RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ELIZABETH CARTER D'ANGELO

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and
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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kathryn Tracy Rizzi: This begins an oral history interview with Elizabeth Carter D'Angelo, on January 16, 2020, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The interviewers are Kate Rizzi and ...

Zach Batista: … Zach Batista.

KR: Thank you so much for coming in today to do this oral history interview.

Elizabeth D'Angelo: It's my pleasure.

KR: To begin, please tell us where and when you were born.

ED: I was born in Columbus, Texas, October 18, 1942.

KR: Let us talk about your family history.

ED: Okay.

KR: What do you know about your family history, on your mother's side of the family?

ED: My mother was the youngest of five girls. Her dad was the bank president in a small town in Texas. I would not call it a privileged life, but she had a comfortable childhood growing up. I guess they were one of the major families in the town area. Her father was born on a farm. He was one of six boys, I believe, and two girls. He did not want to be a farmer. He was the oldest, and he branched out and went to town, which, at that point, was probably no traffic lights, horse and buggy. I believe he had a mercantile store in town at one point, but he realized that people needed a place to put their money and he was actually one of the founders of the bank. It was the Columbus State Bank, and he was the first president.

My mother, being the youngest of five girls, was kind of special. [laughter] She was pampered. She was spoiled. One of the stories that she used to tell me was that after supper--they didn't have dinner, they had supper in the evening--because she was special, her dad would take her--she would not have to help with the dishes or anything. They would walk two blocks--no sidewalks, no curbs--they would walk two blocks up to the main road, to the filling station, and watch the traffic go by. This was--my mom was born in 1918--so we'll say 1925, maybe. If it was hot--and it was hot a lot in Texas--they would get Cokes from the Coke machine, and that was the old kind of Coke machine with the ice in the barrel and you would reach your hand in. She felt she was the most perfect little girl. She was the jewel in her dad's eye, yes. That's one of her stories. Her older sisters tend to tell it a little differently, of course, "Elizabeth didn't have to do the dishes tonight, because Dad took her to the filling station," something like that. So, my mom had a very comfortable childhood growing up.

KR: How did the Great Depression affect your mother and her family?

EDP: It was really interesting, because at one point, I asked her about that. She said, growing up, she was not aware of the depression, because they had a comfortable lifestyle. She said the first time she realized that something was happening was--they'd had a cook, and I believe they

also had a cleaning lady--at different times, men, in particular, would come to the back door of the house and ask to work for food. Her mother, my grandmother, would always say, "Give them food. They don't have to work." So, that made an impression on her, and she couldn't understand why, "Well, why did he have to come? Why didn't he have food at home?" I think it was probably explained to her that, "Well, he didn't have a home, and if he did, they didn't have food." She said that many times her dad--her dad walked to work. It was that small of a town, and he would come home for his main dinner at noontime every day. Sometimes, walking from the bank to the house, he would meet men on the street selling whatever they had, and he always bought whatever they were selling.

KR: What was your mother's education like?

ED: She graduated from high school. At that time, there were eleven grades. She was accepted by the University of Texas. She went to college, I will say, probably one full year, possibly part of the second, and then her mom died unexpectedly. Because my mother was the youngest, she had no choice; she had to go home to take care of her father, because he needed someone to take care of him. He needed a woman in the house, and her older sisters were all married or working at that point. My mom did not finish college, and it always bothered her. She wanted all of us, myself and my siblings, to go to college, because it bothered her that she had not been able to graduate because she had to go home to take care of her father. That's when she met her husband. So, if she had been away at school, we don't know. I wouldn't be here. [laughter]

KR: How did they meet?

ED: At that time, in the small town, the high school--well, I guess the whole town--had homecoming, and this was a big community affair. At that time, my dad was the band director at the high school, and they met at the homecoming dance. The story goes that my dad asked my mom to dance, and he said, "I guess you know who I am?" and she said, "No, do you know who I am?" and there we are. [laughter]

ZB: She answered one of the questions I actually had about that. Growing up in Texas ...

ED: Now, you're talking about my mom?

ZB: Yes, your mom. She had five older siblings, correct?

ED: Correct, all girls.

ZB: All girls.

ED: No, she had four older siblings. She was the fifth, all girls.

ZB: When they went to college, do you have any idea where they might have gone? Did they all move out of Texas?

ED: No. They all went to the University of Texas, which was in Austin, and that was quite a drive from Columbus. I mean, these days, it wouldn't be considered a drive, but they all went to the University of Texas. Mom's oldest sister was named Emily, and I believe she had a scholarship. Then, the second sister was Hermacella. She did not have a scholarship. My Aunt Marce went to the university on a Latin scholarship, but at that time--I'm trying to think how it happened. My grandfather, Herman Braden was his name. The bank needed a treasurer, and Herman Braden got in contact with his daughter Marce at the University of Texas and said, "We need a treasurer for the bank. Come home." So, she came back, and she was working in the bank. Then, Aunt Evie went to the university, and she majored in nutrition, dietary things like that. Then, my mom went. Mom did not graduate. Aunt Marce did not graduate, but the other three girls did, all from the university.

KR: Did your Aunt Marce work her entire career as the treasurer?

ED: Oh, no. She was probably the treasurer for about three years. Then, she married, and once you were married, you didn't work.

KR: What about your family history, on your father's side of the family?

ED: Okay, my dad did not come from a rich family. They had a very hard time during the depression. They lived in San Marcos, Texas. His father was an oil man, which meant he delivered gas to filling stations, and at that time, I think most filling stations were just pumps in the road, maybe with a general store. My grandmother, she had gone to business school, but I don't know that she worked when they were married because my dad had three or four siblings. One died. It was a very different lifestyle for my dad. He probably had a lot of part-time jobs. They did not have a cook. They did not have a cleaning lady. They probably had a horse and buggy, whereas my mother's family probably had a car of some kind, complete opposites. My dad was very aware of the depression, although he did go to college in the town where he was living. In San Marcos, he went to college there.

It's really interesting, because my parents did not really talk about growing up very much. I don't know why. I don't know why. If we asked questions, they would answer, naturally, but they didn't sit around and talk about things like that. My dad and all of his siblings were very musically inclined. At one time--I don't know if it was when Dad was in college, it doesn't matter--he and his sister, Lou, had a fifteen-minute radio show on the local radio station, and they would tell jokes. My dad would play the piano, and my Aunt Lou would sing, and it was a very local type business.

KR: Being on radio runs in the family.

ZB: I guess so. [laughter] Interesting, wow.

KR: What do you know about your father's time in college?

ED: At that time, the college that he had attended was a teacher's college, a normal school, and it was small. He was a commuter, of course, because he was living in town. He was active on

campus in I guess you would say the drama society, such as it was. I know he was on the staff at the yearbook, probably as an artist or in that area. To work his way through college--my dad, as I said, was very musically inclined--he played at a dance hall on the weekends and he played the piano. I am sure my Aunt Lou sang during some of those performances, but he worked weekends while he was in college. He did graduate. Well, he was the band director in Columbus when he and Mom met, but he also had a degree in business, I believe. After one year of teaching band, he decided that was not what he wanted to do. He wanted to, I guess, be in business of some kind. For whatever reason, it didn't suit him. Although he loved music, he didn't like being a band director.

