

Interviewee: Ellen Smith Dunlap  
Interviewers: Vanessa Urbina and Mary Jo Herlihy  
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Transcribers: Vanessa Urbina and Mary Jo Herlihy



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**Abstract:** Ellen Smith Dunlap was born in Nashville, Tennessee in 1951. She currently is President of the American Antiquarian Society [AAS] in Worcester, Massachusetts, an historical organization that was awarded the 2013 National Humanities Medal at a White House ceremony. She married Art Dunlap, became widowed, and remarried Frank Armstrong. They have a daughter named Libby Armstrong. They moved to the Worcester area in 1992 and then relocated to West Boylston, Massachusetts. Before moving she had lived in Waco, Texas and Lawrence, Kansas with her parents. She then moved to Austin, Texas when she attended the University of Texas in Austin. She later moved with her second husband and daughter to Pennsylvania and New Jersey, where she lived until she came to live in Worcester. Her first job was at the University of Texas Library of Aviation, which led to her job at the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia, and then to the American Antiquarian Society. Ellen also shares her secret to getting a hug from two different presidents, President Barack Obama and President Bill Clinton, and what it is like to speak and sit next to two first ladies, Michelle Obama and Jacqueline Kennedy.

**Vanessa Urbina:** We are completing the citywide oral history of the lives of Worcester women aiming to collect goals about a broad range of experiences...in 1850 a Women's Rights Convention was held in Worcester. We're focusing on the areas of women's education, health, work, politics, and community involvement. We just want to focus on your experience with...

**Ellen Dunlap:** The American Antiquarian Society?

**VU:** Yeah

[both laugh]

**VU:** Thank you for your help in this important project.

**ED:** Sure.

**VU:** So just for general, can you tell us your full name, including both your maiden name and married name?

**ED:** My first name was Ellen Kerry Smith, and that was my maiden name. And now I go by Ellen S. Dunlap.

**VU:** Dunlap...how do you spell that?

**ED:** D - U - N - L - A - P

**VU:** Oh ok.

**Mary Jo Herlihy:** When were you born?

**ED:** I was born October 12, 1951. I discovered America the same day Columbus did.

[All laugh]

**VU:** And you already answered that you been married, what is the name of your husband?

**ED:** Oh, my husband's name is Frank Armstrong. I was married to Art Dunlap in 1972 and he died in 1977. And I married Frank in 1979.

**VU:** Ok, alright.

**MJH:** Do you have children?

**ED:** I do. I have one daughter and her name is Libby Armstrong.

**MJH:** Do you have any grandchildren?

**ED:** Not yet

[all laugh]

**VU:** What cultures or ...do you identify with?

**ED:** I'm just as white WASP as you can get.

**VU:** Would you like to tell us about your parents?

**ED:** Sure. My father was a physics professor at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. And my mother met him when she was at graduate school there. And she went on to teach English at Baylor. And my father died when I was three years old.

**VU:** Sorry

**ED:** And my mother when I was about 16 or 17 married a physics prof., as some may never learn, who had been the chairman at the Baylor physics department for a long time and was an

old family friend. Though my sister and I—my sister had already married and I was just off to college when we acquired two stepbrothers and two stepsisters. We had an expanded family late in life as you will.

**MJH:** Ok, so where have you lived during your life?

**ED:** Well, I was born in Nashville Tennessee, because my then-graduate school student father happened to be at Vanderbilt at the time, and then we lived in Waco, Texas, where Baylor was located. My mother went to graduate school at the University of Kansas, so in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade I lived in Lawrence, Kansas, and then moved back to Waco. And then I went to the University of Texas in Austin, and I was married there and after my husband, my first husband died I met my current husband and we lived in Austin until 1983, let me think about that...yes, 1983, when we moved to Philadelphia where I was...had my second son. I worked at the University of Texas, and I worked at Philadelphia and we lived in Mount Laurel, New Jersey across the river from Philadelphia and then we moved here [Worcester, Massachusetts] in 1992 and we lived in Worcester for a year and a half now we live in West Boylston and we lived there ever since.

