

Interviewee: Diane Giampa
Interviewers: Celia Smith and Erin Wilbur
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Location: Bay State Savings Bank, Worcester,
Massachusetts
Transcribers: Celia Smith and Erin Wilbur



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Abstract: Diane Giampa was born at St. Vincent's Hospital in Worcester, MA in 1963. She was raised in Millbury, Massachusetts, where she still resides today. Diane received her Bachelor's Degree in English from the College of the Holy Cross and her MBA from Anna Maria College. Diane and her husband have two sons, Cody and Jordan. After staying home for a year, Diane decided to return to work. She is now the Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Marketing at Bay State Savings Bank. In this interview, Diane discusses her love and dedication to volunteer work. She credits her work ethic to her father, who owned a pharmacy that she worked at as a young girl. She shares the hardship of the loss of her mother, who passed away when Diane was 27. She offers essential advice for all women, to "...just be yourself and ask for what you need and make sure that you get paid what you're worth." Diane is passionate about her career and emphasizes the importance of being bold and voicing your concerns. Her life reflects the ability of modern women in America to successfully balance career, community, and family in a strong and ambitious way.

Before beginning the interview, we read the following statement to Diane:

My name is Celia Smith and I am here with Erin Wilbur in Worcester, Massachusetts, and it is October 11, 2017. We are completing a citywide oral history of the lives of Worcester women, aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences. Based on the goals of the 1850 National Women's Rights Convention in Worcester, we are focusing on the areas of women's health, education, work, and politics and community involvement. Thank you for your help with this important project!

We asked Diane's permission to record her oral history, to which she agreed.

EW: We have quite a few questions for you today. [laughs]

DG: Okay, I will try to answer them. [laughs]

EW: Okay, so just to begin with, your general information, what is your full name, maiden and married?

DG: So, my full name is Diane Marie Giampa, and my maiden name is Stowe. S-T-O-W-E.

EW: And where were you born?

DG: In Worcester! At the old St. Vincent's Hospital.

EW: Oh okay.

CS: That's where I was born!

EW: Me too!

DG: Hey!!

[All laugh]

EW: Alright, have you ever married? [laughs]

DG: Yes, as a matter of fact, yes! [laughs] I am married now.

EW: So, what is your husband's name?

DG: My husband's name is Dana J. Giampa, who works at Assumption [College in Worcester, MA].

EW: And you have children?

DG: I have two boys, my oldest is Cody, and he's 26. And my youngest is Jordan, and he's 22.

EW: And where have you lived during your life?

DG: Oh, my. [all laugh] Okay, so, my parents moved from Worcester to Millbury, where I lived most of my life. I lived briefly... So I went to school at Holy Cross [College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA], and after I graduated, I then moved to Worcester, so I lived on Shrewsbury Street for about two years. And then, when I met my husband, I moved to Templeton [Massachusetts]-. Do you know where Templeton is? Because I didn't either, [all laugh] moved to Templeton briefly and then when my mother passed away, we bought our house back in Millbury where I grew up.

EW: Okay. Can you tell me about your parents?

DG: Oh, my parents, yes! So, my father grew up right behind Main Street, here, and my mom grew up on Dick Street. So, both of them were sort of in the same neighborhood, they met in

Worcester when they were going to school. They went to elementary school and high school, the old Commerce High School, I think, and they met and got married and they moved to Millbury. So, both sets of my grandparents lived in Worcester.

EW: Alright, so what cultures or ethnicities do you identify with, as your family background?

DG: Well, obviously I'm Caucasian, but my family was mainly Italian.

CS: Alright. So, what was the neighborhood like, in general, where you grew up?

DG: So, I grew up in Millbury, which was, is, a very small town.

CS: Yeah, I'm from around there, I actually went to Blackstone Valley Tech. [Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School in Upton, Massachusetts.]

DG: Oh, okay! So, our neighborhood was just a---so we lived in two places in Millbury. The first place was the first house that my parents could ever afford to buy, and it was in a small little neighborhood with tons of kids, and then we moved to Singleterry Road, which is on Singleterry Lake, which is the lake between Millbury and Sutton, where I live now. Very little, very few children, because it's a very rural area, but I loved living there because we used to play outside, and go swimming, and so it's really nice that I can be there now.

CS: So, you said---so you live in Millbury now?

DG: Yes. I bought my parents' house. So, I'm in the house that I grew up in.

EW: Oh, okay!

CS: Yeah. So, do other family members live in the same area, where you live?

DG: So, my younger sister lives in Connecticut. So, she actually moved out of the area, but my younger brother lives in Sutton, so he never moved. He's a teacher at Shepherd Hill High School. [Shepherd Hill Regional High School in Dudley, MA]

EW: That's where I went.

[All laugh]

DG: ____?? Did you have my brother, Mr. Stowe?

EW: I didn't, but I know him.

DG: [cheers and laughs] See? That's my baby brother, Chris.

EW: That's funny.

DG: That's what is so cool about this area, everybody knows everybody.

