

Interviewee: Teresa Wheeler
Interviewer: Dr. Selina Gallo-Cruz
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Transcriber: Melanie Kos



Abstract: Teresa Wheeler is a lifelong Worcester resident and peace activist. She has been involved in the Catholic Worker movement for over three decades and has done work in a number of social justice movements including offering extensive support for the city's homeless population. Teresa is a long-time participant in the local peace community and has supported a range of educational initiatives to learn about nonviolence and disarmament, to understand foreign wars and the role of the US, to support other peace initiatives including the movement against the death penalty and Catholic initiatives to raise awareness against abortion, and also efforts to protect the environment and work against violence in our communities.

SGC: Ok, so we want to start out very generally by asking you about your childhood and growing up in the Worcester [Massachusetts] community, and I know from brief conversation that your father was a professor...

T: Mhm.

SGC: and then I had lunch with Mike True last week...

T: Oh....

SGC: [laughs] ...who was telling me...

T: He's another mentor of mine, yes.

SGC: [laughs] Oh really, you'll have to tell us about that. He was telling me that your mother has won some awards as well, too...

T: Mhm.

SGC: .. and I didn't really know anything about what your mother has done so tell us a little bit about that.

T: Oh boy, yeah, I was thinking after you asked me that she should be one of the ones interviewed as well but...

SGC: Mike suggested that...

T: Yeah, she would be good

SGC: ...so if you think that's a good idea then....

T: Yeah, no, she would be great.... So.

SGC: Ok, what's your mother's name?

T: Her name is, well, she goes by Jane Petrella, but her first name is actually Eleanor, but no one calls her Eleanor.

SGC: Ok, so tell us about growing up in Worcester. You were born here, correct?

T: Yes, I was born here, but my parents and four of my siblings—there were six of us altogether—they first lived on the campus of [University of] Notre Dame in Indiana. My dad was getting his PhD there, actually, when—there for 10 years I think, so I was on the way when they moved here, so I think that they really would've rather stayed out in the Midwest. My mother grew up in Wheeling, West Virginia and my dad in a small coal mining town outside of Pittsburgh [Pennsylvania] called Clairton and he was able to go to Notre Dame on the G.I. Bill, of all things, he went in the Korean War and so he was sort of a late student, I think he started school at maybe 24, something like that.

SGC: His bachelor's.

T: Yes, and he got all of his degrees at Notre Dame, but my mother, practical one, dealing with four children, my dad would've continued to study, said, [laughs] "You better find a job so we can support these little ones," so he found an opportunity at [College of the] Holy Cross and some others closer to Pittsburgh, but Holy Cross took him on first, so that's what got us to this area.

SGC: And he was an economics professor?

T: Yes, economics for 35 years, I think it was like 1960 to 1995. And if you ask, people still know him well here, so if people were interested Professor Frank Petrella, that's the name. There's several people in the department now that he hired and he's well-respected and did a lot. In fact he did a lot too for the athletic department. He was on a lot of the committees that made a lot of policy, and one of them was the Title IX and he— for some reason my dad didn't tell me this, but I would run into people and there was some formula he came up with to make sure that they were spending [laughs] the right amount of money [laughs], and so they kept using it for years and years, I guess. So it was one of— because football was quite out of balance with the spending, they used to give a scholarship to, I don't know, probably like 90 athletes or something like that and they certainly weren't going to be able to continue that with Title IX. So just things like that, I mean, you know you hear things when you talk to people. Chuck Weiss had just retired he was very involved with him, doing things.

SGC: And what did your mother do?

T: Well, she was—she's the activist in the family, and that's where I got my inclination to be an activist, she likes to put it that when they came here, my brother, I think, was just ready to go to kindergarten, my oldest sibling. And so right away, from day one, she was involved at the school level and it was a time back in the sixties that the main breadwinner was usually the father and the mothers would do things like, they had what they called then a Mother's Club, and now it would be like PTO [Parent Teacher Organization], but I remember that being incredible. Every parent, mother, was so involved because they weren't working. And so I kind of have— I still really enjoy that idea. We used to even go home from school to have lunch, but I can't imagine anybody doing that anymore, because the school was like a half mile down the road, but everybody went home for lunch and you went back in the afternoon. So you needed somebody there to feed you lunch, so that's the way it worked, but—so there was a lot of good about that, but not— impede on women wanting to work.

But it was just, it—it had the good aspects of it, that these people were involved in a different way so they really did a lot in the community, and that's—my mother continued to be involved in, well, if anybody knows down Greenwood Street, right off of McKeon Road, that area is called Quinsigamond Village, and so eventually she was the head of a community center that's still there. I actually got on the board there recently and my mother still comes to the meetings, but [Rte] 146—this road that's here, my mother went to meetings for that for, like, 20-some years I think, or more even, And the thing about it is that community involvement made that particular project work like no other, honestly, that's in the country. They look to this project because they would have monthly meetings and get the players in there, like people that had businesses that

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would affect, and somebody that came that lived right next door. I remember this so well, you know that walking bridge that goes over it? That's a very unusual thing, do you know where I'm talking about? If you go down McKeon Road at the mouth of Holy Cross, I mean if you go down the back entrance to Holy Cross and you're on McKeon Road, the fire stations, and then you hit the set of lights, that's all new within the last several years. And the big school is right next door that had been renovated. Actually, they named the library after my mother, the Jane Petrella Media Center. [laughs] Because she worked so many years and doing things, but that walking bridge is just an example of having these meetings and someone said, "Well, gee, when they make that road, you used to be able to cross the street there, but now it's a thruway," and so it cut off Vernon Hill neighborhood from the Quinsigamond Village neighborhood. And someone said, "Well, gee, I'm gonna have to go all the way up and over to walk over there," so they actually incorporated a walk—a bridge to go over it. And that's what happens if you actually get the community involved with projects like that, and it went on for years, and it was really a terrific project, and then she's—we used to have a landfill that's in the neighborhood too, and so my mother was really outspoken about that because every truck in the city came through the Village, all the garbage trucks.

SGC: It's covered over with grass now, right?

T: Yeah, well that's the thing, more recently the cap of it failed—I guess so, that the containment of the stuff from polluting, so they had to recap it, and my mother was a real bargainer, I'll tell you. The former—his name was Tom Hoover, it was two city managers ago, and he was actually the only city manager in recent history that came from our town, and we were all homegrown. And one was around for 30-some years, [Francis] McGrath was his name and she knew him [laughs] quite well too, but he realized from people, like my mother talking about how the Village had all of the different things like that, and they didn't have any say in having all the trash and then we have another—there was two land—it was the incinerator that's up on Ballard Street that now is a recycling center rather than a—it was an open-flame [laughs], everyone put their trash. And all the smoke spewed out into the region, but people got that closed by activism and things like that. But on the landfill, which was neat because my mother, again being persistent, not that there weren't others too, but my mother really has a very high profile, people really respect her opinion, and this—I even remember when he said it, he said, "When we get that money from the Village, the tipping fees,"—so a certain percentage of the places that were depositing clean fill on there were paying money and they did a certain portion of that. They set all this money aside just to be spending on Quinsigamond Village, so I mean—[cell phone rings] oh, that's my phone, I'm sorry— But all this activism, as I'm saying, paid off because they had over several million dollars and then my mother got to be—and still there is an

active committee that decides how that money is spent. So for example, she and I both go to the site council meetings at the elementary school, Quinsigamond School, and the former principal in particular was great, so we'd ask her, "Well, what do you need here?" And so they got the (??) for their classrooms. I don't know if you guys know what those are. I'm not—the technology doesn't mean a lot to me, but something that helps them project things on the board. It's a, you know, a technological thing that's all I can tell you, but then for new gym floor, all kinds of gym equipment, tables for the cafeteria, all stuff that they wouldn't have been able to afford. Then also for the Vernon Hill School which actually was the junior high, I wanted to try—it's right up the road—they also benefitted they got iPads. And then topping it all off, all along McKeon Road, there's Middle River that's there known as the water that goes under the [Rte] 290 bridge, again that's been going 30 years, and we had just had a meeting on Thursday, it was in the paper the next day, so it's probably Friday, it was on the front page of the local section, but they've been planning a park there since 1988. My mother brought a journal which she used for the Quin village—the newspaper that showed 1988 they started planning this, but it's going to have walking trails and these kiosks that you can put the little scanning things up and hear the bird calls if you're looking at the birds that they show on these little kiosk things and they're going to have a canoe launch. And that came about two of the partnership from the city, they kicked in money, the state, and our great—I can't say enough about [U.S. Representative] Jim McGovern. If any of you know Jim McGovern, our great congressperson who comes here often to tell us what he's doing, but he secured money for that and also for visitor's center that's right next door. And again my mother was on that committee for years and—but the whole project, as they say, is just a culmination of people working together even though it took a long time, but the point is, if you don't have people in your community that are pushing for things then the government officials, they don't know what people are interested in unless you're talking to them.

And so that's kind of been my whole thing that I certainly took example from my mother, and I thought it was great and I liked the idea of making relationships with people. And her name was in the paper there for that article, and they talked about her on the radio, the local station where Ed Augustus, the city manager, who used to work here for several years too, and I've known him for a long time. He's younger than I am even, but so he started on school committee, he worked in education in Washington [D.C.] for a while, he worked with Marian Wright Edelman's group too. But anyway, he's back in Worcester, he's doing great things, but all the connections he has—he's worked for McGovern as his chief of staff, he worked at Holy Cross, he worked on the school committee, so he's a perfect example, too, of people that come together and work together, and it's great. It's really terrific how these things can work. All that came from you talking about where I'm from [laughs].

SGC: [laughs] I know you've given me so many points to follow.

T: Yeah, sorry about that.

SGC: That's okay I want to back up, first of all, I didn't write down, may I ask, which year— what year you were born?

T: 1961.

SGC: 1961, and you mentioned a brother. How many siblings do you have?

T: Well, there was six of us, so five siblings.

SGC: Oh, and what number are you?

T: Five.

SGC: Are you the youngest of five?

T: No, one— there's six of us.

SGC: So you're five of six, okay.

T: Yeah, my brother— my younger brother, John, still lives in Worcester.

SGC: And, [pause] ok, and all boys and you?

T: Three and three.

SGC: Three and three.

T: Mhm.

SGC: Okay, so tell us a little bit—so it sounds like you went to all local schools, did your parents raise you all in the public schools?

T: Mhm.

SGC: Did they—so your parents have always lived in the neighborhood by Holy Cross?

T: Well, we—we moved from a tiny little street next door to Helen's Bakery to this house that's right on the corner of Kramer Street and the small street (??)

SGC: Oh, okay. And you went to public schools, so you saw your mom kind of doing community organizing from a young age.

T: Mhm

SGC: Was she involved in your school growing up too?

T: Yes, she was, yeah, in fact she was the one who gave me my high school diploma. [laughs] She was the graduation community speaker.

SGC: Oh, that's a really tight knit community.

T: Oh, I know, well, Burncoat High School, you know Burncoat, it's on the other side of the town, but I have an interesting story on that now that I'm thinking of— or if you'd rather keep going here...

SGC: Yes, tell us.

T: Well that particular school, it's all the way on the other side of town, and we grew up, as I said right here, and there's an elementary school, and not too far away was Providence Street Junior High School which was now as they say an elementary school too, but when they were deciding to renovate another high school because that was tiny, the old South [High] that's on a small street, a main street, a really small school, my mother went to all the school committee meetings. And they were building a new high school, Burncoat, and so she got up and said, "Well why—why don't we send the kids from the Village to the new high school," and of course they—the first were thinking, "Oh well, that's not a very—that doesn't make sense sort of," you know, "who are you," kind of, "to say that," but she kept fighting for it. And finally the superintendent said, "Well maybe one or two of your kids will get through." But they've been going there and had the opportunities and all the way— it's not that long ago then they didn't end up going to South, or I think they could go to both, but it was great because we would get—

290 wasn't as busy as it is now. We'd get the bus, we were there in less than 10 minutes, whereas if we were to go to South, it was all in the traffic along Main Street.