**MJH and VU:** ok

**VU:** That's quite a lot of places

**ED:** Yeah

**MJH:** So that, so what was your neighborhood like generally, back in Austin. Or in Nashville depending on...

**ED:** Nashville I don't remember because I had been a few months old, but growing up in Waco, my neighborhood was very different from [how] the kids grow up today. Oh, I would go by myself all over the neighborhood, I would go down to the Sears store, walk around the whole store looking at everything, come back home, by myself, and we kids were able to run around on our own a lot more than kids do today. And I am still friends with people I knew in the neighborhood then and we see each other on Facebook. Occasionally when I go to Texas and my friend Alice says she remembers every crack of the sidewalk between her house and my house, so we went back and forth quite a bit.

**VU:** And what was your new life here when you moved to Worcester?

**ED:** Well in the first 18 months that we lived here in the itty-bitty cottage next door to the library, while we were looking for a place to settle. My husband is a photographer and at the time he was very much into dark room photography and needed, wanted a house where he could have a dark room studio at home. It's now digital completely so he doesn't need a dark room anymore, but it took us quite a while for us to settle on where we would live and, as I said,

bought a house on West Boylston, so I'm sort of, I was active in a lot of things in Worcester and active in West Boylston as well.

**VU:** We already answered that question...and where do you live in the city now?

**ED:** In West Boylston

**VU:** In West Boylston, yeah and...

**MJH:** You lived in multiple areas

**ED:** Yep

**MJH:** So do other family members live in the same area?

**ED:** My daughter lives in Holden, and her husband lives in Holden, where she works at Tower Hill Botanic Garden and I got to see her last night at her daddy's opening at Worcester State and the photography show last night, so it's nice to have her close by.

**MJH:** Excellent

**VU:** What challenges do you think this city still faces? What would you change about the city, if there's anything?

**ED:** Well, I work very hard on the behalf of the city, I've been very active in the Worcester Cultural Coalition, and was one of the—among the various things that I have worked on is trying to coordinate the promotion and the work for tourism, and also for doing business attraction, and for college engagement. I worked for many years on the program that we now have the money to do which is to improve signage around the city. I think that when I first came to Worcester 22 years ago I asked a man who was giving me a ride somewhere—a cab driver—to tell me about this city and he said, "It's a great place, I lived here all my life, but the problem was the people in charge only give us what we think we deserve." So I guess I'm one of the people in charge and I think the Worcester people are wonderful, I think the city is wonderful, I think it has lots of attributes, but there's a lot of nay-saying and negativity that I found in Philadelphia. People like me who came to Philadelphia from outside appreciate the city a lot more than people who lived there all their lives, and so I think giving people a reason to be proud of the city is something I worked very hard and I think the city administration has worked very hard to try to create.

**MJH:** Ok, so what changes have you seen in Worcester over time since you came here?

**ED:** I think that a lot of the changes—I think that the colleges are much more engaged in the life of the city. I think that the nature of project-based learning at Clark [University], WPI in particular, but [College of the] Holy Cross, Assumption [College], Worcester State [University]. We see a lot more of the colleges really trying to help the city and using the city as a laboratory

for their students, and I think that's to the benefit of the students and the city as well. I think that so much over these past 20 years has just been changed by the Internet, so it's hard to say how much is unique to Worcester or how much it is just the culture we are in. And I think that certainly Worcester has had so many new starts. So long time ago, long before my time when they built the DCU Center, that was gonna change everything, when they built the downtown mall that was gonna change everything, of course downtown malls were bad for cities, for towns everywhere, and certainly at here as well, but also, there's just a lot of activism in the city, and because my husband is an artist, and we have lots of friends in the artist community, I see a lot of that, and people really do care about the city and so to fight for it as an underdog, and I see a lot more of that every year, and it's a good thing.

**MJH:** Excellent...and we already answered that.

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

**ED:** Well, you know, when I came to Worcester, much was made about the fact that I was the first woman in 180 years to be the head of the American Antiquarian Society, and people were always asking me, "So what does it feel like to be the first woman president in the Antiquarian?" and I was like, "I've been a woman all my life, I feel the same way as I always felt." And so it's—I have been a pioneer in my field in many ways, but [it] has been very rare in my career that I have been felt singled out as a woman. You know, I've been in a lot of—a lot of times, I have been the only woman in the room, so I've been kind of used to that. And, so it's been a little hard for me to answer the question about women's experiences in Worcester, because I don't really think about life through that lens, in the same way. You know, I think that Worcester had a woman mayor a long time ago, we have women city councilors, we had leaders in the non-profit, certainly in Worcester, we—there have been college presidents—so I don't—it's hard. I've been a part of the generation where acceptance of women in leadership positions is so every day that it's a little more difficult for me to give a meaningful answer to that question.

