

RUTGERS THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH PATRICIA A. ROOS

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins the second oral history with Professor Patricia Roos, on April 1, 2022, with Shaun Illingworth and ...

Adithya Venkateswaran: Adithya Venkateswaran.

SI: Thank you very much for joining us again, Professor Roos. We ended last interview talking about the mid-portion of your career at Rutgers, after you had been here for a while in your department and gotten tenure. Then, you went up to the Dean's Office to serve as an area dean. We can start there. Can you tell us a little bit about how that came about?

Patricia Roos: Sure. Actually, I came here with tenure. I got tenure at Stony Brook, and then I was recruited with tenure from Stony Brook and so started here with tenure as an associate professor.

Pretty much right away when I got here, the current chair at the time was interested in trying to get me involved in administrative stuff within the department, administrative positions. I think it was my second year, if I'm remembering correctly, that I became an undergraduate director in the department and then, the year after that, I became chair. Then, I served six years as chair of the department.

Through being chair, I began to work really close with Dick Foley and Jane Grimshaw, who were the dean and vice dean, I think was her official name at the time, and I had a really good relationship with them. I became part of the FAS--it was called the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at that point, FAS, rather than SAS [School of Arts and Sciences], which it later became. [Editor's Note: Richard Foley served as dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences from 1992 to 1996 and then as executive dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and dean of the Graduate School from 1996 to 2000. Foley went on to become a dean and then vice chancellor at New York University. Jane Grimshaw, Distinguished Professor Emerita of Linguistics at Rutgers, served as vice dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences from 1995 to 2001. In 1981, the faculties of the federated undergraduate colleges at Rutgers-New Brunswick, Rutgers College, Douglass College, University College, Cook College and Livingston College, merged into a single entity, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). In 2006, the undergraduate colleges were consolidated into the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS), while Douglass College became Douglass Residential College and Cook College became the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS).]

I became part of the executive council, working with the dean fairly closely on a number of things, and he wanted me to become involved with IT [information technology] kinds of issues. I worked really with a series of committees that were dealing with bringing computers into Rutgers and making them more available, putting them on faculty desks, making them more available to faculty. There were some faculty who didn't even have computers on their desk at that point, if you can imagine. There was an initiative for Y2K to really try to bring Rutgers up-to-date in terms of its IT availability and availability of computers and so forth. So, I took a role in that. [Editor's Note: In 1999, it was feared that computers would not be able to successfully transition to the year 2000. This fear became known as Y2K. By the new year, most computers and systems had been updated and transitioned successfully.]

Then, Dick Foley asked me to be sort of a representative--this was while I was still chair--a representative to really build out and connect with the social sciences about computer issues. I did that. I went and talked with different departments, and then I remember a guy in the Physics Department said, "Hey, you know, we're having problems, too. You should come and talk with us." [laughter] I went, and I talked with him in the Physics Department. That was a kind of an eye-opener to see what they had versus what the social sciences had, and yet they still felt that they were under supported. It opened my eyes. That was a good thing to do, and I liked the guy in the Physics Department that I went to meet.

I just got more involved as chair meeting with University-level kinds of people. When I was finishing as chair, Dick Foley and Jane Grimshaw asked if I would be interested in being the area dean for the Social and Behavioral Sciences. I said, "Yes." I was really kind of looking forward to a sabbatical, and they said, "No, no, no, you've got to come now." I became area dean, and I was there for three years. [Editor's Note: Dr. Roos served as the area dean for the Social and Behavioral Sciences at Rutgers from 1997 to 2000.]

Then, actually in 1999, this is when everything began about the Gender Equity Study, and it really was jumpstarted by the MIT Report. Do you remember the MIT Report? Probably. [Editor's Note: From 1999 to 2001, Dr. Roos worked with the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Gender Equity Committee to produce the report entitled "A Study of Gender Equity in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University-New Brunswick," released in October 2001. The full report can be found at <https://sas.rutgers.edu/documents/reports-and-resolutions/gender-equity-committee-reports/40-report-a-study-of-gender-equity-in-the-faculty-of-arts-and-sciences-rutgers-university-new-brunwic/file>. A summary can be accessed at https://oirap.rutgers.edu/msa/Documents/gender_summary.pdf. At MIT, in 1995 a committee was formed to investigate the status and treatment of MIT women faculty. The next year, the committee submitted a confidential report to the university's administration that unveiled inequity and mistreatment of women faculty. A second committee was then formed to further investigate and produced further findings. In 1999, the findings were combined and released publicly. This publicly-released report became known as the MIT Report.]

SI: I have heard about it.

PR: Well, to make an exact date, it was March 23, 1999, and the MIT Report appeared on the front page, top of the fold, as they always used to talk about it, pre-online internet, it was on top of the fold, and it was a report, a *New York Times* report, that was discussing the publication of what came to be called the MIT Report. It was really quite remarkable, and it's hard to understand nowadays what a kind of sea change this was in terms of how people were thinking about gender equity at the national level.

I think it wasn't surprising to anybody (any woman, that is) that what they found was that academia was not as supportive of women as people liked to claim. It wasn't a meritocracy in the traditional sense of the term. Everybody knew that already. Any woman who worked at any university in the entire country knew that gender discrimination existed in academia, but what was so striking was that here was a set of administrators who were supporting this effort and

admitting that their university, MIT, one of the top in the country, had discriminated against women.

I think one of the important findings that struck me was that they said that junior faculty members at the time of this survey, and it was a culmination of a five-year report, they said that junior faculty tended to feel well taken care of and not discriminated against, but that the senior women reported that they believed that as well, when they were junior faculty, and it wasn't until they became senior faculty that they felt increasingly marginalized and overlooked by male-dominated networks and so forth.

I thought that was intriguing and provided some foresight into our project. We found exactly the same thing, that exact kind of pattern that existed. So, MIT began to see this kind of pattern of discrimination. That's a very sociological thing to say. The MIT women were all STEM people. They weren't in social sciences, if I'm remembering correctly, but they were doing a very sociological thing, because they were looking for patterns and looking for the kind of patterns that indicate discrimination, and they found them. Then, we followed up and found similar kinds of things.

I can't overestimate this: it's like an inflection point or a turning point where women across the country, everybody was talking about it, and at a whole set of universities, women began to do these kinds of reports. Here at Rutgers, we were one of the first out of the gate, just that exact spring, spring of 1999, to begin something here. I was in a unique position because I was the area dean for the Social and Behavioral Sciences. The first person to get started on it here at Rutgers was Barbara Shailor, the dean of Douglass at the time. She convened a bunch of people to come and talk about what they thought. A lot of the women throughout the University showed up and said, "This is happening here. We should really do a study." So, I was in a position to really do that. [Editor's Note: Barbara Shailor served as the dean of Douglass College from 1996 to 2001. Shailor, a Professor of Classics, then went to Yale University to serve as the director of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Shailor was later appointed as Deputy Provost for the Arts.]

I went back and talked with Dick Foley and Michael Beals, who was also an area dean focused on undergraduate matters, from the Math Department. He and I became the in-house people to further this project, and Dick was very supportive from the very beginning. [Editor's Note: Robert Beals is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Rutgers.]

The timing was that in that spring of 1999, Dick Foley began to discuss with Mike Beals and me about this project, and he okayed it and said, "Okay, go forward and do the analysis." I was in this unique position being a social scientist, a sociologist, who actually did numbers. I did analyses. I did work on gender equity kinds of issues. I was really ideally situated. At that point, I was moving back to the department. By the spring of 1999, I was moving back to the department as a regular faculty member again.

