

Interviewee: Regina M. Edmonds
Interviewers: Britni D. Hagopian, Carolina X. Correa
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Abstract: Regina Margaret Edmonds was born in 1946 in Bayonne, New Jersey. Jeana was one of three children to the late Richard and Rose McBride Edmonds. As a child, Jeana and her family moved regularly due to her father's job. In the fifth grade, she moved from Bayonne New, Jersey to Glens Falls, New York and she stayed there until the ninth grade. Her family then moved to Long Island where she graduated as valedictorian of her high school class. Her family moved to a new part of Long Island while she received her undergraduate education from Elmira College. Due to her interest in psychology and her passion to work with children, Jeana got a job at the Devereux School in Rutland, Massachusetts during the summer following her junior year. The subsequent summer she got a job in Rindge, New Hampshire at a school called Hampshire Country School, a school for gifted and emotionally disturbed children. After graduating from Elmira College in the top five of her class with Phi Beta Kappa, Jeana went on to receive her PhD from the University of Pittsburgh and lived there while she worked towards her doctoral degree. During this time she completed her clinical psychology internship in Madison, Wisconsin. Upon completing her doctoral program, Jeana returned to Massachusetts where she reconnected with her husband, Alan Navitski, who she had met while working at the Hampshire Country School in Rindge, New Hampshire. The two soon married and had two children; Alanna Edmonds Navitski and Rielle Edmonds Navitski. Since Al was from Worcester, they decided to remain local and they settled in West Brookfield, Massachusetts. Jeana worked in the Worcester Public School System for two years as a school psychologist and helped run her husband's bookstore called "The Book Bear" before she applied to be a professor at Assumption College in 1976. She recently retired after working as a professor of Psychology and Women Studies at Assumption for the past 35 years. In this interview, Jeana discusses the struggles she experienced as a young girl who refused to follow the gender norms. She reminds us of the difficulties women faced when applying to college such as the lack of scholarship made available to women and how women were not preferred by colleges. Jeana recalls the various movements of the 1960's and how she came to discover who she truly was. Jeana also recalls the difficulties of being a working mother, struggling to balance work with child rearing responsibilities especially during a time when maternity leave did not exist. Jeana has very strong political values for which she strongly advocates. She believes firmly in helping not only women but all those who are oppressed. In this interview she describes various issues such as the importance of women having control over their fertility so that they can be equal players in the job market. Furthermore, Jeana describes the inequality and changes she has witnessed in Worcester over the past few decades. Jeana concludes by offering future advice for women.

BH: "Okay, so today is October 28, 2012. I'm Britni Hagopian and I'm here with Carolina Correa and we'll be interviewing Regina Edmonds. So we are completing a citywide oral history

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of the lives of women-Worcester women-aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences. Based on the goals of the 1850 National Women's Right Convention in Worcester, we are focusing on the areas of women's education, health, work, and politics slash community involvement. We want to focus today on your experiences with education and work. Thank you for your help with this important project. ... Alright, so what is your full maiden name and your married name?"

RE: "They're the same."

BH: "Awesome."

CC: "Okay."

RE: "So my name is Regina Margaret Edmonds and I did not change my name when I married. They sometimes call that a Lucy Stoner, I don't know if you got to that chapter in Images yet, there's a marriage contract between Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell."

BH: "Okay."

RE: "And a Lucy Stoner is someone who doesn't change her name. I didn't know that when I didn't change my name."

BH: "Is there a ...?"

CC: "Why? Yeah."

BH: "Is ...yeah, is there a reason ...?"

BH/CC: "... Why you didn't?"

RE: "Because ... I'm not somebody's property [laughs]. I'm Regina Edmonds, I always was, why would I give up my name? Like, why wouldn't my husband give up his name? Like why should ..."

BH: "Why should I give up my identity?"

CC: "Why do ... I agree."

RE: "Yeah, this is who I am and I've always been this way ... always been this person, of course I feel bad that I don't have my mother's name but ... yeah I just, I, I, I would never change my name. That's who I am, you know that was ..."

BH: "Yeah."

CC: “Your identity.”

RE: “... the name I was given and that’s my identity, yeah.”

BH: “Awesome. So where-when- were you born?”

RE: “I was born in 1946.”

BH: “Where were you born?”

RE: “In Bayonne, New Jersey.”

BH: “And how did you end up getting up here? Like, how did you make your way up towards Worcester?”

RE: “When I was in college I was a psychology major and I was really interested in working with children that sort of the main thing I wanted to do in my life. So, I guess it was after my junior year in college I was looking for a summer job and there’s this, there’s a school in Rutland, Massachusetts ...”

BH: “Mhm.”

RE: “... called the Devereux School ...”

BH: “Oh okay, yep.”

RE: “... and so I got a job there during the summer and I worked there that summer and I had a really amazing, interesting, complicated experience. And then the following summer I looked for a similar sort of position ...”

BH: “Oh okay.”

RE: “... and I found one in Rindge, New Hampshire at a school called Hampshire Country School, that was a school for gifted and emotionally disturbed children and that was really interesting too so that’s actually where I met Al, my husband.”

BH: “Oh okay. Well that’s perfect ‘cause then the next question is have you ever married? So, what is the name of your current husband and it sounds like it’s Al and what’s his last name?”

RE: “His last name is Navitski ...”

BH: “Oh okay.”

RE: “N-A-V-I-T-S-K-I.”

BH: “And is this the only man you’ve ever married? Like ...”

RE: [laughs] “Yes.”

BH: “Like, one husband? [laughs] Okay, ‘cause ...”

RE: [laughs] “Yes, one husband.”

BH: “... Okay. And so do you guys have any children?”

RE: “Yes, we have two kids.”

CC: “What are their names?”

RE: “So our oldest daughter, her name is Alanna, A-L-A-N-N-A ... and our second daughter is Rielle, R-I-E-L-L-E.”

CC: “R-I- ...”

RE: “... E-L-L-E.”

BH: [sniffles and whispers, laughs] “I love those names.”

RE: “We made -we thought we made those names up although I don’t know if we really did. I mean we did but then later I-we- met people who’s at least someone whose child was named Alanna but we tried to put the begin-parts of our names together ...”

BH: “Oh cool!”

RE: “So Alanna is the beginning of Al’s name and the end of my name and Rielle is the beginning of my name and the end of his name.”

CC: “That’s awesome!”

BH: “I love that!”

CC: “I have the same thing. I have the same thing. My grandmother’s name –we, we all name- we all are named Linas so my name is Carolina, my mom was Lina, my grandmother’s was Selina.”

RE: “Oh beautiful.”

CC: “So I think I’m going to pass that down.”

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RE: “Yeah.”

BH: “I like that, I like that!”

RE: “That’s really cool. Yeah.”

BH: “Do you have any grandchildren?”

RE: “No. No grandchildren, I would like that but ...” [laughter]

CC: “Not right now [laughter].”

RE: “... that’s not really up to me [laughter]. Not up to me.”

BH: “Alright, so what cultures or ethnicities do you identify with, kinda like your family background?”

RE: “Well, you know I would say I’m an American certainly, for better or for worse [group laughs]. Most of my family has Irish heritage so my mother on both sides of her family wa-was Irish so her name was Rosie McBride, [speaks in accent, provokes laughter] and my father one side of his family was Irish and the other side nobody really knows ...”

BH: “Oh okay.”

RE: “... He says they were-he used to say [laughter] that they were Hessians [laughter] that they came to fight in the Revolution but I don’t know ...”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “He just, he made that up. So I, I probably pretty much see myself as, as Irish in many ways.”

BH: “Is that something that you guys, like in your family, is that like important for you guys, does that like roll over to the types of foods you guys choose to eat or is there anything that it influences like your life in any way? “Not significantly?”

RE: “Not really. I mean ..., certainly not in our family because ... you know my husband makes all the food so I don’t do ...”

BH: “Oh okay.”

RE: “... I don’t do food [laughter]. And he’s really into you know very healthy eating and he was always, you know, on the kids about healthy good vegetable food and all that good stuff so

that's good. In my own personal life I think that being Irish did have some impact on me my great-grandfather I think was like the chief of police of Bayonne, New Jersey and there's a lot of just stories that come from the Irish culture and my mother was sort of a prototypical little Irish cherub; she had all this wild red curly hair ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... and my daughter does as well."

BH: "Oh really?"

RE: "Yeah one of my daughters."

BH: "That's great."

RE: "And then my brother used to say that we were Irish in the sort of had this Irish melancholy, that there was this certain melancholy or a certain kind of, well melancholy is the best word, sort of this sense that the world ..., that you had to be strong and but you were sort of standing out there [laughs] you know on that, on that rock you know ... [laughter]"

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... and the wind, the wind was blowing and it was cold ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... and, and life required, I guess well life required courage and strength but that it also, you could sometimes feel defeated or you could sometimes feel melancholy ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... sort of sad about the struggle being so difficult and I think that that sort of notion is, is somewhat, that makes sense to me you know?"

BH: "Yeah, yeah, yeah."

RE: "That kind of describes some aspect of who I am I would say."

BH: "Yeah. Alrighty. And, so can you tell us about your parents? Just like a little bit about each of them?"

RE: "My mom was the life of every party. She was adorable, she was very short, maybe made it to five feet. But she was very outgoing, she was a kindergarten teacher and, I don't know she just

was funny and adorable, like she [laughter] was sort of round and short and she had curly hair ...”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “... and she was-Howard Gardner talks about people that have emotional intelligence and I would say that my mother had emotional intelligence, she was a very warm, very generous, very, like fun loving in many ways.”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “That was true for a good part of her life you know, not in her later years so much but and my dad was, he was more quiet, he was actually tall and very thin [clears throat], so they were ...”

BH: “They say opposites attract.”

RE: “Yeah [laughter], he, he was tall and thin, he was a very hard worker, he was a very good man, he was very smart, he didn’t really have the opportunity ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “... for an education, I don’t think he even finished high school but he was a very intelligent man. And I also think that he sort of, he sort of egged me on with my sort of activism, he would be always like, “You go on out there and stand for what you believe girl,” [laughter] you know and so I think that even though he was much more quiet than my mother he was more like [laughter] an agitator ...”

BH: “Yeah, yeah.”

RE: “... kind of an I think my parents were unique in their-in that period of time in the 1950’s when I grew up because I think they truly believed that, that there were no differences between women and men, that, that I would have every opportunity that my brothers would have and it, I don’t think there was any question of that.”

CC: “Why do you think that they thought this? I think if we look back at generations you wouldn’t say that people at that time were thinking that as your parents did. Why do you think that your parents did so?”

RE: “I don’t really know. I, I often wondered about that. I think that it might have partly been that my mother was a kindergarten teacher ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: "... and she really was pretty progressive I think that she had-I mean to be a teacher in her day you only went to college for two years so it wasn't like an extensive period like it is now but I think there was something in her love of children and that she would see them all as, as equal ..."

CC: "Mhm."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... she wouldn't see one kid different than another. I think another reason too is that she has a sister who is 16 years younger than her, so my mother was the youngest in her family and then 16 years later this other baby was born [laughs] and you're like hmmm, okay [laughter] that's a surprise you know. And I think my mom was kind of like her sister's mother in a way ..."

BH: "Mhm."