[All laugh and agree]

CS: Yeah, so,so what challenges do you think this city still faces and what would you do to change---yeah, what would you change about the city?

DG: I wish I had an answer to the question about what I would change. I think--- I've been here for a really long time, so I went to school--- I went to Holy Cross, and I graduated back in [laughs] 1985. And back then, the city was a little bit different, because we had the Galleria, what it was called then, so we would come down and we would go to nightclubs, and go out, and it seemed a lot less--- it seemed like there was a lot more to do back then.

EW: Mhm.

DG: Then the fashion outlets came, which I think were a little bit too high-end for Worcester, and then what I've seen is a lot of businesses leaving the city, again, over that [phone buzzes] huge expanse of time. Lately, I see a lot of great things happening in the city. The Hanover Theatre is just absolutely fabulous, I don't know if you've been. We go all the time, I love it. I mean, it's like Boston-like, type of shows, but here in Worcester, and you can be home in 15 minutes, it's wonderful. The DCU Center, we used to go to concerts there, they have great athletic events. There's a lot of restaurants, so I think the city---there's a lot of really great things happening. I use the example of the bikes that we just put in. So, have you heard about Ofo?

EW: No.

DG: It's the---there's yellow bikes, you see them around the city, and you swipe your card, credit card, to ride them for an hour.

EW: Oh, okay.

DG: Which is such a cool idea! Apparently, they have these in, like, Seattle, and somewhere.

EW: Yeah, I was in [Washington] D.C. over the weekend and I saw them.

DG: Okay. [taps table] Well, now what we're seeing is bikes, like, trashed, and dumped on the side of the road, and under overpasses. [phone buzzes] And so, that sort of makes me sad, because I think there's a lot of really positive things happening in Worcester, but there's a,

there's an element of not-so-positiveness, that I think needs to be addressed, and I don't have the answer to that question, I don't. I just don't. But it's just like, you know, I saw a bike under an overpass the other day, and that's why I thought, immediately in my head, that's why Worcester can't have nice things.

[All laugh]

DG: That's exactly what I thought, but I don't want to say that, because I think Worcester is a great city. Obviously, I've been here my whole life, I think it's wonderful, and I think the things that are happening and the people that are trying to do things in Worcester are great. Powwow, the mural project that they just did, is amazing, I mean you can just look behind me here, and there's one from last year up on the back walls there. I think that's an awesome thing to be happening in Worcester. But there is that, sort of undercurrent that somehow, we have to address, and I'm not sure how that happens. If I had all the answers, you know, I'd be queen of the world.

[All laugh]

DG: But, I don't, and I just think it's unfortunate that stuff like that sort of overshadows all the good. That was a long---did I answer your question?

CS: Yeah, you actually answered more than one!

[All laugh]

DG: Oh, I went all the way down the page! [laughs]

EW: Yeah, it was good! So, your connection to Worcester is that you went to Holy Cross, and now you work here?

DG: Yeah, so and my parents are both from Worcester.

EW: Yeah.

DG: So, yes, and when I went to school, I went to Holy Cross, and then I moved to Shrewsbury Street, so I actually lived in the city for a while, and then I've been working here for 20 years. So, yeah.

CS: And so, I know you, like, touched base a lot about, like, Worcester, but--- so what distinct characteristics do you think, like, makes Worcester the place that it is?

DG: Well, Worcester is the second largest city in the Commonwealth [of Massachusetts], but it's

really like a small town. Everyone knows everybody, which I think is really unique, and I think you can get a lot done through people's willingness to work together, which I think is really different in terms of what is essentially a big city. So, I think that there's an ability to effect change here that I don't think you could find if you plopped yourself in the middle of Boston, or Springfield, or something like that.

EW: Definitely.

DG: I think Worcester is definitely a big city, but with a small-town feel.

CS: So, what do you think women's experiences in Worcester have been, generally?

DG: Well that's a good question. [pauses] I guess my first reaction is, I wouldn't--- I don't think I would separate a female from anybody else. Like, that hasn't been my experience, so that's sort of an interesting question...that I don't think I know how to answer, because I don't think my experiences in Worcester have been different because I've been a woman.

EW: Okay.

DG: I don't, which I guess is a good thing. Yeah, like I was trying to wrack my brain for--- I, I think opportunities for women are abundant. I think there's a lot of great organizations in the city that support women. For example, so I have to do a plug. I'm the Chair of the Board of Girls, Inc., which is an amazing organization that empowers young women to be strong, smart, and bold, and I think that women today are being brought up in such a way that they don't recognize that it's any different for a female than a male. And I've got to, I guess give props to my parents, 'cause I never had that feeling, that I couldn't do something because I was female. That just never was part of my consciousness, or whatever.

EW: That's awesome.

CS: Mhm.

EW: Alright, so we're going to transition a little into education...

DG: Alright.

EW: ...off of that.

DG: Okay.

EW: So, where did you attend school?

DG: So, I went to Millbury High School-yay Woolies!