Then, during that calendar year of 2000, Dick Foley gave me total access to any data that I wanted: on salaries, on hires, on startup funds, on promotion rates, research support, leadership opportunities, climate issues. Anything that I wanted, he gave me access to.

I was working with a fantastic graduate student of mine, Mary Gatta, who's gone on to be incredibly successful in addressing these kinds of issues nationally. She and I developed a set of interview questions, and she then, because it was seen as somewhat inappropriate for me to do it, but she and I developed the interview questions and she went on to conduct these interviews with twenty senior faculty during the spring of 2000. [Editor's Note: Mary Gatta has served as an Associate Professor of Sociology at Stella and Charles Guttman Community College at CUNY since 2015, and currently works at the National Association of Colleges and Employers. Previously, Gatta served as the director of Gender and Workforce Policy at the Center for Women and Work and as an assistant professor at Rutgers.]

We can talk more about the women, the kinds of women, but basically they were senior women, PII [Professor II] women--those are advanced, the most advanced distinguished professors--then full professors, who had been in rank for ten years, and then PII men. We got twenty faculty members. Only four PII men agreed to talk with us, but the women were all gung-ho. They were ready to talk with us. [Editor's Note: At universities, faculty earn different titles to reflect their status and seniority. Universities vary, but at Rutgers the order of professors is Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor (Full Professor), and Distinguished Professor. The title of Professor II (PII) is no longer used at Rutgers, but was still used at the time of the study.]

We really had unprecedented access. Ann Martin, who was the business director at FAS at the time, gave us access to anything that we wanted with full approval from Dick Foley.

Just to finish the timeline here, and then I'm sure you're going to have some questions, I started working on this and came up with thirty-two tables worth of numbers that basically addressed all the kinds of issues that were addressed in the MIT Report and other ones. Mary and I working together and working with other deans came up with the kinds of tables that we would want.

Dick Foley left at that point. Then, in November of 2000, there was an acting dean, Richard Falk, who created the Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women, which we got together in the very first meeting and we renamed it FAS Gender Equity Committee. They were the people who really wrote this report based on the data that I had compiled for them. There were ten faculty members on that committee, and I'm happy to share with you, their names, it's public knowledge, on the report, but a wide range of women and men from FAS who we thought would be interested in this project, and they were. They were amazing, actually. They were quite amazing. So, they were asked to say, "Well, what do these data tell us?" I came in with the data and then worked with them, and Michael Beals and I both served in a capacity to help them discuss and think through and write up the chapters for the report. [Editor's Note: Richard S. Falk is a Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Rutgers. Falk served as acting executive dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and Graduate School from 2000 to 2001 and later as acting executive dean of the School of Arts and Sciences from 2012 to 2014. The FAS Gender Equity Committee Members were Gail Ashley, Department of Geological Sciences; Mary Hartman, Director, Institute for Women's Leadership; Angelique Haugerud, Department of Anthropology; Mary Hawkesworth, Departments of Political Science and Women's Studies; Mark Killingsworth, Department of Economics; Noémie Koller (Committee Chairperson), Department of Physics and Astronomy; Michael McKeon, Department of English; Wilma Olson, Department

of Chemistry; Barbara Shailor, Douglass College, Department of Classics; and Wise Young, Department of Cell Biology and Neuroscience.]

We came up with a charge for the committee that, at that point, Dean Falk had, a set of questions. Then, the committee decided to do another web-based survey in February of 2001, which they wanted to send to all 190, at that point, tenured and tenure-track women in residence, during the fiscal year 1999 to 2000. We got eighty-one usable responses, which is not totally wonderful, but it turns out it's enough and comparable to the distributions in FAS as a whole.

We finished the report in October 2001 and sent it to the new, at that point, dean, Holly Smith. I'm sure you've taken a look at the separate chapters and so forth. Unfortunately, given the timing of 9/11, it didn't really go much of anywhere, but it did serve as a basis for the University's NSF grant, ADVANCE Grant, which came several years later. It was a good project for that. It was great for me because I was able to use the data in my own personal work, because the data that I had collected and put into a set of tables were right along the lines with what I was doing research on anyway. I'll stop talking and let you talk and ask the questions, but later, I can tell you more about how it fit in with my own research and publication, especially that *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* article that I sent you. [Editor's Note: Holly Smith, Distinguished Professor Emerita in the Department of Philosophy at Rutgers, served as the executive dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences from 2001 to 2006. The article being referenced is "Gender (In)Equity in the Academy: Subtle Mechanisms and the Production of Inequality," co-written by Dr. Roos and Mary L. Gatta and published in 2009 in *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 27:177-200. Dr. Roos served as the co-principal investigator and director of research for the National Science Foundation ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Grant, "RUF AIR-Rutgers University for Faculty Advancement and Institutional Re-imagination," from 2008 to 2011.]

SI: Most of my questions will focus on how the reports were put together. First, just to get back to the origins of it, it sounds like Dick Foley and others were supportive of the effort.

PR: Yes, very supportive.

SI: Was anybody working against this, anybody who did not want to see this go forward?

PR: If there was, he never told me. He was a great champion of this from the very beginning, and he was in good company because of the administrators at MIT. I suggested it to Dick Foley, and I said, "Look at these administrators at MIT. Look what they're doing. Look at the stand that they're taking." Dick was that kind of a progressive guy, and he wanted to do that as well. He was very supportive, and if there were any naysayers, I never heard about them.

SI: Adithya, do you have a question?

AV: Professor Roos, could you say that the MIT Report was a kind of role model or a way for Rutgers as a whole to generate a report of its own based on how MIT developed a report? Could we say that MIT played a big role in moving that along?

PR: Oh, yes, I think it did that everywhere across the country. I mean, this report, the MIT Report, was replicated in its own way. Different universities had different [conditions]. MIT is heavily physical and biological sciences. When we adapted it here, we wanted to make sure that we did all of Rutgers, all of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences anyway. At that point, FAS was about forty-six percent of all faculty of Rutgers, so nearly half, and we wanted to make sure the full diversity of departments in FAS were covered. We looked at the same kind of people as at MIT, the physical and biological sciences, but we also looked at the humanities, and we also looked at the social sciences. That's sort of one way of adapting it.

The MIT Report focused a lot on space issues, and the faculty on our committee wanted to do that as well. So, we looked at it, but it turns out that space wasn't as big an issue here at Rutgers as it had been at MIT. Yes, you're right, it was a kind of role model, is exactly a good word to describe what it was, but we adapted it to fit us in ways that made sense, given that we're a different university.

SI: Tell us a little bit more about this data you had access to. It sounds like it was a good amount of data, but you still needed more from the qualitative interviews. I was particularly interested to hear that there were these climate questions, which maybe I am thinking about it differently. I am thinking about what climate questions we see today that really deal head on with some of these issues. Was the climate data back then similar, getting into quality of experience for women?

PR: Certainly, the MIT Report did a lot of that and asked for those kinds of--you mean climate of being a faculty member, right?

SI: Yes, like how you find the institution.

PR: Yes, right. At that point in time at Rutgers, it did not exist. In fact, later on, when I started working on the ADVANCE Grant sponsored by NSF, the University, Phil Furmanski at the time, did not want to have a climate interview done here at Rutgers at all. We tried to push for it early on and he had no interest in it, even though there was a Harvard group that was specifically going out to different universities and doing climate studies. But here, and this was several years later, several years after the MIT Report and our report, the FAS Report, at the time, there was really nothing that addressed those kinds of climate issues. [Editor's Note: Philip Furmanski served as Rutgers Vice President for Academic Affairs from 2003 to 2011. He is now a Distinguished Professor at the Ernesto Mario School of Pharmacy at Rutgers.]