RE: "... in many ways and I'm actually named for that woman, so her name is also Regina and she calls herself Jean and that's why I'm Jeana you know ..."

BH: "Oh okay."

RE: "... and it's J-E-A-N-A which makes no sense given the rest of my name but she always went by Jean, J-E-A-N and then I was little Jean, little Jean, Jeana. And I think that my Aunt Jean, who's still living, she's 87, I think that she was a very complicated but also extremely intelligent person, and kind of-out of time and space, you know there were no other kids around and I think that, I don't know if this is true but I feel like my mother could see in my aunt you know just a certain amount of re-remarkable potential and that, that shouldn't be limited or that should not be stifled, or that should be nurtured so I don't know, I don't really know. But I mean I can't say that they were completely, you know, gender equal, I mean they're always ranting [laughs] about how I looked and that I didn't look like a lady [laughter], and that I talked too loud, stuff like that ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... but, but, but in the heart of hearts I think that they always believed that all the kids should have an equal chance."

BH: "Do you think that had to do something with their education, do you happen to know what their education was like? I don't know."

RE: "Well my mom did get to go to what they called "normal" school ..."

BH: "Okay."

RE: "... in the old days so that was a two year college program to become a teacher but my dad was from a much larger family and he was one of the youngest and so he did not have an opportunity to even finish high school so he, [sniffles] he operated, actually a grocery store when he was 17 years old he was the manager of the, of this grocery store and then he worked his way up so he, you know, he wound with, with a, a pretty good job and he was so smart and I used to always say you should go to college [laughter] he'd say, "I can't go to college now I'm an old codger" and I'm like you should but I think they both of my parents had valued education and like we were talking earlier saw education as sort of this pathway out of, ya know to a life that was more full and so I don't, I don't really know ya know?"

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "I think that they were, though I do think that they were both pretty progressive for their time, you know, that they were not sort of typical, 1950's, kind of Cold War era parents that they, that they were not, and they were, my father was and died an old Democrat [laughter] you know who, who believed that his life had been made better by the New Deal, you know, they grew up in the Depression and my father's father had a stroke very early in his life and so the family struggled financially but my father believed that without the New Deal and without the, the infusion of money in the Depression that his family would not have made it and, and especially with the father being, being handicapped that they would have expired you know ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... like they would have died and so he wa-was a life-long believer in the ideas that, you know, that we were talking about before, that we're all in it together and, and people who have more need to help people who have less and people who have education have to be teachers and people who have the opportunities the culture provides have, ya know, will feel much better in their life if they reach back and, and help others. So I, I think that those very strong convictions came from my family particularly my dad."

BH: "Alright. So where have you lived during your life?"

RE: "Well, I've lived a lot of places. So I was born in Bayonne, New Jersey and I lived there until I was in the fifth grade. Then I lived in Glens Falls, New York. My dad's job caused him to have to travel a lot ..."

BH: "Mhm."

RE: "... so we lived in Glens Falls, New York until I was in ninth grade. Then we lived on Long Island and I graduated from high school there. And I went to college in Elmira, New York. During that time my parents moved to an-another part of Long Island [laughs] and then I went from Elmira I went to the University of Pittsburgh for my PhD. And my parents then moved back to New Jersey; a different part of New Jersey. So I lived in Pittsburgh for quite a while

while I was doing my doctoral degree. Then I lived in Madison, Wisconsin where I did an internship, my clinical psych internship. Then I moved back to Pittsburgh and finished my PhD and then I moved to Massachusetts when I reconnected with my husband. And so we lived a number of places in Massachusetts but ever since I finished my degree and came to the Worcester area, I've been in the Worcester area, so I've been in the Worcester area since 1974."

BH: "Have you ever lived in Worcester itself?"

RE: "No."

BH: "Okay. So it's always just been the local area then."

RE: "Mhm."

BH: "Okay."

CC: "What made you stay here? Why not, you know, just go somewhere else? What made you stay local?"

RE: "Stay here? Well I think the reason that we stayed here originally was that I didn't feel like I had any roots at all."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "Whereas Al did, like, he was born in Worcester."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "Like, he grew up in Worcester and I don't know he, he has a much more deep sense of place than I do so he, I think he wanted to stay in Worcester and so when we-we were going to live in Worcester but I didn't want to live in Worcester [laughs]. So we lived in this adorable little cottage on a lake th-the first year I was here and then, then we lived in a little tiny house in East Brookfield and then he got into the book business and he decided that that's what he wanted to do. So once we had the business we really couldn't leave."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "And I sometimes regret, regret it. I think because my kids were so complicated I think living out here in the boonies was not the best for them and I wish-I often have wished that we lived in Boston or we lived in New York City or somewhere much more diverse and more ... liberal [laughs] and, and more embracing of diversity because even though my kids are just plain old white bread kids they're-they think very differently about, ya know, they're very complex thinkers, ya know, they hung out in the, the bookstore for most of their life because I worked in the bookstore as well as at Assumption and th-there was nothing else to do except read and we

didn't have a TV because we hate TVs [laughs] so, so I feel like they, ya know, had a different kind of life than a lot of kids and that made them-they didn't fit in very well in the local school systems. So, even though we stayed here [clears throat] primarily for the business, sometimes I felt well maybe their lives would have been better if we went somewhere else that was more cosmopolitan or something or less rural."

BH: "[whispers] Alright. So you don't have any family members that live this same area then it's mostly your husband's? That's why the connections here?"

RE: "Right. Yeah."

BH: "Okay. If you don't currently live in Worcester, what is your Worcester connection then?"

RE: "Well my Worcester connection is that I've worked in Worcester since 1974 and so I commute to Worcester almost every day and when I first came to this area I worked in the Worcester public schools and I was a school psychologist for two years and I worked in a variety of schools but I-one of the schools I worked with-worked in was in Great Brook Valley so I, I felt like, like I got a very, you know, first hand sort of connection to little kids whose lives were, were very hard and of course I just fell in love with them [laughter] and wanted to bring them home with me [laughter]."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "Half the school ..."

BH: "Yep."

RE: "... but so I worked in the Worcester schools for two years and then I applied for the position at Assumption and, and I got it so I worked at Assumption for over like 35 years which is a long time."

BH: "So are there any challenges that you think Worcester faces or do you-have you seen any challenges over the years that Worcester has faced and is still facing today and what would you change about the city?"

RE: "Well I kind of re-I really like Worcester in many ways I feel like it's kind of a "real" American city, I feel like it has a multiplicity of, of people from all over the world and also that it, it, it like the class structure is challenging, ya know, you've got people with a certain amount of wealth then you have people in the middle class but you also have areas and neighborhoods that, that struggle to-for people to make it out into the middle class and I, I kind of, I sort of like that, like I like-when I lived in Madison, Wisconsin it was so idyllic it was incredibly beautiful and, I mean it was freezing cold, but it was incredibly idyllic at least at that time when I lived there but it didn't seem real like no-every single person was white, every single person was mid-western [laughs], every single person, you know, came from a fairly intact family and so I really

liked Worcester- I do like Worcester, I, I-when I worked in the school system I felt very connected to the issues and concerns of, of kids who are struggling and, you know, I at Assumption I did the field placement course in psychology for many years and so I placed students in lots of agencies in Worcester and so I don't know, I would say Worcester has the same challenges of, of any sort of aging American city but I also think it is populated with incredible, incredibly generous people who give their heart and soul to make things better and I like that, I like that a lot so, so I mean I don't know how you would solve the problems, ya know, I think if we had [laughs] an equitable and fair economic system and where you didn't have discrepancies of wealth and where labor was valued not, not just the intellectual labor of the people at the top but the physical labor and emotional labor of the people in the middle and at the bottom that it would be a lot better but that's true across the board."

BH: "Okay. So what changes have you seen in Worcester over time, since you've been here?"

RE: "Well I think that the Worcester as you probably know is, is a receiving city for many immigrants and so I think that you see that the demographics of the city have changed in terms of where people are coming from who come to Worcester. Pretty much early on- my husband actually grew up on Main South right near Clark and so, you know, back in those days it was more, I think it was some African American population there but also Worcester seems to have a pretty big Latina, Latino, Latina population. But now there are many immigrants from Africa and there are immigrants from Burma or Myanmar and Bu-Bhutan and, you know, so I think that it, it's a interesting city in terms of its demographic mix. And I guess another really big change in Worcester was the construction of the UMass Medical School and I think in some ways that's really great because it, it brought a lot of professionals, you know, doctors and physician, physicians and physical therapists and all the medical people to the area but ... it also to me-I don't really like UMass at all I actually can't stand it [laughter] and it feels like sort of, like a, a industry, it's makes medicine into a sort of industry and it doesn't-even though I know the medical school is developed to train family doctors, you know, doctors who would actually have a, a deep connection to the community and would be primary care physicians primarily-and I know I actually have a friends who helps place doctors in training in the community so that they actually get to know th-the complexity of the issues that people face in the community-so I think that that is all really positive but there's just something about it, it seems like it's become the primary industry of, of Worcester and it, I don't know, it doesn't have any warmth or something to it, and again I feel like there are huge differentials in terms of access to care and how complicated it is to even like, drive to another parking lot [laughs]."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "You have to have a PhD to figure out where to park."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "You know, I feel like it's a very imposing environment and I don't sort of like the way it's gobbled up all of the smaller hospitals and it feels like ... I don't know what the right word would

be, it just feels like it has made access to care in some ways more difficult because it's such an imposing kind of, industrial sort of, place. The other big change that's interesting to me is because I'm a psychologist I, I was very interested in Worcester State Hospital and I actually wrote a fairly extensive paper on the history of Worcester State Hospital and of course now it's pretty much abandoned I mean there are some wards in a newer building but th-the older building it was always very fascinating to me and Worcester State Hospital has a fascinating history. As some of you may know that's the only place in the United States that Freud ever visited; he visited Clark University and Worcester State Hospital. He didn't like the United States very much. He went back, back [laughs] h-home but I feel like the delivery of health-mental health services is really kind of crazy in that the history of how the United States viewed the delivery of mental health s-services to the, to the population is embodied in many of the changes that you, you could trace historically and in, in Worcester State Hospital as a, as an institution. That's really interesting. So, the whole deinstitutionalization movement, this idea that you had to move people out of hospitals, into, the idea was halfway houses or back to their families it just didn't really work and so a lot of the homeless that you see on the streets of any city are, are individuals were-that used to be in hospitals, or wh-who would have had access to hospital care which they don't have any more. So again, I don't necessarily see the problems of Worcester as different from other cities of the same sort of, structure or time, you know-it used to be an industrial city now there's not a whole lot of industry, you know, so I think a lot of cities that have that, those challenges have the same kind of problems that Worcester has."

BH: "So wh-what distinct characteristics make Worcester the place that it is in your opinion?"

CC: "And this could be historical too I think that ..."

