

Interviewee: Pauline Marois  
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**Abstract:** Pauline Marois was an extraordinary woman to interview. She did work full time but was not paid for it, and still, to this day, she works part time and is not paid for it. She was a stay-at-home mother and is now a part-time stay-at-home grandmother. Pauline Marois was born in Worcester and lived in her grandparents' three-decker with the rest of her family. In this interview she discusses working at Salter Press and the *Worcester Telegram and Gazette*, making her own clothing, marrying her husband, and raising her two daughters. She said that her husband looked at her as an equal and for all her hard work, he would give half of his paycheck to her because she earned it. She believes that women think differently than men and that it is a good thing. Also, she believes that, even though the roles of men and women have switched almost completely, people should not work extravagant hours because being home with your family is just as important if not more. She does not at all regret not continuing her formal education after high school because she has found her family responsibilities and bonding to be more crucial. She emphasizes the importance of family and self-education throughout the interview.

**KC:** Hello Pauline

**PM:** Hi Kasia

**KC:** How are you?

**PM:** I'm good, how are you?

**KC:** I'm doing just fine

**PM:** Thank you for being here

**KC:** And thank you for participating

**PM:** You're welcome, it's my pleasure.

**KC:** Alright, we're going to start off with a few questions from your past.

**PM:** Mhm.

**KC:** Where did you grow up?

**PM:** Well, I grew up in Worcester for a while. I was born in Worcester, I believe it was City Hospital, and I was born on Hathaway Street and then we moved to Garden Street in—34 Garden Street as a matter of fact—in my grandparent's three-decker.

**KC:** Nice. What was it like growing up in those neighborhoods?

**PM:** In the day, those neighborhoods were incredible. Worcester is very noted for three-deckers. The French were in one house, the Irish were in the other three deckers, there could've been Polish, there could be Italian people, but it was pretty much French and Irish people and it's the grandparents that basically own the house and then it could be one of their sons or daughters on the second floor with their family on the third floor and people in the day basically stayed there; they didn't buy private homes like the young people do today. It was just—the concept was you just stayed with family and as the elder grandparents passed away, people would move the elder—the children would move to the first floor and sort of move around. And as young couples were marrying, they would start on the third floor.

**KC:** Nice! What high school did you attend?

**PM:** I attended Leicester High School.

**KC:** And what was it like there?

**PM:** It was good. I had just come in from parochial grammar schools. The concept was a little different and eye opening going from eight, nine years of parochial schools and going up to the high school but it was good, 'til this day I still have very good friends from high school and it worked, it worked.

**KC:** Did you play any sports while you were in high school?

**PM:** Not at all. I basically worked after school my sophomore year, the school—I was in the business schedule, the commercial—they called it the commercial department and being one of seven, being the second born and the oldest girl, the school recommended me for a little job at one of the companies in Leicester and so I worked a couple of afternoons just for a few hours to help out. So, sports or anything after school was not available to me and then when I was old enough to work, I worked for Saltus Press typing for the newspapers—the town newspapers—so I would leave school about 2:30. I would start working at Saltus Press at 3:00 and I would work 'til maybe 8, 9, 9:30. When they say you have to put the baby to bed, you have to put the baby to bed [chuckles]. I had to get that done so they could process it to get to Leicester and Spencer and Auburn, etc. etc.

**KC:** Right, right.

**PM:** So after school, no sports, no nothing, nothing, and nothing. I had to work.

**KC:** What was the pay rate for that?

**PM:** The pay rate was a whole dollar per hour.

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**KC:** No! So much money! [Laughs].

**PM:** I know! A whole dollar per hour and I would babysit and that rate was fifty cents an hour.

**KC:** Really?

**PM:** Really!

**KC:** Nowadays, they get like fifteen dollars an hour.

**PM:** I'm going back to babysitting! That was just neighborhood babysitting, you know, to help the neighbors out and whatever and I didn't do a lot of it, but I did a lot of sitting at home for younger siblings at no charge obviously.

**KC:** Of course. Did you suffer any hardships while working there? Like discrimination...

**PM:** No, not at all. We typed where the—of course the print in the day was very different than processing today. If you were to walk through a printing, like the *Telegram and Gazette* we'll say, it's cleaner. I worked typing in the area where they were doing the printing. So you sort of had this grease all over everything, the ink from the printing, and those were the days where they spelt the letters out—a, b, c, to z, put them in backwards and clink-clink, like the old Little House on The Prairie almost kind of fossil. [Laughs]. But no, we typers were just women. The men ran the big type sets and everything but the only thing I was not happy about was it was—you came home and your clothes were spoiled from the ink. It was just a pall in the air.

