1995, you went to Beijing for the Fourth World Conference on Women. You were a YWCA delegate.

RL: Yes.

KR: How did that opportunity come about?

RL: I just really lucked out. A colleague of mine was working with the YWCA in New York and arranging for delegates, and I said, "Can I be a delegate?" They said, "Yes." I just lucked out. I was at the right place at the right time, and it was an extraordinary experience, really, really worthwhile. I don't think they've had anything quite like that since.

KR: How long were you in Beijing for?

RL: About ten days. It was really good.

KR: What was the programming like?

RL: Just everything you can think of. I expected it to be largely Americans, but it wasn't. It was really women from all over the world and really extraordinary groups of women, dressed differently, speaking differently and almost every topic you can imagine. Hillary [Clinton] spoke, which was amazing, at a plenary session. Her husband was president at the time and she spoke and that really made me feel good. She was on the right page. It was good. I enjoyed it. Then, they arranged tourism for us, travel. So, we got to see some parts of China that we wouldn't have seen otherwise.

KR: During the Clinton Administration, you were a special policy advisor to the Deputy Secretary of Education, who was Madeleine Kunin.

RL: Yes.

KR: Kunin was also the governor of Vermont.

RL: I don't remember whether it was before or after, but it was important because the Department of Education was making decisions partly about what they were going to fund. There was special funding for gender equity projects that we would get money for, but there was also a lot of policy and I was invited to assist in determination of the policy and that was good. I also testified before the Senate earlier than that; it was in 1979, and they were looking at the future of education and occupations and trying to plan what will be needed in order to provide the strength and the support for women and girls. I testified there on that, and that was interesting too. [Editor's Note: Madeleine Kunin served as the governor of Vermont from 1985 to 1991. She held the post of Deputy Secretary of Education from 1993 to 1996, during the presidency of Bill Clinton. She also served as the ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein.]

KR: What was that like, testifying before the Senate?

RL: The picture that was on the VFA [website] with the microphone, do you remember that?

KR: Yes, I do.

RL: If you want that picture, I may even have it.

KR: Okay.

RL: That was from there. It was good. It was very impressive for me to be able to do something like that.

KR: What committee was it?

RL: The hearings were before the United States Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. It was called, "The Coming Decade: American Women and Human Resources Policies and Programs, 1979." That's forty years ago.

KR: Forty years ago, yes. I am curious, were you grilled?

RL: Not really. They had us in a panel and one person spoke and then another, about four of us spoke. There were some questions, but they were friendly questions, nothing tough.

KR: I have reached the end of my questions. At this point, I want to ask you if there is anything that you would like to add.

RL: I can't think of anything. You did a really good job. The only thing I would've liked you to ask was outcomes in terms of my family. I could talk a little bit about that.

KR: Yes, please.

RL: Well, first of all, our marriage survived all of that. Even though the plan was that I would be the homemaker and the child rearer, it didn't work out that way. My husband, who was great, great, great, to my great appreciation, filled in, and also we were able to afford to delegate the tasks that other people could do, to pay for them. That worked out well.

The kids, the two kids, did very well in school. One of them, the older one, Julie, who is now fifty-two, went to Princeton and then got her two graduate degrees at Stanford and stayed out there (which isn't so great) and has two kids. Her two kids, one of them graduated from Stanford last year, and the other one is at Yale now. This is the picture, she's the captain of the Yale soccer team, and this is the article.

KR: Oh, wonderful.

RL: This is the *Yale Daily News* and the article about her.

KR: Is your granddaughter Alyssa Fagel?

RL: Yes.

KR: Oh, great. This is the *Yale Daily News*, the sports section.

RL: The *Yale Daily News*, yes.

KR: The headline is "Fagel Shines in Final Season." Is she a goalie?

RL: She's a goalkeeper and captain of the team.

KR: She's going to graduate in 2020.

RL: Right, she's graduating next year. Our other daughter, who's a year younger than Julie, her name is Erica, is a physician and she's teaching in the medical school of the City University of New York. She has two kids, and they're both in high school, two different high schools in New York City. The article about raising my hand ["Raising My Hand High"], that's by her daughter Ilana, who is a junior at Manhattan High School of Mathematics, Science and Engineering. Her son is a freshman in high school, Columbia Secondary. Our daughters turned out fine. They probably thought they suffered a little bit when I just left them to go to work, but they managed. We feel good about that because I think my husband, in the beginning, was not at all sure that this was the right thing to do. His belief was if you can afford it, your wife stays home and raises the kids because that's where the stakes are high; and the only justification for a woman going to work is where there's some kind of necessity, but not if there's no necessity. He moved from that to being a real partner and making it possible. We're married fifty-six years now.

KR: Congratulations, that is amazing.

RL: Thank you. Could I think of anything else? Well, I really can't think of anything else that I should've said, but if I do, I'll let you know.

KR: I will conclude today's interview.

RL: Sure.

KR: Thank you so much for doing this oral history interview. You have been so generous with your time.

RL: It was my pleasure. I hope it works out well. You ask good questions. I said to my husband this morning, "She's going to ask good questions because she's already seen the VFA tape, so she knows a lot more about me than most people would."

KR: Yes, thank you so much. I will stop the recording.

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

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