ZB: Do you have any questions?

KR: I understand that one of your ancestors is Edward Burleson? [Editor's Note: Edward Burleson (1798-1851) served as a military commander in the Texas Revolution and Cherokee War, third vice president of the Republic of Texas under President Sam Houston from 1841 to 1844, and state senator from 1846 to 1851.]

ED: Correct, he is, yes.

KR: Yes, tell me about the family link.

ED: Well, I didn't realize who General Burleson was until my husband told me, "Do you know you have a famous ancestor?" I said, "No, who?" and he said, "Well, General Burleson." I said, "Well, who's he?" and my husband proceeded to tell me who he was. I will admit that there were stories in the family about General Burleson, but they were told in such an offhand way that we weren't sure if they were true or not. You could be a dishwasher and say, "Yes, I was in charge of the waterworks," or whatever. [laughter] General Burleson was born in North Carolina, and he and his wife travelled to Texas. He was a frontiersman. He was vice president of Texas under Sam Houston, and at one point, General Burleson ran for president of Texas. He was not elected. He and Sam Houston apparently had a falling out of some kind, but one of General Burleson's sons is named David Crockett Burleson and we all feel that he knew Davy Crockett.

KR: Oh, wow.

ED: I have a book about General Burleson, if you'd like to see it.

KR: Oh, that is wonderful.

ED: Yes, yes, but General Burleson founded San Marcos, which is the town where my dad grew up, where he went to college. He was the first person buried in the Texas State Cemetery in Austin. I believe he's buried right behind Stephen F. Austin. I don't think he wanted to be buried near Sam Houston. It's one of the family stories. [Editor's Note: Edward Burleson was the first person to be buried in what would become Texas State Cemetery in Austin in 1851. Stephen F. Austin is considered the founder of the Republic of Texas and was a political and military leader during the Texas Revolution. His remains were transferred to the Texas State Cemetery in 1910.]

KR: Yes, I did read that Sam Houston and Edward Burleson despised each other.

ED: Okay.

KR: Is there a story? Is there some family lore about that?

ED: I don't know. I don't know. It might be in the book, because I believe General Burleson had very definite ideas and was an opinionated person. So, whatever happened between them, if you can tell me, I'd love to know. [laughter]

KR: No, I do not know the details.

ZB: She told me about that in high school and I was like, "What? That's a thing? That's so cool."

KR: Yes.

ED: Yes. General Burleson's an unsung hero in Texas, because how can you compete with Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston and the Alamo and things like that? So, there's a Burleson County in Texas, and there might be a Burleson town. Again, I'm not sure. I'm not sure. [Editor's Note: Burleson, Texas is a suburb of Fort Worth.]

KR: I want to ask about your father's service in the military.

ED: Okay.

KR: I also understand that he has two brothers that served in the military.

ED: That's right, correct.

KR: What do you know about your father and your uncles' military service?

ED: Okay. When Pearl Harbor happened, everyone enlisted pretty much; that's it. My dad signed up right away, and because of the enlistment process, he had a hard time getting a job because every office knew that any young man was going to be called up and they weren't hiring at that time. My dad and mom--we moved from Columbus, where he had been the band director, to San Marcos, where my grandmother and great grandmother were living at the time. My dad took a job as a bookkeeper in a local lumber company, waiting for his number to be called. He left Texas. I believe he went to Florida on assignment first. I'm a little bit vague about that, but my mother and I stayed in San Marcos and lived there while Dad went to various assignments. He would come home maybe for a weekend for a visit, or Mom and I would fly up to--we'd take the train to Houston and then, maybe, take a plane up to St. Louis or wherever he was stationed if he had a free weekend or for whatever reason.

As a family, the first place that we lived was in Fort McAndrew, Newfoundland, and that was our first--I believe that's right. Well, let me backtrack. At one point, Dad was teaching communications at Yale, and so we lived in New Haven, at one point, but that was in town. When we were at Fort McAndrew in Newfoundland, we lived on base. It's kind of a different living situation. We were there probably two-and-a-half to three years; that was a normal tour of duty. My brother Steve was born at Fort McAndrew, in Newfoundland. This was '47-ish, and at that time, things were deescalating. My dad decided to get out of the military, which a lot of men did at that time. We lived in Amarillo, Texas for about three years, and then the Korean conflict started heating up. [Editor's Note: The Korean War occurred from 1950 to 1953.]

Dad had been in contact with his former commanding officer, and he was told that because of his past service, he was going to be recalled but that if he voluntarily came forward--that's not the correct word, but you know what I mean--he would be reinstated at the rank in which he left the service. So, that's what my dad did. He didn't reenlist, but he rejoined. After that, then he just stayed in the military. He knew that was a good job and had stability.

From Amarillo, we went to Midwest City, Oklahoma, which is where Tinker Air Force Base was, and Mom and I were there with my brothers for maybe four months. Daddy was sent overseas almost immediately. He came back to get us, and at that point, I had two brothers; there were three of us. We were once again stationed in McAndrew Air Force Base, Newfoundland; we went back to the very same base. We were in Newfoundland for probably three years. As I said, that was a tour of duty. My sister was born in St. John's, Newfoundland, and my mother said, "I am not going back to Newfoundland for another tour of duty, because every time I come home, I have a new baby." [laughter] So, we were in Newfoundland then the second time. We came back to the States in '53, and Dad was then stationed in Bellingham, Washington with the Air National Guard for three years, and that was a wonderful tour of duty. We lived in town. There were two military families in town, and it's a great place. Pacific Northwest is absolutely beautiful.

From there, Dad was transferred to Germany. At that time, there was no housing on base available for a family of our size. So, my mom, myself, my two brothers, and my sister went to San Marcos to live for six months, waiting for housing to be available, and my dad went ahead of us to Germany. When housing was available, in June of '57, my mom and the four of us flew over to Germany and met Dad there. First, he was stationed at Hahn Air Force Base, and we were there for about two years. Then, his squadron was transferred to Sembach Air Force Base in Germany. [Editor's Note: Located near Kaiserslautern, Sembach Air Base was a U.S. Air Force installation from 1950 to 2010. The base is now known as Sembach Kaserne and is operated by the U.S. Army.]

[Editor's Note: Entitled "Growing Up on an Airplane," Ms. D'Angelo added the following addendum to the transcript. In June 1957, my mother and her four children travelled from Texas to Germany. We had been living in San Marcos, Texas, waiting for quarters to be available at Hahn Air Force Base, Germany. My dad had been in Germany since January, when his tour officially began. We flew out of San Antonio to Birmingham, Alabama and spent two days visiting with my Aunt Marce and her family. From there, we flew to Atlanta, changed planes, and then to La Guardia Airport in New York City. We took a taxi to Fort Hamilton, having been

told how much the taxi fare should be. (It seems that New York cab drivers were charging more than appropriate for military families once the driver knew where we wanted to go.) After checking in, we were taken by shuttle to a hotel on base to rest and get ready for the flight to Germany. At the appointed time, shuttle busses took roughly twenty dependent families to the tarmac to board the flight. Each family had at least three children. The flight was approximately sixteen hours long. We landed in Frankfurt, where all of the military sponsors were waiting for their dependents. Imagine the excitement! Some of these families had been separated for six months or more; some were even seeing a new son or daughter for the first time. From Texas to Germany, this trip took us five days; these were the days of actually carrying suitcases (no wheels) and paper airline tickets. Kudos to every military wife!]