SGC: So we're talking about districting here? I'm not understanding why there was pushback...

T: Well, we weren't in that district. So we had to be bussed over there, but again it actually saved a lot of time for people in the morning because you were on the highway and you were right off the highway and right there, but we would've had to go through the traffic of Worcester.

SGC: And was there the districting issues that there are today? Was it like a school— was there a particular social class that was going to this school or what was—how were the districts drawn that it would be close to you but you would drive across town...

T: Well, I mean nothing in Worcester is that far there—that—that's kind of the reason, maybe I didn't say it so well, there really isn't a school that's closest. So that's why my mother was like making that point. That while it's a small tiny school, it's going to be renovated—a new school—why don't we send them [laughs] to the new school that's made bigger and go there. And it'll be a nice new school, and you send these kids— and then ended up going on and on and it did continue and it was great. I got to meet kids from another part of the city. It was really good. So in this area it's kind of a mixed class and there was some recent—more recently a housing—lot of apartments. People got subsidized housing. It used to be called Upland Gardens, but now its Autumn Woods and a lot of that whole group went to the Quinsigamond School and the same schools that I mentioned Burncoat High. But that was great. I thought it was really a great opportunity to do something like that.

SGC: So were your parents first generation college graduates? Because you mentioned your dad...

T: Yeah, you're right, they were both first generation.

SGC: Were your grandparents close by or did you have an extended family nearby?

T: No, and that was the sad thing about the moving here, but my dad's parents were still alive. We did visit them in Clairton PA. His dad came over, I'm going to say, oh boy, must've been early 1900s, with his dad and his dad's brother, so three of them from Italy. And this is really pertinent today to all this immigration talk because when they came over, they left their whole

families. Sisters, mother, big extended family, and then the immigration laws changed and they never saw each other again.

SGC: Oh my god.

T: So that happened quite a bit and that's the kind of thing that, you know, happens. So it has consequences to families when these kinds of policies get put into place.

SGC: So were your parents Catholic?

T: Yes, Catholic. Both parents were catholic. My mother is very catholic [laughs]. She goes to mass every day, they went to the catholic schools. Wheeling WV was a very catholic area too. She worked in a rectory for the priest. She typed everything up. I love talking to her— to my mother [laughs]. You hear all these great stories, she has a lot of great ones.

SGC: Tell us about your home life and like what—kind of the culture of your family and besides being involved in the schools, how was your family— where was your community in Worcester, and what kind of things did you do, and your father must have been working a lot, but when not working at holy cross

T: He was the one working a lot, but we did a lot of things involved with sports and all too . But not real early because we didn't even have a car when we were little. I remember when we got our first car. So we did a lot of taking the bus to downtown Worcester and it was great. There were all the store —it was really bustling and they had— well there's still the Denholm Building. Where you cross City Hall, that was a great department store and they had this one called Grant's, and Kresge's, and Barnard's. And they had Filene's of course, and that was even pre-mall. That's now been torn down. But I remember it being exciting and fun. But then we did get involved in athletics. Well I think all of us, but maybe my elder two sisters weren't quite as involved in athletics, but my dad would take us to all the different practices, mainly baseball, softball, basketball. I ended up playing on a lot of tennis. So those were some of the things. We never went on vacations, none of that kind of thing. But we were very active in the community and with the church. The church unfortunately just closed as a Catholic Church a few years ago. That was a big stressful thing for my mother in particular. We joined Scared Heart parish which is near Holy Cross on Cambridge Street. So we went through a merger. When I was older too, my mother was still going down to church every day. There was a period of ten years that I used to take her down. A lot of community too, especially women and some men too that we might meet afterwards for coffee or things like that. And those were the ones that were kind of the

workers in the parish because we had a pretty active parish doing some peace and justice-y type things. We ha—you might know Frank Cartheiser (sp?) who does something called Interfaith. I don't know if you want me to transition to him, because that's one of the first people I got involved with in activism?

SGC: So how old were you when this happened?

T: I mean I was involved in it, but in terms of more officially it was through the Diocese of Worcester. I joined the peace—I forget the real name, but it was something like Diocese in Peace and Justice Commission and Mike True was on that. My mother, she was at the community center as a director and so she used to go to all of these meetings and things like—all the community centers used to meet and work on issues together, the heads of the community centers. And so she would go. She loved this kind of thing but Mike True was on that commission. Frank was actually head of something called Urban Ministry, but then we merged and became this Coalition of Peace and Justice thing so that's where I got involved with him.

SGC: What year is this?

T: I don't know. I knew you were going to ask me this [laughs].

SGC: Well how old were you about?

T: I'm going to say it was definitely in the early '80s so I was just around 20-ish, somewhere in there.

SGC: Okay, can you take us back to some of those meetings and tell us what they were like, how many people were there, who was there, what they were talking about, like what were the big meetings or topics or kind of events that you remember from this period?

T: Okay, well I remember initially, I think it was a fairly new committee, and so they looked for people that were involved and doing things already. So Mike True, he's a wonderful person, and at Assumption College—he was a professor there. And then we met him. He's unbelievable. You'd love to meet him.

SGC: I just had coffee with him last week.

T: He's a great one. He knows the history; he's just so wonderful.

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SGC: I'll send him the video clip of him talking about women peacemakers in Worcester.

T: He's written a lot of nice books that are good for—oh boy, it's terrible I can't remember, but it has a lot of vignettes of peace people and there's a lot of Worcester people in there too, like he has gotten Claire Schaeffer Duffy I think in there, but he was bringing his work on nonviolence and things like that. And this woman named, Janet Ward, who is a Catholic Worker person. She worked with Dorothy Day in New York City, but she was involved in hunger issues, and this is what ended up happening. She started what's called the Worcester County Food Bank and it's still in operation. It is for communities and I used to shop there for a couple of places, a church, a community center. And it's just gotten bigger and bigger and they moved it from places to different areas. I'm trying to think [of other mentors]—Sister Anne Marshall, her brother was a bishop I think of Springfield. She's still alive, I saw her once walking in the hospital, and she's pretty up there now. My mother's almost 84, she's 83, so she's a contemporary of hers. And another one of my big mentors was Ray Lamothe who's gone now, but he and his wife, Lillian, were very instrumental in working in particular on nonviolence for the Worcester Diocese. Ray used to have his own little office in the Diocese of Worcester and he just was really aggressively trying to promote this idea through Frank. So he and Frank had an office together and he was someone who was an apostle of Father Charlie McCarthy. Have you ever heard of him? He's actually—he's another Notre Dame person. He taught at Notre Dame, he lives in Brockton, and he had, I think, 13 kids. They're all good Catholic [laughs] Irish Catholic family. And he ended up leaving Notre Dame over a controversy about—I don't know the details of it, but controversy about non-violence and maybe ROTC on campus things like that. And he ended up becoming a priest in the Melkite rite. So he already had all these 13 kids but he was able to become—that's actually a Catholic priest. They're an Eastern rite.

SGC: Oh so you can stay married and...

T: Yeah, you can stay married right. But what he does is he would give all these wonderful weekend long retreats and longer about Christianity so if anybody wants to have a really wonderfully rational explanation from the Christian perspective his readings are very terrific. He has a website, I think it's— oh boy— think if you just looked him up you could find his website. But I get emails all the time with his things, but he's very very— Ray in particular would set up retreats around the area so a lot of people are influenced by him, including me. He [Fr. McCarthy] does such a wonderful job and he actually started with Agape. Agape started with him out in Brockton years ago, but he's stayed in Brockton and they wanted to do the community out in Hardwick [MA] , to go to the rural thing.

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SGC: That's good. I have Suzanne Shanley [co-founder of Agape] on my list too, to interview.

T: Yeah, so he's instrumental in that but that's part of—I'm still talking about the Peace and Justice Commission, but he was again very influential for me. He's a lovely person and he and Lillian, his wife, we used to work at Agape together. We'd drive out weekly.

SGC: Oh okay. And how old were you at that time?

T: Well with the Agape part, I think that was like the late '80s and through the '90s because Agape out there I think was like '89. And so we used to work in the office there. I don't know if you want to go there or stay back [laughs].

SGC: Yeah, we're losing—so throughout high school, would you say if you didn't really start getting involved until your 20s, throughout high school were you mostly focused on like parish life and sports and...

T: Yeah, I did do a lot of sports, but I also was involved—we had what was called the Greater Downtown Youth Council. That started with one of the school committee members, he was a principal at the time, John Monfredo, and his wife Anne Marie in the city. So they're still around, he's no longer a principal, but he's on the school community, and he started that. I thought it was terrific once again because I, from a young age, liked this idea of bringing people together from different places. He got representatives from each of the schools and I was one of them and we used to have wonderful things down—which is now knocked down, it was the Galleria Mall, and they had this great big basement a nice big open area, and we would bring people—elderly in particular to come and we would set up programs for them to be entertained I remember having game days. We'd bring different people, there might be some folks that were physically challenged, and they'd come and play checkers and you know things like that. So that was an influential thing for me to see. And I actually got [laughs] in high school, I was the state's DAR good citizen. I know nothing about the DAR [Daughters of the American Revolution], but that's a little more, the upper crusty thing, but the nice thing about that was actually the kids in the school that wrote on it. I actually had to write something and I had no idea they— these questions, they asked some of these patriotic-y things and I said oh my goodness, [laughs] but whatever I wrote it got me the state DAR. I guess they choose them at the different schools so in that regard too there came a little bit of meeting people that were different DAR [laughs] good citizens.

SGC: But you are a daughter of the revolution on your mom's side?

T: No.

SGC: Because what's your mom's lineage?

T: Her dad came from Ireland and her mother from Poland.

SGC: So it was just sponsored by the Daughters of the Revolution to find a good citizen.

T: Yes right.

SGC: And you don't remember what you wrote?

T: I have no idea. They asked specific questions and I remember one thing was about Flag Day and I said, "Oh my goodness, I don't know [laughs]." I didn't think about Flag Day but I must have written something interesting about Flag Day. I thought it was nice, you know, that your fellow students vote on it because it's not something you campaign for. It's just everybody vote today for DAR good citizens so I must have been doing something [laughs] that my fellow students thought was something to vote about.

SGC: Cool, so does that— is that just an award or does it come with a service obligation or?

T: That's a good question, I don't know if i remember. They had a dinner I do remember that not that in Framingham on route 9 and it involved meeting other people, that's the kind of stuff I liked about it—my daughter's that way too. I'm not really that outspoken, I'm really kind of on the quiet side, but I like getting in conversations. So this is good, it's not appearances or a bigger group [laughs] I think I'd have a little more trouble but...

SGC: So you were in high school, like in the late 70s then?

T: I graduated in '78

SGC: Can you tell us what is memorable about your high school years? I mean, do you have friends from high school that are still around that you keep in touch with?

T: I do and because being from Worcester I still— there's still enough people that are around from Worcester that I bump into them. In fact, there's someone just the other day at the Holy Cross games, I see a lot of people, and someone that works here from— she does all kinds of things but I think she's in food service, she's doing the movies now, because I go to all the free movies.

SGC: [laughs] See [to observers], now you'll recognize Teresa, when you see her on campus.

T: Oh all over, I go on the track, I use all the athletics stuff, because I was very—if that's one thing in high school that I remember—Ronnie Perry. Anybody remember Ronnie Perry? You should from basketball. Because the dad was very kind to me, he was the athletic director here for years and years

[Student observer]: That's my grandpa [laughs]

T: No really?

SGC: Oh that's right, Katherine.

T: Is your dad Ron Jr? No sir, wow, isn't that exciting. One of my best memories, this is going off the track of nonviolence I'm sure—he won't remember, but I went to basketball camps, and actually a couple of years— well, no just one I think that I was one of the helpers, when I was maybe a senior in high school. I was going to be coming here, but I got picked by one of my coaches, actually Billy Gibbons' father...

Girl: oh my goodness

T: ... he was — I used to play tennis with him.