We had a faculty member--the committee--and I was designated as this support person, but I actively was involved in the committee deliberations--and they would ask me questions about the data and that sort of thing, and I would tell them what I knew from sociological studies and so forth. But they wanted to do the climate issues, and so the guy on the committee, Mike McKeon I think was his name, was the one who wrote the chapter on "Perceptions." That was his title, and it was a great title. It was a great foray into that climate issue at the time, but I don't know of anything else at Rutgers that addressed that issue before the FAS Gender Equity Study.

We found great things from the--obviously not so much from the quantitative data. The quantitative data can tell you certain important things, but the qualitative data gives a whole different level of complexity to the kinds of, as I later called it, mechanisms of inequity in my own personal work. It wasn't so much part of the report, but I developed that idea as being mechanisms of inequity. Things like that came out through that chapter, which is a fantastic chapter that I did not write. Each of the chapters in the report came from a faculty member who was one of those ten people, one of those ten senior faculty, who was on the committee. Everybody wrote a section of the report. Mike McKeon was the one that wrote that perceptions one.

One strong finding was that the system in place for promotion tended to support men more than women going up early for full professor. We found very, very strong qualitative evidence for that, and then finding for going up for PII. At the time, distinguished professors were called PII, but in my research, I talked about it as senior professors, I think, because I didn't use Rutgers in my work. I just talked about it as an A&S [arts and sciences] unit. So, there were a lot of interesting climate issues that were talked about in that chapter, and that's just one of them.

I remember one of the, from the qualitative interviews that Mary Gatta did, people talk about how when senior faculty were doing promotions and hiring people, they would always talk about the "quality of the men's mind," and that was something that women really picked up on. They said, "Yes, it's always about the quality of the mind and the brilliance, as opposed to women working hard." There was this idea of--it's a very qualitative difference and you could never get that in a quantitative summary. You've got to get that in some kind of qualitative data. We got a lot of that, and that's where that appears in that chapter. Does that, Shaun, get at what you were talking about?

SI: Yes. That leads into what factors were you trying to get at when you were designing the questions for the qualitative interviews?

PR: Let's see, I don't remember specifically the questions; they're all actually in the report, so you can see. I made sure that all of the questions that we asked and all of the sort of supportive documentation is there in the report. So, you can go and look at it, but I haven't looked at it recently. The idea would be to look for, like, "Do you see sex differences in promotion?" "What are the factors that go into play?"

One group we looked at were women who had been at PIIs for ten years or more. We interviewed eleven PI women and five PI women in rank for ten-plus years. In other words, specifically, we wanted to get those women who were already PIIs, already the senior distinguished professors, but we also wanted to get PI women who had been in rank, so those were the ones who we could get some complaints from, that if they saw their department as operating differently for men versus women, it's that kind of people that we would hear that from. Then, also, because we did a web-based survey in February of 2001, those are kind of the things that we also heard when you leave space: "Please give us any other evidence or things that happened in your life." That's where we picked up some additional qualitative answers.

SI: As you were looking through the data, what surprised you the most? What leapt out at you?

PR: Nothing surprised me. [laughter] It was exactly as I suspected, because we think in a university that it's very meritocratic, but as a sociologist, I've been learning for years about the inequities that are much more subtle. I saw them. I personally saw them. I know others who saw them. I came to Rutgers as a tenured associate professor, so I didn't even have to go through the tenuring at Rutgers, but I saw inequities all throughout.

I felt I personally also benefitted. I mean, I was chair of my department. That was unusual, relatively unusual. I became an area dean. That was relatively unusual. I sort of enjoyed getting into that space where I felt like I could make a difference, but even in that position, I personally saw examples of things. Not so much in FAS because FAS under Dick Foley was really, I think, quite good at this. But it's kind of built into the system in the sense that you tend to think in certain ways, because these kind of inequities are built into the very interactions that we have and also policies and procedures that are developed, which I can talk about more. I can just give you one example of me, and I always would use this as an example of these kinds of inequities that we don't think of as discrimination but in fact are. This is a kind of example of me doing the same thing that you look at others to do and you say, "Wait a minute, that's not right."

I was area dean. I was negotiating salaries with the chairs of departments, and this one chair came to me and said, "Oh, can you raise this salary by five thousand dollars?" I said, "Sure, okay, that makes sense. We have enough funds to do that." He made an offer to this male faculty member they were trying to get from the outside at the assistant professor level, and the guy turned him down. So, he said, "Okay, I'm going to go back in, and we have another person who we think is really good and we'd like to bring her in." Since she didn't have other outside offers, like this guy did, "We're going to go with the original salary offer." I started to say, "Okay, okay." It took me only a few seconds to realize that that is an example of embedded inequities right there. I said, "Wait a minute." I said to the guy, I said, "Wait a minute, you already got me to give five thousand extra dollars to your first candidate. You should go with that, and that's what you should give her." He fought with me. He said, "But she doesn't deserve it because she didn't have another outside offer," or whatever the mechanism was. I said, "You convinced me already to give a new assistant professor in your department an extra five thousand dollars, and it's a female, right?" I said, "You offer that extra five thousand dollars." You can see, I mean, it's more a story on myself, because it took me a minute or so to realize that, "Wait a minute, this is an example of subtle bias. This woman should get the benefit of a higher salary. You don't go back to that original salary." That woman is still here, and she's earning five thousand dollars more. And you know how this cumulative pay stuff works, is that if you start off at the lower level, it builds up, and now she's getting a lot more of a salary because she started higher. Anyway, that's an example of that kind of inequity that's built into how we think about how we should structure our hires and pay people who are coming in.

SI: What other challenges were there in managing the committee and putting together the report? It sounds like everyone worked well together and people were more or less cooperative when you went outside. Were there any roadblocks that were either consciously or unconsciously thrown up as the work was going on?

PR: No, it was such a wonderful example of a group of people working well together. All the people who were members of the committee did their work. They wrote chapters. There were some of us who were a little bit more activist on gender issues. One of the people, you should probably talk with him, Mark Killingsworth, who became a friend of mine through that interaction, he's a labor economist, but he's an economist and economists think differently than sociologists. [laughter] He wrote the chapter on salaries, academic salaries. Those of us who are activists thought that he was a little bit too conservative in how he was interpreting the numbers. For example, looking for a significance in what was really a hundred percent--I mean, the data that we were looking at for salaries was every single faculty member in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, so it was a total population, and there are differences of opinion about whether or not you have to use tests of significance to determine whether some difference between males and females are statistically significant. So, he was being an economist in his write-up, and we would sort of negotiate that. But to say there were roadblocks, no. He wrote a great chapter and he focused on not just the salaries but on mobility into higher-level positions, women's ability to not only to get tenure but move into professor and senior-professor level positions. So, he put all that in there, and that's really an important piece of the argument about sex differences in earnings, that access to higher levels. Not just those people who get to the highest ranks, are there sex differences there? Well, yes, there are, but you really also have to take into account, do women ever get there? Or do they get there later than men get there? Data that we provided here suggests that they not only have lower sex differences in earnings, but they also aren't as mobile as men are moving into those higher-level positions, especially those PII, those senior-level positions. [Editor's Note: Mark Killingsworth is a Professor of Economics at Rutgers.]