We were there for about two years, and then my dad--in the Air Force, particularly, you'll have an overseas assignment and then you'll have an assignment in the States, kind of back and forth, alternating like that--from Germany, then my dad happened to be stationed in Texas, in San Antonio, which was just down the road from San Marcos. We were all ecstatic, because we were going to be home. We were going to be near family, and Dad was stationed at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio for three years. From there, he went to Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi. By that time, I had graduated from college. I was not living with the family. Anyway, my dad was stationed at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, and from there, he went to a language school in Maryland, because his next assignment was going to be with NATO in Madrid and he needed to speak Spanish. While they were in Maryland--when Dad was going to the language school--his position in NATO was deleted, and my mother was most upset because she wanted to go to Madrid. She was looking forward to that, and the story goes that my mother went to see my dad's commanding officer and said, "Well, if Paul's not going to be working with NATO, then he needs to be working with someone else in Madrid, so find him a job." My mom was quite outspoken, and come to find out, my dad was transferred to Torrejon Air Force Base in Madrid. Whether my mom had anything to do with it or not, we don't know, but that was his last tour. Then, when he finished his tour in Madrid, he retired from the Air Force. They went home to Texas to retire.

KR: Going back to World War II ...

ED: Okay.

KR: … Did your father get sent overseas?

ED: Yes. He was in Thule, Greenland, and he was also in Reykjavík, Iceland, at different points. He was in communications, and he also wore glasses. So, he could not be a pilot, but because of his communications skills, that was basically where he was usually sent. It was Greenland and Iceland, yes.

KR: Your father's brothers served in World War II, and then also in Korea?

ED: I don't think my uncles--I'm not sure. I'm not really sure. Dad's next brother, Royce, was a pilot. He was a pilot during the Berlin Airlift, and he flew those planes. My Uncle Chester was in the Marines, and he was in--where was he? I can't remember exactly. He was in the Far East,

I think, with the Marines. Uncle Chester, the youngest of the three boys, did not stay in the service. He fulfilled his duty, and then he got out and went home and became a band director. Uncle Royce, the second boy, stayed in the Air Force for a while, and at various times, he was stationed in Hawaii and Alaska. He was in Hawaii when it became a state. It's where they were living at the time. My dad had the longer military career. I'll say that, yes. I think Uncle Royce might have had a medical problem and needed to retire early. Uncle Chester developed malaria, and he was not interested in a military career anyway, but he died. Uncle Chester died quite young, but they were all three in the military during World War II, yes. [Editor's Note: On June 24, 1948, the Soviet Union began blocking western attempts to supply West Berlin by way of the ground through East Germany. On June 26th, the United States and its allies began the Berlin Airlift to supply West Berlin using transport planes. The Berlin Airlift continued until September 30, 1949.]

KR: Did your Uncle Royce share stories about flying missions in the Berlin Airlift?

ED: I'm sure he did, but I wasn't paying attention. That's the problem. That's the problem. The only reason I know that he flew during the Berlin Airlift is that his son, Cliff, was also a pilot with the Air Force. Uncle Royce, of course, and his son Cliff talked about different missions, and that's how I found out that he flew in the Berlin Airlift, not from Uncle Royce, from my cousin Cliff. [laughter]

ZB: Learning about it is really cool. I did not know about any of that.

ED: Am I saying too much? Am I not saying enough?

ZB: No, it is great.

KR: This is wonderful.

ED: Okay.

ZB: Out of curiosity, when your dad retired from the military, what rank did he retire at?

ED: Lieutenant colonel.

ZB: Wow.

ED: He was a lieutenant colonel. Now, my brother went to the Air Force Academy and was in the Air Force for twenty-five years, and he retired as a full colonel, Uncle Steve.

ZB: Wow. I did not realize that.

ED: Yes. My brother also wore glasses, so he could not be a pilot, but he was a navigator. He was in the service during the Vietnam War. I know you're going to ask me about him, but I don't know that much, because a lot of what he did was classified. Even to this day, he won't talk

about a lot of things. I had a government clearance when I worked for the government also, and to this day, I will not talk about a lot. It's engrained.

KR: Yes.

ED: It's engrained in us, yes. [laughter]

ZB: That is so cool.

KR: I am struck by how much flying you must have done at a time when commercial flying was not that common.

ED: Yes, yes. I feel like I grew up on an airplane. I love to fly. At one point, I considered being a stewardess. My mother said, "No, you're not going to do that." [laughter] But it became second nature. We flew commercial. We flew little puddle jumpers. We flew MATS, which is Military Air Transport Service.

One of our trips, when we came home from Newfoundland in 1953, we didn't have much advance notice. A big storm was coming into Newfoundland. It was December. If we did not leave on such and such a date, we could be trapped there, literally, for two weeks, and my mother wanted to be home in Texas for Christmas. She said, "We're going. Find us a plane," not really, but anyway. One day in December, we went to school, and my dad was at work. At about eight-thirty, he got a phone call, and he said, "There's a MATS plane." A MATS plane, Military Air Transport Service, is an empty shell that has fold-down bucket seats. "We have a MATS plane leaving at noon going into Westover in Massachusetts. Do you want to be on it? Other than that, you're here until the storm comes and passes, and that could be January." Dad called Mom at home. She had a ten-month-old baby. Three of us were in school. He told her the situation, and she said, "We're on that plane." Now, we had been packed out, to some degree, because we knew we were leaving. We just didn't have an exact date. This came up, and my mom made the decision, and my dad said, "Okay." Between nine o'clock and eleven-thirty, three children were taken out of school. My mom literally packed paper bags with diapers and bottles for my sister. My dad came to get me--I was in sixth grade--and he said, "Okay, Betsy, we're leaving." I thought we were going to lunch. I said, "Well, will I be back after lunch?" He said, "No, we're going home," and I said, "You mean to the house?" He said, "No, we're going home," and I said, "Oh, okay." The secretaries in the principal's office had the report cards typed up, ready to [go]. This is something they dealt with a lot, because families were leaving spur of the minute. We went to the house. We picked up Mom and my sister Sam. We drove to the tarmac, which is where the airplane was. We parked the car. We left the keys in the car, and there's a story about that too. We left the keys in the car. We had, literally, bookbags, book satchels, and lunch pails, because that's how it was in the early '50s. We got into the plane through the back, through the tail, and there was this empty open space. The crew kind of looked at us. They knew we were coming, of course, and they had blankets and pillows and lunches in paper bags and tried to make us as comfortable as possible. We took off, and it was a twenty-two-hour flight. This is only from Newfoundland to Massachusetts, but it was a heavy plane.

ZB: Oh my.