**KC:** How were you treated there? Like how did your boss treat you?

**PM:** Oh very nice, very nice. You know, we went in, we knew what we had to do. We had our own—in fact, the machine I typed on was the size of this kitchen table. I mean today you're on little computers. But you know, we worked shifts and when I came in, mothers, working mothers, had been home for maybe forty-five minutes to an hour. I just—my machine was always there, but the only thing is it had to be completed. I could not leave until whatever pile that was on my machine—and everybody in there, it just had to be finished. It's not that they were abusive or...

**KC:** You had a job to do for the day, and you had to get it done

**PM:** Exactly, and when you work for a newspaper, it has to be completed and even in the form that I filled out here, my whole one year full time career again was the *Telegram and Gazette* and I worked retail bookkeeping and every night I had to work on the ads and price and do the book keeping and it had to be complete. My department did not leave until the complete newspaper, you know, and it was *Telegram and Gazette* in the day, we had two papers to process. Some of the other desks could just do their work and leave and pick it up tomorrow, but their retail bookkeeping, I priced all the ads that you see in the paper to this day. I had to measure and I had to balance it with whatever paperwork they gave me, you know, people selling the ads, and I would bill them. I would process the billing and then hand it to another person who automated

everything, but again, it had to be done. When you take the job you know it. The paper had to go to bed as they say.

**KC:** Right [chuckles]. What was your favorite memory from that time?

**PM:** Money. Money. I worked because I needed the money. But no, I worked with some very nice people when I was at the *Telegram and Gazette*, God rest his soul, Jack Murphy was my boss and when I went in for the job interview it was May of 1964 and they hired me and it was like on a Wednesday, Tuesday, Wednesday or something like that and they said to me, "Can you start Monday?" and I said, "Not really, I'm graduating June third," and they said to me, "You're still in high school?" and I said, "Yes." And I said to them, "I understand if you have to hire somebody else if you need them for Monday." I thanked them for their time and whatever and they said, "No, we will wait after your graduation." So I was very happy to hear that because I needed the job and I graduated I think on a Thursday night and Monday was the beginning of my one year career in retail bookkeeping at the *Telegram and Gazette* and they were great people to work for, but Jack Murphy, I have to mention him by name. He was a boss—everybody wanted to sit in my seat. So at first, some of the girls were kind of—women were kind of—cold because they wanted that desk to have Jack Murphy for their boss. But they didn't want to hire—train two people they took in-house, they had to train somebody at both desks.

**KC:** Mhm.

**PM:** So it was sort of a corporate decision in which I, today, I understand why they did that. But I—they all came around and they were just great to me.

**KC:** That's nice.

**PM:** Yeah, it was nice.

**KC:** What was your happiest memory from high school?

**PM:** Happiest....Well being elected three time for class officer and the first- sophomore, junior, senior and my sophomore year my friend from grammar school nominated me and I remember 'til this day sitting next to her and I sort of elbowed her and I said, "Lynn, you've got to be kidding me, nobody knows us here!" We were not town kids, the public school, we came in from the parochial school, and so she says, "Well look, just leave the room with everybody else and we'll see what happens." And fifty years later—fifty-three, four years later, the rest is history. So that was good and of course junior prom and oh I worked sophomore, junior, and senior year. We were called the corridor girls, which was a good thing, you know when you say corridor girls, and we were a selected few during our two study periods during the day we did not go to study hall, we worked the office. We did all clerical work, typing, filing, we were sort of assisting the secretary in the school. So, the happy part was, I got to meet all of the teachers personally, all of the teachers personally, and to this day I have to mention these two teachers who came to my fiftieth reunion last month...Paul Zambrano and Carol Harding. To this day I've kept in touch and there's nothing worse than corresponding English teacher and I would put

little PSs on my paper, "Carol, feel free to send this note back at any given time." But also when the secretary was out sick or for whatever reason, I would get off the bus and they would hail me to come in the office so I never even went to homeroom, I just went to the office and was there for the day, whatever the secretary had to do.

**KC:** So you never even went to class?

**PM:** Not at all, no, my assignments were there, I would work on my assignments during the day sitting at the secretary's desk, and I just had more homework that night, that's all.

**KC:** Nice!

**PM:** But, that was fun, that was exciting. I felt very mature, very wow kind of, you know, when you're fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, it's quite the honor to be sitting in the seat of seats. I forgot about that, thanks for asking!

**KC:** Did any of your jobs help you in the future? Like, closer to today?

**PM:** Well, my big career was changing diapers for fifty-one years so none of those jobs that I did at Saltus Press was after school and *Telegram and Gazette*, that had nothing to do with homemaking, with homemaking. I kept being one of the eldest of seven. I had job training, you know, at home, but no, as far as the little work that I did, no.