In terms of working with people and in terms of Ann Martin, who was the business director at the time, she just gave us all of her data. I mean, one thing we did learn was how backwards the systems were, the financial recordkeeping of SAS, and I gather that they've changed that a lot in recent years. I mean, they must have, but there were like different databases for different aspects. We had to go to these different databases in order to get salaries versus support kinds of data, like summer salary and discretionary money. That's what was one of our important findings was that there were big sex differences in discretionary money, less so in salaries as a whole, although there were small differences there, but differences in getting summer salary, getting discretionary salary.

SI: Is that research funds, the discretionary?

PR: Research funds ...

SI: Is it different from discretionary?

PR: Well, I sort of lumped them all into discretionary funds, and research funds was one of them. Summer salary was another, and I think there was a third, which I'm blocking on right now. But every single one of those had sex differences and pretty big sex differences involved. I can remember one interaction I had where I said, "Look at this difference in summer salary. Men are substantially more likely to get summer salary than women." The guy that I was talking with said, "Well, that's because the men are more likely to do work over the summer so that they get summer salaries," like run an honors program or run another project. Well, I said, "This is an

empirical question, right? We have the data to answer this question right here." So, I did the analysis, and guess what. It turned out it was women who were doing work over the summer to get those discretionary monies. First, they were getting less salary over the summer, but the salary that they did get was more likely to be for running programs for the dean's office, as opposed to the men who were getting it for salary enhancement, like negotiated-salary enhancement. They got outside offers. It was often part of their hiring package, where they got this extra money over the summer. Anyway, it was a great example of how you can actually use data and analysis to make the point, to address those kind of empirical questions.

SI: Did the work get into any issues of women being asked to do unpaid labor or not being offered funding for things that men would be offered funding for?

PR: I don't really remember that. It could be. I don't remember it, off the top of my head, anybody making those complaints. So, I can't say anything to that.

SI: When the report was finalized and put out, you mentioned that due to timing, it did not go anywhere. How was it rolled out? Was there any kind of action committee put together afterwards?

PR: I believe I saw a reference to--at that point, I was out of the dean's office. I would not have been involved in any kind of ongoing reaction committee or something like that. I did see, I think, in the report, when I read through it, in preparation for last time, I think I saw that Holly Smith put together a group, and I believe she brought it to the chairs' committee. FAS has a monthly or bimonthly, whatever, group of chairs' meetings, and I think she brought it there.

The timing was bad. It was a woman dean who *may* have felt somewhat more uncomfortable to push these kinds of issues. I don't know that that's the fact. I came out of the dean's office and I was on sabbatical, so I was kind of pulled back from being directly involved. But I don't really remember any kind of organized response to it.

I never got any complaints either. Nobody ever called me up and said, "Oh, this is a bunch of shit or hogwash, and this is not true and that's not true." I don't remember ever getting any negative response to it and did get some positive response to it. I think it's pretty unique.

Personally, I then took the data and used it to write a whole set of articles about it, addressing the kinds of issues that I was interested in as a sociologist. I think it's really hard to--as a sociologist, I think, "How do I frame this?" Using the extant theories that existed when this was coming out, I ended up framing it as this difference between more overt forms of discrimination that we all know about, where people say, "You're a female. You're not going to get this because you have a husband who's earning money." That doesn't happen. That hasn't happened since I've been in academia, at least those more overt kinds of discrimination. But that doesn't mean that there aren't these really subtle forms of favoritism. I think it's important to understand that discrimination can happen either because you say, "We don't want you women, or we don't want you Blacks, or we don't want you Muslims to do this, this, and this," or it can be that you favor people who are already in positions of authority, so white males. If you think about it that way,

it can be either favoritism for particular groups or disfavor for outgroups of one kind or another. It's a different way of thinking about it.

What I tried to focus on were these more subtle factors and to talk specifically as a sociologist would about how they get replicated and reproduced. This particular study was about the academy, and I talked about, I called them "mechanisms of inequity" and I say they happen in interactions with people, among people, but they also happen because they're built into our institutions: the way we think about hiring, the way we think about equity.

The best example at Rutgers, which I think was one of the big examples that I used in my book, was this idea of historical legacies, because back in the 1980s, when Rutgers was looking to build into a major AAU [Association of American Universities] university and they succeeded, what they did was they went out and they hired a bunch of what they called WCSLs [World Class Scholar Leaders, pronounced "wick-sles"], who were almost entirely physical and biological scientists, STEM people. They went out and they bought them, and they paid them a lot of money, these senior-level people. They gave them PII ranks, this distinguished rank, and they brought them in. This was not discriminatory in intent, but it ended up being discriminatory in outcome because most of those people are men. Most of those people are white men, a lot of white men, but not entirely white men. But they're senior-level men who made it at other institutions historically and then bring them here to Rutgers and we're going to give them this position. Basically, this was a very successful strategy, but it had this historical legacy where there were fewer women at that PII level because most of the PIIs were in the physical and biological sciences, not in the humanities, not in the social sciences. Right as that process was hitting Rutgers, there were a number of women, like Mary Hartman and others, who were sort of the grande dames and very successful women at Rutgers, they said, "Wait a minute, you're not bringing in any women," and they ended up lobbying for women scholars. They ended up bringing in three women, very small in comparison to the huge numbers of men hired. [Editor's Note: Mary Hartman, who came to Douglass College in 1968 as a history professor, served as the dean of Douglass College (1982-1994) and as the founding director of the Institute for Women's Leadership.]

I actually went into the archives at Rutgers, looking for the original paperwork for this and I don't remember much of the details, but I read the original letters from Alec Pond to maybe Bloustein at the time or whoever was president, where he was talking about the kind of people that he wanted in these kinds of positions. Again, nothing discriminatory about it. It was an attempt to put Rutgers on the map and it succeeded, but then you have to say, "Well, what are the long-term outcomes of that?" I gave you an example of summer funding as well; that was another thing. [Editor's Note: T. Alexander "Alec" Pond served as Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer under Rutgers President Edward Bloustein from 1982 until Bloustein's death in 1989, when he took over as acting president. In 1990, he was appointed University Professor in the Physics Department and retired in 1997.]

One of the things that I tried to do was to distinguish between questions of why, motive; we don't know the motives of people, but we can document how these things happen. That's really what I tried to focus on: how is it that we got from here to here and we had so few women at the higher ranks? How did we get from there to here and we had so few women in the leadership ranks?

Women at Rutgers were very interested in those questions, so they were very supportive of it at every step of the way.

Personally, I got a lot from this, because I was able to publish a whole set of papers. That paper in *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* that I published with Mary Gatta I think was the best statement in a sociological way of describing how it is that this process works in academia. [Editor's Note: The article being referred to is "Gender (In)Equity in the Academy: Subtle Mechanisms and the Production of Inequality," written by Dr. Roos and Mary L. Gatta and published in 2009 in *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 27:177-200.]

SI: Adithya, do you have a question, or do you have to go now?

AV: I will ask a quick question before I leave. Professor, you mentioned about the five thousand dollars extra payment for that professor. My question to you, was there a notion that women have to advocate in an extra form so that they can get their points conveyed versus how males get their points conveyed? I have seen this notion in historic times, how women have to take two steps in getting what they want versus how males can just ask and they will get it. Do you think that played into when you were mentioning about the five thousand dollars extra salary?

PR: Well, the latter part of what you're saying, men feel entitled, and in a lot of ways they are entitled. But through these kinds of processes, it's like this thinking that that male chair felt that that first male who was going to be hired, he was entitled to that because he had--and I don't remember if it was another outside offer or he had multiple offers and that's why he came to me for more money, or I don't remember specifically what the [case was]--but that male chair thought that he was entitled to that extra money, and I agreed. I agreed that he was entitled to that extra money. But what the chair disagreed [was] that woman, and he said it explicitly, he said, "She doesn't deserve it. She's not entitled to it because she doesn't have another offer," or whatever the mechanism was.