ED: It couldn't fly that fast, I guess. [laughter] It was a good twenty-two hours. We landed in Massachusetts at Westover Field. We got out of the plane, and sitting on the tarmac was a yellow car that had the name Carter on the dashboard. We walked over to the car, opened it up, the keys were there, we got in it. A family from Massachusetts was being transferred to Newfoundland. They took our car that we left on the tarmac, with the keys in it, and we got their car, when we got to Massachusetts. Now, we had a beat-up, old, two-door jalopy-ish kind of car. The yellow car that had the name Carter on the dashboard was a yellow convertible. [laughter] This is in Massachusetts, and it was about seventeen-feet long, it seemed like. [laughter] But this is the way it was. So, we spent a couple of days in Massachusetts kind of regrouping. We got into the yellow car, and we drove down to Texas. While we were driving through New York City, we were going through the Holland Tunnel. Now, the speed limit on any base and housing area is fifteen miles an hour, and that's what my dad was used to driving. We were going through the Holland Tunnel, and all of a sudden, there was a police car coming up behind us and, "Pull over, yellow car. Pull over, pull over." Okay, my dad happened to be in uniform. A policeman came to the car. Dad rolled down the window, "Yes, sir, what's the problem?" "Sir, you're only going fifteen miles an hour. You're holding up traffic." "Yes, I'm aware of that. Isn't that the speed limit?" "No, sir, you're in the United States now. You're not on a base," because once he saw Dad's uniform, he knew. "You're not on a base anymore." "What's the speed limit?" and he told him and he said, "Okay, fine." [laughter] He rolled the window back up, and off we went. [laughter] We got to Texas in time for Christmas.

ZB: Wow.

ED: Yes.

ZB: That must have taken so long.

ED: We were in Texas in probably two weeks or so. We got back in the yellow car, and we drove up to Bellingham, Washington. I either spent most of my life in an airplane or in the backseat of a car.

ZB: Wow.

ED: Yes, good times. I loved it. I would never give up that life for anything, and after all these years, I still want to move every two-and-a-half to three years. That was my life. That was my life, yes.

ZB: Is that why you and Grandpa would go on a big trip every summer?

ED: Yes, partly.

ZB: Partially at least?

ED: Yes. Well, Grandpa loved to travel, and the fact that my family was in Texas was wonderful for him because that gave him an excuse to go to Texas.

ZB: Oh, to go to the Alamo and stuff like that.

ED: Yes, yes, to go down there, yes.

ZB: I know how much you go down there.

ED: One summer, we drove out to Billings, Montana.

ZB: You drove out to Montana.

ED: We drove out to Montana, yes, with three teenagers in the back seat. [Editor's Note: Ms. D'Angelo added the following addendum to the transcript: After her adventures traveling all of her life, driving to Billings, Montana the summer of 1980 with three teenagers in the back seat was a breeze!]

ZB: Oh, my God.

ED: Because we wanted to see where Custer died, we, meaning someone. [laughter] Someone wanted to see where Custer died. I didn't care, personally. Yes, I grew up on an airplane, and flying these days is so pathetic. It's not fun. It's not what it used to be. People used to get dressed up. [Editor's Note: The Battle of the Little Bighorn took place on June 25-26, 1876 between the United States Seventh Cavalry Regiment, led by Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer, and the Sioux and Cheyenne, under the leadership of Sitting Bull. Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument is located in southeastern Montana.]

ZB: Really?

ED: People were nice, and you didn't have to go through all kinds of security checks. Anyway, yes, it's never bothered me to fly. It's just checking in at this point is the hard part. [laughter]

ZB: With all the moving around and going to different schools, was it hard to adapt to schools at all?

ED: It was something you got used to, because everybody else was doing it. It wasn't always fun, and when you had to leave in the middle of a school year, that could be difficult, but that was the way it was. I know there were times--my poor mom, she thought I was never going to be able to conquer long division, because from one school to another, teachers were different and this and that. I tended to lose school time, because we were traveling, yes. Not so much my brothers and sister, me, because of my age, but you adjust, you do it. I mean, that's it. That's the way it is. I know I indicated that I had attended a lot of schools. I did attend twelve schools in twelve years, and during a four-year period, I went to eight different schools.

ZB: I cannot even imagine that.

ED: Yes. The teachers were great. I'm telling you, the Department of Defense teachers, they're fantastic, because they understand what military brats are going through and that we're trying to adjust and that we may have lost time here. Or in a previous school, we were studying this, and now we're studying that. I somehow managed to graduate from high school. [laughter] I made friends. You just do. You make friends, and one day they're there, and maybe the next day, they won't be there for whatever reason, yes. When I graduated from high school--it was a high school overseas--we made a big deal because there was one boy in our graduating class who had been at that high school for all four years.

ZB: Wow.

ED: Only one.

ZB: Only one?

ED: Yes, and we used to razz him about it, "You don't get to move." [laughter]

ZB: Interesting.

KR: You talked about base life versus town life. I was wondering if you could tell us some highlights of each to show that contrast.

ED: In town, you could go anywhere you want, pretty much whenever. When you're on base--when you drive into the base, you have to go through a guard check booth, and all of the cars had decals or indications on them as to the rank of your father, spouse. Even cars had ranks; I'll put it like that. Mostly, on a base, you have the business part of the base here, so to speak, and then the housing area would be here. It wasn't intermingled, and to get from the housing area to the base proper, you would take a shuttle bus. I mean, you could walk it, but if there was a shuttle bus, why not take that? Housing areas were usually three to four floors of quarters. They're not called apartments; they're called quarters. At the end of each building, there would be quarters with either three or four bedrooms, depending on the [family]. Then, in the middle, there would be quarters with only one or two bedrooms, for smaller families.

Basically, sadly, officers lived in one area, and enlisted men, NCOs, lived in another area. Well, I didn't understand it at first, "Well, why do we live here and they live there?" It's all according to rank, which can be good and cannot be good, but on base, it's like a little town: a commissary, which is the grocery store, the PX, which is the department store, theatre, library, always a bowling alley, chapel--which is a multifaith chapel--and the office buildings. I will say, driving on to any Air Force or Army base, I always felt safe. Not that I was scared or didn't feel safe in town, but there's something comforting about being on a military base for me. Some people considered a base a fortress, like we had to be protected against something. I never felt that way. I never felt that way. It was just a warm comforting feeling, and as I said, there were shuttle buses. That was home. That was home.

In town, it was kind of different. When you went to the theatre, the library, anywhere you went on base, even children, dependents, had military ID cards and you showed your military ID card

wherever you went. In town, you didn't have to. I was always reaching for my card, and, "What are you doing?" "Oh, oh, okay, I don't need my card. I'm in town." [laughter] Now, at a movie theatre on base--I assume they still do this, although I don't know--before the show begins, the National Anthem's played and everyone stands. Well, the first time I went to a show in town with friends, I stood up. Nobody else stood up. "What are you doing?" "I'm waiting for the National [Anthem]." "No, sit down. Sit down." [laughter] On base, at five o'clock, every day, the flag is lowered and *Taps* are played and everything stops. All the vehicles stop. Everyone stops where they're standing. If you're playing a baseball game, the game stops. Anyone out walking on the base, you stop, and you turn towards the flag, while *Taps* are being played. Five o'clock, in town, I'm looking, "It's time. Oh, it's not …" [laughter]

ZB: Wow.