Girl: He was my coach

T: Yes, in fact I went to school with his wife, Lisa, and Andrea, his sister. They went to Burncoat, but with this thing it was Billy Gibbons Sr. was one of the coaches, and there was a day when the parents got to come at the basketball thing. So my mother loved it, she's the one that brings it up all the time. That's the main reason i remember it, but they wanted somebody to do a shooting contest. So all these people to pick from, he said, "You go out," and I get to play with your dad and against Ronnie Perry Sr. It was a shooting contest from the foul line

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extended, and so Ronnie, your dad, and I we each were shooting from the foul line extended and then so we each had a ball and we had to rebound for each other, but I'm getting them in, your dad's getting them in, and the other two weren't getting them in so many, so they're cheering for us and — and then they started cheating, they were counting two or whatever. I'm not remembering it accurately I'm sure, but it was my great moment. I loved it [laughs]

Group laughs

T: Because I grew up watching all these games. At the game Saturday, it was alumni game, and I often look for your grandfather because last year I saw him at that event and I see him all the time before he hasn't come as frequently, but at the field house I used to run there, and now I see him and we always chat because he remembers my dad fondly. They were on the athletic committee a number of years together —but yeah, so those kinds of things are very [laughs]

SGC: That's very cool, we have so many connections here. So being a Holy Cross kid, like how much— tell us what that's like, to be a professor's kid and how much Holy Cross is a part of your home life, and you're on campus, and how many of you came here and all that.

T: Well, my mother said, "Always just say you're a part of the Holy Cross family [laughs]. That'll get you in a lot of good places." In fact, it used to be the Ceelo's Theatre, it wasn't called Ceelo's Theatre but Charlie Baker, who was a professor I think he just retired too, he was in French, and he — but he used to let me in free [laughs] But now it's free for everybody anyway, but things like that I used to come up to all the talks, and I still do that.

SGC: From what age?

T: Well, let's see, one that I can remember really well, when [President Richard] Nixon, during the Watergate time, they had Archibald Cox up here, who was the special prosecutor, so I remember I was still in high school then.

SGC: Was that packed?

T: It was packed, yeah. And I'm trying to think way back ones that I would remember. I mean that one sticks out, but I've been to a lot of other big ones. I remember Abby Hoffman who was here too.

SGC: Oh, did— Abby Hoffman talked at Holy Cross? He didn't go here did he? Or did he?

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T: No, no he didn't.

SGC: Because he was a Worcester native.

T: Right, but Mike Bouvier wrote quite a bit about Abby he loves Abby.

SGC: Isn't he writing a book about him?

T: He has, yeah, he has a piece that's pretty lengthy. So he may be extending it even more, but then there was also from the Watergate time it was this— this wasn't around then, but Gordon Liddy was here. And that caused a big huge— he was one of the plumbers that broke in to, you know, the Watergate thing, and he got a lot of exposure later. He was a talk show host and everything, so it was a little controversial here because it cost a lot of money to bring these speakers, and so it was more that [laughs] we were spending money on him but they did and so he—he had a lot of questions. It was very civil, that's what I liked about that era, because I think today, there's a little less of that, at least from my own experience. The campus, sometimes, if people aren't agreeing with the speaker, they've been a little less civil to let them speak. I think in my opinion, it's better to hear the people and to have a good debate and tell them why you disagree. And then they show the people in the audience that maybe agree with that person that maybe [laughs] there's a good reason not to then. But lately there's been some events where—I'm not so much sure here, but I've heard at other campuses, where they're—they've been shouting people down and not being able to speak. I mean, they might not have might have been a better idea not to invite some of them, but once they're there, I think it's better to do that, but....

SGC: So in high school, do you remember your peers, like, being politically conscious or talking about social issues, or what was high school like in Worcester?

T: Yeah, that's a good question. I don't think I was as, you know, politically active, but I think it was more my grounding in the idea, the social justice stuff.

SGC: What was popular in your high school?

T: That's 40 years now time.... what was popular? I wasn't popular in that sense you know what I mean

SGC: [laughs]

T: I was never with the [laughs]. But as they say, it was more the sport things that I was involved with and I did some teaching of, you know, some tennis teaching in particular I did like doing that kind of thing. But yeah, it's terrible I'm not really remembering a lot from high school stuff.

SGC: Well tell us about college, did you—did you have your heart set on Holy Cross or was it just understood that you would apply here or did you apply to a bunch of different places?

T: Yeah, no I actually didn't because I knew we didn't have the money [laughs] either, but that's one of the great benefits. If any of you are bright and want to be professors and [laughs] that's a good benefit with college being hundreds of thousands of dollars now. But I really was interested in Holy Cross as they say, I went to all the sporting events here I was involved in you know different— other professors that would socialize with too, like John Anderson who was a mayor of Worcester, he was in the history department. I played tennis with the—we just lost Ed Kennedy, I don't know if you knew him, and he and his wife Marsha and a couple other professors too. Ed Vitalek, he was in Chemistry, and Tom Cecil is still here, in Math, I used to play tennis with him too... But I forgot what your main question was [laughs]

SGC: So you came to Holy cross in what year?

T: It was '78.

SGC: '78, and when did they start letting women into Holy Cross?

T: Not that soon, probably, '74 maybe?

SGC: Oh you were right at that turn

T: Yeah I was at the beginning.

SGC: Because Joanne Sheehan, do you know Joanne?

T: Yeah, yeah

SGC: She wanted to but wasn't able to apply at that point. Her uncle was an alum here. So '78, tell us what Holy Cross was like, how many women were there? Proportion-wise, it wasn't 50/50 yet was it?

T: I don't know. I know that it— it is now right? Or even more women? Is it more women than men? I have a feeling it was right from the beginning it was pretty close because the women that applied were good. I think the men were worried to be honest. Because I think there were a lot of— it was a lot of men that maybe wouldn't get in today that were here before, just because of the— you know, if you start making— having a bigger group than at the top of their class, then some of the ones that aren't any more won't get in.

SGC: Did you feel that change? That this is like a new mix of students in the classroom? Did it feel new?

T: I didn't really know because I was in the middle of it, you know what I mean, I didn't really experience the same Holy Cross, the same as a young person and being that men, it just— because again I was interested in sports and that was— that's what you went to see the men play so. Because we even went to see them play— they used to play at the Worcester Auditorium, that big building with the pillars that's— they had until they made the Hart Center.

SGC: Well tell us what holy cross was like back then.

T: It's definitely— because of all the upgrading, the physical plant, was beautiful then, and they used to win a lot of beauty awards if you didn't know then, in terms of— the groundskeeper that was here was very known countrywide in keeping a pretty campus. But I remember going to class— I didn't live here, so I mean that's different maybe for some, because I stayed at home

SGC: Oh you lived off campus?

T: Yeah, I mean it was a couple of minutes down the road, but in terms of the atmosphere, again, I was pretty much a studier and I did my sports things and went to talks and also I mean I wasn't— I wasn't, as they say... more kept my small concentric circles that sort of thing.

SGC: What did you study?

T: I started in history and then I ended up switching to religious studies.

SGC: What were your favorite things that you studied or worked on?

T: That's a good question. I liked scripture, you know, scripture scholarship, because that was very intriguing to me, that there was a nice science around the whole thing. And it was actually a lot of Catholic scholars that started that so I liked that idea, but I actually— you probably didn't know this, I didn't end up finishing there, because— this is another whole story, that's why I didn't know you were doing the whole this is your life thing. Because of my athletic stuff, I was very good at tennis, and I had an opportunity to go to a camp in Florida called Harry Hopkins international tennis center. I don't know if any of you know tennis, but he was a big Davis Cup coach for Australia for years and years, and he ran this camp he was elderly at the time, but it attracted a lot of international people. And so I said yeah I'd like to go if I had the chance, so I took a year from here and went there. And you would play for like two and a half hours at practice in the morning, and I love practice, I'm a real— I like games and stuff but I love practice and sweating and running and you know [laughs]. So then you would break for lunch and have another like two and a half hours you would maybe run in the morning, then you'd play sets with the pros there, and other students and all that were there, so I just loved it. I was, you know, hoping that it might turn into a career, and I was doing pretty well. I was playing well and I was getting put in tournaments. They called them like satellite tournaments, you know, you were just getting ready for the— for the big time thing. But then something interesting happened. A student that I went to Burncoat High with, was a Holy Cross person, and he played tennis, so on his spring break, so what year would that be... would've been 1980, I'm not even sure.

SGC: '78, '79, would be your sophomore year, so yeah, so 80-81?

T: Maybe, maybe '80, it probably was '80. Well, he came down during spring break to get just a gist of the— men's tennis team played in the spring. So I said, "Yeah come down." He could play there for a week, it was a kind of thing you could come to for short times as well. So we played did all the tennis, he was in his group, I was in mine, so by the end, on a Saturday, I said why don't we go do something else, so we went to an amusement park, Busch Gardens, which is a terrific place if you like amusement parks. So we walked into the amusement park, they handed us a flyer that said that there's going to be these skydivers, the Anheiser Busch skydiving team. They used to do commercials like that. So, we said yeah okay, we'll do our stuff and make sure we come back to— they had it near the big brewery or something so we came back there and they had this big target set up, and roped off. And so, being I'd never seen skydivers— I had a friend whose father did it, so it really was intriguing to me to see this happen so ...

SGC: Sorry, target, for them to hit when they come out of the sky?

T: Yes, exactly. So that's where people would assemble, right around it. So I was doing what I'm supposed to, so I'm just prefacing the whole thing [laughs]. So we were they watching, and they said something like before it started, the guys are up in the airplane and they're going to send a streamer out to check the wind or something crazy like that. And they say, "Well it's pretty windy, but we're going to do it," and everybody cheered. And so the very first guy comes out of the plane, instead of hitting the target he hit me in the head [laughs].

SGC: Oh [gasps]

T: Yeah, it was a very strange happening. So he hit me with his boots on the head, and there was this girl next to me and she had a broken collarbone from it. But I don't even remember cause I was knocked out and I remember waking up in a— I guess it was like an ambulance of some sort, and the people were—nursing people were saying that— asking me if I'm okay so they're trying to get my information and they said who are you and what's your name, and I said I didn't know. And then they asked me where I was from, and I didn't know that either. I was pretty calm though, I remember that about it, but it was very interesting to not know who you are, even though it didn't last that long, it was you know for maybe a few hours though, if I'm remembering correctly. Because I remember I was at the hospital.

SGC: You're lucky you gained your memory back in a few hours.

T: Yeah

SGC: Wow, was your friend with you? Did he accompany you?

T: That's it, I don't even remember.

SGC: Wow.

T: Yeah, I don't remember what happened and so— but so that was a— I look back on it now and I say it was very, a non subtle way of telling me that I wasn't supposed to do that, literally, get knocked over the head. You say, maybe you're not supposed to be a tennis professional, and that was a quick way to get out of it [laughs]. But to make a long story short, I mean I wasn't hurt really badly, other than a very bad concussion. I mean, it was— I mean I never had headaches before, and that's— it was very, it was painful in that sense. And so I did stay there a

while longer, but I couldn't play, and I couldn't do anything. Very dizzy, that was one of the other problems, equilibrium problems, and for me, the hardest thing was having my parents appear. That was the first time I'd been away from home, so how do you call your parents and tell them you were in a skydiving accident. That's actually how one of my friends said that to someone and they thought, "Wow, the parachute, what happened, the parachute didn't open?" and they weren't thinking that I got hit by one [laughs]. That's about as unusual as skydiver's parachute's not opening properly, but it was a big news event down in St. Petersburg where I was— where we were was in Largo. I was living in St. Petersburg.

SGC: Do you know that I'm from Tampa, and my family lives in St. Petersburg

T: Well no way.

SGC: I've been to Busch Gardens a million times, yeah. I've heard that story—I see the scene of where your...

T: Yeah, yeah isn't that funny, see its all these connections.

Group laughs

SGC: She knows your grandfather, and your coach.

T: I know, I know this is great.

SGC: That's not what I was expecting you to tell me [laughs].

T: I know, well that's why I didn't— I didn't know we were going to get into all that too, but I— but that wouldn't be fair for you to think that I was here that whole time at Holy Cross.

SGC: But so then what happened? Beause you were in your junior year....