RE: "Well historically of course we have to go rah, rah [laughter] for the 1850 convention, first women's rights, national women's rights convention. It's really exciting that Abby Kelly Foster lived in Worcester with her husband, Steven Foster, and she was just inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls last year and also into the National Abolitionist Hall of Fame. So we all love Abby Kelly Foster and ... Francis Perkins who was this-the first woman secretary of labor under I think FDR I'm pretty sure it was FDR. She also lived a long part of her life in Worcester and then Dorothea Dix who's important for the history of the mental health movement in America, spent a lot of time in Worcester. I, I don't know, I mean I, I just like Worcester, you know, the three deckers are sort of classic and it to me feels like more like the cities of my youth in the sense of, of very diverse and sort of the teaming masses [laughter], you know, like the Statue of Liberty, the teaming masses ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... trying to whatever that quote is, you know, gain access to, to the dominant culture, whatever you want to call it. So I feel like I like that and so I, I kind of like that my husband grew up there, he was a taxi driver so, you know, I know all the back streets in Worcester ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... I know all these places that no one else probably could find."

BH: "So what do you think women's experiences in Worcester have been like ... generally?"

RE: "Well, you know, Worcester, Worcester historically wa-was, you know, kind of a hot bed of, of activism not just for women rights but of course Abbey Kelly Foster was very much into the rights of-she was against slavery, she was an abolitionist. But even in the 1960's you had a strong anti-war movement in Worcester. You know, Abby Hoffman was from, from Worcester, you know, the guy that was at the-he was a, a strong anti-war activist and he was arrested at the 1958, presidential campaign-presidential convention. But I feel like Worcester, I mean to some degree has kept a little of its, of its activist, sort of history, not everywhere but, you know, I can still find lots of people who are still working the movement, you know, I have friends who open-for example Abby's House was opened by Annette Rafferty, kind of, pretty much not by herself but through her very intense initiative and then a women who just retired from the Y, Ginger Navickas who was very active in the creation of a shelter for battered women called Day Break and Linda Cavaioli, was who executive director of the Y is a really activist woman. Brenda Safford who worked at Assumption and is now head of the Young Parents Program at the Y. So I think there is still like, a lot of the old-timers from my generation who still kind of fight the good fight to make-to create a social justice and like a professor at Assumption, Mike True, has been fighting against war for as long as I've known him. He was the person who founded the Peace Studies program at Assumption and, you know, he's still alive he is older than I am. So I, I think there's a lot of sort of old, tenacious folks who haven't quite, quite given up and there's a lot of people like that in Worcester still."

BH: "Do you think that there are like a-would you say in terms of equality the women of Worcester, it's been equal or that eq-inequality is, like, I don't know, that you can see it? Do you see inequality when you're in Worcester or, or do you feel like it's come along way?"

RE: "Well I primarily see inequality by class more than-I mean I think gender is really important and I, I do think that Worcester is not any different from any other place. But I think that the big challenges of our time are, are the inequalities by class. And yes, I definitely see inequality by class in Worcester but I, I don't think that's any different from the rest of the United States."

BH: "So no-not by location, not by specifically in Worcester just by class which is something that's more applicable to everywhere?"

RE: "Yeah, yeah."

BH: "Okay. So I'm just gonna move away from the general and family in Worcester questions and move into education. So where did you attend school? So I guess you could do just like all of them from really young all the way through college."

RE: “Wow. Well I went to elementary school both in Bayonne, New Jersey and Glens Falls, New York. And I guess I went to middle school and some high school in Glens Falls. Then we moved to Long Island, we lived in a place called Seaford and I graduated from high school there. And I gave the valedictorian address. And then I went to Elmira College and I graduated from Elmira College in 1968 and then I went to the University of Pittsburgh in 1968 and I graduated with my doctoral degree in ... 1974 I think it was. And then I came to Worcester.”

BH: “So what were your challenges in education?”

RE: “[laughter] I was actually very challenged, believe it or not. I think if I was a student now I would carry some crazy diagnosis, I don’t know what it’d be [laughter], probably dyslexia. I was a—I had a very hard time learning to read. I still am a very slow reader, that’s why I’ve been crazy reading all those articles [laughter] my whole entire life. My older brother was incredibly smart and so he was sort of the, the superstar of the family and I was sort of a little bit of the loser [laughter] in the family.”

BH: “[laughter] Aw.”

RE: “When I was in high school they were trying to track me into, you know, all the lower tracks and track me to —what do you call that—vocational training ‘cause I really didn’t—I always got really, really, really high grades but that was just ‘cause I worked so hard. I didn’t want to go to college. I thought I had enough of this [laughter] ...”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “... aggravation and enough of this kind of, not feeling particularly confident. But my parents said that wasn’t an option, that I was going to college whether I liked it or not, so that was probably a very good decision. So I went to college. I graduated in the top five and with Phi, Phi Beta Kappa so I guess I wasn’t as dumb as everybody thought [laughter] and then I went to the University of Pittsburgh and got my PhD. I would say that my challenges are also something I really in many ways value because I think that when you sort of struggle to understand something you can really explain it better to other people and I feel like I’m really good at that, you know, that I’m a good teacher, that I have a tremendous amount of respect for other individuals who struggle because I did. And I really do think it’s about hard work in large measure [laughs] and, and really, someone who will support you, people who believe in you, and my family believed in me even though, they thought I was kind of stupid [laughs]. And no one, no one ever thought that I would be the one in the family who wound up with a PhD but somehow I did.”

BH: “Well you had mentioned you were valedictorian right?”

RE: “Yeah ...”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: "... but that didn't-it was just 'cause I was a hard worker. That was everybody's opinion that ..."

BH: "Yeah ..."

RE: "That was-you know."

BH: "... that's, that's so strange ..."

RE: "Yeah."

BH: "... I feel like ..."

RE: "Yeah."

BH: "... 'cause it's, it's so funny."

RE: "Yeah, yeah."

BH: "But I can, I can kind of relate ..."

RE: "Yeah, yeah."

BH: "... to that feeling. But, while you were in school did you ever notice that girls were treated differently than the boys, did you go to-was it ever-did you ever attend an all-girls school or was it co-ed or ..."

RE: "When I-all through my schooling was co-ed until I went to college. I actually did go to a women's college which was kind of weird. You know, I don't think you notice it too much when you're there ..."

BH: "Mhm."

RE: "... although I was pretty feisty and I, I didn't-when I was really little I was really feisty and that pretty much got knocked out of me, you know, like it became pretty clear that if you're a girl you have to be quiet and act stupid. And I'm not sure I knew that at the time I just, did get quiet. I never really felt in any way part of any group. 'Cause I couldn't be like that. I just, I didn't get how you were supposed to ... [laughs] I couldn't ..."

BH: "How you were supposed to act like that?"

RE: "Yeah I didn't, I didn't ..."

BH: “Yeah [laughs].”

RE: “... get how, how you-what you had to do to be a girl like I just didn’t get it, I couldn’t understand it. And my mother, who was very good at being a girl, she would try to help me but I just wouldn’t, I just couldn’t stand it, you know. But so that’s why she used to pick on me for the way I looked even though she was absolutely marvelous, you know, I hate mother blaming, you know that [laughter]. I, I think my mother was absolutely fabulous but, for her, she felt if I could like look right then I would be more successful ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “... and I wouldn’t be so sad.”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “But I didn’t want to. So I had these long red braids, you know, down to my back and I had those little white socks that kids wear and so when I went to junior high she said I had to cut off my hair and I was like, like n-no way [laughs] like that would be horrible [laughter].”

RE: “And she, you know, she would say but you look like a, a little girl, you look like a baby, you have to get rid of the white socks and you have to wear-we didn’t even have pantyhose in those days, we had some crazy weird [laughter], some old ...”

BH: “Some contraption.”

RE: “... garters, some kind of wacky thing.”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “And girls in my time wore girdles. I’m like are you kidding me [laughter]? Like ...”

BH: “I don’t even know what, what is ... [laughter]?”

RE: “What’s a girdle? I think it’s something that (expands here???)”

CC: “A girdle it’s like something that supposed to like (spandex???)”

RE: “Yeah.”

CC: “It’s supposed to like ...”

BH: “Suck it in?”

CC: “Shoot-yeah, suck you in and then just ...”

BH: “Way too much work.”

RE: “Yeah. I just wouldn’t do it.”

CC: “[laughs] How old were you when this was happening?”

RE: “I was in junior high, so maybe I was about 12 ...”

CC: “What!”

RE: “... or 13?”

BH: “Did you ever, did you guys ever like notice like soc-like images in society that depicted women to be that way that maybe have influenced ...”

CC: “That’s why these girls were ...”

BH: “... maybe influenced your mother ...”

CC: “Yeah.”

BH: “... to think that way or ...?”

RE: “I don’t know like, we didn’t have a TV until fairly late in my life, I don’t know when. And certainly these images were not as pervasive as they are now. I know that they-my parents bought me Seventeen Magazine once for Christmas and I hated it [laughs]. It was just like I, I didn’t want to look at it, I mean, I felt like I had to look at it ‘cause it was a present but I, I never could do it, like I just couldn’t, I, I don’t really know what it was. It wasn’t like some sort of conscious protest ...”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “... at least the images it just, it just wasn’t me. Like I liked having long braids ...”

BH: “So there was nothing offensive in the, in the magazine to you?”

RE: “I don’t ...”

BH: “It was just, it was just you just liked your braids, you liked who you were ...”

RE: “Yeah I didn’t want to be any different.”

BH: “... you didn’t feel like you needed to change?”

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RE: “Although I did recognize that I was somewhat, not an outcast, but I was definitely not, popular. I was not part of a crowd. You know, I think when we moved around a lot it was really hard, especially when I moved in fifth grade-I guess it was fifth grade-yeah when I moved in fifth grade to Glens Falls, in sixth grade we kind of moved from an inner city, kind of rough and ready sort of environment, to a fairly more upscale environment and I think it began-it was maybe class more than anything else. I just didn’t get these kids. They were all way better educated than I was because again of those discrepancies in schools that we were talking about earlier. So they were much more accomplished as young people and they-I think, I think in that sixth grade class they were more in touch with the ideas of the, of the culture, if I look back on it. And I just wasn’t, like I was just a kid, I was just a rough and ready kid from the wrong side of the tracks, you know [laughter]? You know, I just liked to run around and ride my bike and I just didn’t get it. So I think it was more that, that transition was at a very hard time, that they were really moving to that whole middle school girl thing and I was still a kid; I still wanted to be a kid, a little girl. And I had-I used to play with my younger brother all the time, my older brother sort of did his own thing but my younger brother and I were like that and we just played all the time so he was just four years younger than I was so, I very much into being a kid.”

BH: “Mhm.”

RE: “I liked being a kid I didn’t like being a teenager or a middle schooler, at all. I liked being a kid [laughs]. I think I still do [laughs].”

BH: “It keeps things fun.”

RE: “Yeah. Yeah or simple.”

BH: “So, oh what was I gonna-oh after attending though, an all-female college, did that change your perspectives in any way? Did that kind of like shed light like ‘oh wow I never realized’ or were there different perspectives that you were introduced to while you were there that you never really thought about? Or is there a reason why you picked an all-girls school or did it just happen to be like that?”