I used it as a kind of example on myself, because I started thinking with that sense of entitlement and I had to stop because I knew. [laughter] I just knew from my research that that was wrong. So, I said, "Look, you've already convinced me to give an extra five thousand. You should be doing that for your faculty, right?" It's a different role of a chair. My view of being chair is that you do everything you can for your faculty, and if that means getting them an extra five thousand dollars to start off their career, you should do it. I had already offered it. He argued with me that, no, she shouldn't, but he took it. He finally took it, thank God. I liked the guy. He was a funny guy, but I won't mention names.

SI: That strikes me because the ethos I have always known at Rutgers is that if you get something out of whether it is the Dean's Office or central administration, you do not give it back. The fact that he would be willing to part with it is remarkable.

PR: But you can see how it's a psychological response and a sense of male entitlement, and maybe if it hadn't been a woman, if it had been another male, the person who came in second, maybe he would have done the same thing if it had been a male. Obviously, I don't know the

answer to that. But it was the fact that she was a female that struck me, and it made me step back and realize that I was falling into those kinds of patterns of entitlement. So, I stopped and said, "Oh, no, we're going ahead with this five thousand." [laughter] I went around and did kind of, what is it called, not show and pony? What do you call those? I went around to different universities.

SI: Town halls?

PR: Not town halls, but just like there's something about show and pony things, the phrase.

SI: Oh, yes, I know what you are saying.

PR: I'm really bad at metaphors.

SI: Horse and pony show?

PR: Horse and pony show [dog and pony show], that's it. So, I did this horse and pony show at different universities. I went to Harvard because they were interested in this. I went into the social science area of Harvard. I had a PPT [PowerPoint] file where I talked about what I found in the report, but I also had a way I described it as a plausible academic scenario. I talked about two different faculty members. I call them Christine and Matt. Although there wasn't a Christine and Matt in the study, they represent the kinds of barriers that exist for faculty. In my scenario, Christine and Matt were both STEM faculty. I talk about them being exactly equal at the beginning. Then, they come into the university, and that divergence begins to happen right away, where Christine is offered a salary, a particular salary, and start-up funds, lab space, but the man, Matt, is offered five thousand dollars more. Now, you know why I picked that five thousand. [laughter] He got ten thousand dollars more for start-up. He got prime lab space rather than the regular lab space that she got.

Then, I go through their career to show a cumulative advantage or cumulative disadvantage operating. By year four, Christine was on sabbatical, but she was juggling childbirth and her lab research. She was unable to pursue job inquiries. Matt had a wife at home who helped take care of two children versus one child. He could use his sabbatical for research, and he got some out-of-cycles [merit increases] for leveraging job offers from elsewhere. So, this process occurs throughout their [careers] because of this cumulative disadvantage that occurs over time. You get to year five, and these are both people who are extremely successful. We talked with these senior women at Rutgers who felt this kind of [effect], those perceptions that we talked about earlier. She started working with women in science. She started working with social scientists about NSF [National Science Foundation] funding. Matt, by year four, was seen as being a star. We heard that a lot where women would talk about, "They talk about these men as being stars," because they would sit in on promotion meetings and that's the way that their colleagues would talk about the men but not the women who were coming up. Then, the man would end up in the football box with the president, the main football box.

Finally, you get to later in their career. The woman was promoted to professor but never to PII, never to the senior professor. The man was promoted to senior professor. They were both very

successful in their fields. But the woman felt well respected and valued in her professional community but not at Rutgers, not at her home academic institution, whereas the man did and also felt that, we've talked about it, this sense of entitlement. He deserved everything that he got, and that's true. He did deserve everything he got, but he had a set of advantages. He had a set of subtle kinds of things that added to his advantage, which cumulated over the years. The woman did really, really well, but she didn't have those set of advantages in the same way that the man did. That's the way that I tried to describe it when I would go on this horse and pony show to try to get people to understand it, and they did. It was always very well received, so people got it, "I get it!"

SI: These structural issues that are built in, it seems like there are some built-in roadblocks for women, but it is maybe more about built-in aids for men. Would you say that the University made any attempts to correct some of these structural issues?

PR: I think so much of this stuff gets done at the departmental level because hiring gets done at the departmental level. Certainly, salary, you negotiate with the dean's office. I know that chairs, and chairs since me, have negotiated with deans to get some pretty damn high salaries for males and females. So, certainly in the department that I know best, sociology, I think that you don't see those kinds of salary differences. I'm not in the know enough at this point. I'm retired, so I'm definitely not in the know anymore, thankfully. [laughter]

It's just like from the University, I didn't really see a lot of reaction to this report, which was I think disappointing. It did follow up. The University did get an ADVANCE Grant from NSF; 3.6 million dollars came into the University for the ADVANCE Grant. I worked on that for three years, and then I left. I quit, because I didn't think the University was responding as it should to requests to me that made a whole lot of sense. I was a co-PI [co-principal investigator] and I had differences of opinion with the PI [principal investigator], and so I finally decided that I couldn't continue to work on the project because I both didn't think the project was being handled well and I didn't think the University was sufficiently supportive. I just thought it was going in the wrong direction. I was there for the first three years, but then I quit and other people continued it on, I think. I mean, occasionally, I get requests from NSF, "Do you want to talk about this?" I say, "No, you need to talk with the people who were involved with it after I left because I don't want to get in the middle of that." I was happy to step aside and just work on my own research at that point. [Editor's Note: From 2008 through 2011, Dr. Roos served as co-principal investigator and director of research on the National Science Foundation ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Grant, called "RUF AIR-Rutgers University for Faculty Advancement and Institutional Re-imagination."]

I don't think the University ever really stepped up. I don't know enough about the recent years, once Holloway came in. I know the work of Anna Branch, she's a sociologist, and I've known her for years. I think she's doing some very good things, but I don't know the specifics. So, I can't really comment on them, but her work as a sociologist is really excellent. I reviewed it in the past at professional meetings and so I know somewhat about her sociology work, and it's well done, really well done. I hope that what Holloway's doing and what Anna's able to accomplish is headed in the right direction because she certainly knows. She's a sociologist and she's a sociologist of occupations too, so she knows this stuff. I think that's really good. It's nice to

have a sociologist up there in the position that she's in. I do believe they have done a climate study. I think maybe even before I retired, I saw that they did do a climate study, but I haven't really kept up with it, so I'm not sure. [Editor's Note: Enobong (Anna) Branch is the Senior Vice President for Equity at Rutgers University. Jonathan Holloway has served as the President of Rutgers University since July 1, 2020. In 2023, Rutgers conducted a Climate Survey on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.]

SI: Can you give any examples of the kinds of things they were not implementing in the NSF grant that turned you off?

PR: My hobby horse in the NSF grant was in getting a database of faculty established someplace on campus that researchers could use, both local researchers and people who wanted to come in and fill out IRBs [Institutional Review Board] to enable them to get access to the data, internal and external. As part of the NSF grant, I really pushed for that, and Crystal Bedley and I spent three years developing a database that went back to 1976, I think, when they first established a database. We worked really, really well with Institutional Research, and Robert Heffernan was very helpful, and we had two staff members there who worked with us to develop a database. Crystal Bedley was the one who knows most about that. She kind of followed up on it and stayed working with the NSF project, so she's the one who knows most about that issue of database. What we did was we did a yeoman's effort of getting this database brought up to date, so that there was a single database of faculty dated back to 1976, if I remember correctly, all the way up to the present. I resigned from there in 2011, I think. Up until that date, we had this database, and it was a great.