T: Well I didn't— I had finished my freshman year so after that, and this again, I guess this is for the archives, I think more about it with me ecause only in hindsight can you see my reaction was more I didn't want to make a big deal about it, to worry parents [laughs]. So I try to be the opposite with my daughter, to tell me everything, because that probably wasn't a good idea. But I just know my mother would be frantic, you know, I got hit on the— what's going on, what's happened?

SGC: I would be.

T: Yeah, so I kind of went on that it wasn't a big deal, you know the headaches and this and that, and at that time, there wasn't a lot they'd do, you know what I mean, it was very different than today, they can really check your brain and all that. So for a while they were really worried that especially with losing your memory that I'd get started doing things to myself. Well, how am I going to know what I don't remember [laughs]. If you don't remember, how are you going to know you don't remember it? And so I was always a little worried about stuff like that because I did have headaches for a long time, but I kind of didn't let on about them. So I did come back to Holy Cross and I knew it wasn't going to work for full-time. And that's it, unfortunately Holy Cross only had full time, and so I forget now, what did I do? I think I maybe dropped a couple of classes or something, and then I just didn't finish up, but what I did do though was that I went to Assumption [college], which did have [part-time], so I started taking a course at a time after taking a little bit of a break. And then I finished at Assumption and I got a Master's in Religious Studies there.

SGC: Oh wow, so you stayed on through your Master's.

T: And I ended up coaching tennis over there eventually, but that was— that was about five years later, so I wasn't really better. Because I remember running into a couple of people that knew that I had played tennis and that I hadn't been playing, this— it was one of those weird things, because I hadn't been playing, and I was just really grateful that this one person knew I went down to Florida, and said well why aren't you playing tennis what do you mean why aren't you playing tennis. And so I started playing with him, and it got me back into it again, and so I did, I ended up playing competitively. In New England they have this New England Lawn Tennis Association, so I played a lot of tournaments with singles and doubles.

SGC: Within how many years of the accident?

T: I'm going say it was within like four or five years.

SGC: That's really amazing

T: yeah it was very strange [laughs]. But that's what a lot of people ask me, "Well did you see him coming?" and I think it just happened so fast. And the fact that I— what I told you, I don't remember, it was from my friend, I think the memories were gone from right before the time, but

I do remember after a little bit, like I said we were in the ambulance and stuff, but I really didn't know what happened. So it was very very strange. So don't go to skydiving with me [laughs], or stand way far away.

Group [laughs]

T: Because I guess they were hitting— they were all missing the target, they didn't hit anybody else.

SGC: Oh there were many of them?

T: Yeah, this was the first one, and then they were going under the ropes that weren't even anywhere near the— close to the target

SGC: And they knew it was windy, and they prefaced it as like not good conditions, wow.

T: I know, so it was very, very strange.

SGC: So is this like pre-day of suing everyone? So you didn't sue Busch Gardens?

T: Oh that's right, I forgot about that, they were very nice later.

SGC: [laughs] I would think they would be nice.

T: Yeah, when I was back into playing tennis, that's right, because I had friends I was— I was actually coaching a little at Assumption on both the men's and the women's team, with a friend of mine, and they— a couple of friends that I played with were going to Florida to go to one of those camps for like a week as a vacation and so I decided that I would go on this trip. And then I talked to Busch Gardens people, and they had said once that you want to come back, we'll take care of you, and so I brought all of my friends to Busch Gardens and they rolled out the red carpet for us and we had a great day.

SGC: I should hope so [laughs]

T: No, there was one time, I think, that somebody told me when I had gotten married to my husband, said well you should check on that. But there's really nothing you can get apparently, at least that's the way it was, because I would've had to prove that I, you know, lost earnings and

all that kind of stuff, and you really— it's— I didn't want to do it anyway. I mean it's just the way life is. But nope, so that was a little strange bump in the road [laughs].

SGC: Yes, should we take a break, do you want more coffee or bathroom break or...

T: I mean I'm ok, I have my little water sip.

SGC: You're okay, good. So we've gotten through Master's degree. How old were you when you got your Master's degree?

T: I think that was '87, 1987, so that would've made me 26.

SGC: Ok, so then when you said you got involved in community organizing and the local peace and justice commission, was that after coming back from Florida?

T: Yeah, so that was— that's why I say I think, got literally knocked on the head and went in—I was interested in the religious studies area, but that's when I really got involved — especially like with Mike True He was at Assumption. I didn't have him at all for a teacher, but got involved in things. I don't know, I'm trying to remember, because through Scott and Claire [Schaeffer-Duffy], I mean the Catholic Worker house, the one that's on Mason Street that they do hospitality. I think that one of the first ways I worked with them was they needed somebody to be with the guests on their second floor, because what they'd do is they'd have people that need housing for mainly short periods of time. And at the time, they didn't really have somebody on the second floor, so I used to sleep in one of the rooms, and it was really not the best thing for me to do, because at that time I used to sleep very soundly. So, I was supposed to be the one to wake up if there was a commotion. But they would tell me, "You didn't hear that?"

SGC: [laughs]

T: I'd said no. But I tell you, that changed, though, after my daughter was born. I haven't had a sound night of sleep yet. I think your body changes because you're always listening for a little one and I wish I could get back to sleeping soundly. But at that time when I was supposed to wake up, I couldn't, it was terrible, I was so embarrassed so many times [laughs]. So yeah they had to come up or come from the attic and I was the one who was supposed to hear the commotion but [snores]. That was pretty good. It was self-preservation I don't know [laughs]

SGC: How did you figure out about the Catholic Worker? How did you first hear about it, and how old were you?

T: That's a good question too.

SGC: Keith, this is the person that you really liked the speaker at the nonprofit fair.

Keith: Mr. Duffy, what was his first name?

T: Scott Schaeffer Duffy,

Keith: Scott, he's a character

T: He is a character, maybe that's what I can say. He'll love it if I say this because my sister went to Holy Cross, and I had a sister and a brother, two brothers and a sister, that went here. And, once again, the sports connection, I used to come up and watch the baseball games, I watched your dad play [laughs], I watched him play a lot of basketball too. So we were on campus, and Scott Schaeffer Duffy, this was before I was here, my sister might've been a year behind him, so this might've been the year before she came then too. You would just see him walking and he was noticeable. Just walking, he walked in an interesting way, he still walks a little bit in an interesting way, and he used to wear a bow tie. Not too many kids wear a bow tie. And he talks incredibly a lot. He talks, and then he talked even more, so he might've been talking when there was nobody around. So we noticed Scott before we knew him, and so when my sister went here, she got to know him. So that's probably how, because now I'm not even remembering, isn't that terrible, but that's probably it, because he was interested in religious—he became—oh boy I can't remember, he went to some order right after Holy Cross. And now I can't remember, but he didn't stay with them, but he went to them, and then he started this Catholic Worker house, and that would've been in the early '80s. So that might be where. And Michael Bouvier, of course, because the Mustrad Seed, that's true, but I wasn't directly involved with the Mustrad Seed early on, but the Mustrad Seed is another Catholic Worker house. And Worcester is very unique to have so many Catholic Worker influences it's unbelievable. But they're the soup kitchen, and if you want to get Frank's story on that, because he—he left Holy Cross to do that, in the middle of the whole Vietnam mess.

SGC: As a student?

T: He left, yeah, but he came back, years and years later.

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Student: My boyfriend works at first Baptist in Worcester and they're involved in Mustrad Seed, they do like once a month— bring food, and I helped over the summer and I served some of the homeless there. Frank was— I met him a couple times, he's really cool.

T: Oh excellent, he actually lived with a Holy Cross professor when he quit school, Dave O'Brian and he went to— this is where, like I said, all these Holy Cross professors, a lot of them were on Notre Dame campus when my parents were there. The Kennedy's were there, Dave O'Brian was there.

SGC: Okay cool, so you're in your 20s, so at the end of college and your master's, you're starting to get out into the community tell us, were you mostly— when you were getting involved in the Catholic Worker where did you learn about non-violence and kind of tell us— they don't know much about the Catholic Worker yet. So if you could explain what that climate was like, what it was like to be hanging out there, was there a lot of discussions, was there a lot of talking about politics, were there meetings, give us the scene a little bit more.

T: Well that's sort of the thing about the Catholic Worker in particular, the idea is that you're working for peace and you're doing the works of mercy at the same time. So the idea of hospitality, you're opening up your home to people, and Peter Maurin who was one of the founders with Dorothy Day, that was his idea. We just had a clarification of thought, at the session last night at the Mustard Seed, that's part of Peter Maurin's idea that you're serving and you're also thinking about things and working on clarifying your thoughts. And you had the intellectual side of this movement and then the real direct service. The whole philosophy with Dorothy Day is that it's a very personal movement, so you're serving the individual, you're really getting to know a person. And that's what I really like about it because I really think that people can be moved much more easily and convincingly on helping people and just having an idea about a policy if they actually get to know someone or the facts. And so this idea of a Christ-room or something as a part of the Catholic Worker Movement and maybe you wouldn't need so much government if everybody took on someone in their own home or that sort of philosophy. And so Mike Bouvier And Frank Cartheiser and it was actually this other Holy Cross person Sean Donovan, I think it was Sean and Frank originally that started it just as a small storefront on Pleasant Street in Worcester. The Mustrad Seed would be more of a drop-in place. They didn't know what they were doing, they just went on it, they had to do something, in the middle of the whole Vietnam mess that was going on at that time. I think it might have been 1972 that they started it, but it's had many different forms since. But that was where they'd have a pot of soup on, they didn't even have a stove at first I think they put it on a radiator [laughs].

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And they'd have people, welcome them to come in, play cards or whatever on the couch. And then it morphed to more people that were coming in and living on the— wherever they could put them, and this is pre shelters in the city, so this place was— it was crazy [laughs]. Because all the people that had needs had no— there was no Abby's House for women, there was no PIP Shelter [People in Peril], so this was the place you went if you wanted help. And there was [laughs] a lot of the city people I think looked the other way in terms of— because there was so many people sometimes that would be there. But that's why I mentioned to you another woman, Geri DiNardo, I don't know if you tried to call her because she doesn't do email anymore, she told me because I've been trying to send her— I do the notes from our Mustard Seed meetings. But I talked to her last night, she would be interviewed, because she's been involved from early on in the Mustard Seed, she could tell you a lot more than I could about that period. And she's written a book now which is really neat, called Saints and Rascals [laughs] and Mike Bouvier did a foreword for it, but it's a lot of little portraits of people that have come over the years to the Mustard Seed and so it's really kind of nice little thing. It gives you an idea [laughs] of what kind of things they did, because I wasn't involved in any of that, but I love hearing the stories about it, because it was very unusual stuff to be able— people wouldn't think that that's what was going on, because we're used to having some government things that take care of some people, but even like Scott and Claire's house, what they'd do is— a lot of these agencies that people go to to get a place to stay, if you can't fill out the paperwork, then they can't deal with them. So, and I'm not into what those things are, but they end up often— they'll call Scott and Claire, "Can you take somebody," because for whatever reason they couldn't take them. And so that's kind of how that worked for them.

SGC: So it sounds like these things were going on for over a decade, or at least the Mustard Seed was going on for over a decade when you got involved. Now to kind of switch back to your biography and how it overlaps with your service work here, after your master's you just decided to stay in Worcester, and what were you doing for work? Or were you just doing volunteer and service work?

T: Well I did get married in all of this too [laughs]

SGC: Oh, well tell us that.