**KC:** What were your favorite hobbies?

**PM:** Sewing, I went to the Girls Club, the Worcester Girls Club, which is still in existence today. I think I was twelve, however, my grandma and my aunt were really the homeschooling with the sewing. As I said, coming from a meek and humble large family, in high school I made most of my clothing.

**KC:** Nice!

**PM:** Skirts, blouses, dresses, jumpers. I made a coat, spring coat, because I liked it, but also out of necessity. I know it sounds like it's a hundred years ago, Little House on the Prairie, but...

**KC:** You couldn't afford to buy...

**PM:** Not really, not like today, and coming out of parochial grammar schools, we had uniforms, and they were woolen uniforms in the day. However, my grandma made my sister and I cotton uniforms for the spring and the fall so we were not as hot as some of our peers so we had two uniforms. I mean my grandmother had made a couple, you know, obviously for wandering and whatever, but so going into high school, the budget wasn't there for extra clothing. I mean the boys, mom had to buy for the five boys, so you don't make boys clothes as easy as girls so between my grandmother and my mother sewed, but having seven children, the time wasn't there.

**KC:** But you enjoyed making them?

**PM:** I loved it, I loved it. Even 'til this day I still sew. I made my wedding gown.

**KC:** You made your wedding gown?

**PM:** I made my wedding gown, yes I did. [Smiles].

**KC:** Wow!

**PM:** As a necessity. I'll be honest with you, it was out of necessity.

**KC:** That's very impressive.

**PM:** And I, for the seventh grandchild, I cut it up and I made a christening gown and I just wish that I had cut it up for the first grandchild even though I made their christening gowns and the boys had rompers with them, but I just wish that I had the vision to cut it up. I probably shouldn't say this but I weighed about eighty-six pounds, ninety pounds when I got married. Did I ever think somebody could fit into that dress other than a ten-year-old trick-or-treater? [Laughs]. So I figured to salvage the memory and the fabric to repurpose it. All my life I have been recycling, repurposing.

**KC:** So you no longer have your dress?

**PM:** The dress is gone. I still have the top, the little top left to it. But what I do have is a christening gown for granddaughter, grandchild number seven, a girl, she wore it and I'm hoping that great grandchildren will wear it some day and they will, I'm sure.

**KC:** They will. Okay, and now we're gonna (ph) go onto a little later on about your parents if that's okay.

**PM:** Absolutely.

**KC:** What did they do for work?

**PM:** My mother was a homemaker, obviously with seven children she did not work out of the home when I was there. She did a lot of volunteer work at church and in schools, you know, making this and Harvest Festival at Saint Joseph's Church in Leicester, so she was pretty much home and she cared for her parents and sisters as well, who were in that three decker in the city that I was telling you about. My father was a steelworker, he worked at Johnston Steel Wire for the city. That was his career of the decade. Both of my parents came to the United States from Canada very young. My father was on his own at the age of sixteen, seventeen, by then both of his parents were deceased, and there was no future in Canada so he came in from Canada working odd jobs. He obtained his citizenship, could not speak a word of English. French was the family language so he bought a dictionary and the newspaper and he taught himself how to speak English and read.

**KC:** Nice!

**PM:** But my mother, I have to finish, the first three lived home when my mother was probably in her mid-thirties and she did go out to work at a warehouse. It was Millbrook Distributors in Leicester. I believe at this point in time I don't think they're still in business. But she worked there thirty years.

**KC:** What did she do there?

**PM:** She worked, picking orders for places like CVS or Walgreens, she was in the houseware, you know, a measuring cup and spoons and she also did like toothpaste, so when the stores needed orders on whatever merchandise they needed for their shelves, she was the manager—she became the manager of that department where it was a line that your bucket would just wheel up and down and you as a picker—this is where she started as a picker, waiting again learning how to read English and speak the language you picked so many cartons of toothpaste, and toothbrushes, and brushes and combs and measuring cups whatever was on the order for that particular store. And she did retire from that, she worked there many years.

**KC:** Now before your mother worked, did she prefer you to work with her in the home to help take care of the children?

**PM:** Ohhhh. yes!

**KC:** Or did she want you to work outside?

**PM:** Oh yes, when I was ten years old, the mop and the dust rag were at the door after school waiting for me, and there was always a little brother, or little brothers, to keep an eye on when they went outside. When I was fourteen, baby number seven was born and my mother at that point, with a little bit of health issues, she needed some extra help so my youngest brother, his name is Mark, he lives in Virginia at this point in time, he was three days old when I met him and he basically grew up with my children because when he was born, the first three were almost out of the house by the time he could recognize a, b, and c. So, he does not remember the three eldest at home but he grew up with my children, he is three and half years older than my oldest daughter.