ED: Yes, yes. As I said, I enjoyed living on base. I felt very safe there, very comfortable, whereas in town, you have to kind of figure out where things are. On a base, there's just so much area.

KR: Where did your parents stand politically?

ED: I don't have any idea. I don't know. Yes, I really couldn't say. I think my dad might have been a Republican. My mother, when she died, which was in 2009, she was a staunch Democrat, but I really don't know. I don't remember politics being discussed. The only thing I remember making an impression on me, in '52 I guess, I had a button that said, "I like Ike" that I wore for Eisenhower. Then, in the fall of '59, when Kennedy was elected--that was the year, right? [Editor's Note: Dwight D. Eisenhower, former General of the Army and Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe, was elected president in 1952 and again in 1956. He was a Republican. John F. Kennedy, a Democrat, was elected president in 1960. Kennedy served as president until his assassination on November 22, 1963.]

KR: He would have been running in '59. The election was in '60.

ED: '60, okay. You're right, yes, yes. We were all so surprised that Kennedy won, because we thought Nixon was going to win, because we were overseas--we were in Germany at the time. We had no television. We heard the debate on the radio, and we thought Nixon had won. [Editor's Note: Prior to the presidential election in 1960, Democratic candidate John F. Kennedy faced off against Republican candidate Richard Nixon in a series of four televised debates. The first debate took place on September 26, with Kennedy emerging as the winner. Kennedy appeared calm and collected on camera, while Nixon declined to wear makeup and looked nervous. Kennedy went on to narrowly win the election on November 8, 1960.]

ZB: Oh, yes.

ED: We didn't know what Kennedy looked like.

ZB: I have heard about this before in class.

ED: I didn't know what Kennedy looked like; I'll put it like [that]. I'm sure my parents did. I heard a little bit of the debate. When the news came over that Kennedy had won, it was, "He did? But he's so young." That was my [thought], "But he's so young. Does he know what he's doing? Well, we'll find out."

ZB: Yes, I remember learning about that in school actually. When television was introduced and he got televised, a lot of people's opinions changed.

ED: Changed.

ZB: The way that Kennedy held himself on television was so charismatic. Compared to Nixon, who was not as acquainted as, I guess, Kennedy was in a situation like that.

ED: Nixon didn't look good, yes, yes.

ZB: That is crazy, wow.

KR: But over the radio, it sounded like Nixon had Kennedy beat.

ED: We had thought Nixon had won. We thought Kennedy was an upstart and didn't really know what he was doing or anything. I remember my dad saying Kennedy was very definite in a lot of things that he said, whereas Nixon seemed to be waffling, which I guess was more being a politician.

ZB: Interesting.

ED: I have to say too, in the military--well, at that time, everything that I'm saying has to do with the time that I was raised in the military--politics didn't seem to be discussed that much. Whatever the commander-in-chief decided, that's what happened.

ZB: Oh, that makes sense.

ED: But a lot of things were over my head. I was too busy getting on and off airplanes and transferring schools.

KR: What about major events in the Cold War? Are there any memories that stick out?

ED: There again, I have to say, not many. We did have practice alerts on base, and the sirens would sound. We had no advance notice, the sirens would sound, and there would be brown alerts, red alerts, black alerts. Whenever the siren sounded, we would all go down to the basement in the quarters buildings and wait there until the all clear was signaled, but I can't really remember. I have to say that, no, I don't really remember a lot. I was already back in the States when the Berlin Wall went up, and I remember hearing about that and thinking, "Well, how could they put a wall around the land?" I couldn't quite get it, yes, but thinking about things, no, I always felt safe. I'm sure my parents discussed things but not in front of us kids, yes. I think they wanted us to feel safe. They didn't want us to worry or be scared, because on a

base, there are always planes flying over and maneuvers going on and tanks here and convoys there and all. It was part of our life. Now that you asked me that, not really, no, no. I think, in some ways, my mom said she wasn't aware of the depression. Maybe I wasn't aware of the Cold War, because I was in my bubble.

ZB: Yes, on an airplane.

ED: On that airplane. [laughter]

KR: Were you able to identify different types of military aircraft?

ED: Not the way a lot of other people could. I should've been able to, but there again, I think I just kind of floated through life. If it didn't affect me personally, it was hard to be interested in it, so, no.

KR: Yes, I think that is something that people did during World War II.

ED: Yes, yes.

KR: That was a very popular thing for young kids to do, to know the silhouettes of airplanes and be able to identify, but that's an earlier time period.

ED: [Yes].

ZB: Interesting. I didn't know that was a practice that they had.

ED: Oh, yes. Well, they had Civil Air Patrols.

ZB: Oh, yes, that makes sense.

ED: Yes, right.

KR: What was life like when you were living in Germany?

ED: It was fun. It was fun. We lived on base, and I immediately made friends--well, you'd make friends instantly. I was in high school. I was fifteen, sixteen, and there was a teen club on base and that's where we would go in the evenings to dance, play records. There was probably a pool table, stuff like that. It was the social type of event. A lot of babysitting, and there, again, that comfortable feeling of being on base, again. As far as my schooling--are you interested in that at all?

KR: Please.

ED: Okay, the base where my dad was stationed was too small to have a high school. So, all of the high school-age dependents were bussed to Wiesbaden, which was about sixty miles away. We lived in a dorm, a boarding school. Because we were close enough, within a certain radius,

the bus would pick us up at the housing area on Sunday afternoon, drive us up to Wiesbaden. We would live in the dorm during the week, and then on Friday afternoon, when classes were out, the bus would be in front of the dorm and we would get on the bus and go home for the weekend. Then, on Sunday afternoon, we would get on the bus and come back.

Now, when you're in high school, there's a lot of extracurricular activities during the weekend. If you have to go home--if you have to leave on Friday afternoon--you can be a little bit belligerent, unhappy. Thankfully, the powers that be understood that high school students want to go to football games. They want to go to dances. They want to socialize with students who are day students. Parents who live in the area, their quarters are near the high school. It's a regular high school environment for a lot of the students, and that's what we wanted to be part of. So, we had to fill out a permission slip to stay for the weekend.

In the high school that I attended, there were day students who lived in the housing area where the school was. My type of student, a five-day dormy, would arrive on Sunday and leave on Friday. Then, there were seven-day dormies who were there all the time. My roommate, my sophomore year in high school, was from Oslo, Norway. Her dad was in the Navy, and so she couldn't go home on Friday. So, she was there all the time, and I would say, probably, most of the students who lived in the dorm were seven-day students. We were the minority, the ones who went home. I didn't want to go home. I wanted to stay. I wanted to go to the dance. I wanted to go to the football game. I just wanted to be with kids in the dorm, and so I would get permission slips and stay.