[All laugh]

DG: I got my bachelor's degree from Holy Cross, and I got my master's degree from Anna Maria College...

EW: Okay.

DG: ...in Paxton.

EW: Alright. So you said you graduated in 1985?

DG: '95! No, just kidding, '85.

[All laugh]

EW: Alright, so did you have any challenges in education?

DG: Again, not really? [pauses] I always felt---I guess it--- well--- and I guess it's a testament to the people that I grew up around. I never felt like--- and I'm not blind to it, I will say that--- but I never felt like being a woman presented any more challenges than being a member of the human race. I just never--- and certainly I hold Holy Cross, that never--- I can't even think of a situation where I felt like "Oh my God, because I'm female, *that* happened".

EW: Mhm.

DG: I have seen it in business, but I've never experienced it myself, honestly.

EW: Alright, so, upon finishing your bachelor's and your master's, what did you see as your options?

DG: Well, I have an undergraduate degree in English, and, there really are no jobs in English. I thought maybe, like, I would go into writing, which is what I wanted to do, so I thought maybe a reporter, and I got a job right out of college at a small tabloid paper in Auburn [Massachusetts], which was really fun, I met a lot of really great people. It was back in the '80's, where the work atmosphere was much more relaxed, like you'd go out for lunch and have a couple drinks, and then people smoked at their desk. You guys are probably going, "What?".

[All laugh]

DG: It was very different. But, I couldn't make any money, and with an English degree. I guess--

- my mom was a teacher, and my father was a pharmacist. I didn't want to be a pharmacist, I really didn't want to be a teacher, I mean that was obviously an avenue open to me with an English degree. So, I went back to school and I got my MBA [Master of Business Administration].

EW: Okay.

DG: And then I just managed to--- I was doing fundraising at a small company, and the HR [human resources] person left right around the same time that I got my degree, and it was a mental health center that eventually grew to have, like, 700 employees, it was one of the biggest employers in Massachusetts. And I went to my boss and I said--- I was 24 years old. I said "Give me a shot." And we had a union, and I knew nothing about human resources--- and I'm telling you, nothing.

[Erin laughs]

DG: And he said, "Okay. And I said, "Look, if I can't do it, I'll leave," Because I was single, I had no responsibilities other than to myself, I was kind of [pauses] bold. I was going to use another word. And I just said give me a shot, and that's honestly how I got my start in HR. So, I consider myself incredibly fortunate, and I don't know whether that has anything to do with being female or not, or just having the nerve to go in and ask for what I wanted. So, I was there for seven years until I had my second son, when I decided to stay home, and then I ended up here.

EW: Okay.

DG: So, yeah. No formal training in human resources. Marketing, my MBA concentration, is in marketing, so I came here as the Assistant Vice President of HR through a recruiter who I knew, and I was working in Waltham [Massachusetts] at the time, and he said to me, he goes, "There's a bank in Worcester." I literally live five minutes from here. And I'm like, "No, you know, I'm happy, I like my job." I did like my job, I loved my boss, and my husband said--- my kids were really little--- he's like, "Are you out of your mind?" I don't know if you guys have commuted to Waltham, but if it's raining, it adds another hour. I mean, it was just awful, it was a really bad commute. So, I came and I interviewed, I got the job, I came here. I actually took a pay cut to come here, because it was so close to home, and I loved it, because it's so small, you can do whatever you want. So, this job didn't exist--- as I'm sitting here--- so, we had a couple marketing people who left, and finally my boss said, who kept saying to me, like, when they would leave, he'd be like, "Why don't you just do it for a while? Why don't you just do it for a while?"

[Erin laughs]

DG: And I'm like, "Okay, okay." Finally he said, "You know what, you keep doing it, we'll just give it to you." So that's how this job kind of came to be. So again, like, I don't feel like I've been hampered at all, because I'm a female. In fact, maybe it's helped a little bit, because I sort of didn't--- chose not to even look at what might be barriers, and just went and asked for what I wanted, and was lucky enough to work in organizations that were very supportive, and bosses who have been incredibly wonderful, to me professionally. So... And I met my husband at work, so there's that.

[All laugh]

EW: Always a plus. So, what support networks and mentoring have been important to you?

DG: So, my bosses have always been really great, and interestingly, they've been all men, which is kind of interesting. Especially, I think, in the hospital and in banking, there's always been an abundance of people who have been incredibly supportive and have sort of said to me, "We'll give it a shot." [phone buzzes] I think one of the things about me is I'm always willing to screw up, so that--- if you're willing to do that, I think people give you more of a chance and are supportive, so I've been really lucky to have bosses who have been incredibly supportive throughout my career. I can't even--- I'm trying to think have I--- I don't even think I've ever even had a bad one. [knocks on table]

[All laugh]

DG: It could turn on a dime. No, he's fine.

[All laugh]

CS: So, besides the jobs that you've already mentioned, are there, like, any other jobs you've had? Besides the ones that, obviously, you've mentioned.

