

Interviewee: Cherylann Holman
Interviewer: Cat Lenis
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Abstract:

Cherylann Holman was born on Belmont Hill in Worcester in 1969. She attended Belmont Hill Elementary, Worcester East Middle, and Fanning Trade School where she studied to become a hairdresser. She married after high school and had her two sons, Tyler and Nicholas. After divorcing her husband she was a single-parent to her sons who were four and six. She worked at an insurance company, now known as Hanover Insurance, for 19 years. She then attended the Salter School and received her medical assistant certification and worked in the medical oncology department at St. Vincent's Hospital. She now works at the YMCA on Main Street. She is active in her parish, St. Peter's, and is on the running team on the YMCA. In this interview Cherylann discusses growing up in Worcester and touches upon spending time at such popular places as the Worcester Galleria and Skylite. She remembers the Blizzard of '78 and the 1999 Worcester Cold Storage Fire. She shares her experiences of having gastric bypass surgery as well as overcoming alcoholism through spirituality and having a positive outlook on life. She emphasizes the importance of staying healthy that she instills in her sons as well as the value of friends, family, and God. She provides inspiration and advice to young girls, stressing the importance of getting an education.

CL: So I'm just going to say that we're doing this oral history on the lives of Worcester women. We want to collect stories on a broad range of experiences based on the 1850's National Women's Rights Convention which was about education, health, work and politics. So we want to focus today on your experiences with all four of those, or if you want to focus on one of them, that's great. So Cherylann, on January 19th if we can have your permission to continue and record your responses?

CH: Yes.

CL: OK, so thank you for willing to be interviewed. So what is your full maiden name?

CH: Cherylann Strom.

CL: OK. When were you born?

CH: November 8th, 1969.

CL: Have you ever married?

CH: Yes. Once.

CL: Do you have any children?

CH: I have two boys. Tyler who is going to be 21 and Nicholas who is going to be 19.

CL: And do you identify with any culture or ethnicity?

CH: Well my boys are—I've always considered them to be biracial because their father is African-American. And my ethnicity is Italian, Polish and Swedish. And so when we speak of our family it's biracial.

CL: OK, great. Maybe if you want to talk about your parents a little bit or where you've lived or how you grew up?

CH: Yup. My mother is one—the oldest of three girls. And her family was complete Italians. And my father is of Irish, Polish, Swedish background. And I grew up here in Worcester. And grew up on Belmont Hill. One of the Seven Hills I guess you can say. And attended all of the elementary schools within the city. And I moved away from the Hill when I was just about 19. Someone had set fire to our home—and it was a family home. So we ended up moving and separating I guess you could say. 'Cause at the time it was all family and then—so we had to disperse throughout the city.

CL: So how was that neighborhood, I mean you kind of touched upon it, when you were growing up?

CH: I thought it was great growing up. I had no problems. As a young child, teenager, you know I certainly felt safe around the neighborhoods. Every one kind of looked out for each other. It was that kind of mindset. That type of neighborhood. And we also—there were families within blocks of each other. And so it was good. And prior to that my mother and her sisters grew up in the home too. So they lived there for a good portion of their lives too.

CL: That's great. And so you said when you were 19 you moved?

CH: Well the house had caught fire so I moved. At that time I was living with my grandparents. So I had moved out with my grandparents into another home, into—temporarily over near

Plantation Street. I didn't stay with them much longer because I ended up meeting my husband at the time relatively young and immediately had children so, that's where my life started going down a different path.

CL: So you've been in Worcester your whole life?

CH: Mhm.

CL: So I guess we can talk about what challenges do you think the city still faces right now or what you would change about Worcester?

CH: Well what I don't like is when I hear people stereotype the city. In that—where they don't feel safe here and they're afraid to come into the city and that kind of thing. It's discouraging because you know, with the economy the way it is and—people move here to Worcester to be closer to Boston. So our rents are higher because people are moving into the city from various areas. But yet we still get a bad rap and I don't like that.