The high school in Germany is just like taking an American high school and sitting it down in the middle of Germany. We had a football team. We had band. We had cheerleaders. We had extracurricular activities. Whatever you have in high school, we had over there. I lived in the dorm for two years, my sophomore and junior year, and then the summer between my junior and senior years, my dad was transferred.

So, we were transferred from Hahn Air Force Base to Sembach Air Force Base. Now, Sembach was close enough to a high school for a daily bus trip. So, that meant, after two years of living in a dorm, being on my own, so to speak, I now had to live at home with my family and be a senior and go to a different school. That was one of the hardest adaptions for me, because my heart was in Wiesbaden, and now, all of a sudden, I was going to school in Kaiserslautern and not happy. It was tough. It was tough on my whole family, tough, until one day, I got on the bus to go to school, and a young fellow said to me, "Betsy, sit with me." I thought, "Oh, you're kind of cute. Okay, I will." So, that changed everything, because he and I started going steady, and now I had a boyfriend and I belonged. The high school, Kaiserslautern, [was] the high school that I graduated from. We were stationed at Sembach Air Force Base. At that time, the students were going to Kaiserslautern. There were Army *kasernes* [barracks] at Vogelweh, and I think it was Bad Kreuznach, but I'm not sure. There were a lot of different Army and Air Force Bases sending students to this one school. So, there was a lot of rivalry as to, "Well, where's your dad stationed? What base do you live on? We're better than you are," stuff like that, but that's normal. That's normal, yes. In the end, my senior year wound up being very nice because I had a boyfriend, and because I was dating a certain boy, I became part of a clique. That's what I missed when I had to transfer from Wiesbaden to Kaiserslautern. [laughter] How am I doing?

KR: Wonderful.

ZB: Great.

KR: Wonderful.

ZB: When you were in high school, you mentioned you could not do the extracurricular activities as much. When you could do them, what activities were you interested in?

ED: Well, I was not athletically inclined. I will say that. I've never held a baseball bat. Extracurricular activities for me would be being in chorus, being on the prom committee. Well, gee, is that it? I felt that I was busy, but now that you're asking me, Zach, I really don't know.

ZB: Okay.

ED: Pep squad maybe, I'll say something like that, yes.

ZB: Of course, I could see it, since you do it now.

ED: Chorus, yes.

ZB: Interesting.

ED: Sorry.

ZB: Oh, that is all right. You are remembering so much. You remember the towns that you were near. I would not be able to do that right now. How can you remember all the names from those German towns and the bases and stuff? Is it just normal for you?

ED: Well, because it was such a good part of my life.

ZB: Yes, it is incredible.

ED: Because when you move around a lot, you remember certain things; either you do or you don't. Yes, I do remember a lot of things, but, gee, I always thought I was busy with extracurricular activities, but now that you're asking me. When I lived in the dorm in Wiesbaden, it was easier for me to be in afterschool activities, because I was living in the dorm. The dorm was right across the street from the high school. When Dad was transferred to Sembach and I had to take the bus to Kaiserslautern, that meant making sure that whatever I was doing after school, I had to get on the five o'clock bus to get back to base. So, that kind of squelched a lot of things.

ZB: Yes, I can imagine.

ED: Yes, that's interesting. I hadn't thought about that.

KR: What were your academic interests in high school?

ED: Well, I always loved English. I took shorthand and typing, which at that time were two different classes. I can't say I was the smartest tack. I was just there to have fun, to enjoy things. This was the mid to late '50s, and being a cheerleader was probably what most girls wanted, being a cheerleader and dating a football player and wearing his letter jacket, [laughter] oh, my God, having a ponytail, the whole bit. I wasn't a great student. I managed, I got by, but I wasn't straight "A's". In fact, my guidance counselor my senior year told me that I would probably be better off going to a business school rather than trying to get into a four-year college, because my grades were not that good. Mom said, "That's because you moved around so much." Well, yes, I did, but what about every other military brat who has a 4.0 average? I just wasn't a [student].

KR: I am curious about music. The 1950s is often seen as being synonymous with rock and roll.

ED: Correct.

KR: What music did you like?

ED: Oh, we were talking about that in the car.

KR: Oh, good.

ED: Oh, yes. Oh, well, let me see. Who did I say in the car? Who did I mention?

ZB: Elvis.

ED: Oh, Elvis.

KR: Okay, so you liked Elvis.

ED: Oh, my goodness. Elvis Presley, Paul Anka, Neil Sedaka.

ZB: The Belmonts?

ED: Dion and The Belmonts. The Platters. Johnny Mathis. Ricky Nelson.

ZB: Wow.

ED: Beach Boys, that was later. That was college I guess, yes. Oh, Ritchie Valens. When I was in high school, dances were the big social event, and everybody danced, whether you really could or not, you thought you could dance. The popular music depended on if it was danceable. Dick Clark had a show called *American Bandstand*, and I personally--because I was in Germany throughout my high school years, I never saw it--we didn't have television. I never saw *American Bandstand*. I know that's hard for people to believe. I never saw *American Bandstand*, but I understand that one of the segments Dick Clark would have would be to play a

new song, and people had to say whether it was danceable or not, whether it would be a good dance song. I think a lot of the songs, a lot of the music from that era, depended on if you could dance to it.

ZB: Oh, interesting.

ED: Any dance that you went to, there would always be a dance contest, slow dance, fast dance, the whole bit. I will say, I was a good dancer, and I had a certain partner who happened to be a football player. He was like 250 and six feet. I think he probably just stood there and twirled me around, but I thought we were both dancing, whereas I was probably [the only one dancing]. His name was John, but I think we called him "Whitey" because he had blonde hair. Anyway, it doesn't matter. Whitey and I would enter all the dance contests, the fast dancing, and we always won.

ZB: Oh, wow.

ED: Now, I don't know if it's because he was a football player. I thought I was a good dancer, but, anyway, this was part of the social life back then. Music was so important. Now, overseas, at that time, we were always six months behind what was number one in the States. So, anybody who transferred over, say, during the middle of the school year from the States, we always said, "What are you dancing to in the States? What's popular?" because our music to them was passé. It was passé. There was only one radio station, Armed Forces Network, AFN, and they would play classical music at one o'clock. They would play country western at two o'clock. We would have maybe an hour of rock and roll, say, from four to five, and that's when we would hear the music.

In the PX, which is the department store, they would have a music department. We would go in, and at that time, there were records on turntables and if you wanted to hear a song, you would ask the person--a forty-five was a single record, say, "Love Me Tender"--"Could I listen to 'Love Me Tender?" "Okay." They would get the record, put it on the turntable, they would give you, I call them, earmuffs, they were these big ear things, and you would listen to the song. God knows what else was happening. You'd listen to the song. As I said, anybody coming over from the States, that was the first question we asked, "What are the new songs? Who's popular now? Who are you listening to?" The movies, movies were very big then too. Yes, I grew up not watching television, and a lot of programs I'm watching now on those old television stations because I never saw them. I never saw them.

KR: Why did you not have a television?

ED: There was no television. Nobody had it. It wasn't just us. There was no television. Of course, it was invented, but we just didn't have it, and you can live a life without watching television.

ZB: So, it was mainly radio then, right?