**VU:** That's fine

**MJH:** That's ok

**VU:** So now we are moving on to education

**ED:** OK

**VU:** And some of these you already answered, so sorry

**ED:** That's ok.

**VU:** Where did you attend school? And if you want to focus on a particular school like college.

**ED:** Sure, I went to the University of Texas as an undergraduate, and I was eager to get through in three years and to do that, my mother, who never married at that time, was living in Durham, North Carolina where her husband was on the faculty at Duke, so I would go home in the summers during college and take, go to my mother's home, and take courses at the University of North Carolina. And these were hard courses, not these new courses that they have at UNC where you don't have to...you're an athlete and you don't have to do anything to get the grade. But anyway, I took credits at the University of North Carolina to piece together my degree in three years, then I continue to do the same graduate, I went straight to graduate school at the University of Texas, but I had credit at the University of North Carolina also. And so I got my Master's degree in Library Science from the University of Texas and swore off school from that. [laughs]

**VU:** Ok, that's a lot of work.

**MJH:** So what were your challenges in education?

**ED:** Well, my challenge in education are I'm a terrible procrastinator, so I would put off until the very last minute for every test, every paper, every whatever. But I did have the ability to pull things off, but not without lots of midnight oil being burnt and I still have that problem.

MJH and VU laugh.

**ED:** I would say that I was very fortunate in that my calling as a librarian and working in special collections like this one [American Antiquarian Society] kind of found me as I found it and it was just through...kind of happens. The University of Texas is a huge place; there are 40,000 undergraduates when I was there.

**MJH:** Wow.

**ED:** So you pick your classes, it's a huge campus so you have to look into the schedule and say, "Can I take, can I even get to this class? It's on the other side of campus and whatever." So you pick your classes based as much on where they are and how they fit into your degree plan and I took a course because it looked fun and it was pass/fail, in the right place at the right time in the history of aviation. And I, as part of the course requirement, you could either write a paper, which I didn't care anything about the history of aviation, so I wasn't gonna do that, or spend a certain number of hours in a little library that was on the campus that was devoted to the history of aviation. So, I said I'll do that. And that little library was part of a big university library that has an amazing 20<sup>th</sup> century history collection and literature collections. And they got to know me, so when I was in graduate school continued to work there, and then after when I got my degree, I got a professional job there, and I became the research librarian there. And, that was just one of the coincidental that sort of happened and kind of shaped my career. And it's a great career. I love what I do, and I love the institutions I've been associated with.

**MJH:** Sounds wonderful.

**ED:** Coincidental though. (Laughs)

**VU:** What support networks and mentoring have been important to you?

**ED:** I believe that [in] my undergraduate and graduate school career, there were people who believed in me before I believed in myself, kind of sort of nudged me in ways that led to me getting that first job, which led to me getting that job in Philadelphia, which led to me getting the job here. And, I'm not saying that I didn't do part of it myself, but early on people seeing a spark of interest in me that was in sync with their own professional and scholarly interests, and sort of enlisting me, sort of research assistant, partner, kind of in what they were doing, was a great door opener for me. And certainly since 1983, I have been an executive director of a non-profit institution, I've always worked with board members who kind of service—I mean they're your boss, but their also your mentor. And I've met some wonderful people who have served as good role models for me, through their board service, through the institutions that I've worked for.

**MJH:** So, our next section is gonna be on work.

**ED:** Ok.

**MHJ:** And a couple of these may sound repetitive.

**ED:** That's ok.

**MJH:** So what was your first job?

**ED:** Well, my first job was sorting those magazines in college. I had never worked before. I was very fortunate. Somehow, I don't know how, my single mother, my widowed mother had been able to support me and my sister without our having to work—but that was my first job.