RE: “Well I didn’t really pick it, as I said, my parents said I had to go to college and I didn’t want to so I wouldn’t even participate [laughter]. I just-I wouldn’t look at them, I wouldn’t do anything ‘cause I’m pretty stubborn. So my father picked the college, or my father and mother together, I don’t know. They picked it just ‘cause they liked the sales guy, you know [laughter]. And I think maybe they gave me probably a pretty good scholarship. I think that was it. In college I had a very, very wild an interesting roommate who was just crazy [laughter] and she certainly blew my mind and I think I learned a lot from her [laughter]. But, in our day it was really the war in Vietnam, it was really the po-political stuff that really like grabbed you. I mean, I was pretty mad that a couple schools accepted me but didn’t give-they just by policy didn’t give women scholarships because women would just go and have babies and waste that scholarship money. So I remember being offended by things like that and I hated, sort of the

whole Marilyn Monroe sort of, you know, sweater sets [laughter], poodle skirts [laughter] white bucks, you know, can you believe that? I hated all that stuff, I just didn't-I don't know why, like I didn't have any reason to dislike it just-I didn't like it. So when I got-went to college-and in the 60's, the whole 60's thing got all like stirred up, that felt more like me and again these weren't like conscious decisions

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "... it just felt like hey I don't have to wash my hair [laughter], you know, I don't have to brush it. I could let it grow long and in my face and I-my hair was long to my waist until just not too many years ago. And I identified with that. So, so that was-it wasn't so much about gender, it was about freedom. It was, it was that 60's mantra, you know, that you can be who you are, you-and that was true for men and women, you know. You know, as I got into the anti-war movement it definitely was clear to me that, you know, men controlled everything and I was in a few, not too many, like consciousness raising groups and it was probably then that I started to be more of a feminist but I never, I never could sort of get into this mindset that, that women were oppressed. I thought everybody was oppressed. You know, I thought men were controlled and restricted in certain ways and women were restricted in certain ways and African Americans were totally restricted by not having equal rights in the society and, you know, I was interested in the deinstitutionalization movement and psychiatric patients and they were denied their rights. So it was really about rights and it was about believing in the integrity and the dignity of each person I think that was like so-that's, that's when I started to be crazy [laughs], you know that's when I started to be really passionate about all of this but it, but it was like I had finally found who I was all along. Like, that's what it felt like to me. In fact I just gave this paper up in Toronto. I was talking about it in the Women of the World class, I don't know, you read the Adrienne Rich essay ..."

BH: "Mhm."

RE: "... in class? So Adrienne Rich just died last year and we had this symposium on her life so, one day symposium, so I wrote this paper called "Adrienne Made Me Do It." And I feel like that clause in there, "None of us are liberated until we're all liberated,"-like when I taught that essay in the Images class, that phrase blew my mind be-because that-I think that's what I always thought my whole life and here somebody wrote it. And so that's how I felt in the 1960's, in the midst of the anti-war movement and the fir-second wave feminist movement and the civil rights movement and then later on the gay rights movement. All of those things seemed like I had come home, like that that was who I was all those years, I just didn't know it when I was struggling to be a girl and [laughs] you know, figure out how to put on a, your pant-you know, your [laughs]-like what is that [laughter]?! A garter belt, blah! You know, I just-my poor mother, she'd be like well you have to wear that. I'm like, 'I'm never wearing that, that's disgusting!' [laughter] You know, that type of thing. And even when I got my-when she was trying to be so progressive and explain about my period I'm like, 'Are you kidding me? [laughter] (____???)'. That's disgusting [laughter]! No way!' I just like, couldn't like, couldn't resonate with it and so that I think was exciting to me in the 1960's, especially the later part of the 1960's, where whoever that was

who'd been hidden all those years and kind of stomped down or damped down by the 1950's and everybody, you know, being happy and loving that the war was over, you know, you didn't have to go under your desk and hide in case there was a nuclear bomb going to drop on you and all this crazy stuff [laughs]. That just didn't feel like me but the 60's did and so I don't know, it was about gender but it was also about class and race and equality and, and the peace movement and all that good stuff. So, that's why I'm still crazy [laughter]. Crazy after all these years is that how the song goes?"

BH: "You had mentioned that there were a couple like awareness groups that you were involved in. Do you re-remember which ones they were?"

RE: "I was just, I would just-I used to come up to Worcester, I guess I had-I must have been visiting Al then. And he had more-his friends were more, probably more into activist groups than I was, because I was in graduate school so I had to behave. And it was, it was more just informal groups that I attended that were called consciousness raising groups back then that was the term they used. But I wasn't so into it, I mean again because I didn't like the emphasis only on how women were oppressed, I thought it was more about kinda how everybody has a right to be who they are."

BH: "So upon finishing your formal education what did you see as your options?"

RE: "Well I, I thought I had a lot of options. You know, I, I had a clinical psychology degree so that allowed me to work, you know, in the delivery of services, so that's the first job I had was in the Worcester schools where I was a school psychologist and I worked with kids with all sorts of difficulties and did evaluations of their learning problems and their psychological problems and I did that for two years and I loved the person I worked for but I kind of didn't feel very comfortable in the options that were available so I felt like I would do a lot of work to evaluate the kids but then there wouldn't always be the services that, that they needed and I think that it was also in, in that situation that I became so-even more convinced that there was just profound inequity. Because, you know, one school I would work in would be in a fairly wealthy part of Worcester where the kids had everything and then I'd be in Great Brook Valley and I remember we were-back in that time we were trying to set up special education classes for students and, you know, now they're going the other way of getting kids out of special education classes, but at the time there were no services for kids. So we were trying to develop a special education room for kids who were having a really hard time and as a consequence since there was no room in the school, they gave us the special ed room but, the outcome of that was that three sixth grades or fifth grades or something had to be in the gym, and there were like 65 kids. That's crazy, like no one can learn in that environment."

BH/CC: "Yeah."

RE: "And that isn't going to happen in a more wealthy part of the city. And so it just kept hitting me in the face that the things that these young kids had to contend with in their young lives was so overwhelming and it was just so not fair [laughs]. That's my middle name [laughing], 'it's just

not fair!' You know, and it's just so not fair and it made me crazy and I felt like, why is the Worcester school system paying me money to go and do this task? They should just give that money to this family [laughs] and that family would have a chance.

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "That made no sense to me and it made me feel crazy. So I-a job came up at Assumption and I decided to apply and then I got it."

BH: "And you've been-you were there for 35 years you said?"

RE: "Yeah."

CC: "35 years."

RE: "Yeah. You know, I stayed partly because my children, my children of course would not think that but as hard as it was to be a college professor and it is really hard, there's a lot of flexibility in your time. Like if you need to stay up all night to grade your papers you can stay up all night but you didn't have to be there. I mean, I was there a lot, but you didn't have to be there all the time and I actually brought them with me when they were first born because we had no maternity leave. So, in many ways it allowed me to be a working mother. I don't really know that I could have been a working mother in that time period with no family, no nothing, not much support. You know, logistic support for the kids, I don't think I could have. Like I couldn't have stayed being a school psychologist I, I just- what would I do with my kids? So I stayed partly because I love the students and I love teaching a really lot. But I always regret it. I do regret that I didn't use my clinical skills and my clinical training as much as I had wanted to. So that's what I'm going to do now. That's my next phase in life."

BH: "Have you started anything with that at all or ...?"

RE: "A little bit, a little bit. I've been to a bunch of conferences and I'm, I'm taking a course on global health and I'm interested as you know in the sort of global health stuff."

BH: "Alright so, what support networks and mentoring have been important to you?"

RE: "Probably the main support network would be my colleagues at Assumption. I don't think I had much of a support or mentoring at all prior to that. I was pretty much-I feel like I had to kind of figure most of it out on my own. But I would say that my colleagues at Assumption and I was on-one of the earliest women there. There were few before me, not many. But there were, there was a group of women faculty and we kind of supported each other, you know ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... there was only four or five of us [laughter] but ..."

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BH: “[laughs] Yeah, but you kind of went off each other?”

RE: “Yeah, yeah.”

BH: “Kind of helped each other out, yeah. I guess one of the more broad questions for the education section that I was just curious about would be, did you-was it obvious or was there no difference or did you notice that it was kind of more important for boys to go, to be going to school versus women because I know you mentioned oh girls wouldn’t be offered like as much scholarship because they were just going to have children and then they, they the scholarship would go to waste. So was there more of an emphasis on men getting jobs-going to college than there was women at the time or ...?”

RE: “I think so, again not in my family but yeah ...”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “... I think that was true. Certainly when I was in graduate school it was very complicated because it was in the middle of the Vietnam War and as you probably know during the Vietnam War and other wars men were drafted ...”

BH: “Mhm.”

RE: “... so the school thought a lot of men would get drafted so they accepted more students than they could actually deal with and they accepted more women and probably that’s one of the few reasons women got a chance. What happened was, the men at least in my program, didn’t get drafted and so then there was all this like pressure to flunk some of us out because they had too many students. And it definitely-that’s just the heat coming on-it definitely-there was a feeling that us girls were taking spaces from the more deserving guys. And when I was working in this research institute as part of my graduate program there was in a learning research and development center and they definitely, you know, preferred men or even told- I was told by one guy who was a honcho there that he would never hire a women over a man, that, you know, women would just waste their time. Same thing, you’d just work for two years, they’d invest all this time training you and then you’d leave because you were going to have a baby. And I remember being really mad about that and saying you don’t me, you don’t know what I’m gonna do, you don’t know about my decisions. And, I don’t know. So yeah, and when I worked in the Worcester schools you could work in the summer but only the men got to work in the summer so the women psy-psychologists were not usually offered that position because the men had to care for their families.”

BH: “Then what about the women ...”

RE: “Yeah.”

BH: "... who have to care for their families?"

RE: "Yeah, and then I remember when I got my first credit card. Here I was, I had a PhD in psychology and my husband was a taxi driver [laughs]. And the, the credit card was in his name ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... they would not give me a credit card in my name, even though there was this huge gap in education. And I hated that. So, so, you know, there was that second wave feminist stuff going on and I think I felt very much, you know, as I said there was no maternity leave, there was nothing at Assumption, if you had a baby, well then you were supposed to leave. But to me I was just going to do it, like it didn't matter. I mean, I had to figure out how to have a kid in the summer [laughs], which I did actually figure out pretty well, twice [laughter]. And so, you know, one kid [laughter], one kid was born in July, the other one in June. I was like, 'Good for you mom,' and I just brought them with me. And that offended-people hated that. They-no one said anything to my face but people did not like that."

BH: "Mhm."

RE: "But that is what I was going to do. I mean I was kind of like that's what I am going to do."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "I mean, I don't need, I don't need mater-I was like us women we can do it all."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "You know, we're not wimpy, we'll show those guys."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "Not only can I work full time, I can drive an hour each way, I can bring my kid with me ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... I can help my husband in his business, I can, I can, I can ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... until I was dying [laughs] of exhaustion [laughter]. But, so yeah, you know, the lack of any kind of family support, like any kind of support, not from my family but the idea that you

should have family leave or maybe even a daycare center at Assumption or something. It wasn't like you were discriminated against it was just like no one ever imagined that women ..."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "... would be in this environment and in fact when I first came to Assumption all the restrooms pretty much were just for men there were no-they all, they all-[laughs] like you'd go in and there'd be a urinal and you're like, 'Oh!'[laughs]"

BH: "You're like, 'What do I do with this?'"

RE: "Am I in the wrong stall and then you'd go out and it would say women."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "So they would just put a sign. So it was, yeah it was very, it was very preferential to men but I don't know, it wasn't like-I think that most of us sort of bought into and so the idea was well it was totally preferential to men so you just have to prove that you're as good as or better than a man. It wasn't sort of a feeling that oh these accommodations should be made for me and oh I should have this or oh I should have that."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "It was just sort of like, okay that's a system so I have to participate in that and I have to be as good or better and if I have to come to school with this baby velcroed to my back then that's what I'll do."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "Yes. And I did [laughs]. I don't know that I would recommend it [laughs] but ..."