CL: Yeah. So I guess now we can talk about what changes have you seen in Worcester over time? It's great since you've lived here your whole life...

CH: Well, my kids have grown up in the Main South area since they were like five and six which is where we presently live and again, never feared my safety or anything like that. I've seen a lot of changes take place as far as community involvement. Particularly from Clark University because they have a great impact in this neighborhood. And the churches that are in the neighborhood. And, you know the people—we...my sense is that people have pride about where they live. We're not specifically down—you know when they say, "Oh you live in Main South," you know I think of Main South down near the Parent Information Center, you know that type of thing, closer to Piedmont, Beacon you know that area. Which I think there would be some, some question, you know about the residents there. But I believe also that there have been improvements and there will continue to be improvements. You know I see continuous participation from the police. They're walking the beat now and that type of thing. I think more people have a voice which is good because the more people that get involved the better things are going to be. With regard to the politics for instance—Barbara Haller who was our district council member for I think 10 years approximately just lost her seat to a lovely woman Sarai Rivera and that was like a really good stepping stone I think for the residents because we all came together to get her elected for change. Barbara may have been doing a great job, but it can only go for so long and we need someone new. I think that is a good testament to what our district is looking to do and the part we take in it.

CL: Definitely. We can talk about community involvement. Do you consider yourself active politically?

CH: Not currently. I am aware of who my representatives are and that type of stuff. I would like to become more actively involved especially now that my children are getting older—they are older, in college. So I want to take more of an active role. I've always thought about getting on the school committee myself but I just never thought I had the intelligence or the money behind it to support a campaign kind of thing. But I'd like to just see how the dynamics of city government goes and maybe get a little bit more active in that way.

CL: Have you ever been involved in volunteer or community work?

CH: Mhm. As a parent, after a certain length of time I divorced my husband and so it was just myself and my kids—they were four and six when I was raising them alone and I was very active—very active in their school, very active in my parish community. I did work with CPAC. CPAC, it's the Citywide Parent—I can't remember the acronym. But it basically was a group of parents who participated from all schools within the city. So we had representation from every school and it would help with decision making or goals that the pack wanted to do themselves. So it was some place to start.

CL: And you said you were involved with your parish?

CH: Mhm. St. Peter's Parish. Here on Main Street.

CL: Oh yeah, I mentor there.

CH: Oh you do? Yup, yup that's a great program. The parish is phenomenal. Monsignor Scanlan has been there a little bit around 20 years. And it's funny because when I went to that parish when my kids were small he was there and he taught me when I was a young girl at Our Lady of Fatima on Belmont Street. So it was nice to have him there. But it's a great, great parish. A lot of community within the community. So when people come from all areas of Worcester, outside of Worcester because we have such a good rapport in the community and within the church. We're like one big family.

CL: That's great. Along the lines of Worcester, what distinct characteristics do you think Worcester has? Maybe that you like or...?

CH: I love some of the architectural buildings in the city. And just that in every nook and cranny in the city you can find something that is of interest. Bancroft Tower, which I've come to learn a

little bit more about ‘cause part of my history—recent history is that I was on a running team through the YMCA. And we would run up that Bancroft Hill Tower [laughs] and yeah so, there are a lot of good places. A lot of—the Worcester Art Museum. There is a lot of history that I think is not touched enough, especially by the residents. I think that if it was—you know, ‘cause I wouldn’t say it’s *not* available, I just think that people don’t take opportunity of it—take advantage of it. And that could be for any number of reasons. But I do love Worcester and that—it’s just—it’s like one big circle of streets and you know, I drive—I love to drive. And I feel like I know the roads very well. I can take you from one place to the other and just take all back roads. And when I’m with people that just amazes them that I know all these shortcuts and everything. But, you know, it is—it is a great place to live.

CL: Yeah, definitely. Do you think that women—what do you think women’s experiences in Worcester have been? Specifically women, rather than men? ... How have maybe women experienced things differently than men in Worcester that you’ve seen?