It was a phenomenal database where we could go in and not just get the kind of numbers that administrators are interested in, but we could do really good data analysis, regression analysis, and take into account a whole set of factors that are so much better than doing, "Oh, here's how many women. Here's how many men. Here's how many Blacks. Here's how many whites. Here's how many Asian, Pacific Islanders, and so forth." As part of that process, we found out problems that existed in the collection of data, in part because they were forced on the University when there was, at some point, some date when they said you couldn't ask race anymore. So, the numbers of people who didn't have race in the database became huge and uninterpretable. You can't do analyses of race differences if you don't have adequate data on race.

That, I think, was a huge disappointment to me because I tried so hard to get some place in the University, like the Center for Women and Work in SMLR, where I had been acting director for three years, and so I thought, "This would've been a great place to have it, where there would be some subset of people--who didn't control of the data; the data would have to still be controlled by Institutional Research--but develop a set of mechanisms to use the data and use it effectively." There was no interest. I talked with the higher-level people and found absolutely no interest in having that. When I left, maybe they kept it up for a few years, but I doubt anything along the lines of what I had hoped would develop exists at this point. [Editor's Note: The Center for Women and Work (CWW) within the School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR) at Rutgers is a research and advocacy organization that promotes equity for women both economically and socially.]

Now, I've talked with Anna about it, actually, and I don't know whether or not it's something that she would [be interested in]. I mean, she's a numbers person, so I would hope that that would be something that she would see. But, again, once I left, I really kind of removed myself from that, so I don't know what has happened. That's been like ten years now--eleven years--since I quit that project and I really don't know what's happened since then. I'm happy to be out of it, because it got me in trouble. It got me in trouble with higher-level people in the University who were not happy with what I was saying. I said, "Okay, I'm going to cut my losses," and I just left. It was good. At some point, it needs to go to different people and have them move it forward or not. Once you leave a position, you don't really know what's going on.

That's the nice thing about retirement is you can really retire and not have to worry about all of these things anymore, but that was a disappointment. I've been on a couple of, one in particular, as an external member on an ADVANCE Grant at another university, and that was the thing that I told them. I said, "You need to have a database." I said, "This was always my hobby horse at Rutgers and I failed, but maybe you guys can do it." So, that's the stuff that I've worked on since then.

SI: Tell me a little bit more about your work within the last ten years, from the 2008-2011 period, with the Center for Women and Work in the Labor Relations Department.

PR: I think that was before. I think it was while I was on ADVANCE that I was at SMLR. [Editor's Note: Dr. Roos served as the director of the Center for Women and Work in 2010-2011, co-director in 2009-2010, and acting director in 2008-2009.]

SI: Okay.

PR: I had a part of my line in SMLR for three years, and then I think it was right after I resigned from ADVANCE that I had my line totally moved back to FAS, because I just didn't want to have two departments that I had to deal with. That's a hard thing for anybody to do, and I had already noticed a whole bunch of assistant professors and tenured professors who had trouble negotiating across different departments. I came back. I just came back to being just like a regular faculty member, and I loved it. I put time in for my department and worked with students and served on committees and just became a regular faculty member again.

SI: Did most of your work at the center focus on the NSF grant and the database issue, or were there other aspects?

PR: At the Center for Women and Work?

SI: Yes.

PR: No. It was really just trying to keep the center afloat. The University was coming after people because of complaints. It's like I played this role of just trying to deal with senior-level administrators who were having one problem after the other. I spent a lot of time when I was there negotiating that stuff and hiring somebody new to come in as full director. I helped to spearhead that, but there was no way; I didn't want to stay as permanent director. I didn't have

any interest in it. I wanted to just go back and be a regular professor at that point. Enough of this; enough of this responsibility.

SI: Are there any examples of the problems they would bring to you?

PR: Who?

SI: You mentioned the problems with higher-ranking administrators.

PR: Oh, the administrators?

SI: Yes.

PR: Yes, there's a couple of people who shall remain nameless who started going after individuals, and I was outraged. They sicced an auditor on the department, and the kinds of complaints they made were just absolutely absurd, like having people put together day-by-day descriptions of what they did three years ago. How many of us can do that? We can't do that. Faculty members and staff, you know, we just have a varied number of things that we were doing. It all came because there was a woman who complained about being harassed or discriminated against, not sex harassment, but she felt that the administrators were not recognizing her true brilliance. [laughter] She went to complain and, oh, my God, it was a disaster having this auditor come in. When the auditor came in, I had a personal meeting with him, and I said, "This is absolutely absurd what you're doing," but they had to go through the process. I talked with the person who came in as director after I left, and nothing happened with that auditor's report. They were just using that as a mechanism to get rid of people. It was pretty outrageous.

SI: When you say get rid of people, was it because they saw them as problems, or they were just trying to save money and get rid of lines and other expenses?

PR: I think they were trying to address a complaint from this woman, who ended up, they kind of moved her off to another campus, and she made a big stink there. She did similar kinds of things there, and I think finally they just succeeded in firing her. But it's very, very hard to fire people. You have to listen to what they say, and I agree with that. You have to go through the process, but she was absolutely using the process to her own personal advantage in a way that was really horrific and disgusting. She hurt really good people in the process, really terrific staff people that ended up choosing to leave. But I've seen that a number of times. It's not just men who do that; women do that, too. Women do that same thing; if they don't like people, they can make their lives pretty horrible, too.

SI: You have talked about how your research was affected. It was a continuation of what you had done before but added to your research, the work you had done on the NSF grant and the report earlier. Were there other aspects of your work, maybe working with professional groups or other efforts, that we have not talked about yet?

PR: That was earlier in my career. I did a lot of that. I was the vice president of the American Sociological Association. I was on their executive board for however many years that would be, three years I guess, and that was cool. I enjoyed that. I once ran for the president of the Eastern Sociological Society, but I didn't win that. So, I did a lot of that kind of work early on. Then, once I started with being chair and area dean, I had too much on my plate, so I just focused on that.

Then, once I stepped down from the ADVANCE Grant, I really focused on my research, trying to get something out from all the years that I had put into the ADVANCE Project. I didn't get much out of the ADVANCE Project, but I got a lot out of the FAS Gender Equity Study. So, that, I used, and I got quite a few publications out of that. The ADVANCE Grant was kind of a bust for me in terms of research. It could have been; if that data had gone through, maybe I would have published more about that.

My research, once I published this work on academia, I went back to a focus of my dissertation work and my work with Barbara Reskin in *Job Queues, Gender Queues* to look at changing sex composition of occupations and brought that up to date. My last research publication on gender and work kinds of issues was about updating the numbers of changing sex composition of occupations in more recent years. I used census data to do that. That was the focus of my last work on that area. [Editor's Note: *Job Queues, Gender Queues: Explaining Women's Inroads Into Male Occupations* is a 1990 book by Dr. Roos and Barbara Reskin. The latter work being discussed is "Integrating Occupations: Changing Occupational Sex Segregation in the U.S. from 2000 to 2014," by Dr. Roos and Lindsay M. Stevens, published in 2018 in *Demographic Research* 38:127-154.]