**KC:** Oh, wow!

**PM:** So, it put him in another generation so being so young to marry and have children was second nature to me because I had been taking care of an infant totally if I had the time to do it, to help my mother. He was three days old when I met him. And a big snowstorm, we had no school with a nor'easter, good old New England shows up in February.

**KC:** And what year was this?

**PM:** My brother Mark was born [ ] 1961 on President Reagan's birthday, Ronald Reagan's birthday. We have quite a few president birthdays in the family, kind of interesting when you do the genealogy here.

**KC:** Nice! Would you like to talk about your siblings? So who's the eldest?

**PM:** My older brother is—Ernie is his name—he lives in Westborough. He is a retired barber. He did not graduate from high school because home life was interesting on certain occasions.

**KC:** And you do not have to elaborate.

**PM:** And so he quit school and he joined the navy. However, before he went into the navy he took a barber's course to cut hair and from day one he was a natural so when he went into the navy, when they realized the man could cut hair—now he's only eighteen or nineteen at the time—they took him to do that instead of other inconvenient things to do on a ship. So he, he was there four years and he enjoyed being in the navy and he came out of the Navy just as the Vietnam War was festering. So he barbecued for thirty, forty years, retired from his own business so, for a young boy at the time, quitting school...

**KC:** Making some business?

**PM:** He did very well, he was smart enough to get a trade, and again in those days, students in high school if they had an opportunity to take a job that they thought that could work for years, they quit school for no particular reason. Not because they were forced students, it's just they had a job. See today we're career-minded. In my day, it was a job, money. But today you young people need to find a career, especially women. And I have a sister who's a year younger than me, she's a retired school teacher from Leicester, her name is Sue and I believe she still works as an aide, you know, I think she helps with math or something. Again, she comes from the era of education. When she retired from her classroom, I'm sure that they had a hard time replacing her. Tomorrow we have a funeral for one of my brothers and it's the third brother that I lose in forty-three years. The oldest was twenty-one in a motorcycle accident and the other brother, in 2002 he passed away in Cali. He was forty-seven and tomorrow my sixty-three year old brother, he just turned sixty-three last month, he passed away on Sunday and his funeral is tomorrow. So my mother has buried three of her children, which is a very unnatural thing to do. So that is kind of a sad issue in the family, for a parent too. And then of course I mentioned Mark, he's in Virginia. My husband and I basically raised him, as I said, with my children so it's a hodge-podge of different people.

**KC:** Well, talk about your husband.

**PM:** My husband is a self-made man. He graduated from high school very young. He had just turned eighteen—excuse me, seventeen—in April and he graduated in June. So, when you're not college bound and you're out there looking for employment, knowing that—and we knew that even at that point in time we were possibly going to marry because we dated my four years of high school. So they kept saying when you're eighteen come see us. Well, that was another year from now so he was wondering too, you know, I've got to do something. He tried college, he tried Worcester Tech which is with—and I don't even know today if it's still there. It's a two-year technical school. It's like a trade school except it's after you have your high school

education. So he tried that for a while and Arthur was an incredible student; top grades, whatever, but he just didn't really like school and that's okay. So he went to work driving a truck for family and his uncle was Ralph Marois and it was the Marois Brothers. And Uncle Ralph said he would give him a job driving a truck. However, "Sit real tall in the truck and wear your sunglasses and don't get stopped," 'cause he really should've been eighteen to drive that truck so his uncle gave him a job while he could think about do I want to go off to college, what do I want to do and, and he was unofficial engineer—civil engineer when he retired from the Marois Brothers. And he learned on the job training, he drove the truck for a while then he worked for [Parrington?] Engineer where it was a company like the expressway going through. They would come through your backyard, pig farms, you know, wherever the expressway was going through. He had to stake it out with a crew and of course he was lonely and on a crew of four going from property to property doing the surveillance. The men on the job gave him some of their books to study. They didn't encourage him to go to school, but they said read these books, so he did. And he had an incredible, unofficial career and he worked for the Range of Brothers, I believe that's the name, for a while. Again, engineering, they did work all over the city. I can't offhand think of some of the sites, but it could be some of the colleges, banks, granted they did a lot of work in the city. I think they did one of the banks downtown on Main Street. So again, experience, job training. They did not go to college, but had a very successful career and he retired fairly young.

**KC:** When did he retire?

**PM:** He retired in 1990, at the age of forty-six.

**KC:** Wow, that is really young.

**PM:** Yes. But you know, he just had other interests and things that he wanted to do. We're meek and humble people who are sort of living below our means so we just figured dabble in a few parts of things and here we are today. But the secret is live below your means.