BH: "Yeah. Alright, I'm going to ... [recording cuts off; end of first half of interview]"

BH: "I, I had one more question, what was it? It's slipped my mind but if I remember it I will bring it back up. Oh, I guess, did you ever get a sense of like yo-you know, you were talking about women doing it all, having to do it all kind of thing and like, being the super mom, did you ever feel like, discouraged if like, you couldn't do it? And like, you felt like this is the image that's being portrayed or like, this is what I have to live up to because I remember reading a couple articles in class ..."

CC: "Mhm."

BH: "... about being a super mom per se and like if you didn't meet these expectations then, you know, you weren't a good mom or you weren't a good wife or anything like that, and ...?"

CC: “Yeah, how, yeah how did you balan-one of our questions is how you did balance different priorities and different responsibilities as a mother as a, as a working woman? The different roles that you played in your life and the interests that you had in your life ...”

RE: “Mhm.”

CC: “... as a, as a person?”

RE: “Yeah.”

CC: “How did you manage to balance all that?”

RE: “Well, I don’t think that any of us knows the answer to that. I think it’s impossible actually.”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “I remember one time talking to a student and I was encouraging her to go on to graduate school and get a doctoral degree and she was like, ‘No I just want to get a masters, I want to have a family,’ and I was like, ‘You can do it ...,’ and I was gonna say you can do it all, you can do it all, you can, and I got you can do it, I just couldn’t, I couldn’t actually say that, that you can do it all because I did it all but it, it took a huge, huge toll, a huge physical toll and an emotional toll, it was, it was too hard. So I don’t really know the answer to that question and sort of when I teach Images I think that that is one of the ways whereas many women, young women, believe you’re equal, and that there’s no reason for feminism ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “... and I don’t know if they started your class with. ‘How many of you are feminists?’ I always started it like that ...”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “... and nobody raises their hands and then at the end a lot of people do. You know, many young women that I’ve taught feel that, you know, most of the basic problems for women our culture are solved and I think in large measure that’s true, except for how we are gonna care for the kids. And I feel like there is a greater desire for men-husbands to participate in raising kids than there was in my times. That was not-like nobody-you just didn’t think about it. But again to go back to some of our discussions about sort of, you know, the work environment like, you folks work all the time and I work all the time now ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: "... because of the computer. You know, I work day and night. And that wasn't actually true in my time when my kids were young so at least, when I came home for better or for worse I couldn't work except for to read and grade papers. But I didn't have to answer emails and I didn't have to try to deal with problems that students would send me on the internet and I didn't have to like if I wrote a letter of recommendation then the secretary would take that and deal with the sixteen thousand places students were applying. And, and so I feel like it's really hard that both men and women of your generation will be drawn into that almost 24/7 work cycle and even though I wasn't drawn into a 24/7 work cycle I felt like it was 24/7. Neither of my kids thought sleeping was very important [laughter]."

BH: "How convenient for you [laughs]."

RE: "Yeah and I felt since I was away from them most of the day that I really wanted to be with them so I might get home at 7 o'clock at night and I would hang out with them 'til like eleven or midnight and then I would sleep maybe two hours and then I would get up and do my school work. So my dad used to joke, he'd, 'Step right up everybody, step right up, step right up. Pay a dollar; see a lady who hasn't slept in seven years.' [laughter] And it, and it was true, you know, like, it was funny but it was true. I felt..."

CC: "Did you feel like it was always you were pulled into many directions? (____???)"

RE: "Yeah you were always pulled in a thousand directions and you felt, I felt, I don't know if other people felt this way, I felt like I never did anything very well."

CC: "100%."

BH: "Because you were trying to do so many things at once, how can you be expected to give your all to ...?"

RE: "Yeah, yeah so it was impossible and like I said we lived on the third floor of the book store ..."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "... and, you know, the washing machine was in the basement [laughs], but you couldn't leave the little ones up there alone, because, especially the younger one was very active. So I mean I would do laundry at two am in the morning because that was the only time I could be sure that Rielle wouldn't get up and start walking around [laughs]. You know, "I got out my bed."

BH: "[laughs] Fantastic."

RE: "You did get out your bed and we were right on route nine there and her, her major goal in her entire life was, "I'm going across route nine, I'm going by myself [uses baby voice]."

BH: “Oh. No, no.”

RE: “Every minute of every day. So it was really, real-it was extremely hard and I feel like it, it wasn't ok, you know. I was, I was physically sick a lot and I would just ignore that too it's sort of like well what are you going to do? You have to be a mom and you have to be a teach-you know, you can't really miss class and you can't really not drive in the snow [laughs]. And you know driving with the kids in the snow used to scare me to death. And so I would say that that is the challenge; that is the greatest challenge. And I think it was a tremendous challenge that I faced. Al was great. He did all the food.”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “He bought all the food and he does all the shopping and he made all the, all the meals.”

CC: “What does Al do for a living? I'm sorry I'm ...”

RE: “He runs the book store.”

CC: “Runs the bookstore. And before that, like when your children were born? How was that?”

RE: “He ran the book store.”

CC: “The bookstore as well.”

RE: “Yeah, that's how we lived in that building ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “... because we bought the building for the store and then kids were born in that house, well they were born in a hospital, but that's where they grew up, in that crazy building.”

CC: “How-has worked change for you over time with, with Al's help or has it always been like he always did the shopping like?”

RE: “He has always done the shopping and always makes the food. I don't do food. I'm so not interested in that [laughs].”

CC: “[laughs] Hey listen, I don't blame you [laughter].”

RE: “But both of my kids though, both of my kids are great cooks so they learned that from him. And I think the other way that the challenges of mothering have affected me is that that's what I write on, sort of research area field of psychology is issues of mothering both in the U.S and also in sort of the more global environment. And on mother blame as a sort of this endless kind of

mantra or as they say in the English department trope, I guess this trope of the culture that everything, you know, that goes wrong anytime, anyplace this is your mother's fault and I, I reject that intellectually ...”

CC: “Yeah.”

RE: “... but I certainly feel it. How-you know, you can't grow up in a culture and not internalize that. So I would say that that is my greatest- it remains my greatest challenge, you know, even though my kids are obviously adults now. It's-I don't think that the women's movement figured that out ...”

CC: “Figured that out.”

RE: “... at all.”

CC: “So, I mean you're talking about these hardships you did have, and it's-I mean we have-we are definitely moving or progressing in terms of women equality. Do you think that women of our generation I mean like, people like me or Britni who are moving maybe to, and I don't want to say better and I don't want to say a better society, but we just have more rights and more opportunities, do you think we will struggle with the same things? Same issues that?”

RE: “I don't know, I think so, I think so, because I don't think that our, our country is set up-it's not family friendly. Like if a women takes off a bunch of years as she moves forward, she's gonna fall back in her career. You know, it's really hard especially like especially say in the sciences-if you step out of the career path for even three or four years you're almost out of date by then.”

BH: “Mhm.”

RE: “And I feel like with the computer while it does allow you to work from a multiplicity of places which is then an advantage it also calls to you, like you're always on call. I feel like I'm on call 24/7. I mean I'm still working like a crazy person even though I'm retired [laughs]. I have hundreds of letters of recommendations to write. I'm working on a grant, I-and you can do it all the time and it's hard it's hard enough when you know this work is in your background and you can't do anything about it because you are not at Assumption let's say. But when it's right there and all I really have to do is open it up [laughs] and, you know, start ...”

BH: “Yeah.”

CC: “(____???)”

RE: “... start typing away, it's very hard for me. And so in the last year that I was at Assumption after being on sabbatical, I mean I was working until one and two o'clock in the morning every single night. And I said, ‘You know, you're 65 years old, this is too much, this is like are you

having fun yet?' No I don't think so. You know, on the positive I do think that now is more acceptable for dads to be more involved with their kids and I think many fathers value that as mothers do, but again I don't think our work environment is set up like that, fathers, it's much more acceptable for dads to be involved actively with their kids and I think that many fathers values that as, as mothers do. But again I don't think that our work environments are set up that way and I don't think our childcare situation has improved at all. I think it's, in many ways worse, I mean, my kids were in daycare all the time and it was expensive, but now ..."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "... it's like half your salary or something. And again I don't think that idea of extended families-I mean we are still moving all over the place so you don't have that network of extended family. My friend is-just became a grandmother and I love this, what her son and daughter-in-law are doing is they rented an apartment that's big enough for the grandparents. So the grandparents live some, who knows where, and each set of grandparents comes in for a month and takes care of the baby for a month, and then they go back home to their house [laughs], and then the other set of grandparents comes and stays for a month and then they go back home. And that's what they're doing, now that's seems really exciting and creative to me, I mean I would love to do that if my daughter had a, had a (_____???)".

CC: "Yeah, I mean you get a month too and ... [laughs]"

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "Yeah, you get a month off and a month on ..."

CC: "Yeah."

RE: "... and then you don't give up your own home maybe. So I mean I do think-and I do think there are lot more online support for mothers ..."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "... there's lots of mommy blogs and, and all kinds of sites where moms support each other. So I think that those things are positive. But I feel like it's still a real challenge because I think like for many women and men too, but I think for many women, I mean I would say if someone asked me, 'What is the most important thing that you ever did in your life,' I would say it was, you know, raising my two kids and that's-they are the centerpiece of my life. I mean I loved being a college professor and I did want to be a person like I was like, 'I'm not just a mom, I'm still-I'm a person,' but I actually wasn't I was a worker and a mom, I really wasn't a person. I never went anywhere, I never did anything , I was sick all the time [laughs], you know, every Christmas I'd get my grades in and the next day, and even last year I had pneumonia ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... I turned in my grades and then I got pneumonia. And I was sick for a month. So I don't know I, it's-I feel like especially in our current culture that has a lot of these demands for kind of intensive mothering, you know, like deep engagement with your kids-I mean I'm sort of into that, I'm not into intensive mothering but in the sense of being with them a lot. I mean I adore them [laughs] ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "They're like everything to me. But we don't-kids don't like get on their bike and ride to West Brookfield, you know, you-they're always in structured activities that the parent is involved with and if-that's just very hard to do, you know ..."

CC: "Agree."

RE: "... very, very hard to do. So I don't know. I think it's a challenge, I mean I think it's-well to me having kids was the most important thing in my entire life but it isn't easy and I don't think the culture has changed in that respect and in fact in some ways the challenges may in some ways be greater. I feel like one of the worst things about the women's movements was that while we were fighting in the 1960's and 70's for equal rights and equal pay, for equal work, what we didn't-weren't paying attention to was that the cost of living went crazy. So like in my day your mon-a one, a one family earner, you could live on that."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "But we were saying is, 'We can live on one income but we are human beings and we want to go to college and we want, you know, a life.' And the society was like, 'Well maybe, yes maybe no.' You know, you were kind of struggling through this and then it turned around and now, now if you wanted to be a stay at home parent it would be very hard. And mostly the cost was the cost of housing. Housing became astronomically more expensive. And that happened right at the end of the 60's into the 70's-I mean at the end of the 70's into the 80's. So like we bought that giant house for hardly anything and then within like five years you had the real estate boom and housing became extraordinarily expensive, like two to three hundred times what it used to cost. Then that-we weren't paying attention [laughs] when that happened so now it's almost like-now you don't have the choice of one person working. The-almost two people have to work to be able to make enough money. That was not true in the 60's and 70's and it wasn't true when I first started working."