ED: Yes, but, like I said, there was only one radio station.

ZB: Yes, it was just the one station.

ED: That's why records filled a lot of our days, and going to the movies. That was a big [social event].

ZB: What movies were popular then? Were there any specific stars that everyone liked?

ED: Anything Elvis Presley was in was popular. Whatever the movie theatre was showing, we went to see.

ZB: Oh, okay.

ED: There was only one. There was one movie theatre, and it had one movie. Whatever won the Oscar, we would get it six months later. Movies were much better done back then. They were interesting.

KR: How about USO shows? Did you ever see any USO shows?

ED: I never did, but when my folks were stationed at Torrejon Air Force Base in Madrid in the late '60s and early '70s, they saw a couple of USO shows. I think maybe the fact that my dad was not overseas during the war, he didn't see any USO [shows]. Maybe wherever we were stationed, the USO shows were not playing, at that point, but I never did see a USO show. I would've loved to.

ZB: Let me see. After going through all that, coming back to the States and getting into college--you went to which college again?

ED: Okay, I went to the same college my dad went to.

ZB: Oh, okay.

ED: At that time, it was called Southwest Texas State College. It is now known as Texas State University, and I like that name better because it sounds better. [laughter]

Even though my guidance counselor in high school said that I should go to business school, I was actually accepted by the University of Texas as a non-resident, which drove my mother crazy, because of course I was a Texas resident. I just happened to be living in Germany. Sometimes, I really kind of wonder about it, "Why wouldn't I be considered a Texas resident? I was born there. My parents grew up there. My dad's in the military. We're stationed in Germany. What's going on?" Of course, at that point, it didn't [matter], but my mom was most perturbed. At any rate, I was accepted by the University of Texas.

I came back to the States to go back to school. My folks were still overseas at the time. My Aunt Lou, my dad's sister, took me up to Austin. I had a dorm room. It was January; it was midyear. In fact, I flew from Frankfurt to McGuire Air Force Base the weekend that Kennedy

was inaugurated. In flying from Philadelphia to San Antonio, I was told that because of the inauguration--and I had no clue--and there was a big snowstorm, I might be bumped, because more important people might need to be on this plane going wherever they were going, meaning leaving Washington, D.C. Well, I made it. I made it, anyway.

ZB: It's still cool that was a possibility.

ED: I digress. So, anyway, my Aunt Lou took me up to Austin, and we went to the dorm. The dorm seemed to be about that big as that building or parking garage [pointing to a ten-story high building].

ZB: Oh.

ED: Remember, I was coming from a high school class of 134, and the University of Texas, at that point, I'll say, was maybe seven thousand. Well, that's how big a base was, and I was like, "Oh, my gosh." I was petrified, completely petrified, and in over my head and I knew it. My Aunt Lou, God love her, said, "Now, listen Betsy, you don't have to go here." I looked at her, and I think I probably started crying. I said, "Why?" She said, "Because I talked to my cousin Charlene in the registrar's office at Southwest Texas, and you've been accepted there. So, you can go there if you want to." I said, "Yes," because, number one, it was in San Marcos, which was my dad's hometown. It was a smaller campus. It was not as humongous as the University of Texas seemed to be at that point. So, I said, "Well, but Mom's going to be mad," and my Aunt Lou said, "No, she won't. I'll explain it to her. I'll tell her." You can see my mom was the driving force, God love her. So, I said, "Okay, I'll go to Southwest Texas for at least a semester, just until I feel comfortable. Then, by that time, Mom and Dad will be back from Germany; we'll talk things out, because we always talk things out," and I usually pretty much did what my folks told me to do, "Then, we'll figure things out, okay?" She said, "I have a room for you in the dorm." "Okay." The dorm was half this one, one quarter.

Yes, I started at Southwest Texas, and I loved it. I felt comfortable there. I felt at home. The thought of transferring to the university for the fall semester was, "Oh, my God, I don't want to have to transfer to another school. I don't want to do that again." So, I stayed at Southwest Texas, and that's where I graduated from.

KR: What was your transition like your freshman year at Southwest Texas?

ED: Well, because I started in January, I was always a semester off class wise. It was a big transition for me. Next to having to attend a different school my senior year, this was big, but because I had family living so close by, because I was familiar with the town itself, and campus was not that big, I just kind of did it, I guess, like I did every time I transferred to a different school. I made friends fairly easily. I was living in a dorm again, which was very comfortable to me. I had no problems with that at all, and people, when they found out that I had just come from Germany, that kind of made me interesting. I settled in and really enjoyed it, because it was a smaller environment. Maybe it was the security of being on a campus, much like a military base. I don't really know, but I just felt very comfortable there. I liked it, and I liked the professors. I was getting a lot of one-on-one attention, and I decided that that's where I wanted

to stay. That was it. For me, at that point in my life, that's what I needed. I loved it. After so much transferring and adapting and being the new kid in town, I just needed those four years of knowing who I was and where I was and not having to reintroduce myself all the time. So, it worked out for me, yes. I think my dad was very proud too that I graduated from his alma mater, and then my mom was a little bit disappointed that I hadn't gone to the university. She knew that I felt good there, and she understood; wherever I was going to be happy, she was going to be happy.

ZB: Here [on the pre-interview survey] you have a lot of clubs listed down. I told you this last night ...

ED: Yes.

ZB: … That it amazed me how active people were in your generation, compared to mine where being this active in clubs is not as common, at least as far as I was concerned. One of the clubs that you have on here was the Angel Flight, which I looked up and actually learned a bit about. Can you elaborate a little bit on that club? [Editor's Note: The original Angel Flight chapter began at the University of Omaha in 1951 and became a national organization in 1952. Originally, the organization supported school's Air Force ROTC programs and was made up of mostly women. In 1995, the organization changed its name to Silver Wings and expanded their mission and objectives.]

ED: Angel Flight is a women's auxiliary to the Air Force ROTC program on campus. Of course, I was interested, because it was affiliated with the Air Force and ROTC. I guess I liked the idea of serving the community, because that's what we did. We had different events with the ROTC cadets, and at that point, ROTC was only male. So, this was about the closest we could get, we being the women, to [being in the military]. I certainly was not interested in being in the Air Force, but I liked being connected to the military, Air Force, and all that, and I enjoyed the comradery. We wore uniforms on certain days of the week. I just enjoyed the atmosphere, I'll say. At one point, I had a job on campus working as a secretary in the ROTC department. It was so natural for me to do that. Angel Flight, we held charity drives, clothing drives. We marched in parades. As I said, we wore uniforms. We had rank. I was the commander my senior year. It's funny, I never thought about why I joined it; I just did because it seemed like something I would do.

I had been in another club. I don't know that I listed it, because I tend to not. I tried out for a dance team in college, not having any idea what was involved, and there were so many practices. There was this, there was that. I was just, "Oh, no, this I don't like." So, I was on the dance team for one year, and then, after that, I preferred to be associated with Angel Flight. I was in a sorority and other clubs. I didn't care for the dance team that much, although, much to my surprise, they are now apparently world famous and march in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade every year and have been on television. What can I say? I didn't think they had a chance. [laughter]

ZB: How was it in the sorority that you were in?