CH: Well the only thing that comes to mind is that when I was a young girl, my father worked in one of the manufacturing buildings, which was a big part of Worcester’s history. So from what my mother and my grandmother have shared, women kind of just did womanly things. So they weren’t really in the work force per se. Or what they did wasn’t of any type of importance. This is what has been shared with me. So...I don’t have anything specific—at this moment. Something might pop in.

CL: OK. We can talk about education. You said you went to various schools in Worcester if you want to talk about that...

CH: I went to Belmont Elementary School—Belmont Community actually. I was—I went to Head Starts here and then I went to the elementary school. Moved on to junior high at East Middle—Worcester East Middle and then went to Fanning Trade which was a girls’ vocational school. That was very interesting. It was—I went there because I was—I didn’t feel popular enough to like be in a coed high school so I thought I would be more safe around all women, all girls. There was maybe a handful of guys in there and stuff too but I was one of the—I was second to last class to graduate from the Fanning Trade before they merged with the Worcester Voc [Vocational] School which is now up on Belmont Street.

CL: What year was that?

CH: I graduated in ’87. And I think they merged in ’88, ’89 maybe. So...I loved school for the most part other than being picked on and stuff like that. ‘Cause I was the one to get the bully

from. But, I felt like I got a great education and had no problem putting my own kids into public schools.

CL: And did you attend graduate school or go to community college?

CH: Well after I had—after I graduated like I said, I immediately had children. I had two kids by the time I was 23. So I—then six months out of high school I went on to work at what was then called State Mutual. State Mutual Life Insurance. And I was there for 19 years. And within that 19 years they changed their name three times. And they are now known as Hanover Insurance. So when I started there it was State Mutual—you could still smoke at your desk and then it became Allmerica Financial and now it's Hanover Insurance. So it was like the place to work. You know, my grandfather would say, "Retire from there Cherylann, retire from there," and I probably would have had they not laid me off. They made a different business decision and sold a block of business so that was a big life change. So I went to school as my kids got older part-time at Quinsigamond Community College, received an Associate's Degree there and I've just been plugging away at different classes and stuff to get a Bachelor's, so that's my goal.

CL: A Bachelor's in anything in particular or...?

CH: Right now I'm thinking more Urban Studies with a focus on Human Services.

CL: Mhm. That's great, yeah. So, now do you work outside your home?

CH: I work for a not-for-profit agency. I'm actually at the YMCA of Central Massachusetts which is right on Main Street. and that's where my office is. So I look out my window and I see a lot of activity out there but, you know, it's not all bad. And I hope to retire from there. 'Cause at 42 I don't want to keep bopping from job to job. I've had a couple of layoffs in the past, you know four years or so and I just want to feel settled somewhere for the rest of my working career.

CL: So, when did you begin working? Like your first job?

CH: My first job I was about 15 I think, 14, 15 and it was at Goretto's Supermarkets. And the site I was at was on Southbridge Street right near the Rotman's Furniture place—Wendy's is there now. Wendy's and a couple other places. So the Goretto family had several markets in Leicester—there's still one standing in Millbury, but they closed the other ones that were here in Worcester. So that was my first job while I was in high school. And again, high school job making money, working the register and stuff, it was good for what it was.

CL: And then you went to Hanover from there?

CH: Yeah, pretty much. I went to Hanover from there. I had gone to Fanning Trade like I said and I had wanted to become a hairdresser so that's where I—my focus of studies—'cause Trade School you had a week on and a week off of academics so I had gone to be a hairdresser and you know, I tried to get into the field, working for Rob Roy for a little bit but I just—I needed to support myself and the money wasn't right away and then this opportunity came with State Mutual and I just grabbed it.

CL: And did you like the job at State Mutual?

CH: Mhm. Yeah I did. It was—I felt as if I stepped in an entry-level position and by the time I got laid off I felt like I was in a pretty good standing financially and I had made a name for myself within the company and, like I said, it was...the people that you work with for that length of time become like your family so that was the hardest part I would say is saying goodbye and trying to maintain those relationships after you walk out those doors for the last time. So that was challenging to have to go through, you know but, it's all good.