BH: "Just 'cause we've already touched on I think all of the questions for work ..."

CC: "Yeah."

BH: "... without really transitioning through but I guess the last couple things I would want to know-because I remember when you were talking about even working at Assumption and-or like

applying for certain jobs or whatever there was always this bias as a woman because of maternity leave and everything like that you would get dirty looks or whatever it was when you brought your children to work, could you just like expand on that just a little bit or like...?"

RE: "Yeah I mean I think-so my first child was born in 1980. And, so that means Assumption-well Assumption I think went co-ed in the late 60's, but it, but the faculty wasn't really co-ed. Now there's at least as many women [laughter] if not more but so I think- I always thought I was one of the first ten women there but someone told me it was even less like one of the first five or something, I don't know. So there weren't many women. And so there weren't any role models of how you would do with this. There wasn't any maternity leave like it didn't exist because how could a faculty member be a woman? Like, I was kind of like [laughs]-it wasn't like they were opposed to it, it's just like, no one ever thought of it like, how would-why would you need that, only men are teachers-professors. So I guess I didn't exactly realize that or I don't know, you know, it just didn't exist. And so I basically you would have to-I don't know if you would have to quit or whether they would give you a leave of absence I don't really. Like nobody talked about it. So my friend Arlene Vadum, Dr. Vadum [coughs], she-her son is two years older than my first child. But she only lived down the street so she, she was able to go back and forth to breastfeed and do all that other stuff and do the things a baby needed. But I lived an hour away so I just couldn't-like I had no idea what I would do, you know [laughs]."

BH: "Yeah."

CC: "Mmm."

RE: "Like, I hadn't thought about this. So I figured I had to have them in the summer so I figured that part out but then once the baby was born I-it was like well, you have to breastfeed this baby. What are you going to do now? So it seemed to me the only thing I could possibly do was to bring my daughter with me so I did and, she was a, a, a, she was a pretty-she didn't cry a lot, she was a relatively happy baby and she was adorable and wonderful [laughter] with her curly red hair. I mean, people did love her, but they thought it was really kind of weird that you would come in my office and here is this baby in a little crib, I had a little, you know those plastic bassinets ..."

BH: "Yeah, yeah. [laughter] Yeah."

RE: "... I had one of those that Arlene gave me so the baby was in this little plastic bassinette and, you know, I would lock the door when I was gonna breast feed. I had students who took care of her while I was in class and with her ev-even though the other people like the administrators didn't like it very much no one said anything to me. I think the chair might had said, 'You know we don't have insurance to cover things like this,' and 'You shouldn't have students taking care of the baby; what if something happens, you know, the school doesn't have insurance.' And I'd be like, 'Whatever.'" [laughter] Like what do you want me to do? You know?"

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “What do you want me to do? So that worked out pretty well with her, even though I know people didn’t like it, and it was hard, you know, it would be pretty strange for a student to come into my office [laughs] and there’s this baby here. But I kept her with me that whole first year. And she, you know, learned to walk there and everybody knew her [laughter]. It was really and she would walk all over campus with students and she would spend time in their rooms. And, I don’t know, it was okay; it wasn’t perfect but it was okay. I remember one time I was in Taylor and she was there with a whole bunch of students but not any student I knew [laughs].”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “This is weird ...”

CC/BH: “Mhm.”

RE: “... so I went over and I said, you know, ‘What’s going on here?’ An-and they’re-and all of the kids were sort of like, ‘That’s Dr. Edmonds baby,’ ‘cause they didn’t know me.”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “Like, ‘She’s fine.’ [laughs] and I’m like, ‘Well I’m her mother.’ ‘Well we don’t know that!’ [laughter]”

BH: “Well we don’t know that!”

RE: “They, they protected her from ...”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “... from me and I thought that was really cute and that whoever was the real babysitter had just gone to get something to eat and so she had a pretty good time and I think, you know, even though administrators didn’t like it, it was okay. But then when I had my second child four years later, she was more intense, and she would cry a lot ...”

BH: “Mhm.”

RE: “... and that was not ok.”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “People would be very angry about it and ... they’d be like, ‘What is that child doing here?’ You know ...”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “... and she’s disturb-and even if they didn’t specifically say she’s disturbing everybody it was clear that she was. So I was only able to-I only kept her with me for, for the first semester and then ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “... I, I had to do something different. So Lana went to daycare-Alanna went to daycare in Worcester, so that was only down the, down the street. So once in my second year she was down the, down the street and that wasn’t so bad. But once I had two kids it was imposs-essentially impossible [laughs] ...”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “... it was- it’s-it (didn’t/doesn’t???) really work. And so those years were very, very hard. And I felt like the kids suffered too and the kids suffered by being in the car all the time. Yeah, (I know???), each way every day.”

BH: “Do you-would you agree that like-like it just sounds like you worked a lot in that way but do you think other people recognized like your hard work as work or do you think they just saw it as like work, it-work equals money and so like they never really recognized ...?”

RE: “Yeah an-and that’s one of the things I think remains also in academia, a real gender difference or it’s either a gender difference or it’s a difference of, of personality or something I don’t know but-for example while I worked at Assumption I always, you know, I think had good relationships with students. I spent time talking to students, trying to help them out with careers, and also sometimes with personal issues. I always wrote thousands of letters of recommendation, many more than most people in my department. And I was caring for my kids and I was working in my husband’s business. So as a consequence I wasn’t out publishing. And, so guys who came in at the same time as me who did not have parenting responsibilities or sort of these kind of parenting responsibilities that women generally take on as faculty, you know, I don’t know if it’s true. There are-there’s a lot of nice guy faculty but it’s almost always the women faculty. I think they are the ones who spend a lot of time with the students. So you have three responsibilities: teaching, service to the community, and publishing. And promotion is supposed to be based on all three of those, but what it really turns out is that it’s based mo-more on publishing than anything else. So what happens is that people come in at the same time, especially in my case where I was doing pretty much all the parenting except for the cooking and shopping, which I don’t dismiss as a big, a big contribution. You know, there’s only 24 hours in a day, so if you’re teaching, you’re mentoring, you’re doing a lot of service ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: "... you're really engaged with the students you don't have any time to publish and so I always thought that we were-that those three things would be rewarded equally but they were not. So usually people can do two out of the three, nobody can do three out of the three ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... unless you don't have a family, then maybe you can. But it didn't turn out that way so people got promoted like way ahead of me ..."

BH: "Mhm."

RE: "... like way ahead of me [laughs]. For example, one faculty member got promoted to full like maybe after about 12 years and it took 33 years ..."

BH: "Oh, wow."

RE: "... to get promoted so that's a huge financial difference ..."

BH: "Yeah it is."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "... because every time you get promoted ..."

CC: "You get a ..."

RE: "... you get a bump, pretty good bump. And so what I decided in my life was that I, I would just not get promote-you know, that would just have to be it. You know ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... I just wouldn't do it and I would have to accept that. But you know that made me really sad so, it was kinda of cool because about, I don't know, five or eight years ago I was at this conference and a, a group of women were like, 'What's wrong with you [laughter]? You're an awful professor!' And I'm like, 'Oh, forget it!' I can't ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... I can't do it. And they said, 'Well you have to do it, you have to do it for women hood,' and, you know, they kind of inspired me. By then my kids were, you know, out the house and I decided I would try to, try to publish and try to, you know, go for it and so I finally got it. But, but, you know, 33 years into your career that's not what usually happens. And I, I feel like it was my mothering responsibilities but also kind of the mothering responsibilities I took on with respect to my students which I loved doing it ..."

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “... like-but that seemed to me very gendered and I would always argue in the faculty meetings that we need to honor all three, like we say we are gonna honor all three, but we really don't.”

BH: “Mhm.”

RE: “And that we should honor all three, but, but that's never going to change. And that's not really different at Ass-you know, at-Assumption's not different in that respect.”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “So I think that women who are on an academic career track, who have kids, it's very, very hard to advance as quickly as, as others in your field.”

CC: “Thank you so much or sharing a lot of like your personal experiences and, and we do want to move on and, and kind of just hear a little bit about your political views [laughter] or your community involvement. Do you consider yourself active, active politically?”

RE: “Yeah I think I'm, I'm not as active as I want to be ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “I, I think because of all those situations I mentioned before, you know, there's only 24 hours in a day but, you know, I, I feel like I'm an activist and I feel like I'm-well I'm gonna be a poll watcher ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “... on election day, to be sure everyone gets an equal opportunity to vote and, we certainly contribute to political campaigns and have strong feelings about who gets elected [laughter].”

CC: “You know, some say that this is one of the most important elections we'll have in a generation. Why do you think that so many people think that this is one of the most important ones? Do-would you agree? Do you agree with this?”

[phone rings]

RE: “I think so, yeah.”

[pause for break]

RE: “So you were asking me if I believe this is an important election?”

CC: “Yeah, if, if, you do agree. You know, so many people are saying that this is one of, of the greatest or most important elections. Do you think that you would agree with that? And if you do, why?”

RE: “I don’t think it is one of the most important elections, but I do think it’s extremely important as to who gets selected. So I feel like, I feel like the economy is actually limping along and moving forward. I don’t know why Obama doesn’t like [laughs] tout his successes a little more than he has been. I feel like the troth that we fell into as a consequence of the Bush policies which, as I said before, I think are very similar to the Romney philosophy. That that was described at the time, and this is back in 2008, described at the time as equivalent to the state we were in prior to the Great Depression, and I think that’s true. And I feel like even though Obama’s not perfect that he took what could have been a potential economic disaster, big time disaster, and at least stabilized the country, and that if we could get out of Iraq and Afghanistan and avoid additional military engagements that maybe we have shot at, at being ok. My personal opinion is that if Mitt Romney gets elected that that will be a disaster for this country so in that case, in that way I do believe it is critical who gets elected. If he gets elected and reinstates the policies of the Bush administration, cut social programs, increases costs of college, increases interest on student loans, you know, tightens welfare even more than it already is, continues the Bush tax cuts for the super wealthy, that there’s, that there’s absolutely no hope for the future. I, I, I just give up-I mean I just, I don’t understand what his appeal is and I feel as though his ideas are exactly what got us into the mess in the first place and I’m actually terr-terrified. And I feel like that th-the ascendancy of the Tea Party and, you know, their ideas about women ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “... that, that were back to the 1950’s.”

CC: “That’s per-per-perfect that you say that because I did want to ask ho-how important do you think this election-and particularly it’s important for, for women.”