**VU:** And, you've had that job, and we know you work here now, have there been any jobs in-between?

**ED:** Well, so I went from being the airplane girl to being, well my first job in the main office at the—it's called the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center now—at the University of Texas. I was an assistant dealing with all the people who wanted to use the manuscript collection there. They have fabulous manuscript collections of famous 20<sup>th</sup> century writers and artists, and people applied for permission to use the manuscripts. So, I was sort of the person who accessed the collections, found out what they were working on, and what materials we had that would fit their research needs. And so, when they came from England, or France, or New York, wherever they were coming from I would interview them. And then when their books got published they would always acknowledge my help, although I had not really done anything. But it was sort of like doing vicarious research, but I was called a research librarian. And then,

in 1990—1983, I was asked to become the director of the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia, which was a rare book and manuscript library, something like the University of Texas but a tiny little jewel box of a place that was in the home of the two Rosenbach brothers, who were dealers and collectors of arts and antiques, and rare manuscripts and books. And they sold at prices that no one had ever heard of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They sold [?] and Huntington's noted, but they brought what they did not want to sell at any price back home to their private collection. And their house, it's a house museum, and so, I had never read anything, and I had never raised money, and I'd ask my mother on an advance on my allowance from time to time, but I had never really been a manager before, when I became director of that wonderful house museum. And although it was sort of a small place, it was a part of a constant of many [?] and manuscript libraries in Philadelphia as a network together to do great projects, and then I came here in 1992.

**VU:** We can skip a couple of the questions. What were, or are your primary in terms of housework and childcare?

**ED:** Almost nothing. My husband worked for the University of Texas when I met him. He had taught photography at UT, but was at the time I met him the chief photographer for the news and information service. And he got a chance, after, not too long after we met each other, he won a fellowship based on his fine art work. And he quit the University and we sort of made a pact, and we decided to start a family. And we made a pact, he would stay home and keep our daughter, if I would work and continue to let him do his fine art photography, even when it didn't make any money. And, it was a very natural thing for us to do, because he'd been a widow—a widower himself for a long time, and had been used to tending for himself, taking care of himself, and he also was from a family of strong keepers. So, he's just a very natural cook, and all I could really make was macaroni and cheese from out of a box, and my daughter had a lot of that when her daddy was traveling. And so, he was the natural stay at home guy, and when we lived in New Jersey, it was about an hour commute, so I would get to work, and he was in charge of her when she was in nursery school and kindergarten, you know, up through the sixth grade when he came here. So, he cut her hair and bought her clothes, and it sometimes showed. But we've had kind of a natural reversal of roles. And, I pay the bills, we both do the laundry, and we now have somebody else to clean our house, so...

**VU:** So, did that bother anyone around you guys, like family or friends?

**ED:** No, no. Absolutely not. Everybody knows that Frank's a better cook than I am.

**MJH:** Our next question is what do you think are the pros and consequences of the path you chose?

**ED:** I have no regrets whatsoever. I have had a remarkable life, just because of the institutions I have been privileged to be associated with. I have been acknowledged in a lot of famous books by famous people. I—once when I was at the University of Texas—talked to Jackie Kennedy on the telephone, and then when I saw her at a memorial service in New York, when I was living in

Philadelphia, I went up to her and asked “Do you remember talking—calling me at the University of Texas?” and she did. It was kind of a unique enough experience. And, I talked to her I got a hug from the president the other day, which I was gonna show you on my phone. Did you know I got a hug from the president?

**VU:** No, I didn’t.

**ED:** I did.

**VU:** Wow.

**MJH:** I’m still recording this by the way.

**ED:** I was just gonna show you the picture. That’s on my Facebook.

**VU:** Wow!

**ED:** This was—we were at the White House. The Antiquarian Society was singled out for a National Humanities Award, a National Humanities Medal.

**MJH:** Congratulations.

**ED:** And it was pretty cool. And I—everybody wants to know, what did you say to the president to get him to give you a hug? And so I said, you just have a little second, other individuals were getting awards, and institutions were getting the award, and it was pretty exciting. I was sitting next to Michelle Obama during the whole thing, which was a little bit nerve wracking, but she was very nice. But, I thought back to the time I met with Bill Clinton, again something in conjunction with the Antiquarian Society, and you just have a split second to break the ice, and I said the Antiquarian Society is in Worcester, and he said, “Oh I love Worcester,” this is Bill Clinton saying this, because he had been here many times. He loves Worcester, because everyone has been so nice to him, and he was here during the firefighters’ memorial service. And, I told him, “Yes, that’s why we’re putting a sprinkler system in the library because of the warehouse fire and your grant of four hundred thousand dollars is helping to pay for a part of the sprinkler system.” I said well that worked last time maybe I’ll try this time. I went on stage, and I shook his hand and said “I’m from Worcester,” and Obama said “Oh my gosh, I was just there at the technical high school! It’s an amazing place.” I said “I was there. I saw you hug all those girls and my daughter thinks I’ve concocted this whole medal thing to just get a hug from you.” And he laughed and gave me a hug. So, I was totally jealous watching him hug all those girls, so... [laughs]. So now I’ve forgotten what the question was, I’ve been so busy telling you my story.