**KC:** How'd you two meet?

**PM:** How did we meet...well he was the big senior and I was the little trembling freshmen in high school. Actually, he saw me first. He was coming from the second floor and I was on the first floor going upstairs to another class, I think it was civics, which I wish they would come back to teaching civics, you know, local government. And I guess in the stairwell we would pass each other five days a week and then one day during lunch I guess, and we did not have a lunch hall, a state of the arts cafeteria like today's high school. In fact, Leicester High School in the day was at the town hall in Leicester.

**KC:** Oh, wow.

**PM:** And so we, you know, didn't really have places to go so we sort of ate in the classrooms and friends in the hallway and whatever and we just started talking, but there was a classroom couples would sit in and just sort of talk and have lunch. It was a little quieter than the other

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areas in the school, but it was—in fact, Arthur's was the last class to graduate from the town hall Leicester High School. That was 1961.

**KC:** Wow!

**PM:** And then my sophomore, junior, senior year, they built a new high school, which had been updated since then.

**KC:** Can you talk about your children?

**PM:** My children...well, let's see. We were almost children having children. As I said, I graduated from high school June third, got married October third of senior year, and our—the oldest, Suzanne, was born July, 1965 and I was nineteen in August of that year. So we had three children in twenty-four months. We had a son Paul thirteen months later and then eleven months later we had a daughter Michelle. So then we bought a house in Auburn, the fourth year we were married and I am very proud to say we are here forty-six years in this very house. I refuse to move. If it was good enough day one, it's certainly good enough today. And we had one baby in 1971 while living in this house. And they're educated, they're—one is a hygienist, one was a stay-at-home mother where she did like Tupperware and Pampered Chef in the evening when her husband came home and she did sell private jewelry. Her children are college age at this point and she works at the Holden Town Hall. And then Paul, our son Paul, had worked construction like his father and his grandfather, Herman Marois. He still works, he is in Local 4 I believe, it's heavy equipment. And Pamela is a woman that works at home for—they do paychecks. They process paychecks and ADP (Automatic Data Processing), so she's very busy on the phone with disgruntled people that their paychecks are, they're not correct, so she does a lot of corrections. It's understandable why they might be a little irate on occasion, it's money, it's the wrong rate, and whatever you know. So the kids are educated and they're on their own, yippie-yi-yo, you know!

**KC:** When you had children when you were younger, did you work then or were you a full-time, stay-at-home-mom?

**PM:** Full time, stay-at-home. Again, if you live according to your budget and you live lower than your income—I always sewed, I always cooked, and I felt that I didn't bring money home, but my job was to save money. And my husband always made me feel that half of a paycheck was my contribution as well because if he had to hire for food and laundry and day care and etc., etc., he'd have to work another part time job. So, I was always the equal even though I was a homemaker, I was always an equal partner which is more than I can say for some. [Noise from husband's carving of a wooden statue interrupted interview].

**KC:** Alright, so where were we Okay, so we're gonna (ph) move on a little bit more. I know you didn't attend college, but do you wish you had?

**PM:** Not really. As I might have said earlier, in the day nurses went off to college, a school teacher went off to college, women didn't go for engineering or architect, or, you know, it was—

if you got a job and it was money you could sort of semi support yourself at home and if you knew there was advancement, you get an apartment and marry or whatever, you just did it. And some people just quit school, like juniors or seniors in high school for no other reason other than I have a job. And in the sixties and previous to that, even the mindset in the seventies still somewhat, the goal was to find a job and support yourself where today it's a career. So, I was on the cusp of all this and having the three babies as close as we did, I was a little occupied. And Arthur was out house hunting so I never thought about like oh woe was me.

**KC:** Well as of now do you wish you furthered your education?

**PM:** Now? Well, not really, but I'm finding at this point in time, the library in Auburn has been my best friend for a few years. I've been reading medical books, self-help books, psychology books if I have friends or people that I know with a specific medical issue, pancreatic cancer, colon cancer, autism, just different things. I'm curious at this point in my life to know more about some of these things so I go to the library and I will get the books on whatever issue I'm trying to understand and if they don't have it, as all libraries, they bring it in for me. But you now as a younger person like yourself, I don't know if I would have appreciated the education then where you are appreciating this education more today than I would've at your age I think because of the social norms or mindset. You know like women, you don't need a college education, all you're going to do is be a homemaker and have—all you're going to do is be a homemaker and have children. And that's who I was, however I did forty-six years of volunteer work. That was sort of my work out of the house back and forth.