RE: “I think it is very important for women, and I don’t understand how women [sighs]-I don’t understand how women would vote against their own interests. I, I fe-feel like women do actually care about, about other people a lot, you know, I think that women care about children and I think that if you’re gonna cut spending for education, you’re cut spending for social welfare programs, you’re gonna cut Obama Care, or whatever you want to call it, the Care Act, you’re gonna get rid of all that, then you are perpetuating a generation of kids with ill health who cannot access the health, health care system. And I think that if they appoint another supreme court justice during their period of time, so let’s say Romney gets elected obv-somebody is gonna have to leave the court eventually, they’ll appoint a judge and they’ll overturn Roe v. Wade and that will be it. You know, an-and I think we will be back into a place that, you know-I was a young person before Roe v. Wade and I was a young person before birth-access to birth

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control and it's not a pretty place to be. You know, people-I can tell you tons of people that I knew who had abortions that were not safe and were not, you know-abortion's complicated, I'm not saying it's right, I don't think it's the best idea [laughs] but it-and I think without access to, to a contraceptives, without-they want to close Planned Parenthood, which again is an organization that serves women's needs who cannot access the health care system. So Planned Parenthood only 3 percent of their work is abortion, 97 of their work is screening for breast cancer, screening for colon cancer, providing contraception. If, if all of that is gone I, I don't, I think we will be in a position in this country that is-would be devastating for women. And I don't know how they in 2012 be against equal pay for equal work. [laughs] Like, how can you be ag- that's saying that women are second class citizens, that their labor is not to be valued at the same level as male labor and I just, I don't understand it, I don't understand how someone can have that position. So I think it will turn the clock back for women. And, you know, what I say in Images when I teach it is that without some sort of control over your fertility-if you do not have control over your own fertility you cannot be an equal player in, in the job market because, you can't ask a business to [laughs], you know, every nine months give you time off."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "You know, if-you need to have control over your fertility. I think abortion is much-is very, very complicated but I think contraception is not very difficult or complicated. And the thing that hurts me the most that just is like a knife in my heart is when, the Republicans argue that they are pro-life. I don't think they pro-life, they're pro-birth. Okay, that every child that is conceived needs to be born, but they're against welfare, they're against care-pre-natal care, you know, they're against health insurance for the people at the bottom of the pile who can't access pre-natal care. Once those children are born they're against investing in schools, they're against investing in, you know, healthcare, they're against investing in college education, they're against the Dream Act. They are against all the things that I believe in, where you rise- you help rise up all the people, not just the people who are privileged. So I, you know, they're in favor of the death penalty, how can you be in favor of the death penalty, but be crazy about abortion? How can you be hawkish in, you know-George Bush, how many people were killed in the [sighs], in the war in Iraq? When Iraq, when Iraq did nothing to us, I mean I'm not saying that Saddam Hussein was not a dictator; he was a dictator, he was not a great guy, I'm not saying [laughs] I was in favor of Saddam Hussein but Iraq did not participate in the attack on the U.S. and, you know, his, his idea about preemptive war, that if I feel threatened by a nation we in America have the right to engage in preemptive war. How is that pro-life? I don't understand it. So I, I think it's-I don't think the times are as dire as the media makes it out to ..."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "... to be. I don't think that-so like in my life time I feel like there have been elections that were much more crucial about things like the Vie-are we gonna end the Vietnam War or not? Are we going to give people-African Americans the right to vote? You know, are we gonna she-put hoses on them, you know, and then the riots in Watts and other places, all of those things were part of my life experience. So I don't think the times are as dire as they seem. For just a-if

you just take a very small slice of history but I think they could get really, really dire if Mitt Romney is elected [laughs]. Sorry, it's just my opinion. I feel-I feel he's dangerous, I feel like he flip flops, he changes his mind every other day, he says whatever he needs to say to whatever audience he's talking to but if you look at what Paul Ryan's economic plan is, and he has not changed his plan, his plan is to take apart Medicare, to overturn Obama Care, against the Lilly Ledbetter Pay Act, again-increasing in-interest on student loans , against the Dream Act, I mean all the things that in my opinion are necessary for some sort of justice and equi-equality in this country. I think it could be [laughs] pretty dire even though I don't necessarily think the state of the country is as dire as many people say it is."

CC: "Well, I, I think it is very evident that you are very passionate about this ..."

RE: "Mhm."

CC: "... or that you have strong political views. Who-what people in your life have influenced these views or what has made you this passionate about politics?"

RE: "Well like I think probably as I said early on my, my dad was a-just a Democrat through to his soul. And he believed that the New Deal under FDR essentially saved his life and that of his family and that the government can make people's life better and as a consequence, then they give back, which he did. So he died at 89 having worked his whole life and he paid taxes his whole life and, that, that he was a good American, you know. So that was definitely a factor. I feel like being a child of the 60's was also a factor and sort of really seeing, again, firsthand-like I went to Washington and was part of various protest marches and just seeing firsthand the injustice and inequality and that it's just not right [laughs], that people who have lived here all their lives don't get to vote and don't get to participate actively. I think working as a school psychologist in the inner city of Worcester and seeing that in comparison to what- like my kids weren't born then, but in comparison to what my children would have access to versus what these kids had access to. They had 50 strikes against them by, by the time they were born that's just not okay, you know, it's, it's not right. Those kids were great, I loved those kids. They had, they had spirit and they had, you know, they had drive and they had motivation, and they had all kinds of stuff going for them. But they weren't gonna make it [laughs], I don't think. Some of them do, but not many. And also being around the, the teachers-who were by-in-large, the teachers in that school were passionate like you were saying before, They were passionate, they loved the kids too, some of them were from their neighborhood themselves who had made it and they would stand as examples that if you play by the rules, you can make it. I don't think that's true anymore. And so I think that's why I hate the welfare reform laws so much because you know what? If you play by the rules you won't make it, you'll get to work for minimum wage. So I am passionate because I believe – I think because I am a child of the sixties I believe that we can change these things, like I think if people knew enough, if people really heard some of the ideas of the past and like, came together so like my daughter, one of my daughters is involved in the Occupy Wall Street movement and, you know, she was talking about that this just like changed her life and even though it was only for a short time and that many of the mentors of the Occupy Wall Street groups were people from my generation who still [laughs] believe for better

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or for worse that if you make enough noise and you, you march, and you say “no way,” you know, that you’ll make a difference. I don’t actually believe that anymore. I, I marched t-to Washington j-just prior to the Iraq War and it was the largest peace march in the history of the United States and that was in 2002 or 2003 right before Bush invaded Iraq and it wasn’t reported on the news. Those peace marches were larger than the ones in the 60s that are in the history books and that was on the news. There were three to 400,000 people there and it was not covered.”

CC: “Why do you believe ...”

RE: “Cause corporations own the media now. Corporations own the media...”

CC: “[whispers] Sorry, yeah.”

RE: “...except for public ra-public media that’s why the Romney administration is also against the funding of public, public radio and TV because that’s the only sort of one and few independent sources and so, you know, Rupert Murdoch owns [laughs] the media and, and the other, another really big issue is in the old days, the government ran prisons but now in the new days the, the pr-prison system is also a business and so they lobby for three strikes you’re out laws and really ‘tough on crime’ and so that, you know, they will be sure that the prisons are packed with people so they can make profit. I-that’s not-I don’t think that’s right, you know, I can’t go up there and lobby that this kid shouldn’t go to prison for 25 years cuz he-three strikes you’re out and his third strike was that he had a joint on him. I mean, I don’t care. Like, if a college kid had a joint on him all the time, nothing’s going to happen to them [coughing in background] and nothing really ever does. So I feel like this class, this class distinction and what you can have access to is just overwhelmingly unjust at this period in our history and, and I’m, I’m old enough to know that it wasn’t always like that, you know, I’m old enough to know that. I was, I was there for the war on poverty and you did rise people out of poverty. I mean there are a lot of factors for why that was, it wasn’t just government spending cuz of course government spending has to be, you know, funded by taxes ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “... but if we didn’t have 50% of our gov-federal government tax-i-it-50% of the spending is on defense and you can find that on any, any site and I don’t know that we have to spend 50% on defense of all the income we get in the United States government on building more nuclear bombs. We’ve got plenty of them; we’ve got more than anybody else on the planet.”

CC: “Thank you so much for sharing that [laughter] all this information. Some very-very evident that you are definitely very passionate about this. Just to move away a little bit about your political views, what about in the community? What are some of your community programs that you have volunteer in or have been part of? Have ...”

RE: “Yeah, I’m going to do more of that. Again I-all the years that I was working I didn’t really have enough time but I am on the steering community of the Worcester Women’s History Project ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “So that’s one of the things I’m on and then I’m on the sub-committee-two sub-committees, the nominating committee and the Oral [laughs] History Project so I’m on those two committees.”

CC: “What led you to join [pauses] this committee, committees?”

RE: “Well actually I got drawn into the [Worcester Women’s] Oral History Project when Linda Rosenlund, who also works at Assumption-she was trying to develop this project so I worked with her on this whole Higher Ed Collaborative that we were talking about and it was fro-fro-- from one of those meetings, this idea of having the interviews be based on the four themes of the 1850 convention. I thought that that was really a cool idea.”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “I also attended the-they had a-in 2000 they did a 150th anniversary of the Worcester Women’s-of the convention and so I got interested in that cuz I attended that. I also-they raised money to paint four portraits of, of women from the Worcester area that hang in Mechanics Hall so before that all of the portraits in Mechanics Hall were men and the four-the, the group raised a lot of money, well they raised a huge amount of money to restage the convention but then several years later they raised a ton of money to have artists contracted to paint four photos-four portraits in the old style so they all look like ...”

CC: “Wow.”

RE: “... the old style so that was Lucy Stone, who’s actually from West Brookfield. Her home site is just up the street, Abby Kelly Foster, Clara Barton, and Dorothea Dix. So those are the four women that hang in Mechanics Hall and that was through the project so I thought those things were cool and when I was head of the women, of the Women Studies program at Assumption, you know, we had the artists come and talk about the process they engaged in to do research for the portraits and stuff. So that was one of the ways I got interested in it.”

CC: “Would you say that that’s one of their biggest or major accomplishments? What would you like that their major accomplishment was?”

RE: “Well I would say that their three major accomplishments are the restaging of the convention ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: "... and bringing to light-to the history books that even though Seneca Falls is the- everything you always read, that's where you read the first, the first women's rights convention was that's true but it was very small, it was a very regional group and the people of the time considered Worcester to be the place of the first women's rights convention because it was a national call for participants. And I think that, well there's a bunch of things. They have a woman who performs as Abby Kelly Foster, Lynne McKenney Lydick, and she has raised the awareness of the, of the program all over the city cuz she performs in high schools and elementary schools and everywhere and it was really through her actions and tireless efforts that Abby Kelly Foster got inducted into the Women's Rights Hall of Fame and into the Abolitionist's Hall of Fame. So that's a huge accomplishment and then I think the portraits is a huge accomplishment and I think the Oral History Project is a huge accomplishment, especially as I was saying because of the Higher Ed Collaborative because the histories are housed at the Schlesinger Library which is very prestigious and because it has this archive of women who are deaf, I just love that. I have a number of family members who are deaf and that just makes me really happy [laughs] that somebody figured out ..."

BH: "I think that's fantastic!"

CC: "Yeah."

RE: "Yeah."

BH: "I think that's really cool I love that."

RE: "And Judy Fask, she doesn't work at Holy Cross anymore but she-she is just so inspiring and she interprets, you know ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... a lot of events and so she's just-my uncle was deaf and so many of the ways deaf people communicate is through, you know, beautiful like non-verbal ..."

BH: "Yeah."

CC: "Non-verbal cues."

RE: "... kind of ways of expression."