CL: Yeah. And so you had two kids. So how did you manage raising your kids and going to work?

CH: Well at the time when I was at State Mutual there was an opportunity that you could have a little flexibility with your schedule. So we had a customer [service] that was open 24 hours. So I had been working either first shift, second shift, third shift. Whatever I could do to not have to put my kids in childcare. One because I couldn't financially afford it and I had family that could help as well. My mother was more than happy to help. But other than, like I said they were—my bosses and everybody, we were all so connected and so supportive that they were patient and understanding when things come up with the family and stuff like that. So it was a great job for me during that time that I was raising the kids alone. And I made some really good connections there.

CL: That's great. So, and then after the Insurance you went to the YMCA.

CH: Well not directly. After the insurance company I felt like maybe I needed to make a change so I was going to go into the medical field. So I went to the Salter School and I received a certification in medical assisting. So that—it was hard to find a job as a medical assistant. And everything has been a learning experience. Because had I not been—it was almost like they guaranteed you to find something but you really couldn't because places wanted experienced people and you're coming fresh out of school. So it did land me a job at St. Vincent's working

on one of the floors which was very, very good for me. I liked that because I find myself to be a very compassionate and caring person. And the floor that I was working on was the medical oncology floor so to be able to help people—very sick people either from other medical needs other than, not cancer but it was just—I felt I was put there for a reason, you know. I've always believed—when I share my experience about St. Vincent's and the people that I had contact with, I feel that, when a cancer patient decides that their time is done and they have no more fight in them—for them to make that decision is so brave and it's just so powerful and so brave of them that you just want to help them continue on that path, that journey into the hands of their maker. So that was very, very good. I really enjoyed that. And then, things happened and I left St. Vincent's for personal reasons, ended up at UMASS in an administrative position, an entry-level administrative position. And that didn't go all that great- all that well. And again I enjoyed the people that I worked with—I never had a problem with people that I worked with but again, things happened and I had a lay off. So I took the summer off— this was this past summer— collected unemployment but still looked for a job and stuff and that's how I landed in the YMCA job which is beautiful because it's a giving atmosphere. We're serving the kids within the community and trying to look out for their benefit. We have a saying—one of our focus areas is to help families and kids learn, grow and thrive in an environment that they feel safe. And we're all for healthy living, youth development and social responsibility. And I have a lot of those personal characteristics and beliefs so I feel like I'm right where I'm supposed to be at this time.

CL: That's great. That's interesting. When you were a hairdresser did you ever think that you would be working at these other places?

CH: No [laughs]. My sons make fun of me because in my high school yearbook I said that my dream job would be that one day I was going to cut Bon Jovi's hair so, they laugh about it now but [laughs]. Do you know who Jon Bon Jovi is?

CL: Yeah [laughs] I love him, yeah, that's funny.

CH: Ok [laughs].

CL: I guess we can talk about...so health? How has any health issues impacted your life?

CH: Umm, well my mother has always been obese. Myself as a child I was obese as well, you know, overweight. I have always had to fight that. You know, one of my earliest memories of, in childhood, was a young man, a young boy in my kindergarten class telling me I needed a bra because I was a chunky little kindergartener. And he said, "You need a bra," you know that kind of thing. So that was my first sense of, I guess you can say racism based on weight and you know, prejudices so you know I... it's always—it's been a problem one way or the other. Either

people don't eat right or people eat too much. But I think slowly it's starting to be identified and things are trying to make change. Like I think the way that the schools are more impactful around what they are serving the kids for breakfast and lunch is a great thing. But yeah, as far as like the health part of it all, my family just was never health conscience about what was going on around them. My father being a Polish-Swede you know, he ate a lot of wrong foods and a lot of—the sausages and that kind of thing. So that wasn't, that wasn't good for you first of all but you know, I myself ended up having gastric bypass surgery in 2006 and lost over 150 pounds. And since then you know, I have really been, the focus—I've really focused to try to take care of myself. I'm not a size 6 but I'm physically fit and active and for the most part I do— I am very aware of what I put in my mouth. But I think—especially in today's economy makes a huge impact on health. It's cheaper to eat poorly. And families having to watch what they put—how much money they spend at the grocery store is sometimes very sad. Because you can go get a five dollar pizza at Little Caesar's and feed your kids at night. But to eat well you have to have the money, it's sad to say.