**VU:** Oh, the pros and cons of the path you’ve chosen. You said you have no regrets.

**ED:** No regrets because, you know, I am not a historian, but I love—I'm curious about thousands of things. It's great to be a librarian if you're curious about things, because you know how to find things out. And so, being a librarian, and being a library administrator, and working for great institutions, it's been very rewarding, and can't imagine doing anything else.

**VU:** So, now where moving on to politics and community involvement.

**ED:** Hmhm.

**VU:** Which you're very involved in. The first question is, do you consider yourself active politically?

**ED:** Well, I am—yes and no. I'm probably not as active as I should be. I do not—I've never run for elective office. I've never campaigned or canvassed for candidates. I follow politics pretty closely, and I have made, you know, modest contributions politically from time to time. But I wouldn't say that I have been very active, as an activist. I have served on, in West Boylston, I was on the finance committee, and I was the chair of the finance committee for too many years. But I'd go to the town meeting, and that sort of thing, and have opinions about things. And, I would not say, compared to what other people are, I would not say I'm a political activist.

**VU:** Ok.

**ED:** I vote. [laughs] Sometimes it doesn't matter, my vote, but yup.

**MJH:** Have you been involved in volunteer or community work?

**ED:** I really have not. I am involved—well that's not really true. Again, I know so many people who volunteer so much. I've always worked full time, so I've never had the opportunity. But professionally, I have volunteered to do a lot of things, so the Worcester Cultural Coalition, for instance. I've been on the board of the Mass Foundation for the Humanities, now called Mass Humanities. I was chairman of that board for a term. I've been very active in the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, I've served on the distribution committee, and then I was on the board, I was on the executive committee for many years. And, so, that counts as professional volunteerism I would say. But not the same way I know so many women—I mean what would we be in a society without the volunteers that do so much.

**MJH:** And, what led you with that organization, the Cultural Coalition?

**ED:** Well, what led me to work with the Cultural Coalition is just a concern that we can do so much more collectively than we can do individually. And we had a whole lot to contribute to the economic, social, and cultural vitality of this community if we worked collectively. So, we do a lot of joint promotions. Do you all know about the Woo Card?

**VU and MJH:** [Nod].

**ED:** So that's all what the Cultural Coalition does, the ads on the radio, that sort of thing. What led me to the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, was simply I was asked to be, to serve as a citizen participant in the distribution committee, the giving of grants, and you just get—I learned so much about the community, about social service agencies, about environmental agencies, and other broad scope of non-profits that I would not have known about otherwise, and, that was very involving. My serving with the Mass Humanities was natural because the national endowment for the humanities, nationally is something the Antiquarian Society is very much involved with, and they support us and have for many years, so that's the state affiliate of the federal system of humanity support.

**MJH:** Ok, and then, what role has religion played in your life.

**ED:** Not that much. I have—I come from a long line of preachers [laughs]. I know a whole lot about my family going back in many different, kind of the 360 of all my family. And lots of, lots of preachers in my family. There all probably very disappointed in me, and of course growing up in central Texas everybody went to church, and everybody was defined by what church you went to. When you meet somebody that was the first thing you asked, well what church do you go to? And my brother-in-law is a retired congregational minister, and he has always been available for, for you know, marriages, funerals, and family services of that sort. But except for occasional things like that, I haven't been to church in years, and I think that's probably one regret that I have, which is education. At least I had religious education as a child, and chose not to remain active, but I probably didn't do a right by her, and not giving her the background to which to make her own choices.