DG: Yeah, so, growing up, my dad owned a pharmacy in Millbury. So, I worked there from the time I was about 10, and I hated every second of it.

[Erin and Celia laugh]

DG: But when I look back, I realize that having a family business sort of gives you a worth-work- ethic that nothing else does, because it, it's your family, I mean you're contributing to the [phone buzzes] success of your family, it's not just a job. And my dad worked really hard, seven days a week, and I think that sort of instilled in me the same type of work ethic, which I think you don't see a lot these days. I sound like an old lady, don't I?

[Erin and Celia laugh]

DG: These days.

CS: So, the work that you do now, what has that, like, meant to you?

DG: I love my job. I love everything about it. So, I'm not a--- like I said, I majored in English. I'm not a numbers person. I'm not an analytical person. I like to talk, I like to meet people. And so, this job sort of gives me the best of both worlds. I love HR, because I love the human piece of it. I love marketing, because the bank is so involved in the community that I get to meet so many great people, and I get to support so many wonderful organizations that are helping this city become better than it is today. So, my job is sort of the perfect blend of everything. You never know what you're going to get when you come to work in the morning [phone buzzes], every day is different, and I'm not bored, and I have the attention span of a flea.

[Erin and Celia laugh]

DG: And I always used to get in trouble at school because I talked too much. So, if I was just sitting in an office, filling out forms or something, I feel like no one would be happy [taps table] because I would be so distracted.

[All laugh]

DG: I would be. So, it's the perfect job for me. I don't know if that answered your question, but...

CS: Yeah, it does.

DG: Yeah.

CS: So, what were slash are your primary responsibilities in terms of housework and childcare?

DG: Well, my kids are grown up, so... They're gone, and now I want grandchildren.

[Erin and Celia laugh]

DG: My oldest son just got married, and he bought a house in Auburn [Massachusetts] this summer, and my youngest just graduated from college. So literally, my two kids are not kids anymore, and this has been a very interesting transition because... You'll see. At least, for a woman, I feel, it's very interesting because from the second you become pregnant, your priorities shift. And all you care about, sort of, are your children, and you kind of lose yourself in the process, because your kids are the most important thing. And rightly so, and I'm not saying that it's...willingly. I mean you--- that's, that's your value system, is all about your kids. Once they

sort of find their own lives and go off like they're supposed to, you find yourself sitting there, going, "Now wait a minute... I mean I've been running to football games, and to basketball games, and to soccer games, and picking this one up here, and sending this one over there." And go--- and now all of a sudden, you have all this free time.

[Erin and Celia laugh]

DG: And it's like, "I have no idea." However, you have this great opportunity now to get involved and to do more things, which I'm very much looking forward to. So, to answer your question [slams table]. I don't really have those responsibilities anymore because they're gone.

[Erin and Celia laugh]

DG: Although my husband cooks, so I never cooked. I will put that out there right now.

[Erin laughs]

DG: I don't know how. I'm terrible at it, but...

CS: So, I know you mentioned earlier that after you got your, like, your second job or- yeah, your first job in HR, you stayed home with your sons...

DG: Yeah.

CS: ...for a while?

DG: Yeah, so, I was there for seven years and, decided, both of us decided, that [phone buzzes] I was going to stay home for a little while. I was kind of trying it out. But, I didn't--- it's not that I didn't like it. I love my kids. But it was kind of boring. I mean, I've worked from the time I was 10 years old. I've never not had a job, really. So, to all of a sudden be home, and they're napping, I mean, they were little. My oldest one was three and a half, my youngest one was an infant. And it was wonderful to be there with them. I'm glad I did it, but I didn't even last a year. I--- it would've made me crazy. And I also think that, for them, they loved daycare, and they loved the friends that they met at daycare, and it was stimulating for them, and we had a wonderful daycare provider. So, yeah, it didn't last very long.

[All laugh]

DG: One day my husband called from work, this is funny, and he heard banging. I was literally ripping cabinets down.

EW: Because you were bored? [laughs]

DG: And he's like, "Diane, what are you doing?"

[Erin laughs]

DG: "Nothing? Nothing?" Yeah, it was bad. Because I'm not like tha--- I'm not like a--- I don't cook, so there's that. I don't, like, sew. I don't even know how to describe it, like I don't do stuff like that, so housework, to me, I couldn't even, like, think of something to do. It's just not me. So, I mean--- and I enjoyed being with my kids, don't get me wrong. And this job, and every job I've had has actually afforded me the ability to go to their school plays and go home and see them. I've been really lucky. I never missed an athletic event, I never missed a parents' night. And I wouldn't, because that was most important to me. My husband, too. We've been really lucky to be able to work where we could be with our kids when we needed to. So...

EW: That's really good. So, did you share the responsibilities with anyone when you weren't staying home? With your husband, or...

DG: Yeah, my husband. I would say it was 50/50.

EW: Okay.