CL: Definitely, yeah. Along those lines, what are your experiences with access to quality, affordable healthcare?

CH: I've been fortunate that with every job that I've worked full time I've been able to have access through the group plans at my employer's. I have family members who are on MassHealth for—either because they don't have any insurance or they're disabled. I don't believe that they've had many problems. You know, could copays and things like that be cheaper? Of course they could. But in today's society and with what is going on I think you absolutely have to have insurance, or something.

CL: So whose health are you responsible for, besides your own? Like your kids...?

CH: Yeah, that's it. And my kids being older I think they have a pretty good sense of their health and well being. They're in college. One is soon to enter college this coming fall. But the other one just told me about—he goes to UMASS Dartmouth—and he said that they've made a huge rehaul over in their cafeteria, the resident's cafeteria, where there are better options to pick from and stuff too. So again, it's trickling down in many different places. But they're aware of—I've always pushed them to you know exercise and yeah it's not just so that— they say to me “Look at me, I'm not fat.” And it's not about being fat. It's about taking care of your body, exercising your heart, keeping up with your bone structure, your muscles and all of that. I think they get it, I think they're just lazy about it.

CL: Yeah. So...What major historical events in Worcester have occurred in your time here? There's like the Blizzard of '78...

CH: Oh yeah the Blizzard of '78. When the world shut down for a good couple weeks. That was interesting because I lived on Bell Hill and I lived in a three decker which Worcester is famous for—our three deckers. I don't think you see them anywhere else in this part of the country. But I was jumping off my second floor porch into the mounds and mounds of snow that we had you know from that blizzard. And I just remember—like I said everything shut down. My mother was the crossing guard for the school and we lived on a hill and we had to walk up or down the hill because we couldn't get the cars up or down. So that was something to remember. And the other thing that you—the first thought that came to me when you asked the question was the [Worcester Cold Storage] warehouse fire [December 3, 199]—where we lost six of our firefighters. And that was just a really, really big deal for the city. It seems even today like it happened just yesterday. And I remember bringing my kids down as young as they were- they were probably 8 or 10 and we were laying flowers at the fire truck that they had in memorial for the firefighters. It was just so devastating and such—I wanted to have that little bit of history so when they were knocking the building down I went and got a brick from the building and I have it just put away and stuff with the news clippings and everything so yeah, that was.... And the fact that so many people from throughout the country came. The President [Bill Clinton] came and all of that, that was a really, really big deal for Worcester.

CL: Yeah. So I guess, we can talk about...in school I guess the gender aspects of school, do you think girls were treated differently? I know you went to an all-girls school but maybe in elementary school...were girls treated differently than boys?

CH: No, I didn't experience any of that. Other than, like I said just being picked on. But it didn't come—it came more from the girls side of things I think. But there was no difference with the boys. Nothing stands out to me as far as them being treated any different from the teachers or you know anything like that.

CL: How was dating? Were you allowed to go on dates?

CH: I wasn't a popular girl. And because I was overweight I felt like I wasn't popular with the boys. So I didn't date, really. I was probably maybe, a junior in high school and brought someone to my junior prom or something like that. So that wasn't part of my life experience. I was more about my friends and academics, you know that type of thing. So...and then I went—I probably, when I share my story about how I met my ex-husband was that he was one of the first men to really pay me any attention. So I kind of fell for that and that changed my life completely because I started a family younger than I probably had anticipated. But I probably—I wouldn't turn it around for—I wouldn't change things. Because everything that happened makes me the woman that I am today. I... I've experienced and suffered physical and emotional abuse at the

hands of my ex-husband and so I learned to deal with that and got a lot of help from women agencies in the city which was—they're great resources for everybody. But, yeah that's about—nothing comes to mind about gender specifics, gender differences I should say.