**KC:** And talk about your volunteer work.

**PM:** Well, as I said, I started off in high school as a three-year class officer, which I am very proud of that accomplishment because at the age of fifteen you don't really know what you're doing, but the guidance teachers and people are help. And I did church work, I did community work, I worked for the Heart Association, the days where you had to get a kit to each household to do their street and a woman off the streets says "Will you coach here Auburn with me?" "Oh sure," I said. Little did I know, if we couldn't find someone on the street to take the packet and go door to door, we had to do it. Now my youngest was probably two years old at the time and the others weren't much older, four, five, and six, so that was quite the feat, but, I—off the top of my head I can't remember everything, but I was a Daughters of Isabella for a while, which is the women's part of the Knights of Columbus. I just did that for a couple years because it was a Shrewsbury order and a night out with the girls when you're going out by yourself and you're meeting them there it just didn't happen, but I chaired the—worked on the committee at Saint Joseph's in Auburn for the Bishop's Fund. I was president of Our Lady of the Angels—my children went there for a while. The PTA, I was—spaghetti suppers and Mardi Gras and fundraisers and I'm sure there's a whole lot of other things that I have forgotten that I did.

**KC:** Class reunions?

**PM:** For fifty years I worked on the committee for class reunions and that's a lot of fun because I would start like a year and a half ahead of ourselves and it was fun having meetings every four, six weeks and then we had nothing over the summer. July and August people had vacations. And again, that keeps you in touch with your friends doing reunions. But the volunteer work is what I did and what I really learned from some of my volunteering was Department of Social Services which is—they have a different name for it today—Family Services. And for eighteen months I sat on the board for a while and it was young people wanting to get their children back because the state would take their children away for whatever reason. And the help wasn't out there for these people. And I would sit on—every month I could sit on two cases with social workers and they wanted just somebody's advice, opinion that had no education in the, you know the business and there was one young lady that I knew she was getting her baby back. She was finishing her high school, she was still living with her mother, she was looking for work, she was going off to college, but that was a tough one, the social working volunteering.

**KC:** That must have been very depressing

**PM:** No when you, when you trip over some of the things in your own personal life, it makes you stronger and you understand some of these issues out there and I've crossed a few bridges in my life, issues, trying to help people, but that was an interesting adventure in part of my volunteer work.

**KC:** Now we're gonna (ph) go a little bit broader. What world events had the most impact on you throughout your entire life?

**PM:** Well, Vietnam. When I was getting out of high school and we were marrying and having children, Vietnam War was an eye opener and there is a Richard Huntoon memorial on the highway in Leicester, Route 56. I graduated from high school with Richard and he was just in the Marines in Vietnam I think less than six months and he was killed. And so you sort of even though we were in our own world raising children, still living in the city, my husband was out looking for a house, you know for the family, we knew we wanted more children and I was very thankful that—and I admire service people. [Noise from a dog running around in the house interrupted the interview].

**KC:** So, during Vietnam then, it was right after high school you said, right?

**PM:** Well, Vietnam was while I was still in high school. It was being thought of and happening and low key, you know as any peaks and valley situation.

**KC:** So why didn't your husband go to war?

**PM:** Well, he graduated from high school and a young man of the age of seventeen not going off to college, he was drafted about a year or so later. However, we were married and at the time, they were not taking married—they were boys, not men, age seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, so he was exempt. So the following year, Uncle Sam sends him another little notice he's been drafted. However, they were taking married, no children. I was pregnant with baby number one. And

then the third time, Uncle Sam again sends him a little notice drafting him but I was pregnant with baby number two. They didn't want to look at anybody with a wife and two kids so that was the end of messages from Uncle Sam. However, over the course of time, I realized that my life perhaps could've been different. Not necessarily on a positive end if he had been in the service. Over the years with my reunions and get togethers with my classmates, I talked to some of the men that were career men or they were re-enlisted maybe once and the wives followed them from state to state. Or they were either—they were in Vietnam for a while or the Navy where you're gone several months at a time and the Mrs. is home with the kids and it was tough on the women when the men were gone and money wasn't that plentiful. I don't know what the money was, but I know being in the service is not a high wage venture. I know my life would've been very different, I believe, if my husband had been in the service. We would have not bought the home as young as we were. I was twenty-two and he was twenty-four when we bought this house, scary and we're still in the same house forty-six years later and a lot of things would've been different. And we need service people, we need police, we need firemen, we need nurses, we need EMTs, these are our heroes then and now as well. But I was happy to have him home.

**KC:** What was one of the most shocking generational transitions for you?

**PM:** Shocking generational...nothing in particular that I can think of. Oh, I'd like to go back to world happenings, or whatever. When I was in high school, I was a senior in high school, November 22—or was it the 20<sup>th</sup>?—I'm trying to think, 1963 President Kennedy was assassinated. I was getting on the school bus, I was on the school bus, and my dear friend to this day, Teresa, came rushing on the bus screaming and crying, "The president has been shot, the president's dead, the president's dead!" And we all, you know, kids on the school bus, there's a little bit of noise. I remember the silence all of the sudden on the bus. Everybody just couldn't believe it. It was—that was memorable and of course the whole world shut down and the television, and the next couple of days was just very...