T: Yeah, that was great. My husband and— we got married and his family had a business, so this is interesting. I ended up working there. This was another sport thing that happened. I got injured my senior year of high school, I got— somebody hit me, actually it was a friend of mine that I saw at Holy Cross movie the other night, hadn't seen her in a long time. She put her knee

into my thigh and it bled internally, and it took a while to— that blood I guess has to harden if you want to get gooey about it, and then it has to dissolve. But it kept me from playing tennis my senior year in high school, but it did work, and I go back to your—your grandfather again, because I was coming here to play basketball, and he [laughs] wanted to make sure that I was healthy, and he offered to do something, I think there was some kind of drugs I could take [laughs] but I didn't want to take any. So I ended up being ready for basketball, but he was very kind, he wanted to make sure I was going to be okay. So because I was injured, I was looking for a summer job. And here's the connection thing again, my Providence Street junior high middle school, my favorite teacher ever in the 9th grade, we did a neat class, it was on independent history, like independent study history, and he learned all nice practical style— that was a good thing, real awareness raiser for me. But he offered me a job at my husband's dad's business, that's how they would recruit people, and it was the greatest place. It had a driving range, miniature golf, go karts, batting cages. I said, "I'm there! I can't play basketball all summer," so that was a fun place to be. And so I met my husband there. Because he wasn't around actually originally but he was living in Florida at the time and came back to help his dad with the business. It's missing now, but it's the park n ride for the Mass Pike down there. So it's so sad whenever I go over there, there's nothing there anymore. They took it for the Mass Pike, so devastated my husband, he was so sad.

SGC: So how old were you when you— this was, you were finishing college and your master's or?

T: Well I was, yeah— how old was I. I was just 20, so I was young, yeah.

SGC: When you got married or when you took the job?

T: No, I got married young [laughs]. I was going to school at the same time. So yeah it worked out for us. I look at it now and think my daughter's 21, thank goodness she's not going to get married [laughs]. But it ended up working out well and I think a lot of it too was the head injury and all that stuff. Just everything, everything was kind of strange. Because I was, you know, varies— but that's it, I worked there for a few years because I came to Holy Cross, and, you know, did the sports and everything for a year. So this was then, the other thing happened after. So there were two things that tried to stop me [laughs] from sports things, but I recovered. And I wasn't even playing football, see that? Didn't have to be playing football where they're trying to hit people [laughs]. Things sometimes just happen.

SGC: Okay, wow, so what does your husband do?

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T: Right now actually he works at the state hospital. And he loves the Mustard Seed, he takes a night at the Mustard Seed and really has a great connection with some of the people there. He's always complimenting them, how well he does with everybody there. So it— it really has worked out well, though we make peanuts. But he was— he had been in sales, we had our own little business for a while and so that's why I was able to do a lot of the work I did, because we had our own business and we could be flexible.

SGC: What is your business?

T: Well he just got into some other businesses, just kind of direct sales, and I wasn't interested in it, but I'm very good with people work in every group I've been involved with because I take notes, I'm always the note-taker, so I'm kind of that nuts-and-bolts person. I often for whatever get involved in just— just out of default usually, because somebody sees you taking notes, so if you guys don't ever want to get stuck taking notes, don't do it when you first go to a group [laughs]. I mean, I really, I do like it because it keeps me focused and I love that I have a lot of history, but I do it for Agape and we have day-long meetings at Agape. And so, I write the whole time and [laughs] but the Mustard Seed ones I have to type them up properly and get them ready because we're a 501c3 [nonprofit] now which caused a big controversy there, because some don't want to do that as being Catholic Worker, but it was out of necessity for a few reasons, but that's been two years now I think.

SGC: I feel like, do you guys need a break? Should we take a break? Yeah...

T: Yeah.

Break occurs...

SGC: So I think we got to your master's and then you had your own business with your husband. And tell me -- maybe if you want to walk me through the professional timeline first so we can document that, and then we can go through your notes on community service. Because I think you have the most here.

T: Okay.

SGC: Right? Not to minimize your work. [Laughs]

T: No, no, no, no, no. I would see that -- that's what was great, that I was able to -- that's the good thing sometimes is having a little bit of freedom of your schedule, even though it was hard sometimes with the buck stopping at you to do your own thing too. But we had -- at first, I was involved in my husband's father, Walter Wheeler. That's where I met my husband at, working at the -- did I mention that already?

SGC: Yes.

T: Okay.

SGC: Like a family activity center.

T: Yes, right. It was called Wheeler's [Golf Land].

SGC: Yeah, the students were devastated that it's closed down.

T: I know, I know. There's a place like it now in Auburn...

SGC: Oh, oh cool. I don't know it.

T: That has been around for a little while. I know it doesn't have the par three golf course. That was very unique. And I think most of those are gone now if there's any more. But, you know, all short holes and I think I mentioned batting cages, miniature golf, driving range, all that. So that was nice. And actually, I was going to school while working there too. And so that's what was nice. I think I liked the more part-time-ish. But it ended up I could go in the summer. So it worked out—it ended up working out well. So things, you know, you had to get over that—the worst thing that could happen to you. [Laughs] Some things work out for your own pace that's good. So I got involved with all kinds of stuff. And that's what I'd forgotten to say though that the whole Central America and all that stuff, the faith communities and all that kind of stuff going on, Oscar Romero, because when was he assassinated? Did I mark that down so I'd remember?

SGC: Was it the early '80s?

T: Yeah, let's see. He might have been actually in 1980. Let's see if I wrote that down.

SGC: Yeah, '89 was the Jesuit murders.

T: Oh yeah, yeah, because that was about the same time. I remember going to it. We went to a really big march in D.C. That was with the Schaeffer-Duffy crew. Because we were sending so much money there; that was the issue.

SGC: You were sending money to . . .

T: The South American government.

SGC: Oh, okay, okay.

T: You know, through the [President Ronald] Reagan years. So he was 1980, and even [President Jimmy] Carter, so it was before that. So I remember seeing this letter that people were complaining to Jimmy Carter about it too because it was something crazy, like ten million dollars a day. That's a lot of money to send to oligarchs. In fact, the guy that was the president or whatever you would call him in El Salvador, I can't remember his name, but he had gone to a Jesuit school here. That's why it was so awful because all these people, the school, the Americas, that whole connection, that the people that were assassinating these poor folks in countries like—it wasn't just El Salvador, but that was one of the ones that I think it was easy to focus on with the Catholic whole context and [Fr.] Romero being shot while saying mass. It's so blatant. And then the four church women that had been murdered too. So that was earlier on. And then when the Jesuits got killed, see that was—the four women, okay, [laughs] you know what I mean? But then the Jesuits, and I think it was one of their house kind of helpers and her daughter were killed. And it was so blatant that, if you remember, blew their brains out at night. It was terrible. And, . . .

SGC: One of the nuns was lowered into a pit of rats.

T: One of those other four women?

SGC: Yeah.

T: Yeah.

SGC: Yeah, there was extreme torture and rape that went on before they killed the women.

T: It was unbelievable, really just unbelievable stuff.

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SGC: And Ita was in that group.

T: Ita Ford. Maura Clarke, Jean Donovan and who was the other one? [Dorothy Kazel]

SGC: I can't remember. I know Father Roy was closest to Ita.

T: Okay. But there was someone at Agape that had just written a biography about one of them as well. She came and because she's related to her, a daughter of someone that's really involved with us at Agape, but I can't think of her name right now either. I don't know her well; I just know her from her coming to events. So we had her coming to speak at the Advent Program. She was very good. All these connections there that, for Catholics in particular, if you were into the social justice, this was horrendous to think that we were supporting this kind of stuff, that they were going to be doing these kind of things to church people besides the peasants. See, that's the only thing, it's the peasants that have—I'm saying the word, it's not even a good word to use of course. But here's these people. . .

SGC: The rural poor.

T: There you go, thank you. [laughs] But here's the whole thing. You need this high-profile stuff for anybody to pay attention. And so that's when you have to—that's the politics of it. And so there was a lot in the community that was around that. So you would have been too young [laughs] to see. So that was when I think more the activism stuff I was involved in coalesced around the faiths, communities and again, a lot of speakers would come. I remember seeing Gutierrez had come early on too. Anna Maria [College] had a really neat guy. What was his name? Patrick Hare (sp), he ran the department. And he used to bring all these great speakers. And then all of a sudden, he got fired in a second; he was gone. It was the strangest thing. I never knew what happened there.

SGC: He didn't have tenure?

T: I don't believe so.

SGC: Okay.

T: But he was terrific. And so I have no idea what happened, but . . .

SGC: So for the archive, if we could clarify the networks that you were involved in?

T: Okay.

SGC: So you were going to The Mustard Seed regularly at this point or where were these networks where you were hooking up with Scott and Claire to go to the march, hearing about the speakers coming.

T: Yeah, I think more through that Peace and Justice Commission and Scott and Claire's place, whenever that opened. I think they just had their 30th anniversary. So when would that make it? In the mid-'80s?

SGC: But you were going to weekly meetings at the Peace and Justice Commission?

T: It wasn't weekly. It was probably, you know . . .

SGC: Bi-weekly maybe?

T: Something like that if I'm remembering correctly. And we were planning events, again, around education, but not particularly doing activism ourselves there. But that's what's great about Worcester. I was mentioning about that guy the other night that there's just so many people doing things. So I think probably through Scott and Claire, they were the vigil people. So they planned a lot of vigils. And then I was volunteering, I think I told you, at their house on a weekly basis of sleeping, [Laughs] sleeping with the guests, which was not my thing. I tell you, it was really—I remember waking up after some commotion that somebody else had already dealt with. I realized that wasn't my gift. So I think they finally, if I'm remembering -- somebody ended up living there [up there]. So I got out of that one luckily. So that would be where the connections would have been, I think. I'm really a good, good candidate for chronology aren't I?

SGC: But you – so you're going to a lot of talks about Central American issues throughout the '80s. Helping with the Catholic Worker House, doing vigils, local vigils? On what other issues besides Central America?

T: Let's see, well at that time, that was probably the main focus, to be honest with you, at that particular time. And then there was just the different ones. What was nice again about Scott and Claire in particular was local issues. I remember being at the hospital; my daughter was young,

so that was later. Yeah, because she was already born. But the nurses, when they had a strike at Saint Vincent's [Hospital] oh, that was great.

SGC: What did they strike for?

T: They wanted to push—make the numbers of so many—say they one to one nurse to two patients in emergency care or whatever or urgent care. What would you call it? I'm trying to think of the word for when people need the most help. They're in . . .

SGC: I think urgent.

T: It's not urgent care, but it's terrible.

SGC: ICU?

T: There you go. Intensive Care, right, ICU. But it might have just been the patient ratio in general as well that they wanted to have the ratios not patient-based.

SGC: They were overloaded, yeah.

T: And so there was some really great movement with that, they were striking.

SGC: For how long?

T: I'm not sure, but it was longer than anybody would have wanted so that they did get replacement workers and everything. So we were doing some vigiling in front of the hospital.

SGC: Oh, wait, they replaced them?

T: They did.

SGC: Oh, oh no. I thought you meant to supplement them. No, but they replaced them.

T: Right, because they didn't have any.

SGC: Oh god.

T: So they got workers in. So it probably didn't last really long, but long enough to have to do that. It wasn't like a day and that kind of a thing. But that's where I remember once because Father Bafaro, he was on the Peace and Justice Commission from Saint—the Italian church over here. The one that they're closing, Mount Carmel. But he was out there vigiling with us, and this was what was awful. The church told him not to go. And they didn't—"I'm doing it." And that's what was . . .

SGC: The parishioners or his higher-ups?

T: The higher-ups. So I felt so bad for him because he did a lot of great stuff, you know? And he's the one who hosted these dinners we used to have for education. And it was great. He had an Italian family at the parish that made all this pasta. So he would feed the people. They'd come for the food, and they'd get these great talks. But that was part of, you know, what we did as an educational thing. And we did some talks around when the peace pastor came out. I might have mentioned that already. So that was some of the early—and the one on economic justice as well. And so those would have been some of the earlier things.

SGC: Let me ask you about the Central American Solidarity Movement. Was anyone offering sanctuary here in Worcester? I know it was big in the southwest, but I just thought I would ask.

T: Yeah, they probably were. That wasn't something I was particularly involved in.

SGC: But not on your radar, okay.

T: But yeah, I'm not sure who would know that, who was doing that. Hmm. But the one who was really good in all this, you probably know [U.S. Representative Jim McGovern too. He was working for [U.S. Congressman John] Moakley in Boston, and he investigated the Jesuit murders and became kind of . . .

SGC: Yeah, he was in my article. I mentioned his role.