**MJH:** Oh ok, well we're moving on to health.

**ED:** Ok.

**MJH:** And our first question is how have health issues impacted your life or of those in your family?

**ED:** Losing your father to cancer when you were three years old was amazingly impactful. I miss him every day, although I hardly knew him. And my own health has been unremarkable. I do—do you know what lazy eye is? Amblyopia?

**MJH and VU:** Yeah.

**ED:** So they didn't find my lazy eye until I was in first grade, and so, I have very diminished—I can see you, but I don't use my eyes together. When I try to read with my bad eye, things kind of hop around. And that's really, you know, the only health issues that I have ever had. And I wouldn't—it doesn't affect me except—because I don't use my eyes. When I go... when I'm lecturing, and I go to call on somebody, I can't call them by name because I don't know who they are.

**VU:** Right.

**ED:** I have to remember to try to close my bad eye, and look at them with just my one eye, because they don't know, are you looking behind me or? Because my eyes don't focus the same way other peoples do, but that's a very small burden to bear.

**VU:** (Nods). What are your experiences in accessing quality affordable health care?

**ED:** I've never had any issues to whatsoever, where very fortunate aren't we in Worcester to have great healthcare and insurance to cover it? And it's never been an issue at all.

**MJH:** Whose health are you responsible for, besides your own?

**ED:** Well, I would pretty much say that's the only person I'm responsible for. My husband is much older than I am, he's sixteen years older than I am, and he is responsible for his own health. And, he has many more complications than I do, and I listen to him talk about it from time to time, but he mostly just takes care of it himself.

**VU:** We're moving on to the last section.

**ED:** Ok.

**VU:** How do you get through tough times? What kinds of thought keep you going?

**ED:** That's a good question. Well, I have to say I'm pretty, I'm a pretty lucky person. I don't feel that, yes my first husband died, yes my father died, but I really have never felt that I have had really tough times. I have had challenging times, you know, little baby, a new job, husband unhappy that I made him leave Austin, Texas, trying to figure out where we were gonna live in a big new city, you know that sort of thing. I think I was so busy with the new job, just didn't have time to wallow in your, you know, troubles. But, also I am very interested, as I said, in kind of my family history. Not because famous people [are] in my family or notable people, just think of all the people that fell love and lived through hard times, just to make each of us who we are today. And, I often tried to, when I'm looking at history books and family records, and that sort of thing, think about oh my god, look at what these women went through. How many babies died? How many, you know, reversals of fortune, bad things happen, and whatever, and I guess I kind of figure well they all made it through to make me who I am today, the least I can do is buck-up and not complain about things. And, that's kind of a small role, small scale, of looking at problems just through the lens of other people. And, I also feel that when you're responsible for a big organization and lots of people's livelihoods depend on me and the success of this organization, I kind of have this responsibility not to wallow in any frustrations, shortcomings, or trials. You just got to—you know a lot of people are counting on you. And this institution is two hundred years old, and we have a lot of continuity to maintain, so it kind of puts whatever

I'm going through in perspective, and I think that's useful to get a grip on what are the big issues here, not the little ones.

**MJH:** Excellent. And, how do you define success in your life? Has this definition changed over time?

**ED:** Let's see... let me think about that. I think that success for me is not, I think it's always been important to me to have what I do appreciated by others. I don't mean recognized, like awards or accolades, but just understood and appreciated. And, I think that I have been fortunate that people have for the most part said, "Ellen, she does a good job, she's helpful to other people, she contributes to her family and her community and her professional responsibilities." And, so, I guess what I'm saying is success it's—I don't have an internal barometer, gauge of what I—I'm not trying to get at X number of amount of money, or X number of wins of one sort or the other, but it is important to me to have people appreciate in a small, some small way, what I do. And, I don't guess that has really changed. I guess you—who you are trying to—the people around you change, but that inner goal of wanting to be appreciated I think had made a difference in. And, I've tried to always be supportive of other people you know, there are some people in my job now that I'm the boss of, there are some people I'm a mentor to, some people I'm a colleague of, and I've always taken an interest, a great interest in other people's lives and their work. And a friend of mine in Chicago once introduced me on a panel, said that Ellen has the ability to—you find yourself telling Ellen some things about yourself that you've never even told you own family and friends, but just because I do take a great interest in other people, and enjoy hearing about their lives, their success, and it makes my life richer because of that.