**KC:** Traumatic?

**PM:** ... traumatic and a big eye opener so that was another. That and the seniors, we went to the New York's World Fair on the up note, we had three or four wonderful days in New York.

**KC:** Wow, so go more off of that, what did you see?

**PM:** Oh gosh, the big thing was Walt Disney's pavilion. They embedded this tune in your head, "It's a Small World After All" and the Pietá from Rome, the Pietá was there from Rome. And one of the pavilions of Rome. I don't know if 'til this day they do World's Fair. I just haven't heard the name or anybody comment, but this was 1963, 1964 so my class went to the New York World's Fair. A bunch of country bumpkins from Leicester, Massachusetts. And the big eye opener was we were bused to the—the second time we went to the fairgrounds, we were bused there and they handed us all a token to take the subway home from New York. Now, most of us—I had taken buses when I worked in the city, but most of these kids didn't even know what a bus looked like never mind taking a train back to the Commodore Hotel, New York City. So,

course we were scared little chickens so when you get on whatever train you've got to come home on and you talk to people they say, "Look, when we tell you to get off, just when the door opens, get out [laughs]. It goes that fast." So that was an interesting couple of days and the bus ride to New York and back was a long four, five hours but it was fun for the kids. God bless the chaperones.

**KC:** [Laughs,] that must have been rough on them.

**PM:** Oh, they just sat in the front and ignored everybody, but no, that was exciting just seeing the Pietá and Walt Disney. How's that for a flip side of a coin, you know, but that was good.

**KC:** In your mind, do you think you achieved the American Dream?

**PM:** Yes. Yes I have. We were born in [     ] centuries, the man went out to work and the women stayed home and there were times that some of my friends sort of resented my being home where they were starting to need to go out to work part time, you know, like either when the children were in school or any evening when the husband was home. I mean, to pay for a babysitter to go to work you might as well stay home for the little money that you were making and you were almost giving the sitter the same amount of money so it was a wash, you might as well stay home. And people were just happy and content to live that lifestyle because we lived according to our means. So if you're not living according to your means, a second paycheck needs to come in and we've actually—we haven't gained that much from a second pay check because the price of homes, automobiles, appliances, furniture, food, etc., etc., etc., not only doubled, it tripled, quadrupled in prices because these business people out there, they said, "Hey those 20,000 dollar houses, we're going to charge them 60,000 for the same house because there's two paychecks coming in!" And I realize women wanted to get out and being a homemaker is the toughest job anybody will ever have, I'll be honest with you. You're cooking, you're cleaning, you're laundering, you're driving kids to school, some sports, volunteering parents, community, you know, that's a fulltime job onto itself.

**KC:** And even then you don't have strict hours so you're working from the time you get up, 'til the time you go to bed.

**PM:** It's a 24 hour call, exactly and people will ask you to do things 'cause you don't work; that I found amusing sometimes, can you get this for me or that or—because you don't work. And I tell people, now that I'm of a certain age. When I was sixty-five a few years ago, I kind of reevaluated a few things and I'm sort of semi-retired so I only work half a day now and that's twelve noon to twelve midnight, you know, and that's just twelve hours a day versus the twenty-four hour call, but that's life and motherhood. You have kids in the middle of the night that they could be sick they could need a feeding, an infant. It's the job description; it all goes with the territory. And I think at this point in time with so many women having to work—and yes we need women in the workforce, don't misunderstand me with this—we've lost the family concept. It's not what it used to be and no, we didn't have the big money [puts up air quotes with her fingers] McMansions, we didn't have the brand name clothing and the this that and whatever's,

but were we happier then? Maybe. Today it's fast forward and I talk to my girls sometimes, they're always in a rush; "I don't have time for this, I've got a this-that," you know, they're on such a tight schedule where I would bring my kids to school, then I would do the marketing and the banking, sort of at my leisure and my husband came home for lunch so I knew a certain time lunch should be on the table so he could get back to work. Then I'd run a few more errands, or laundry or whatever was soup du jour at the time and then picked up the kids at school and while they were doing homework on this very kitchen table that we're sitting at, I would be in the kitchen peeling vegetables and answering some homework questions. And my fossil encyclopedias which they used are still in my living room, I will never get rid of them, never get rid of them. I love it when the girls call and they can't boot up their computers. "How many stars did Lincoln's flag have when he was president?" Thirty-three is the answer! And my daughter says, "Ma, I don't want to hear it. I can't get the computer up. we need to know how many stars on Lincoln's flag when he was president." "Thirty-three." I loved it when she called.