CL: Yeah, OK...Now did you ever participate in any extracurricular activities or..?

CH: Not on a sports level, more so I would think around the yearbook committee, that kind of thing. Arts maybe, but nothing sports related. I guess you could say I wasn't one of the jock type of girls, I was more the girly-girl.

CL: Were you into fashion or anything? What was considered fashionable when you were in high school?

CH: Well when I was in high school it was the '80s and I liked listening to you know rock, and heavy metal. So my hair was probably a good six inches off my head, teased up and I wore a lot of heavy makeup and, you know, the rock kind of clothing. We had some local band popularity so myself and a couple friends because we were in the hairdressing field we would go and help them get ready for concerts and stuff like that. You know, do their hair and makeup because at that time everybody was wearing hair and makeup regardless of if you were a man or a woman. So that was pretty much the fashion sense of that time. The Madonnas of the '80s [laughs].

CL: That's great. So when you were not at home or at school where did you usually spend your time?

CH: At the Galleria.

CL: Oh, the mall?

CH: It was the mall [laughs]. It was the Worcester Center Galleria. So I remember that when it was renamed I guess to the Fashion Outlet Mall and Judith Light was actually in the city to do that whole ribbon cutting ceremony and if you don't know who she is, she was from *Who's the Boss*. She's now on *Law and Order* occasionally and stuff—great actress. So she did the ribbon cutting and that was the place to hang out, you know. At the arcade, the mall you know, all of your friends were there. Orange Julius was there, you know. Or it was at the skating, the skating rink—Skylite roller skating which is still here. So, yeah, you were either roller-skating or at the mall or arcade hanging out.

CL: So now do you have any hobbies? I know you run? Or any activities you like to do now?

CH: I like to—I'm on the running team at the Y. I've been on the running team for—well they started in, when Worcester first had—Worcester has had a half marathon take place in June and it's now coming into its third year. So I've been on the running team for a couple of years now. We trained specifically for that first half-marathon. And other than—I don't have anything specific that I must do. I enjoy spending time with my friends. So, there's a lot of—I love social activity and being around people with the same common interests. So I relish the relationships that I have and having relationships, it's a lot of work. It's maintaining those friendships through good and bad and it's a two-way street.

CL: Yeah, definitely. This is more...abstract but how do you get through tough times? What keeps you going?

CH: Mmmm [laughs]...that's ok....After having the gastric bypass surgery I had become an alcoholic and got into a lot of trouble—not a lot of trouble, it could have been much worse. For me it was a lot of trouble so I got active with Alcoholics Anonymous within the city and the recovery has become part of my life. It's a huge, big part of my life in that you learn to rely on something greater than yourself to be able to help you through those bad times so they don't lead you to another drink. So I have a lot of spirituality and a lot of friends who help you through all of that. Because for me, it's all about God and that's how I was raised, in the Catholic faith and you always seek help and guidance from Him before anything else. So I would say it would be God and my friends and family and just knowing that. I've never been like a pessimist. I've always thought that things could be worse. I might not have the perfect life but I have what I have for some reason and I'm OK with that. I don't need to have a mansion in the Hills or anything like that so I just take every day for what it is and try to make the best of it. Because I feel if you don't, then you don't want to leave this Earth thinking, "What if?"

CL: Mhm, yeah. So how would you define success in your life? Has it changed over time?

CH: I think just success for me is.....hmmm...well, people would describe my success—'cause I have a hard time describing it myself because I'm a critic of myself—so people would say—'cause they have said you know, "You've raised two beautiful boys, two great kids who have good morals and a good upbringing. Fortunately they have not—thank God they have not gotten into any serious trouble." So I guess that could be seen as a success on my part. I've been able to stay with jobs—many jobs that I've worked haven't been—I haven't left out of my own doing. So that, I believe is a success on my part. The fact that I've maintained this huge weight loss for almost six years now is a great thing and I think just, you know, being the best person that you could be every day is a good thing. You don't want to just talk the talk, you want to live it. So...