Then, I think I mentioned to you that my son died of opioid addiction in 2015. Thank God I had stepped down from ADVANCE because I wouldn't have been able to do anything. I started reinventing myself to learn lots about addiction, mental health, and harm reduction, and you name it. I did a deep dive into all the research that sociologists and social scientists have done. I have like a stack of things I've read, all my books now on addiction. 2013 is when he really went off the deep end, and then he died two years later. Since then, I've totally reinvented myself as somebody who focuses on addiction and mental health.

I've been writing this book about opioid addiction and trying to bring opioid addiction to the general public but also a memoir. It's like this unique space that uses my sociological insights to address the opioid epidemic, trying to take into account my own experiences, which are very sad. It looks like somebody's going to publish my book and I don't have a contract yet, so I'm not going to tell you who, but by the time I comment on your thing [the oral history transcript], I will definitely know, because we're sort of in negotiation at this point and he's reading my chapters. [Editor's Note: Dr. Roos is the author of the memoir *Surviving Alex: A Mother's Story of Love, Loss, and Addiction*, due to be published by Rutgers University Press in May 2024.]

I've written twelve chapters, and I think it's pretty good, actually. I think it's really good. It's interesting how it connects with my work on gender and work, because what I'm doing is I'm looking at all of those more subtle things that exist out there in how we think about addiction. [Dr. Roos' Postscript: *Surviving Alex* has sixteen chapters.]

There are three different ways that you can think about addiction, one of which is that people make a choice. That's the one that the everyday educated person thinks, "Okay, you've got to stop doing that, and it's all choice." I've written a couple op-eds before this. Now, I'm writing this book. The first approach is choice. The second approach is brain disease. The brain disease exists out there, and that really accounts for it. Once you take that first injection or snort of heroin or meth or whatever, it hooks you and you're a goner. The third is a much more social science way of looking at it, which I don't know if you've heard of Maia Szalavitz. She's a new contributing writer for *The New York Times* and she wrote a book that was really stunning called *Unbroken Brain*. It was published in 2016. She started writing about it in articles and stuff prior to its publication date, so I had read about it. It really spoke to me. I had a front-row seat in the addiction of my son, and it just made so much more sense. Even people who use heroin, most people don't get addicted, so why is it that people get addicted? Well, people get addicted because they're self-medicating themselves. There's a self-medication process going on that accounts for it. So, you say, "Well, why is it that people need to self-medicate? How is that played out through institutions?" [Editor's Note: *Unbroken Brain: A Revolutionary Way of Understanding Addiction* is a 2016 book by Maia Szalavitz.]

My son Alex was in twelve rehabs. I have notes from psychologists and psychiatrists and staff people from every single institution that he was in, and I did interviews with a whole bunch of his friends, teachers, police officers, doctors and social workers, and family members. I used my sociological tools to gather data to provide insight into why is this happening? Why aren't we doing what we should be doing? Why is it that we have this war on drugs that is a total failure? Why is it that there's such a race difference in who's in jail and mass incarceration? Why is it that we switched to the idea of a brain disease? Well, that was because whites were becoming more addicted.

There's a whole set of interesting sociological issues and historical issues that I now know about, and I used those last [years], right before I retired, I used those years to become involved and to gather data and learn more in two ways, one of which was that I paid a sociology graduate student (Allegra Pocinki) to go and do a ton of research into all these areas, like community and grief and bereavement, you name it. So, she came up with a whole set of things that we read together and talked [about]. That was great because that served as the basis for my book, and also for an Honors course on "Addiction" I taught in Spring 2019. Then, secondly, I was accepted into an IRW seminar. Do you know how the IRW seminars work? [Editor's Note: Dr. Roos was a fellow at the Institute for Research on Women (IRW) in 2018-2019 in the seminar "Public Catastrophes, Private Losses."]

SI: A little bit.

PR: They have a yearlong theme. There was a yearlong theme that my research on this fit in perfectly ("Public Catastrophes, Private Losses"). So, I was sitting around with these wonderful people in the seminar, and they helped me think about it. I presented on it and got first comments back, and I was trying to write for a lay audience. I'm not trying to write sociology; I'm trying to write for a lay audience, and so they gave me lots of good feedback. That was my first feedback.

I worked early on with Ken Branson, who was in Rutgers News, and he read a lot of stuff I was writing. I was trying to have it published as a long-form essay, and I was just hitting a brick wall, no interest, no interest. He said, "Pat, you've already got a book here. You've got three chapters of a book. You should write a book." So, I said, "Oh, good point."

I started to write a book. Last January of 2021, right smack in the middle of the pandemic, with nothing else to do, I started to write the book, and now I'm on chapter twelve. I'm getting close to being done, and I think it is going to be published. They're talking about a contract, and so hopefully in the next couple of days or so, I should have a contract, or maybe next couple of weeks, but we haven't negotiated all of the issues. [Dr. Roos' Postscript: As of August 2023, I've finished the book, and it will be published in May 2024.]

They like it because it's this mix of sociology and policy, sociology and memoir. It's pretty exciting. Yesterday was my birthday. My sister thought I was kind of nuts because I was so excited, I had the entire day to work on this chapter twelve, which I'm almost done with, and I had to deal with this complicated set of things, like, "What did I do? What was I doing?" and I was writing this section on turning grief into action, getting involved in the politics of it. I was just going through what I did in order to have a more political turn to becoming involved among those who are activists on the whole addiction question. It's been exciting.

SI: Is there any particular group that you worked with in terms of trying to get policy changed?

PR: That's what I was writing yesterday. I worked with this group called Denied Treatment, which was a small group. There are these larger groups that bring hundreds of people together, but they didn't speak to me. I needed something smaller. I needed something that I could do, that used my sociological expertise. I saw online this group that was just starting, where a woman was working with an attorney and he was working pro bono and they were looking for families who had issues with insurance, not being reimbursed for mental health and substance abuse issues. That was one of the issues we had. We had paid nearly thirty thousand dollars, and I spent years trying to get reimbursed for that, to no avail. I still have not been reimbursed. So, I was describing that whole process in this section on political activism.

I got involved with this group called Denied Treatment, and we worked together to prepare for the tenth anniversary of the federal bill on mental health. In 2008, there was a bill that tried to create parity. If you hear people talk about parity, the insurance companies are required to have parity between mental health issues and other medical matters, like physical kind of health issues, think, diabetes, that kind of thing. This began before this tenth anniversary. They were preparing for this tenth anniversary. New York already had something in place. This lawyer had connections with the New Jersey Attorney General, and he was showing an interest to get involved in the same way that the New York Attorney General had done. This was under Christie. Chris Christie was still Governor at the time. So, we kind of bided our time, talking with the New York people, he did, I didn't have any connection with the Attorney General on this. But I was in this group where we were sort of drafting and trying to figure out what to do and bringing it to the state legislature. [Editor's Note: The federal law refers to the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008]

(MHPAEA), which generally prevents group health plans and health insurance issuers that provide mental health and substance use disorder benefits from imposing less favorable benefit limitations on those benefits than on medical and surgical coverage.]

In 2018, I published an op-ed in *Insider New Jersey* about this issue of insurance parity. Then, right before or right after that, I testified to the New Jersey State Senate Commerce Committee that was considering this bill. It had already passed the Assembly by that point, and it was getting to the Senate level. The head of this committee was Tom Kean, Jr., who's actually Republican, and he was very supportive, and other people [were also]. In some sense, it's one of those few bipartisan issues that you can get Republicans onboard, because these other efforts, which I call harm-reduction efforts, and that's the term that people use out there, it's not my term, but it's what I believe in that is what we really need to do.