**KC:** What got you through tough times?

**PM:** Personally as a married women, I have not really had any tough times so I didn't really have anything to get through or get over or...

**KC:** That's a blessing in itself.

**PM:** Exactly. You know, I think my husband and I marrying so young, we didn't really have any great goals to achieve, or we just—he was at work, I was a homemaker, we knew what we needed to do and we did it, and we didn't have any grand ideas that it was going to be different. My personal life growing up as a kid, that was the hardest part for me; some of the issues, but married life? I knew from day one that this was a lot better than where I came from.

**KC:** What was one of the most important lessons you have learned?

**PM:** Important...hm.

**KC:** Or any advice you would like to give women.

**PM:** They need an education, definitely, they need an education. Unfortunately, when women have high careers, high-end careers, they're working two full time jobs. I would almost say try not to work for forty, fifty, sixty, eighty hours a week for the women because they come home and they still have [to be] the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker. Although, it's my understanding today that the men are cooking, they're cleaning, they're driving kids back and forth, they may have to take a day off.

**KC:** So it's almost like the roles have switched?

**PM:** They have switched tremendously. And, and, yes we need—I think women think differently than men. Whether it's politics, or even if it's, even engineering designing something. Oftentimes men will put the refrigerator—an architect will put a refrigerator on one side of the kitchen and the stove is on the other side where you need to group things together,

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you know, things to flow or where sometimes women will just see things differently. And it's always been the men, the men, the men, and I know why the women are fighting so hard for their positions, because they were never considered equals. See, as I said earlier, I did not bring home a paycheck. I personally felt the cooking, the sewing, doing everything—I even cut hair! I cut the family's hair; I wanted to be a hairdresser from high school, but it didn't work out for me because I just needed to be on my own. So that luxury wasn't available for an education so I guess I'm a wanna-be hairdresser. But women are working very hard and I don't think it's to their benefit as much as they think it is beneficial, so you need to think about that as well, you know. How many hours a week? When you're finished with your education and having a family, you're being pulled by two to four different directions at all times, but women think differently than men and that's a good thing because we are different. You look at a picture of a man, you look at a picture of a woman, we are different.

**KC:** Absolutely. And are there any stories you would like to share from your past or from your heritage, any stories?

**PM:** Well, as I said earlier, both of my parents were born in Canada. I am the first generation born in the states. My father in law was born in Canada as well, but my mother in law was born in Webster, Massachusetts, but again, we are all from French Canadian descent. And I think on my richer side of the family, I think maybe eight or ten generations back, there is a Micmac American-Indian in the family because some of my brothers and even myself somewhat, the nose, answers the question, but three of my children's grandparents coming in from Canada came to this country and did not speak English. They bought dictionaries; they bought the newspaper every day. My father-in-law in particular, Herman Marois, read the newspaper from first page to last page, pretty much the whole thing, and he was a man that had little or no education and he was brilliant. He would make a little piece of furniture or a picture frame, you know, at the miters or the corners and just measuring things out for picture frames and my mother-in-law did a lot of crewel work and needlepoint and things like that and again, to have it professionally framed was not in the budget. So, he made and repurposed a lot of things and my husband does the same thing today. He makes things, but just teaching themselves how to speak and read the American English, that they came to this country, you know, they are not the generation where we had to cater to them because they did not speak English. Today, emigrants come in and they don't speak the language and they're not expected to learn the language. We as taxpayers provide interpreters for them and I can understand helping them out for a while, but they need to learn how to speak English [in] the country that they decided to live in. So you know, my in-laws, my parents, they're self-taught people and they were responsible for the most part.

**KC:** Well thank you very much for your time!

**PM:** Well, Kasia, this was my pleasure, this was very interesting to hear what I think about, but you know the next generation we'll see more women out there in careers, not jobs and that's a good thing. But, I just wish that women wouldn't pace themselves the way they think they need

to. I mean you need to think long and hard sometimes on some of the decisions in life and I have thought long and hard about some of my choices and you have to live with it. But—and education is so costly today. Men and women just feel that they've got to go out and fast forward and pay the tuitions back and etc., but we're losing the family structure. We've got to come home a little more, we've got to come home a little more. And enjoy your home. I know people that have mansions; they're never home to enjoy it.

**KC:** They just have it 'cause they could afford it.

**PM:** I guess! And it looks great on a Christmas card, but no, I just wish that your generation would just sit back, relax, and enjoy your life a little more. You're heading to a very busy life, but I do thank you for this time. I've enjoyed this, I want to hear from you where this is going and how this worked out for you. Thank you!