CL: Yeah, that's great. I guess, so based on your life experiences what advice would you give to young women of today?

CH: Mhm... Young women of today... I would not rush into starting a family anytime quickly. I would say that you should get your—do your life experiences now. Go to school, get your education, see new things. I wasn't able to go away to college or anything like that and to see my kids—they're men, but to see them actively engaged in college and away from home because you know, I've seen my older son grow so much just from that experience. And I have a god-daughter who, she's actually like a surrogate god-daughter because she's a young woman who I was Girl Scout leader to for a number of years—yeah, I was a Girl Scout leader and I didn't have any girls, so that was how I got my fix [laughs] so—and she wants to be a dancer, and she's always wanted to go to school for dancing and she just felt like she was never good enough and I said—I just tried to encourage her to let them tell her she's not good enough. You still apply and getting in and never think that you can't do anything. So I think education is something that should be in a young woman's mind first and foremost and then—because I think there's so many options out there today that why not experience them before you have to have a family? Because you live a different life as a family, as a mother. I mean where you just shared that you're going off to Switzerland? How wonderful is that for you? You'll have that memory for the rest of your life. And hopefully you'll do great things over there. You're touching a part of the world for yourself, making memories that you're going to be able to share with other women.

CL: Right, yeah. Do you feel that you've left a legacy- or that you have a legacy in Worcester?

CH: Umm...hmm. I think within my own, you know, community, my own circle and network. I often—well I don't often think, but I think that when my time comes and I pass, I think there'll be a long line at the funeral home [laughs]. Because I know a lot of people and I... yeah, so I think in some way, shape or form I've left a little legacy behind me.

CL: That's great, yeah. Is there anything that you want to touch upon or talk about?

CH: Nothing specifically. I just thought this was so engaging. Because when I went to—where I'm trying to get more actively out there in the community and stuff, so I had gone to the [*Voices of Worcester Women*] book signing at the Library and it was so interesting, the stories that they shared from the book. I ended up buying the book and some of the people you recognized, the names and what a great thing to be able to sit down and do with someone. I know someone who sits on the Board or is affiliated with the organization and I said, "How does someone get interviewed for that?" and she's like "We'll interview anybody!" She said "I'll pass your name along!" So I don't know, I feel important. I'm not, you know, I'm not a political figure. I'm not

out there where someone might recognize my name but it's nice to—I'm the average woman and you know someone is going to have some interest in it, at some point.

CL: Oh yeah. Every woman is important. So yeah, that's great. So, now that we're working to tell a fuller story of the Worcester women, what do you think we should be sure to include?

CH: Hmm...So as you move forward with future interviews and stuff?

CL: Yeah, like is there anything else you think we should ask? Or that needs to be touched upon?

CH: No, I don't, no. I think just giving—I love the idea of the probing questions but I think just allowing women to just share what comes out of their heart. That might not necessarily be—but I think it's just a great thing to be able to just have women reflect. Maybe perhaps giving some questions prior to the interview might be helpful so they have a little bit more thought about what they might want to share but, yeah.

CL: That's great, yeah. Is there anyone you think we should talk to? To interview?

CH: Do they have to be born and raised in Worcester?

CL: Nope. Just any connection to Worcester.

CH: Well my President and CEO of YMCA, I don't know if she's every been approached but Kathy Hunter and she has been with the Y for over 20 years and has I think a very solid life and can—a lot of good experiences and bad experiences that would be insightful, to have someone's history. But if I were to....you know no one specifically jumps out.

CL: No, that's great yeah. Well, thank you. Is there anything else you would like to say or...?

CH: Mmm, no [laughs]. No, I think I'm all set.

CL: Well thank you so much for being interviewed.