DG: Which was really nice. Because, like, if one of us had to work late, then the other one would go home, and we had the flexibility with our jobs to do that, so that was good. You know, Cody called sick, when he was at school, and he was sick. "Oh my God, I have a meeting, I can't go," so I'd call my husband, and we're both in Worcester, which was really nice, the kids were in Millbury, once I decided to come to this one. So, we always did share that responsibility. So, someone was with them at all times, if, if we had to be.

EW: So, how have you balanced different priorities, responsibilities, and interests in your life?

DG: Like I said, for me, my kids came first, the entire time that they were growing up, and I just feel like I'm glad I did that, because it goes by so fast. I blink my eyes and one's married, and the other one's working in Boston [Massachusetts], and I'm sitting here looking around going, "How did that happen?" Like, I look at baby pictures, and I'm like, "Well how did that happen?"

[Erin laughs]

DG: So, for me, I made it a priority that they were first, all the time, and my husband, thank goodness, was incredibly supportive, so that I was able to work full-time, and I think, like most families, when we'd just first started, we both had to work, there was really no option that one of us was going to stay home. I mean, we just couldn't afford it. So, I think we worked together to do that, I don't know how someone would do it alone. I- I- I feel very fortunate that we both

supported each other.

EW: So, what do you think are the pros and the cons of the path that you've chosen?

DG: Pros, well, here I am, and I'm very happy, and I love my job, and I love what I do, I love being here. Cons... I don't really--- someone asked me this question a little while ago, and said "If you could do it all over, would you do anything different?" And I don't think I would. I think I would maybe stop and smell the roses a little bit, because I'm the type of person that's always looking to the next thing. Like, what do I have to next, what do I have to do next, what do I have to do next? And I wish that, you know, when I was even in high school, or in college, or in my 20's, that I had stopped and just sort of enjoyed it for what it was at the time, because it just goes by so fast. You're going to find yourself in your 50's before you know it, and you're going to be like, "Oh, wow, how did that happen?" Because that's really how I feel, like how did that happen? So, I wish I had just, like, taken a second to just enjoy it more.

EW: How do you feel about the choices you've made in your life?

DG: [coughs] Like I said, I wouldn't change a thing, I really wouldn't. I think for every mistake that I've made, I ended up here. So, I have to look back and say, there's nothing I would change. I have two beautiful boys and I love my husband and we have a great life, so I don't—I mean I think of some things I do, and did, and I cringe, but I don't think that I'd do anything different.

CS: So, we're going to kind of transition into politics slash community involvement so...

DG: Okay.

CS: ...do you consider yourself active politically?

DG: Politically, no.

CS: Okay.

DG: And we have to be very careful... 'cause where I work...that we don't ever endorse a candidate, act like we endorse a candidate, look like we endorse a candidate...

[all laugh]

DG: And I would tell you, politics to me, I feel like it's a very polarizing subject. And I think everybody has an opinion, I certainly have an opinion, but I have, I have a problem when people don't respect other people's opinions. And I just see people fighting, I mean, you know, over foolishness. And I just feel like if we can't work together, we're not going to get very far. So, in terms of politics, yes, I have opinions, but I'm always very reluctant to express them because I

think people are very intolerant these days, particularly, about people's opinions, if that makes sense.

CS: Yeah.

EW: Perfect.

CS: So, have you been involved in volunteer or community work?

DG: Ye—oh yeah.

[all laugh]

DG: Yeah, yeah.

CS: So, what groups did you work with or for?

DG: So, I'm currently Chair of the Board of Girls, Inc. I'm the Vice Chair of the Board of the Nazareth Home for Boys in Leicester. I'm on the board of the Worcester Historical Museum, we volunteer with Be Like Brit, we volunteer—I was on the board of the Red Cross but now I, I remain a corporator, I was on the board of Children's Friend and I remain a corporator there. We volunteer for Karaoke for a Cure which is great event, love it, where we do karaoke for pancreatic cancer research. I'm trying to think—we teach courses—so right now we're working for Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester. We're going to be teaching financial literacy courses to people who—for whom English is a second language. I think that's all I've got but, I've done tons of stuff. I love to volunteer, so, we work with the Diabetes Organization, the Diabetes Foundation, we've worked with Taste of a Nation to provide food for people who can't get food. We do book drives. That's one of the things I love about this job is because, you know—next week we're actually putting together backpacks for the homeless, we serve food at the Mustard Seed here in Worcester, all absolutely supported and encouraged by this organization. It's great.

CS: That's great.

DG: Yeah.

CS: So, you've mentioned a lot of different...

DG: Yeah [laughs]

CS: ...volunteer things there. So, like what led you to get—to join and get involved in all these...

DG: Well, well, it's kind of interesting that this organization [taps] is the first place [taps] I've ever worked—now I've been here for 20 years, so you have to kind of [thumps]—so the first place that I've ever worked that encouraged community service. In fact, [thumps] all of our officers—our bank officers—have to—as part of their job, sit on a board or volunteer in the community because the bank is really [thumps] committed to supporting the communities from where we draw our business. So, honestly, that's what got me into it. I also coached my—when my kids were little—their soccer team with my best friend and we were terrible...