T: Oh good. So there are all these connections of all the people here, and I'm trying to think too of some of the other stuff. Roy Bush Y (sp) years ago had come up here too to Holy Name High School to drum up people going to the school, the Americas. And Tom Lewis, we talked about him a little bit because he had Emma House. He was a guy I was mentioning if you didn't know him. He died just suddenly. He wasn't that old. He was just in his 60s. And he had been in the Vietnam War, and so there were things at his house too. He used to have these street masses and

put out signs like, "No drugs, no dealing, and no violence." And so right out on the sidewalk, right across from The Mustard Seed is where his house was. So, I mean, I guess in general, a lot of it was trying to work at local things like that. Looking at violence in your local community and trying to do something about it, and then extending it to where we might be putting our nose in places internationally. So when you're somebody that's out for peace and justice, it can be overwhelming because the issues are everywhere. So that might be one of my drawbacks. I got into everything. I feel like if you don't get the facts out and the issues and people know, how can they make choices because some people really weren't presented with what's happening. And so I think in general, of the groups that I was involved in, that was sort of the idea. Well, that idea that you think globally and you act locally, and so you try to talk to your people in power, so to speak, in your own area and address them, educate, and hope that you get some – a nice group of—a bigger constituency to try to move in another direction if you feel like you're going the wrong way in terms of social justice things.

SGC: What about Agape? When did they start?

T: Yeah. That would have been—let's see, probably where I met them, I'm going to say it would have been like in the-late '80s, so maybe '88 or '89 when they built the house out here because their ministry started in Brockton with Father Charlie McCarthy that I mentioned to you who does these non-violence retreats. But they had a vision to work to have contemplation in action. And so they found this spot. One of the people on the Mission Council Meeting knew that there was some nice land near the reservoir out there. And so they bought the land, and tons of people—that's again what's so wonderful. Hundreds of people helped build that place. And I was in at the end of it. So Michael Bouvier (sp), my friend that you know, he took me out there once when he was going out on a Sunday trip. And I just said, "Oh, I'd love to come with you. I'd love to see what's going on." And I just fell in love with the place right away. And they were still building it. So I used to go out and help with—I have no building skills whatsoever, but lugging stones. Brayton (sp) did a beautiful job around the base of the foundation. He put up all the stones that make it look so pretty, and they were right from the property and lugging piles of sand and stuff like that. So that was my way of helping and then getting involved in the ministry. The way that I got involved in the ministry was with the college retreats. And I went at least once a week, sometimes more and worked in the office there to help promote, and I helped run the college retreats. And at that time, it was much harder than it is now. But we would try to get kids from different schools and then run maybe—first we started with one a year, and then it got to be a couple besides all the other events. So it was outreach to all these colleges, finding the contacts and trying to build relationships with them and then getting students to come. So we might have had four or five from ten colleges all at once. still don't know how we did it.

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[Laughs] I think I was much younger; I could handle that stuff. But we had just that one building at that time. And the kitchen . . .

SGC: The house? Their house?

T: Yeah, it was only the one house; it wasn't the Straw Bale House yet. And then the kitchen was much smaller. And so Lillian LaMothe (sp) and I used to bring all this food. Because you figure you have 50 to 60 people maybe on a weekend. And you've got to feed them from Friday through Sunday. Nobody's going anywhere. So we would get stuff ahead of time. She'd bake lasagnas and things like that because it was vegetarian stuff. And at that time too, I was a shopper at the food bank for the Refugee Apostolate—forgot about the Refugee Apostolate. [Laughs] I worked with them. It's now called Urban Missionaries. They're on Canterbury Street. But I would buy food through Saint Catherine's. We had a thing at the food bank. And so because we didn't need a lot of that food, I would get some for Agape; I'd get it for the Refugee Apostolate. So I went through a lot of shocks in my cars going to the food bank. My mother would come. We loved it in a lot of ways. It was fun, but, man, that was a lot of work too, because I'd bring it to my parents' lawn and we'd store it as long as it was a good day. And I got some cute pictures of Janelle, all these boxes. You know those handle banana boxes? As many as I could fit in my car, and it was lot. We would really jam it. And then I'd go sorting it. I was like, "Yeah, Agape would use this. The Refugee Apostolate will take anything, and Saint Catherine's will use this." Because it used to be nice initially at the food bank. You could fill and get whatever you wanted. But then they started making you take whatever's in their box. So maybe [laughs] three really treasures in one box and we've got to take it. So like if I just did this for Saint Catherine's, we didn't need all this stuff. So it really worked out well. But then, of course, rules got changed all the time, and they got much stricter after that woman like Janet Ward was there. So it got harder to do what I was doing. And they ended up making the Refugee Apostolate getting their own thing. So, see, sometimes it's those grey areas are nice [laughs] because it made sense, right? You know? You get a box that has like 20 cans of something that are going to sit on and you're not going to use them, but this way I could sort it out. I didn't really remember that, but did that week by week; we did that all the time. That was a big, little part of my-my mission. [Laughs]

SGC: So you were really active. So you've been doing Agape once a week or more for how many years?

T: Well, see, this was the thing, before my daughter was born, that was the change in going there on that kind of basis because I had unfortunately after the first couple months, my

pregnancy kind of went sour. I had to be on bedrest. So it was kind of sad because I was hoping—because I was even running still and everything, and then I think it was Thanksgiving I started having, what do you call them, contractions. And that was only less than three months into my pregnancy. So I asked my sister—I was at her house for Thanksgiving who already had two kids and saying, "Yeah, I'm feeling something strange, you know?" She says, "Oh, you better call the doctor." I called; they said, "Get right over there." I didn't get to eat my Thanksgiving food. And I was having contractions that were like two and a half minutes apart.

SGC: Oh my gosh.

T: I know. but again, it was my first time.

SGC: Braxton Hicks, right, when you have early contractions or -- yeah.

T: I don't know, but they were so severe. They were very frightened by it.

SGC: Oh, that, yeah.

T: And because—and the funniest thing on all that is I got to see every doctor in the—I was with the Fallon Plan doctors. So you don't really like have one doctor at that point once you get into hospital settings. And every one of them had something different to say. So I realized nobody really knows anything. It's all so unpredictable. But one even sent me once thinking I'm going to have the kid right then. I head over to Memorial and they gave me—I don't know what they did to make sure that she wasn't coming. But they wanted me there because they're the ones that have the most stuff for the premature kids. So that was unfortunate and then so my daughter was very little. It was harder to go back and forth. But I was still involved and I've been on what they call The Mission Council. But in the early years, we didn't have that particular group, but we had a group that met, I think, I don't know if it was monthly even. And we would do like a spiritual thing, and we would kind of do the similar one, but we made this a little more formal. Beause that's the thing I like about like the Catholic Worker and the Agapes is it's much less formal. And that's where with The Mustrad Seed now, for certain reasons, even though most didn't like it, we became more formal, the 501c3 just to make sure there was some transparency there and hoping that miraculously someone will take it over from all the gray hairs once we all fade away. Oh, you were asking me about Agape.

SGC: What year did your daughter—where was she born?

T: She was in '96. So it was probably a good six or seven years of going there like that on a regular basis. And what else was going on? Well then, as you know, as a mom, once you start getting involved with the school years and things like that, I was involved in the schools doing similar—but I was still—that's the good thing about having our own business. And my husband, we really took hits financially because when she was little, we really didn't do much. He wanted to be with her. And so . . .

SGC: Oh, what was your business again?

T: Well, the golf one.

SGC: Oh, okay.

T: And then after that, my husband always liked sales stuff. So he found a few products that he could sell. One was [laughs] called the Air Chair, these hanging chairs. And he's so funny because he likes making people comfortable, and he likes products you can demonstrate. So people would sit in them at these different shows. And so he would go all over the place. So I'd be the one doing all the paperwork, ordering the stuff. And once again, we had a nice relationship with this one guy that originally he just was doing shows for him. But he trusted the two of us, and he let us do all kinds of stuff. And I'm not like an accountant or anything and whenever he would push—or it was actually once he got this one girlfriend, he was kind of wanting to push me to be a little more in the bounds of how they would normally do it and then order all this stuff. And I kept telling my husband, "No, we can't do it because if we get stuck with it," but this way, he was letting us just sell from what he had, and I would just buy it as we went. So, like I said, I loved it. I've always tried to get those kinds of relationships so it was a relationship, and it wasn't about, "Well, you know, we're not going to make money that way." He even let us use his van. I think the point in bringing that up was it did allow me to still be able to do things so I could work at home with my daughter, move around on the floor. And I might have stayed up in the middle of the night too much doing paperwork because I had to or call like all these venues. So my husband could have never done any of that.

SGC: No?

T: He's a great person. And plus, now though, he's also a great people person. So he got out of sales altogether, and now he's working at the State Hospital making peanuts.

SGC: Oh.

T: And me helping my folks, so we're always like on a financial—close to the edge, but because --

SGC: But you're happy? [Laughs]

T: Yeah, yeah. And I was able to put some money aside. But it's, you know, going. It was with somebody in school, which hopefully you don't have to find out and do that, but she's been able to find money. And that was another thing too. I helped her how to do the scholarship thing, because that's where a lot of kids, the parents that don't get involved in the kids, they may be able to do it, they may not, they might not understand. So to me, it's all about education, but I know a lot of people don't have the time for it, so I've helped several people in that regard too that didn't know. I said, "Yeah, you know." The guy says, "Oh yeah, they said they're doing it." I said, "Have you seen them?" Because there's money out there, especially that first year. Especially if they're really good students. I mean, others are—it's a little harder; they're sort of more merit-based. But Janelle was a gold mine because she did so many interesting things. She could write well. So you take advantage of it if it's out there. And she deserves every penny of it is the way I look at it.

SGC: That's cool. Yeah.

T: But we worked together. I set everything out. The living room was just constantly filled with all the applications. I think she went--32 she applied to.

SGC: Holy cow!

T: Thirty-two.

SGC: I was very small. I know many people apply to like a dozen. I think I applied to five undergrad and five grad. I'm just [laughs] not a go-getter.

T: Well did -- well did your area have them?

SGC: Mm-hmm.

T: Yeah? But that's the thing, some don't know that they have them or that, "Well, I probably won't get them" kind of thing. So I just really feel like the guidance departments are overwhelmed in schools.

SGC: Yeah, they are.

T: And if you don't go there . . .

SGC: You've got to kind of be lucky to have someone, yeah.

T: . . . you've got to grease the wheel. You've got to be the ones to go. And it's, you know, in a good way. So again, everything's about relationships. You build nice relationships with people, they'll want to work with you, and that's the way it should be. But if you're a troublemaker, people might still work with you, but they certainly aren't going to enjoy it. So everybody work together, and that's the way it hold be. I'm still involved in the school councils at my daughter's old high school, even though she was only actually a student there for a year, a full student, because I think that's important. I've talked to the kids still, and I bring things to them. And one in particular was about they offered a course on college prep that really did help a lot of these kids that are doing homework too much, and they're staying up, and then they don't have time to do that. So they actually had a one-trimester course. And my daughter took that. And I said, "Oh, this is great." And so then they dropped it. And so I wanted to ask, because one kid really was looking forward to it, so that when I asked the guidance people, they said, "Well, they're doing it a little differently, like at an activity period because not everybody could take the trimester one." So I understood what they were trying to do. I still think they should offer the one for those that really, you know, could fit that in. It was like you were saying, to be on a regular basis. And so it's not another extra thing, I don't really want to deal with it until I have to. But this way, they were thinking ahead and getting that done. I think, again, an issue in our culture of college debt, that's one that every petition I see go by, I just keep putting that one on the radar too and trying to read up on that because it's unbelievable what's happening to kids. And since I do have that connection with my sister in Germany, the card tricks are just incredible. But we just talk about, you know, we can't be Socialists here and help people when other countries can do it, but there's just such propaganda about helping people in that way. None of those kids start with nooses around their necks and not being able to, you know, afford cars and even think about getting a home and stuff like that 'til way down the line if you have to borrow so much money. So, you know, those issues—so that's what I was doing with my daughter.