CC: "Absolutely."

RE: "It's like a, it's like a dance. It's just, I get chills when I think of those women finally, you know, having a word ..."

BH: “Having a say, yeah.”

RE: “... being part of, being part of an important project. Other things-what else do I do that volunteer, I don’t know. I-I’m trying to work on a kind of grant to get money for young mothers at the Y-YWCA. I’ve been really involved in trying to learn more about women in the global context. I’ve been taking courses, that’s not really volunteering [laughs] but I’ve been taking courses along those lines.”

CC: “Yeah but I do want to point out that I think that even now just being here and like educating us an-and just all these views-I think that, that’s like service to the community, I think that you know ...”

RE: “I think try to think that, yeah.”

CC: “... we pass that down to ...”

RE: “And I think that- I felt that Assumption, you know, trying to just be a person that people could trust, you know, that, that there was a safe place if you were having a hard time and that I would pretty much [laughs] always be there, you know, just because why not? You know, I, I often think of my own kids and like how I always hope and hope that if they were ever having a hard time there would be someone there for them and so I have that in my own mind like, you know, you have to, you have to walk the walk, you can’t just talk the talk if you really believe in creating a more just and equitable environment then you have to be there and do it when someone needs something that you can provide.”

BH: “I found that helpful. I loved that. That was one of my favorite things.”

RE: “Yeah that was one of my favorite things too, to be, to be able to do that and to say “yes you can” [laughs], you know, not to quote Obama but, you know, when people are down and out ...”

BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “... people need someone to say you, yo-you can make it and I’ll help you. And it, you know, in some ways it, it’s easier at Assumption because I, I always knew the system, like I knew a whole bunch of strategies of how I could help individuals who were struggling to, to still hang on even if it meant dropping a course or it meant negotiating with the dean ...”

CC: “Mhm.”

RE: “... or it meant going to, you know, couns-whatever it was I not only knew the counseling resources but I sort of knew how you could ...”

CC: “Go ...”

RE: "... you know, not work the system but understand the system enough so that you could find out the places where there was flexibility so that you could succeed and so I find it-I really want to use-I've kept my psychologist license active and I wanna, you, know-that's the one thing I didn't get to do during most of my life was to use my clinical skills at least in a-that type of a job."

RE: "But I feel like it might be harder for me like in working with the young moms-my life-I don't know how to help them understand the systems that surround them so that they can find those places of flexibility. I'm not talking about scamming the system. I'm talking about finding places where there's flexibility so that you can get a little slack ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... that you need, in order to be able to succeed during a short period of time. So I mean that would be something I feel I have to learn and then again, I'm really interested in working with immigrant women because I think that they face enormous challenges as well. And remember those great women who came with the scarves ..."

BH: "Oh my goodness, with the scar-scarves. That was amazing."

RE: "... with those and other things. So, you know, so I want to connect up with people who also like, just generously donate their time, so I can learn more about the specific challenges and then I feel like I can be more helpful because I think it is helpful to be a good listener, but I think it's also helpful to kind of understand how the system works so you can help people access resources that are there for them, or advocate more effectively for themselves or whatever it is, you know, that they need to do. So, I'm working on it [laughter]."

CC: "Again before, before we end there's a couple more questions that we do want to ask, that brings me back up into the personal [laughter] questions, how did you define success in your life and have you noticed that this has changed over time or have you always had this same image of what success was supposed look like?"

RE: "That's a compl-I want to say it has changed, probably when I was young, I thought success was primarily academic achievements. I never was particularly into money [laughs] I don't know why I, I never measured success in terms of financial stuff, I don't know why. I don't really care too much about it, I mean I have a house and I have a car and I have a digital camera [laughs] and I have two kids and a good husband ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... like I mean what else could you possibly need I don't need an elevator for my car [laughter]. But I think I did measure it in terms of academic achievement probably because, as I've said earlier, people didn't think I would be very successful in that area, so that was pretty important to me to actually do it. I think I would say that as you get older you realize you can't

define things like success. That everything is much more nuanced. So some things you do really well but while you're doing that other things slip and then you have to go and pick up the pieces of the other things so that you can show off that part of your life. So, I don't know, I don't know what success is. I think trying to be true to yourself is, is success. I mean I think staying true to who you believe you are and the things-try to make happen in your life and the life of others the things you believe in, is success. You know, that's I guess is the only way I could think of it."

CC: "Based on your life experiences, what advice would you give to the women of today and, and future generations?"

RE: "I'm just smiling 'cause of course I remember [laughs] us writing down that particular question ..."

BH: "Yeah."

RE: "... we thought that was a good one ... or in including that on the list. I don't know I think I would say, you know, just be-believe in yourself, you know. Work hard to know who you are, work hard to identify the things in your life that you believe you're good at, and the things maybe the things you not so good at, but to kind of develop a deep sense of who you are, and then embrace that person. You know, and just believe in who you are and don't let anybody knock you down [laughs]. You stand strong and don't let anybody knock you down. I mean I think it is hard to know yourself, I think it's hard to figure out who you are so your-and that's going to change as you develop and grow. But I think all through it, if you can hold onto that inner core of who you are and, just not let anybody knock you down, is the advice I would give. You know?"

CC: "Promise two more questions then we're done [laughter]."

BH: "Yeah."

CC: "Now that we're 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?"

RE: "Say that again."

CC: "Now that we're working to tell a fuller story of the history of women than has been recorded in the past, what do you think that we should make sure we include?"

RE: "I think that we should include women's strength. I think we should include ideas o-of motherhood. That-and that the traditional roles that women played are to be valued. That, you know, nobody really makes it alone in this world. They make it in part because people support them and one of the people, who to the best of her ability who supports you, is your mom, and that the work of mothering is very ha-very complicated work. And it has not been recognized as an action of great complexity and self-I don't know what I was gonna say, I don't want to say

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self-sacrifice because I don't, I don't like that idea, but it requires what Sara Ruddick, there is an important theorist of women, of motherhood and she calls it maternal thinking. It requires a complexity of thought and the attention to the ne-needs of your children and it requires you to work to understand who they are so that you can be that sort of bulwark for them as they kind of go out into the world. And so I would say that, that many of the traditional roles that women have played-I mean I'm excited ..."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "... that I've been able to play a role on the external work force but I equally value the complexity and psychological demandingness of the work of being a mother, and I don't think that gets the like ..."

CC: "The true value."

RE: "... waving of the [laughs]-like, 'Yay mom!' [laughs] Like, maybe on Mother's Day that's about it. But, but you know, women raised all the great men, you know, pretty much ..."

CC: "Hey."

RE: "... and they wouldn't have been who they were without their moms so I'm a big mom fan [laughs]."

CC: "And the last question is is there anyone else that you would suggest we talk to?"

RE: "Well I don't know who else on your list. I feel like we have to talk to Annette Rafferty before-Annette Rafferty is the founder of Abby's House. I would think we should talk to Ginger Navickas who founded Day Break. So Abbey-Annette Rafferty founded Abbey's House. Ginger Navickas pretty much founded Day Break. I don't know that I would-I don't know if Melanie Demarais has been interviewed, she may have been, I think Melanie was, yeah she's a real go-getter. Brenda Safford was-Brenda Safford was already interviewed. I want to get to know a lot of the women who work in the-like I don't know people in communi-minority communities but I was at an event one time and I was asking everybody like-I don't know there's a woman who directs the Gospel Choir [laughs] in Worcester, but I don't know her name."

CC: "But you do you think that we should extend maybe more into-I mean even the younger generations I think ..."

RE: "Yup, I think. Mhm."

CC: "... it's so interesting when we can, you know, just hear from older generations but I think knowing the perspective of younger generations or ..."

RE: "Absolutely."

CC: "... more involved-and I do agree with the minorities .I think that we do face different issues I think that when we face that we're women but we're also dealing with that we migrated to a new country where we might not ..."

RE: "Mhm."

CC: "... you know, I remember learning English and I think that one of my biggest struggles I think was, adjusting that it was a new environment and not just in terms of like weather and stuff like that, but just that even when it comes to food ..."

RE: "Yup, yup."

CC: "... and then getting different food [laughter]. I think-we wake up and at least my roommates already like I have my Colombian breakfast [laughs] ..."

RE: "Yep, yep, yep, yep."

CC: "... you know what I mean? I think we are dealing with adjusting to that, I think we are dealing with, I don't want to say a lot more issues because I, I ..."

RE: "No."

CC: "...I really dislike when some of-I know there are a lot of minorities that use it as a crutch. I think we are here now and we have to embrace it I think people who come from other countries, we are blessed we have this country that let us live here and let us learn about the culture and we take advantages of the opportunities here, but we also have this other perspectives. And I think that it would be- I would just love to hear more about how minorities dealt with this."

RE: "I think that would be great I mean you could even-I mean you wouldn't have to do it for the oral history project necessarily but you know, but there's really interesting kids at Assumption and yourself, you know, Mitsouka ..."

BH: "I loved her."

RE: "... and what's his name, Raz-ca-cas- maybe he graduated. He was in my women studies Image Studies class last year. I love that kid [laughter]. You know, there's like really ..."

CC: "Mhm."

RE: "... exciting students right at Assumption. Did you, did you know Kate Biegner? I don't know if either of you"

BH: " Kate Biegner, that sounds so familiar.

RE: “Yeah, she was psych and women studies.”

BH: “Oh Kate yes, yes she’s in my Masculinities class.”

RE: “Okay. So she interviewed, for her honors thesis, a number of women from other countries, primarily I think from India at, at, at WPI mostly. But yeah, I just think that’s so, so great, and you know that woman that came, I can’t remember her name, from the Lutheran Social Services ...”

BH: “Oh right, right. Yep.”

RE: “... I’ve got to get into touch with her but, you know, she would be an amazing person to interview because she is the person who takes care of all the, you know, takes care of the-she does the paperwork for individuals coming as refugees or asylum seekers from all over the world and, and there’s a organization downtown called ... what-Southeast Asian Coalition which has been involved in the Cambodian and Vietnamese population in, in the, in the-in Worcester. And that’s-I want to go ...”

CC: “Yeah.”

RE: “... you know, and get talking to those folks. I haven’t quite done it yet but, that’s like next on the list [laughter].”

CC: “Thank you so much.”

RE: “But the project really wants them, women.”

CC/BH: “Yeah.”

RE: “I’m mean, I don’t know, are you a senior also?”

CC: “I am a senior.”

RE: “Yeah. So you guys are probably leaving pretty soon.”

CC: “I know I wish I, I honestly I wish I knew and-I’m actually-I just had a lunch meeting with the Women’s Initiative program here ...”

RE: “Mhm.”

CC: “... and I think that I want to start getting involved ...”

RE: “Mhm. That’s a great group to get involved in.”

CC: "... in, in, in a lot of the Women's Initiative and I do a lot of motivational speaking ..."

RE: "Mhm."

CC: "... so I, I think that just getting to know people in the community that are involved in the same ..."

RE: "Mhm. Yep, yep."

CC: "... same program."

RE: "Now that's a great group. I, I used, I used to hang out with them too-I forgot that now [laughs] but"

CC: "Thank you so much."

BH: "(____???)"

RE: "Alright, (____???)"

CC: "I did learn not to drink an entire bottle of water while you're doing an interview [laughter]."