[all laugh]

DG: ...but whatever. So, I had sort of always sort of wanted to volunteer but didn't know how to get involved. So, this job and this organization, the bank, sort of gave me entry into that whole world [thumps]. And I just find it--the contrast between doing something like that and doing your job every day, is just so amazing. It's so great to be able to help people and be able to give back, especially when I feel so fortunate. So, I don't know what type of a difference I'm making, but it just—it just makes me feel good—and I think if enough people would get involved in that way, I think we'd all be a lot better off.

[CS and EW whisper]

CS: What do you think we should...just cross it out?

[laughs]

DG: You can ask me...

[all laugh]

CS: Okay, so, so, the question is, what were the organization's main goals...

[laughs]

EW: But, there are a lot of them.

[all laugh]

CS: All the questions are talking like it's just one organization...

[all laugh]

DG: And you're like, ooh ooh.

[all laugh]

CS: Is there any one organization that you would want—that kind of—you're the mo—that you're more passionate about that you would want to mention.

DG: So, my favorite one, I'll tell you, is Girls, Inc. I've been Chair of the Board for five years and how I got into that—this is sort of interesting, well, I thought it's interesting [laughs]—so how I got into it is I sit on the board of the Nazareth School for Boys in Leicester. The finance committee chair of Girls, Inc. is a friend of mine, and also sits on the board in Leicester. Girls, Inc. had lost their executive director and he asked me—so we had just done a search for an Executive Director at Nazareth—he asked me to help them with a search using my HR (human resources) background. So, I worked with Victoria Waterman, who's the Executive Director now, she was the Chair of the Board—this is so convoluted—we worked together to hire an executive director. After they did the hire, the two of them, the Executive Director and Victoria, said, [pounds on table] “We want to take you out to breakfast to thank you for helping us.” So, I'm like, “Ooh breakfast, okay, let's go.”

[all laugh]

DG: So, we go, and all of a sudden, I'm on the board.

[all laugh]

DG: [laughs] I should have seen it coming—I'm like really. But I love the organization. It's so amazing. So, you talk about women and empowering women—this organization is dedicated to helping girls become strong, smart, and bold. The work they do is amazing. The woman that works for me in HR, Katherine—who I think sat you guys down when you came in, the blonde—she volunteers at Girls, Inc. and has done so for years because she just loves being a mentor to these young girls. They have wonderful programs, they encourage girls who are studying in science, technology, engineering, and math, they have after-school programs, they do swimming. And now my term is up, and I'm having a really hard time letting go. So, I've been there for five years and the reason that I stayed on in that role is because we started a capital campaign. So, we've done—Girls Inc.'s site, the physical site, is right across from the old St. Vincent's Hospital on top of Providence Street, and we had to do a lot of structural things to the building. And it's very unique that they have a physical plant. So, we started a capital campaign, and everybody said you should keep your, you know, the governance the same throughout the capital campaign, so I agreed to stay on. And I thought, that when it was over, that I would be oh [sigh] now I have time to do other things, but I'm really having a hard time. It's a control thing, I think.

[laughs]

CS: So, did most your work consist of, like while you were there, consist of that campaign or were there other things...

DG: Well...

CS: ...like programs you were working on.

DG: ...Yeah it was everything because I'm the Chair of the Board, so I sit on practically every committee, I run all the board meetings, I evaluate the Executive Director with the board. The capital campaign was a big one, a lot of fundraising involved, but just helping oversee the general running of the organization, finance committee, it seems like it's my second home. So, I got involved in everything pretty much and touched everything, which was a really great experience. And it's a phenomenal—if you're ever looking to volunteer for something—it's a phenomenal organization. Just the pool—so remember how when you were growing up, like if you ever had to go swimming with boys, you'd be like embarrassed because you didn't want to put your bathing suit on, you didn't want to get your hair wet, but this is just for girls, so there's none of that. They can go swimming, they can express themselves in a really safe environment, and it's just to me is amazing. And I wish I knew about it when I was growing up.

EW: Yeah.

DG: Except for that, I might not have gone if there were no boys—don't put that in. [laughs]

[all laugh]

CS: So, besides all that, are there any major accomplishments that you would consider for the group?

DG: Yeah, I actually feel—and a lot of the credit has to go to Victoria Waterman who's the CEO [Chief Executive Officer]—when I joined the board, just before that, the organization had gone through some really bad financial struggles, and as a funder—so we have a charitable foundation here, and we fund a lot of things—so looking at it from the other lens, I would be concerned to give them money, because I would be wondering, is it going to be around, is it—you know. And it has done a complete 180, I mean she has done an amazing job with that organization. The reputation is stellar, the financials are solid, and it's been really cool to sort of be part of that, watching that turnaround. I cannot take credit for it, but I would say I'm very proud of it.

CS: So, what role has religion played in your life?

DG: Uh oh.

[laughs]

DG: Not much. I would say I was raised Catholic, but I'm not—I've probably kind of lapsed to be honest. And I didn't raise my kids specifically—they're both Catholic, they made their First Communion. They're not confirmed. So, it hasn't been a big part of our lives, unfortunately.