SGC: I have a random question.

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T: Oh sure.

SGC: Beause I have a daughter, and I'm looking into this program they have at the Unitarian Church for kind of like coming of age, spiritual cultivation . . .

T: Oh wow, yeah.

SGC: . . . as well as like understanding changes in your body and being female. And so I was thinking, I don't know of anything in the Catholic Church that's like, you know, we have our Sacraments, we have, you know, around that transition they go for confirmation, but it's not related to any kind of rite of passage for girls or what it means to be a woman. I'm thinking about like your approach to mothering and of raising a girl in particular. Like did you think about that extensively or were there things that you read or were you part of a mothers' group? What was it like raising-raising a young girl as a Catholic peace activist?

T: Now that you say that though, I didn't really think about that too much. But that would have been good. I know at their school, I did attend a thing they did. This was a public school. I don't know, what was she in? Maybe like 4th grade or something and they had a movie, and they had you come to that too. But yeah, those are really good questions. I know for my daughter, because I really did include her in everything. So she came with—and the good thing is sometimes you have kids that don't want to sometimes. I just was incredibly lucky to be honest because sometimes the kids want to stay as far away from whatever the parents are doing. But, for example, all those meetings at Agape with my daughter, you know the stairs that go up? She would sit in that first little landing. And she was very quiet when she was little. But she would listen in on everything.

SGC: [Laughs] That's how my daughter is.

T: So we talk about things on the way home. But she'd have her little books. You know, she'd be working on some kind of projects or, you know, when she was in school too of course she'd do homework. But she liked being around all that. And I remember doing some things because Aiden's a year older than she is.

SGC: Oh okay, mm-hmm.

T: And so we did some things together over at her house. And another family from Agape, although he's back now, Harry Dushane (sp), so he's working actually with Urban Missionaries, Walter Doyle (sp) that I mentioned before. But he's had a lot of different jobs. But he came through. I met him at Agape as a campus minister coming from Saint John's with students. And he was so moved by Agape, he brought his wife and family and two children. So they were wonderful because one was a little older than Janelle, and one was around Janelle's age, a younger boy. So we used to get together too. And it was really nice. And, of course, again, having similar interests and things like that. But in terms of you're talking like a sexuality thing, I really . . .

SGC: Oh no, I mean like more holistic.

T: But one thing – yeah.

SGC: Like being a woman, yeah.

T: Yeah. Hmm. Yeah, I just feel like, you know, for Janelle, because I still can't believe all the stuff she's doing.

SGC: Yeah, she's very active.

T: And just because you have to understand, maybe I didn't tell you this, when she was very young, this was very frightening too. She was diagnosed by the powers that be after she was in preschool as a selected mute. She didn't talk to anybody. My kid that's all over the place, she didn't speak.

SGC: Oh, I would have never guessed that by meeting her.

T: I know.

SGC: She's so articulate. [Laughs]

T: I know. And she always was at home. But she didn't speak outside of the home.

SGC: She was absorbing.

T: That's true.

SGC: [Laughs]

T: But it was so interesting because it did turn me into some—a little bit out of my personality. I had to be—I mean, it's not that I'm not outgoing, but I probably did change my personality because I became more clownish around the kids to make them be attracted to Janelle as a kid. She would like turn away. So she might have talked to me a little and maybe get overheard, but that was very, very seldom if that happened. But she was known as the kid that doesn't talk. But for example, I probably wouldn't have had these big birthday parties. But when she was real little in my church basement, not that we could afford big birthday parties, but they would let us use the basement, and so everybody from our class would come. And my husband who is very entertaining we'd do the old-fashioned things like pin the tail on the donkey and Janelle and one of her friends made all of them. They'd pin the thing on. The musical chairs. Oh, Simon Says. We've got these on film. They really are great. And they really enjoyed it. And it was just pizza and running around. But that was the thing, it was so that—it can go either way. You have a kid that's different, they can be really brutalized. And so she was, "Oh, there's Janelle who doesn't talk." So I had a teacher in first grade that would always report to me and say, "Yeah, she smiled today." And then in second—she did start to talk near the end of first grade in school. But I remember seeing it; talk about being heartbroken. I knew what she was like at home, and I think she was probably over-talking after not talking all day in school or anything. But I went into read in the library at story time. And so the kids come filing in. And I'm telling you, I see my daughter with her posture. It was like a kid that was probably like a teen girl. Like they grow tall usually before boys do. And maybe, you know, their bodies are changing so that they're like this, you know, kind of hiding and they hunch over. Here's my cute little, lovely, so-animated daughter that's walking like this, you know? And I'm going, "Oh my goodness. That poor kid," you know? It was heartbreaking. And then she told me after doing the reading, she says, "Mom, how could you do that? Eeverybody was looking at you." And so some thought with her, this idea of being being watched, you know? So it was really intriguing. But as you see, she came out of it.

And the first thing that was funny, the preschool are the ones that alerted us to this might be a problem and had us go to a psychologist at the grammar school. And they gave us these articles. [Laughs] And said stuff like, "Yeah, some of these kids, they were like locked in the basements or the attics." And I'm thinking, oh my goodness. They're going to come take us away. They're going to take her away from us, you know?

SGC: As a mother, yes.

T: And they said, "Oh, no, no, no, it's not that." I said, "Oh good." I said, "I think they're staking us out to see what we do with her when she's at home." So that was very intriguing times.

SGC: The diagnoses, the culture of diagnosing I think is over the top.

T: I know. It certainly is.

SGC: And I know so many kids who are -- my nephew was like this -- wouldn't speak, but we were told when it was just the nuclear family that he was Mr. Chatty Magoo.

T: Exactly, there you go.

SGC: And then he grew out of it, and he's completely—you can't even see it. [Laughs]

T: There you go. Well here's one example too. One of her preschool teachers who lived on the same street, I always used to take my mother grocery shopping and my daughter too. We were down at Price Chopper. She's just, you know, lah-de-dah like any kid. She's just the normal thing. And then all of a sudden, this preschool teacher comes up, boom, she shut down on a dime. Just that thing. And she's so lovely, and they were all so nice. But that's something in her. And I always interpreted it for her as that she might have been actually a little bit ahead, that she was—this idea of self-consciousness that you have or that you're going to do something wrong. I think that was part of it.

SGC: Comes around 8 or 9 or 10, yeah.

T: There you go. But here . . .

SGC: Came early.

T: . . .this is what she even did too. I forgot about this one. I used to run [laughs] with another woman. The choir at our church, we had a children's choir. And it was wonderful. We had as many as 30 kids. Of course I would take my Janelle. But one choir practice, I used to sit, it was like on the edge. We were above, you know, in a choir loft. And here she was sitting, and I could see her. And all of a sudden, her face is like purple; it's red. And I'm saying to her, "What's wrong honey?" And she didn't want to say a word. She's sitting there. I was thinking, "Oh my goodness, something is drastically wrong." But of course she wasn't going to say anything. And

I asked her after. She just didn't want the attention, so I had to stop right away. I had to be the calm-looking one. But, I mean, it looked terrible. She was holding in a cough for an hour.

SGC: [Laughs] No wonder her face turned red.

T: How could you do that? I said, "Janelle." I shook her hand. I said, "You've just done something no one else in the world could ever do because that's a reflex action. That's not something you can have control of." So that's how bad it was for this kid.

SGC: Oh.

T: She thought coughing was going to make her stick out. She even did something like when she had a runny nose, she would cover up like this. And I tried to tell her, "Gee, if you're trying to hide that nose, that makes people look at it." But anyway, she was really interesting.

Another break occurs

SGC: I feel like we went through the 2000's. One thing I wanted to ask before, what about the first Gulf War? Were you involved in fact, we used to meet—this was what was really nice, again, being a faith-based thing. Every Monday—in fact, Scott mentioned that the other day because we always used to meet religiously on Mondays. It was a nice core group of us. And he would use the scripture of the day, and that would kind of spark discussion. We'd each get a go-around sort of like the Quaker method. So everybody would get a chance to say something. And then out of that would come planning for vigils and so forth. And in particular that year too, which was nice because Scott was talking about the stations of the cross. And I remember one of the early years; it was probably pre the war starting, we shared that in terms of writing the stations.

SGC: Oh cool, okay.

T: So we each took one. Scott, he's so wonderful. He'll do everything, so it was nice. That's probably why it never happened again though because it was probably tough for Scott to wait for all of us slow people to bring in our essays. But that was really nice because we all got to reflect on different topics. I think I did the death penalty. As we were standing in front of the Federal Building, I did the death penalty. But if you've never come, it's a lovely thing. But again, we used to go a lot of different routes. But that was a way of, you know, as a community really sharing and preparing out of a spiritual base of saying, "We know as Christians this is not something we

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want to see happen again." That's what was so heartbreaking; I think I had mentioned that before, to know that all that—never thought people would be snookered again. After the Vietnam stuff. So showing that it was all for nothing and it was a lie and it was this and it was that. So now with this, the stuff in the White House now, that's why any of us—and I'm not, you know, don't consider myself old-old, but when I look back and I see, you got me thinking; I say, "Wait a minute, I've been doing this over 30, almost 40 years," you know? And you just sometimes don't believe it. That the same old things can happen again. So what's wrong with the education? Why? And now it's—and all of this—my daughter, when she was born, the computer stuff wasn't even out there. So that's a huge change. People are getting their information differently, and it doesn't make it better. In a lot of ways, it's making it worse. It's easier to do the propaganda. And that's why you just always got to be at it. It's not going to end because there's always people that are wanting to manipulate for, you know, for whatever selfish, power-kind-of reasons. So in terms of that, we used to do I think it was every week down at Lincoln Square and some right here in front of City Hall. And there were just some beautiful things around the world actually, (___??) People really thought, how can they --

SGC: If you could speak up a little bit?

T: Oh sure. It's a little noisy?

SGC: Because of the jazz music. I can hear you, but yeah.

T: Oh good. But I think that that was what—there was so much going on. I mean, there were record numbers in terms of people trying to just—poking holes and a reason to be doing this. But it still didn't matter. We had the—again, the wrong people in the White House that had their own agenda and just didn't care about everybody else.

SGC: So what would be done locally? I mean, there were regular vigils for how long?

T: Again, my memory doesn't serve me well on things like that. But throughout the whole preparation time, because there was a lot of preparation time for that, there were supposedly—the diplomacy was going on and blah blah blah. But it didn't—and then in terms of being Catholic, I think I was mentioning about the editor of The Free Press was really trying to say, "Here's the just law thing. Doesn't even measure up with that. So, you know, maybe we should be getting into this." All that kind of stuff was going on. But it didn't matter, didn't matter. It still happened so . . .

SGC: So then tell me a little bit about September 11th and the second Iraq War and what was happening in the communities that you were connected to in Worcester.

T: Yeah, yeah, that was tough for different reasons because [sighs] because when that happened, again, already just going through the other thing and being jaded by that experience and knowing that, you know, sometimes it's depressing. You think something's going to be effective and having a history that people being sent halfway around the world is not going to do any good. But when that happened, I just knew in my gut it's just going to give them, the people in power, an opportunity to clamp down even more. And it's going to be different forever for us. And unfortunately, that's true in terms of going on an airplane. We were very spoiled. You know, we now have to—everything has to be looked at, all of those kind of things. The NSA [National Security Agency] development in terms of everybody being a suspect to listen to and all of that whole culture was not before that time. And so our current president is playing on those fears even more. He keeps using our dear radical Islamic terrorists that we have to be aware of every second. And so I'm more of a statistical person in terms of if you look at the statistics of any of these things, it's the likelihood of something happening to you are very remote. It's more likely in a car. Everybody gets—more people get hurt going in their car every day. And not that—certainly I'm not putting it lightly that we shouldn't be doing something about clamping down on violence. I'm certainly all for that. But the ways of going about it are so not non-violent. And instead, it's picking up the big stick. So that's why I remembered feeling that when that happened because I actually was at Holy Cross. I was just finished running from behind the Arts Center. And I turned on the radio. And I didn't quite know what was happening. And then I started hearing it. So I went home quickly. And I saw, you know, the Towers burning and everything. And that was what I was feeling. I mean, kind of sorry to say that my first instinct wasn't as much for all the people getting hurt. I thought right way of the future, about the repercussions of it.