**VU:** And based on your life experience, what advice would you give women of today and future generations?

**ED:** Well, don't be limited by anybody else's opinion of you. Don't be, don't be stereotyped by anybody else's expectations. I remember kind of, when I was very young, and working very hard on my own career and thinking about having a family, and if this was the time, and what would that do to my career, and whatever. And I was in Austin, and I was in a group—a big conference. Ann Richards was one of the people speaking, and she said something, "You know you just can't put off having children." I mean women do it now much more than they did a generation ago. When I—having my daughter at thirty was kind of the outer limit and now women have babies up to forty regularly. And, I just remember that as a moment of, kind of, how can you have it all? And, I just think it's a little crazy when you do, when you try, but it is possible to do it. And, I think my advice to women is believe in your super powers [laughs].

**MJH:** Then, our last question is that, now that we are working to tell a fuller story of the history of women than has been recorded in the past, what should we be sure to include?

**ED:** I think that as I look back, trying to recreate the stories of my grandmothers, and great grandmothers, and great-great grandmothers, of course I can see when they married, when their children were born, and when their children died, and so much of the outline of the story doesn't

talk about what they felt. It doesn't talk about what was in their heart and I think that asking questions like that is fascinating to scholars looking back in time. Of course that's what our library is full of, stories of recorded, but the stories that aren't there, the things that are not said, are the tantalizing stories. So getting people, getting women to be honest about, and open about their inner thoughts I think is the thing for interviewers to do.

**VU:** I actually do have a couple other questions.

**ED:** Sure, sure.

**VU:** That are different. What was considered fashionable when you were a young woman?

**ED:** Well, when I was in high school everybody, you never wore pants to school. The thing, the pants suit was sort of a big thing, but that was really more I think when I was in college. In the early '70 or '71, something like that. We wore stockings to school, in high school, it was disgusting, but we did. And, lots of attention paid to one's hair, and I had beautiful hair in high school, long, flipped, perfect, worked for hours on it, and then one day I was going to a summer school at the University of Arizona and the anticipation of being in a hot climate, I cut all my hair off, it was as short as Twiggy, and people didn't even know who I was.

**ED, MJH, VU:** [Laugh].

**ED:** So, you know, much dressier, much more cute. I mean, absolutely cute clothes, I had fantastic shoes back in the day, now I wear Meryl's because I'm a middle aged lady, but lots of dresses, lots and lots of dresses.

**VU:** What was your favorite musical group, or song, or dance, or club?

**ED:** The other day, before the election, I saw on Facebook something that Lesley Gore had posted. Do you know who Lesley Gore is?

**MJH, VU:** (Shake head no).

**ED:** She was a singer in the mid-sixties, and she, I just, watching her sing this, she had a montage of women singing one of her favorite songs, "You Don't Own Me," and it was about women standing up for their own reproductive rights and the election, and I was reminded that Lesly Gore, when I was in the sixth grade, she had a song, "It's My Party and I Can Cry If I Want To."

**MJH, VU:** Oh yeah! That was a good one.

**ED:** And then "Judy's Turn to Cry," my first fandom, I loved Lesley Gore, I was just involved with all kinds of popular music back in the day. But, I stopped being involved with popular music in the, probably the mid-seventies, and I listen to country music more than anything else

now. But, all of the '80s and most of the '90s I didn't have anything to do with popular music whatsoever. So, people around here are always making cultural references and I'm like, "I have no idea who you're talking about."

**ED, MJH, and VU:** [laugh].

**VU:** Ok, so that concludes our interview.

**ED:** Alright. Well, I will say one thing, I was, last year I was talking to the guy where I go and, we were talking about the music that was on the Muzak, and I said, well he said, "What's your favorite, you know, type of music?" I said, "Well what kind do you think I like to listen to?" "Well," he said, "who's your favorite music artist?" And, I really didn't have anyone to answer, so I said, "Who do you think my favorite is?" And he said, "Frank Sinatra?" I was like, "aye yi yi, Frank Sinatra was popular when my mother was a kid!" [laughs]

**MJH, VU:** [Laugh]

**ED:** And I was like crushed that he would—I was so—well I had to come up with some answer that would not put me in my mother's generation. So... anyway... I hope that this has been helpful to you.

**MJH, and VU:** Yes it has. Thank you.

**MJH:** It really has.

**ED:** Great. Great.