CS: Okay.

EW: So, we're going to move on to health in your life.

DG: Okay.

EW: So, how have health issues impacted your life or those in your family?

DG: Well, huge. So, my mother passed away when she was 51, of leukemia ---never sick. I was 27 when it happened, and I would tell you that it was the most devastating thing that had ever happened to me, obviously. I had just had Cody, he was four months old, and it was devastating. I didn't expect—it was sudden, too, because she was a teacher, she got sick around Christmas time, we all thought she had a cold. If you look at the pictures now and I see her, she looks really pale. My mother was tiny, she was like your size [points to CS]. She was a teeny little thing. Incredibly healthy, thin, never sick a day in her life that I can remember, and then all of a sudden, she had leukemia and it just—devastating—she was diagnosed in January and passed away in August. And that was, to this day, horrible. So...

EW: I'm sorry for your loss.

CS: Me too.

DG: Oh, thank you. It was like 26 years ago, but I know look at me still. The loss of your mother is something—I don't know—hopefully your mothers are still alive—devastating, especially for a girl, I think.

CS: Mhm.

EW: So, how have your experiences been in accessing quality, affordable health care?

DG: I've been really lucky that all the jobs I've had have offered wonderful healthcare. The—one of the things I struggle with now—from a provider for our employee's perspective—is the cost of healthcare because it's skyrocketing. But I've never—and my mother and father were both professionals, so even growing up we always had access to healthcare. I never even really thought about it, luckily. So, it's never been an issue in... [knocks on desk] ...my life. But I would tell you, as you get older, you start to think about retiring. And you're like, oh, now what

do I do...

EW: Mhm.

DG: ...because it's expensive, but, it's not been an issue up till now.

EW: Okay. And besides your own, whose health are you responsible for?

DG: My husband's. He's a pain in the neck, and he doesn't take care. [laughs] No, I'm not responsible for anybody's really [laughs] because my kids are grown up, and they're responsible for their own health. But, my dogs, maybe.

[all laugh]

CS: So, how do you get through tough times and what kinds of thoughts keep you going?

DG: Oh, that's a good question. I think I am a positive person by nature, so I don't tend to dwell on negative stuff. And I think—I don't like being unhappy, so when I'm not happy, I either do something to fix it, if I can, or I just try to change my mindset. I'm not one of those people that sort of wallows in misery, I don't—I hate being unhappy, so I will do anything to not be that way.

CS: How do you define success in your life, and has this definition changed over time?

DG: Yeah, it's changed, definitely. I'd say when I was younger, success to me—I always said—this was so stupid—I always said I wanted to make as least as much money as my age. That was sort of the barometer, which was very strange, but it was at the time. Money becomes less important as you get older, I think. For me, success is being healthy, is loving the people that you're with, is having your family with you, and everyone being okay. When I was younger, it was much more about how much money I was making and what my career was. Not that that's a bad thing, but I think it changes as you get older. I'm tired frankly and...[laughs]

CS: So, based on your life experience, what advice would you give to women of today and future generations?

DG: I would probably say, don't be afraid to ask for what you want because that has always served me really well. And to stop and appreciate where you're at at the moment, enjoy the moment, I say it to my kids all the time. Like, just enjoy the moment because you'll never have this moment again and when you're young—I sound like an old lady again—but when you're young, you don't realize that. You really don't. It just, it goes by so fast.

CS: So now that we are working to tell a fuller story of the history of women than has been reported in the past, what should we be sure to include?

DG: I mean [answering machine rings] I'm not saying that this hasn't been said in the past, but I think that women should not be afraid to go after what they want. [rings] I don't think that they should be defined by their gender. And I think a lot of times, the world [rings] makes you think you might be, but I don't think that's true. Unless you want to be like a [rings] male model or something, well then clearly you can't. [laughs] But I'm just saying—you can't—I think women sometimes feel defined by their gender and I don't think that's a reality if you don't let it be one—if that makes sense.

CS: Is there anyone else you would suggest we'd talk to? Like any other women for this project?

[cell phone dings]

DG: So, tonight I'm going to an event that's put on by the Pink Revolution, which deals with women's cancers. And the woman who volunteers for it, Audrey Kurlan Marcy, I think would be fabulous. She's a philanthropist in Worcester. She has a background in PR (public relations) and marketing but now she volunteers exclusively. Her husband works at Charter TV, (television company) and she's amazing, I think that she would be really good. If you want me to give her your info, if you have like a card or something, I could give her. I could have her give you—or I could get her info for you—I'll talk to her and see if you want to call her.

CS: I think, yeah, I think that...

EW: If you could get her info, we could probably pass it along to the oral history project and they could contact her.

DG: Yeah, she's amazing. So, if you're looking for like a dynamite person who volunteers left, right, and sideways and really is passionate about just philanthropy in general and I wouldn't say specifically women's causes, but she's very interested in cancer, and cancer research, and she does this all on her own, in her free time, which, I don't even know how she has any. She's amazing. She's amazing. So, I can shoot you an email with her information.