SGC: That's my same --

T: What's that? Was it?

SGC: That was my same thought.

T: I just—I was so heartbroken by that idea that everything's going to change and the people—that the cowboys are going to win again, you know what I mean? That's what's going to be happening. And at first, I was pleasantly surprised. They treated it more like it was a crime, you know, that we have to find these people. But that switched much too quickly. And then it was

about, "We've got to bomb Afghanistan. Now we've got to go after Iraq." Iraq? The people from Saudi Arabia? None of it made sense. So I knew we were in big trouble.

I knew we were in big trouble. And it's funny because our business at the same time, we had—do you know the Big E, the big festival every year? It's a huge one. You know, people sell things, but there's carnivals, all kinds of stuff and 4-H club, all that. It's in Springfield. And the guy where we get our stuff from was in New York City. So we're trying to set up for this thing, and he couldn't even leave to get us the stuff. It was really a tough time for us in a business way because everybody was wondering if war's going to happen, so it was all that too. But I'm telling you, just as you were feeling, that's where my heart was. It was about, "Here we go." At least during the [president Barack] Obama years, I thought things were—not that I certainly agreed with everything that he did, but the whole tone, you know, that's what we need. It's all about how you treat people. I keep coming back to that. But none of this is helping. And in terms of the whole immigrant stuff, he [President Trump]—it's just making everybody upset and tense and fearful. I really think it's about the fear and losing—we talked about that a little bit the other night—this whole—the white privilege does not want to give that up. And this is just a perfect way of articulating it. And he is able to do it so effectively and just doesn't know anything, so add to that, he's so uniformed about everything. So you feel like, okay, I can go educate this person, and maybe he'll see it's not doing the things he thinks it's going to do if that's what he really means. But there's just—there's just something wrong with him intellectually, psychologically. So this is like the worst it could ever be in my estimation. I don't know if that's a good [laughs] wrapper-upper. [Laughs]

SGC: Well, let's wrap up with this question: can you tell me what your life is like now in terms of the networks you've maintained contact with or things that are new or recent that you're doing?

T: Okay. Well, more with . . .

SGC: And specifically to what you most invested in Worcester as a community or issues supported by Worcester networks.

T: Yeah, well I think in general, the main community's the Agape one; I'm always going to be involved there. That's kind of my primary. In some ways it's not in the city, but the ties are very deep there. And then with Scott and Claire's on an ongoing basis for support things too and try to do some of the things that they're working on. So I'm not a community member in that way, but we're all community in the larger sense of that word all the time. But the Mustard Seed right

now, because of what was happening there, there was a need for hands on deck over there. So on a more day-to-day level, although just because my mother's been having her problem, that's where sometimes I haven't been able to be as active in some of the things. But even a year ago I was going every day to be helping because we had to start up another whole new routine of people now. But things have settled into a pretty good routine. But I do the—I'm the secretary of the group and do all the note things and everything like that. But that's a big thing too because the issues around Mustard Seed have to do with bigger issues as well, the homelessness, the opioid crisis, all of those things you see every day.

So it's the personalist philosophies of the Catholic Workers that you relate to people on a one-to-one basis and try to help them if at all possible. And so that doing the works of mercy right there is feeding people. That's really something very concrete. But at the higher level, I always like to be working on it at that next level in terms of, "Well what about the problems there?" So, I mean, for myself, I haven't been able to work on them as much at this particular time because of having to deal with things with my parents a lot. But I'm always out there. This is the thing. I see this because my mother knows everybody in the city too. But like the powers that be, if you're always talking and always giving, anytime I see anybody like that, I'm trying to tell them what I'm seeing. And make a difference to hear from people. And I learned all that through my mother watching her over the years. So I'd say in the schools right now, I still go. We had a meeting yesterday at the Quinsigamond School, which is a school I went to as a kid. It's right down the road from my parents' house. There's 800 kids there, 800. And they speak many languages. And the only reason they're not a Level Four school, which is the lowest, is because there's not—the federal dollars could like handle two in the city being named officially Level Four to get the funding. So we're like a Level four school, but . .

SGC: To support, oh, that's great.

T: Right. But they're doing it in a different way though, so it's really very interesting. There has been some strife there. A principal that had retired a couple years ago, the new one that came in got a vote of no confidence, excuse me, a little while ago. But very exciting, my mother got a call last Saturday that the old principal, Debbie Mitchell, who retired, is coming back for this year. So we met with her in a little group yesterday, so that's really exciting. But I think in that way, as I say, that starting with the young people, that if you can get them off on the right track then that's the place you have to be invested in. So when I run into people that I know who are movers and shakers, like when I see Ed Augustus [Worcester City Manager], for example, somebody like him, I remember talking to him in an event at Piedmont Street. He remembers my daughter all the way back. It's so funny. I'm kind of going off again. But just to tell you how

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things—it's a perfect example of this. When just started middle school, when she did her long composition, one of those years. And so she wrote about—the question was, "What's your favorite place," or whatever. She wrote about the Worcester Public Library. She wrote this wonderful essay about a book. The books are calling to me. She's a very good writer. And this one book that came out, I can't remember it now. But then she had a contest with my husband. She said that she could read that book in a day, and it was like 500 pages or something. And so here she is reading it. And (___??) essay, but she talked about how exciting the library was and all the things about going there since she was a little kid. I got this great picture that was in the paper of us and me holding her and she's looking at a book. And anyway, again, I like to tell people when they're doing a really nice job. And I knew the head librarian, Penny Johnson, there at the time. She was there for a long, long time. And I said, "You know what? I bet she would really like to see this, you know what I mean?" It raises people's spirits if they know, here's a kid and it's right out there, and it's not a prompting from anyone. This is coming from her. This is her favorite place to be. So I gave her a copy of that, and she read it. And then the next time I came into the library, Janelle didn't even know I did it, but one of the librarians there who's from Albania, oh, she loves Janelle too, but apparently Penny let all the librarians read it because, again, Janelle is talking about this great place. And she said, "Oh," with her accent, "Oh, what a beautiful essay that was. Thank you so much," and they all had read this thing. So then Penny Johnson said, "Look, they're having a legislative breakfast at the library to talk about library things, and I love that kind of stuff." She's like, "Do you think Janelle could come and read her essay in front of all these politicians and the library board people from across the state," right? So she had to get out of school to do it. But she did it. And here she was; I think she was maybe it was seventh grade. But anyway, the repercussions of her just doing that, I knew a lot of those politicians, you know, local ones and everything. And so, like I said, this was just like a year ago, less than that, and Augustus still remembered her reading that story.

SGC: Oh, that's lovely.

T: And we were at a Holy Cross basketball game. And a guy came up, and I didn't know him. And here's Janelle and I walking out. He says, "Oh, hi, Janelle." And I'm saying, "Oh hi," like you know sometimes people, you might have met them. And he says, "Oh, well I know you don't know me, but I was at the library. So he was like the head of the State Library Board. And he remembered her, so that was the greatest thing, and that really had an influence on him about spending their money. And same thing, I remember there were two other people. It was two other local politicians, the same thing. And here's one little thing, her doing something, me saying, "I want to tell them what a great job, what a nice thing to share that with the library." And then the head librarian, she and the other librarians were very excited about it because it

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makes them feel good that they want something that's, you know, important and helping people. And then it leads to another bigger group sharing and seeing that maybe we should be putting more money into—you know what I mean? It was that kind of thing. And so this was my whole point. So when I saw him again, he asked me about her based on that from how many years ago? Seven years ago he had remembered that. And then we were talking, and I had talked about the Mustard Seed and about the policies and things, what's going on there, and he's wonderful if you know him. He was at Holy Cross too and doing ...

SGC: Mm-hmm, I -- yeah, I met him, yeah.

T: But my mother's known him since he was on the school committee he started. But I guess in those ways, that's a typical way to be. If you're in a community and part of a community, that you can do that free flowing if you stay involved and if you try to know that it's important to you to make you (___??) and they're not taken lightly. And they say calling politicians, and they have to hear from you, takes very few to make a difference. So I do that. I've been doing all these crazy petitions. But [laughs] there's just too much going on now. But I guess I forgot that when we were—it was about like how I'm doing something today.

SGC: Yeah, kind of what you're involved in today, and you go to the Catholic Worker House (___??).

T: Right. So because we're still working on all the different events and things in Agape because I'll do—what did we go to more recently? It was an event out in Arlington for a guy that's leaving. But Suzanne, you know, we support them. They're going down for the (___??) down to Washington. I mean normally that would be something I would try to do, but I just can't leave my parents right now. But those kind of things, like when I went to Washington, it was a real big one too with the climate change assembly. I was able to go to that one. But years ago going into New York a lot, there were a lot of big ones. They were fun to do as big groups and Boston things. But Scott and Claire were always planning things locally so I really liked that, that there was always so—I think I had mentioned it's always sort of on the fence a little with the vigiling because I do like it to be where people will be approachable and maybe have some conversation because sometimes I think it could drive people more apart. So I'm always a little, a little hesitant. But I do it because if you don't do it, then, you know, nothing can get done either. So it can provide the opportunity for conversation. Scott's very good at that. That's why I love working with them, and Claire of course, but he's just so not bashful, you know? [Laughs] So if anybody makes like a negative look or something, he's always trying to draw them in to make sure that, "Okay, well I'm on (Level four)?? then." Talk about it, get their view and bring them in to do a

brass circle. And even a few years ago, Holy Cross, oh my goodness, the vigil we do in September though, oh, on the stairs of the library more recently.

SGC: ROTC, yeah.

T: Sometimes we had done it in front of Hogan, the back side of Hogan while the kids were walking in. But all of a sudden it was, I'm going to say it was on the 10th anniversary then of 9/11. Yeah, I bet it was. And a security guard came up. He was very mad. I thought we were going to get into some big trouble because he was really mad. And Scott said how he always writes to the president, which he does, Father [Burroughs]. And, you know, he didn't—they didn't say not to do it. I can't remember all the details, but I do remember that one being a little hairy, and that was one time where Scotty says, "No, we're not leaving." They were only going to be there like two more minutes. And I'm saying, you know, "Let's just leave," you know? But he did continue to talk, and he invited the security guy to do the prayer with us. I think he was just one of those guys who just was, "You know, this is the anniversary of 9/11. You shouldn't be protesting about, you know, military, ROTC, whatever." So that one could have gone down worse than it did. But he was a little—because usually he's very good at that. But he was pretty annoyed that being asked to leave, but we ended up recovering quickly enough that it didn't turn bad. [Laughs]

SGC: Yeah.

T: But, no, but I mean, that's the thing. There's things come up. There's always issues about social justice and just somebody that really feels like it's important. Then you're just always going to be trying to find people to work with, and then Worcester's a great city to do that. It really is. So many people working on good things. So, as I say, at this point in my life, my daughter's away, but now my parents sort of—I've stepped in to take a role there, and it's working out great; it really is. Because like this time of day, usually a little later, so I was a little late because my dad was at the bakery still. He went out to shovel. I said, "No, no, dad." Even though it was just a little bit. But he slips, so I had to make sure I did it well before he came back because when it's a little bit sometimes is when it's extra slippery. So he was going to be over in a couple of minutes. But it's just, you know, getting my father because going in and out of the bathroom, getting her back settled in her chair. Because she can move once she's up holding her Rollator. But she needs help dressing, taking a shower. So, I try to do all of that that I can do. And I sleep in a recliner next to my mother. So it's [laughs] it's quite a . . .

SGC: That's intense.

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T: It's—yeah, it can be. But we make it fun. [Laughs] But I'd like to take her to her meetings and all that kind of stuff. So I have an interesting life. [Laughs] It keeps me on my toes. But I very much appreciate being able to stroll down memory lane so God bless you.

SGC: Yeah, thank you so much. Thank you.

T: Poor woman, though. You're going to have to figure this out.

[End of recorded material]