I published this op-ed, and I gave testimony to the State Senate committee. Then, that committee approved it. The Senate itself approved it. In April of 2019, Murphy approved it, and so it's now the law of the land in New Jersey to ensure that mental health and medical issues are treated the same and that insurance companies need to be open and transparent about how they're making decisions for payment and reimbursement. [Editor's Note: On April 11, 2019, Governor Phil Murphy signed legislation (A2031/S1339) that requires health insurers to provide coverage for mental health conditions and substance use disorders under the same terms and conditions as provided for any other sickness and to meet the requirements of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act.]

I spent years, from 2014 to 2019, five years, trying to get reimbursed for this approximately thirty thousand cost. I even appeared before the state health commission (the regulatory commission), and they turned me down. So, I just gave up. That money is gone. [laughter] That thirty thousand dollars is gone forever, but mine is so small compared [to others]. I have a friend who has paid over 300,000 dollars and has never been reimbursed. So, this is a huge issue. There are a lot of people out there who are going through this same issue.

That's my big political statement there. Once I finish writing this book and once it's published, I'll probably [get more involved politically]. One of the exciting things about moving to D.C.--I think I told you that I'm moving to D.C. sometime over the summer, probably late summer at this point--I'd love to get involved with more political stuff, but it's got to be something that uses my expertise that I can do something with.

That's what's been fun about writing this book is actually feeling like it's important and will make a contribution. My big push here is about harm reduction. There's a whole set of articles and books that are coming out now about harm reduction. It's all over Twitter. I'm not a big Twitter person, but I'm on Twitter so I can see what it is that the harm reduction politics people are talking about. The problem is that all the policy types are talking among one another, but it hasn't gotten to people like me, other parents like me. I never heard about harm reduction until I started working on this book. Nobody knows about it. I've talked with police officers. I've talked with the person who's the incoming police chief here in Metuchen; he never heard about it. Most academics have never heard [about it]. Have you heard about it?

SI: Yes, a little bit.

PR: Good, you're one of the few people. I would say eighty-five to ninety percent of the people that I've talked with, everyday people, the only people who know about it are people like academics. The few academics who are in sociology of medicine or criminal justice, they've heard about it. But you've got these groups of people talking about harm reduction, but you don't have the mechanisms that allow harm reduction that push people and push the general public to support harm reduction.

My political stuff now relates to writing. The last op-ed I wrote was for NewJersey.com, *The Star-Ledger*, right after Biden was elected. The title of it [was] something like, "Hey, Joe, do something for harm reduction," or, "Don't forget the harm reduction," "Don't forget Alex and other people like Alex." So, I haven't heard from him. Joe never called, but I wish he had. [laughter] I would've told him, "Get [onboard]." Joe Biden is actually onboard in terms of harm reduction, but he's not putting enough money into it so far. So, we'll hope, because his son is an example, Hunter Biden. I've read Hunter Biden's book. He needs to put money into it, not just give lip service to it. But it's ten times better than Trump, who had a commission that addressed the opioid epidemic but did nothing but continue to throw people in jail. Jeff Sessions, that was his take-no-prisoners approach. We deal exclusively with demand and throw everybody in jail, and that's not the right thing. [Editor's Note: President Joe Biden's son, Hunter Biden, came out with a memoir, *Beautiful Things*, in 2021. Jeff Sessions served as the U.S. Attorney General from 2017 to 2018 during the Donald Trump administration.]

SI: Yes, it seems like there are a lot of attitudes that probably in that generation will not be changed.

PR: The old farts, yes.

SI: I am Generation X; you hear that a lot there. It seems like the kids that are students now have a more open attitude; they realize you cannot solve this issue with police and jails.

PR: Right. I'm writing the book for people who are in positions like me but also all those people who think it couldn't happen to them. Guess what. It happens to perfectly normal people and "good families." That's one of my metaphors that I use: it happens in "good families." It happens across the political perspective, the demographic perspective. It can happen to anybody, and you see that. You see that, because really what it is, it's about mental health. Ultimately, that's the basis. It's about mental health and people self-medicate, and there aren't the mechanisms now to help people get through it. There's a book I read recently, if you're interested in it, is this book, Carl Erik Fisher. Did I show you this, *The Urge*? [Editor's Note: *The Urge: Our History of Addiction* is a 2022 book by Carl Erik Fisher.]

SI: No.

PR: He's a psychiatrist, but it's the story of his own psychological break from drinking and stimulants. They tased him. They came to him, they tased him, they took him to Bellevue [Hospital]. It's a really interesting story, but he shows what it is that happened to him, and here

he was, in this really high-level occupation. He was just out of med school, he was in his residency, I guess, and white, and what happened to him versus other people in similar positions. He talks about harm reduction and the kind of strategies that worked for him and the kind of strategies that didn't. So, it's a really interesting book.

SI: Have you worked on this issue in the context of Rutgers and students?

PR: Not really. I know the woman who started the sober living houses, Lisa Laitman, she's just about ready to retire. She's the one that brought sober living to Rutgers. When Alex died, I asked people to donate money to her organization, and they did, in his honor. I think at least a part of the funding from this book I want to go to that. I don't know who's going to replace her, so it depends on who replaces her and whether or not I have a connection with that person, but I think the person that might take it would be a really interesting person. I think I could make a connection with them. [Editor's Note: Lisa Laitman, former director of the Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance Program at Rutgers-New Brunswick, started the Recovery Housing program in 1988.]

I'd love to have sort of continuing involvement in this area, and I'd love to be able to donate some money because I think Rutgers has done a good job with this sober living house that they have. It was brilliant. Her building was the first in the country. I think it works, because, ultimately, what all this is is creating a sense of community, and if you can get to the point where you can connect with that community, that's going to be the thing that makes a difference. That's going to save you. That's going to keep you from dying because you've got that. You have a way out. You have a way forward.

Ultimately, we need to create a situation where people have housing, where people can get jobs and not be kept out of jobs because they once had criminal charges in their backgrounds. There's a whole set of support structures. There was an interesting article just yesterday in *The Washington Post* about a young woman, twenty-one years old, I think, who was talking about contingency management, and she was actually paid money to stay sober. She had a meth problem, but it also talked about other support structures. She had a baby, and she had a place to stay while she had the baby. Then, she had housing and she had other kinds of support structures, so it really takes a community support structure. But she's also doing this contingency management, which Carl Erik Fisher talks about as well. He still has to go and get his urine checked years after going through rehab. He was at rehab for a long period of time, but he has to keep doing that because he has to keep proving that he's not on drugs. His license depends on it, so there is the contingency. "You want to have drugs? Well, you're going to lose your job." At this point, he doesn't want to lose his job because he's happy with what he does, being a psychiatrist. These are the kind of things that people on the right would say, "We're coddling criminals." Oh, another interesting one is just this past Friday, John Oliver. Do you watch John Oliver? [Editor's Note: John Oliver is a comedian who has hosted *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* on HBO since 2014.]

SI: I do, but I have not seen this one.

PR: See this one; you'll see exactly what I'm talking about. The entire session is on harm reduction, and it shows pictures of the people on the right saying, "Well, we're coddling criminals." Then, other people saying, "People, this works, it's cost effective. This is the way to go. It succeeds." Just kind of getting people to see that, and I'd love my book to be part of that conversation, that's what I'm hoping. I'm hoping that I don't get to D.C. right as Republicans take over the Congress. That would be a disaster. Then, I'd really be back in the trenches.

SI: Is there anything else you want to add that we have not talked about?

PR: Nope, I think you've got my whole life here.

SI: Yes.

PR: Okay.

SI: Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

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