EW: Yeah and we can pass it along-

CS: Yeah, they're always looking for...

DG: Great, great.

CS: ...new people so.

DG: She'll be more entertaining than me I'll tell you that.

[all laugh]

EW: So, we have a few more. So, have you [phone rings], have you ever been involved with any branch of the Women's Rights Movement?

DG: No, no.

[answers phone]

DG: My husband—okay go ahead, I'm listening.

[laughs]

EW: Alright, who were your role models when you were growing up and who are they now?

DG: Growing up, that's funny, because growing up my role models were sports figures, I always wanted to play baseball. So, Carlton Fisk, from the Red Sox [baseball team located in Boston, Massachusetts], you probably have no idea who he is, and God am I old. That's him—any pictures over there [turns around to search for pictures on wall], eh, I had a better picture somewhere. Anyway, he was my role model—oh right there [points to picture]—he was the catcher for the Red Sox, I loved the Red Sox. I wanted to play professional baseball. I played Little League, I played in high school, I played in college. That was my dream. So, you can see, I never thought that I wouldn't be able to play just because I was female. It didn't even ever occur to me—and I specifically wanted to play baseball because I was forced to play softball in high school, so. My role models now are—I don't even know if I have role models—I have people that I admire, like Audrey, and people that I see doing good things. And sometimes I wish that I was a little bit more giving of my time, so I admire people very much that, that donate their time and work towards causes like that. And obviously I'm not a baseball [thumps] player so here I am.

[All laugh]

EW: So, do you think that feminism has changed during your lifetime?

DG: Oh definitely, yeah definitely. And again, I don't say that I haven't been affected by it naively, I think I've been really lucky. I think I've been in jobs, and in organizations, and worked with people that have been very—I haven't experienced, sort of, chauvinism in that way. That's not to say it doesn't exist, and I know that, I'm not that naïve, but I think I've just been really lucky. So, I think from—even from when I started working till now, in my lifetime, I've seen a huge difference. I've seen women having a seat at the table, I've seen women in positions of authority and power and much less concern about someone's gender and more about their ability.

And I think that continues to change. Because I think—I can tell you from a hiring perspective, I deal with men who hire for positions, who are always in the back of their head—someone like your age [points to CS] or your age [points to EW]—well she’s going to get married and then she’s going to get pregnant and then she’s going to go out on maternity leave and what are we supposed to do and blah blah blah. But I think that’s changing, I think it’s changing, and I see it a lot less. I actually had a job—and again, like I said, I’m not naïve to it but I don’t think I’ve been affected by it because I didn’t let it affect me and I have a big mouth—my boss actually said to me, he was hiring someone in a very similar position that I was in, and he was going to pay the man—and of course I’m in HR (human resources) so I know what he’s making—that he was going to pay the gentleman, like say, five-thousand dollars more than me. And I actually looked at him and I said, “Explain to me, explain that to me and he said, “He has a family to support.” And I went, “Well what’s that?” [points to photos of family] because I had pictures of my kids in there. And then he immediately backpedaled, and the situation was resolved. But so, I’m not, like I said, naïve to it, and I’m not going to say it doesn’t exist, but I think it’s a way lot less than it was—it’s very encouraging—years ago.

EW: Do you believe that some men have been threatened by your success in the past and do you think that some men may be continue to be threatened?

DG: No, no—well yes—but I’m going to say I don’t think just men. I’m going to say what you’ll find is when you’re working in an organization and you’re successful, there are going to be women that are as threatened by you as men are. I think if men still have that sort of preconceived notion about you, not as much threatened as, she doesn’t really deserve it—so it’s more—not threatened is the wrong word—it’s more resentment. I think women are threatened by each other and they need to stop doing that because if we don’t lift each other up and support each other, than how can we expect men to? So, I would say both men and women, not just men.

EW: Anything else?

CS: Is there anything-

DG: Diane stop talking! [laughs]

[all laugh]

CS: Is there anything that we didn’t ask you that you would want to include?

DG: No, I would emphasize again, if I had to give advice, to you two [gestures towards CS and EW] who are about to graduate and go off into the world, don’t be defined by your gender, and don’t think about what you can’t do, ask for what you want to do. Because you’ll be surprised, I think, at times, to find that if you just ask, you’ll get what you want. I think women are afraid to ask. I think there’s that stereotype for a lot of people that if—when men ask for something

they're aggressive and they're strong and they're powerful—but when women ask...they're a b****. Don't put that in there. [laughs] But you know what I mean, it's a very negative stereotype if women are standing up for what they want. Don't, don't acknowledge it. Just be yourself and ask for what you need and make sure that you get paid what you're worth—and honestly, I have never, ever, had to experience that—and maybe again that's just me but—does that make sense?

EW: Yeah.

CS: Yeah.

EW: Well, thank you!

CS: Thank you!

DG: You're welcome!