ED: In the sorority, they were local sororities at the time, meaning only on that campus. There, again, that was a nice feeling of belonging, of knowing, as someone said to me, "Whenever you run for anything on campus, you know that you have thirty-five votes from your sorority sisters. You know you've got those." So, it was a nice. It was a social organization. We did do charity works and stuff like that. My mom and all of her sisters had been in a national sorority when they were at the university. There, again, it was kind of a natural--at that time, being in a sorority was kind of what you did. My junior year in college, national sororities started looking at our campus, and I would say the majority of the local sororities and fraternities went--that was the phrase--went national. So, my local sorority became a national sorority, and one of the first questions my mother asked me was, "Are you going Chi Omega?" because that was her sorority. I said, "No, we're not." The local sorority that was the biggest rival to my local sorority went Chi Omega. [laughter] I have to say, Mom actually laughed, because she didn't like any of the girls in the other sorority any more than I did. [laughter] But what would've been interesting is that had I'd been in college when Chi Omega was on campus, I would've had to pledge Chi Omega, because there's a legacy.

ZB: Interesting.

ED: There's a legacy.

KR: What was the name of your sorority for the record?

ED: My national sorority is Delta Zeta, yes.

KR: Did the sorority have a house?

ED: We did not, no. The campus was not that big. The best we could do--well, it just sort of happened--on a certain floor in one of the women's dorms, Delta Zeta would be on one floor, Chi Omega would be on another floor, kind of like that. They were women's dorms, at that point, not coed, women's. We had to sign in and sign out. We had curfew.

ZB: Oh, that actually sounds like a lot of the dorms at Douglass.

ED: Oh, yes.

KR: Yes, please tell us more about dorm life.

ED: College dorm life, as opposed to high school. [laughter] Well, had to sign in--did we have to sign in when we came back from class? I can't remember. There was a big lobby, of course, with mailboxes and a front desk. The first dorm that I was in, there was a switchboard, because there was a phone, like a phonebooth, on a wing of the dorm. There were no phones in the room. There was an intercom system, and the intercom would come on, "Betsy?" "Yes," "You have a call on line four." "Okay, thank you." You walk down to the phone booth, pick it up, "Hello." Or, "Betsy?" "Yes." "You have a caller." That meant your date was there. "Thank you, I'll be right down." When you went out on a date, you had to sign out. There was a big clipboard and your name, and you signed out the time. I'm not sure if we signed out where we were going. If

we needed to indicate where we're going, we usually fudged it to a degree. [laughter] Then, curfew during the week was probably ten, ten-fifteen, and we had to sign in when we came in. The house mother would be at the front door at the appointed time, and she would lock it. If you were not in, you were in deep trouble--I'm telling you, deep trouble. So, if you wanted to be off campus during a weekend, I don't know that we needed permission from our parents, but we had to notify the dorm that we were going to be out of the dorm that weekend, so they wouldn't be looking for us or wondering why we hadn't signed in or out. On Saturday nights, I think we could stay out until maybe eleven-thirty or twelve. Usually, right around half an hour before the doors were locked, there would be all these couples on the steps of the dorm saying, "Good night," and then rushing in, rushing in real quickly.

KR: Is that as far young men were allowed in, just on the steps?

ED: They could come into the lobby, because when they came to get us for a date, they had to announce themselves. They'd walk up to the desk, "Hi, I'm So-and-So. Would you let Betsy Carter know I'm here?" "Yes," and that was it. There was a restroom that they could use, but there were double doors that they could not go past. They were only allowed in the lobby area, per se, unless you were moving in or out, and you needed heavy lifting done. Then, we would open the doors and yell down the hallway, "Man on the floor," to let the other girls know there was a man on the floor, because the communal bathrooms were there and we were all kind of prudish. We were always dressed, and we always had a bathrobe on or something if we went to the shower and all, but there would be the odd one who wouldn't. [laughter] But, yes, that was the only time that men were ever, ever allowed. I remember when my dad came to see [me at the dorm]. When my family came back from Germany, they came to see me in the dorm. Even my brothers were, "Well, you have to tell them we're here. You have to tell them that there's a man on the floor." I said, "Okay, fine, I will. Yes, I will," but that was it. That was as far as the men could go, yes. I graduated from college in '65, so up until then--I don't know when they started having coed dorms--[it was a] women's dorm. The women's dorms were on one side of campus, and the men's dorms were on the other.

ZB: Do any teachers stick out while you were at college?

ED: I had a wonderful English teacher my very first semester when I was getting acclimated, and her name--and I'm serious--was Star Huffstickler. That was her name. She was an English teacher.

ZB: What a name.

ED: She used to write Harlequin romances. That's her sideline. She's the professor who told me that I should be an English major, what was I doing being a business major? "No, Betsy, you need to be an English major." "Okay, sounds good," because I wasn't enjoying business that much. I thought it was going to be more typing and shorthand. I didn't know it was going to be accounting and business law and economics and all this dreary stuff. [laughter] So, I changed my major to English. As it turned out, because the college that I was attending had been a teacher's college forever, the year that I attended was the first year that it was not a teacher's college. It was a liberal arts [college], but everybody else was getting a teaching degree. They

didn't know what to do with me. I didn't want to be a teacher. "No, I'm not taking any education. No, I'm not doing student teaching, no." "Well, what are you doing?" "I'm an English major." "Yes, but what are you doing?" I said, "Well, I'm a business minor." [laughter] "Oh, all right, okay, fine." [laughter] To this day, people are still kind of, "Oh, you majored in English, but you didn't teach?" "No, I never wanted to."

ZB: I feel that.

ED: I never wanted to, and I always say English literature, not grammar, because I cannot diagram, no. I figured with a business minor, that would get me the secretarial job that I wanted, because that's what I wanted. I wanted to be a secretary. When I was in college, the job choices were teacher, nurse, maybe librarian--that was about it--secretary. I didn't want to be a nurse. I didn't want to be a teacher. The college did not have a library science program, so what was left? Secretarial work. But that's what I like. That's what I enjoy, yes.

KR: What was your course of study like in English literature?

ED: I took as much Shakespeare and Chaucer as I could. [laughter]

ZB: Oh, I love Shakespeare.

ED: Yes.

ZB: He's the best.

ED: Yes, yes. I took a lot of Robert Browning and American lit, English lit, whatever. I did well in English, because I loved it. I always tell people, "Major in something that you love, because you'll get good grades, for one thing. You'll like your professors." So, that's what I did. As I said, I had a business minor, which I did have to take "Accounting," which was not easy for me. I had the same accounting teacher my dad had had, what, twenty-five years earlier. "Ms. Carter?" "Oh, God, yes?" "Was your dad Paul T.?" "Yes." "I remember him." "Thank you." [laughter] I was also a German minor, because I had taken German in high school, and I figured, "Yes, why not?" So, that was it, that was it, yes. I got a B.A. in English, as opposed to a B.S., just because one of my English professors said, "You really need to get the B.A." But that meant--and I never understood it--that meant taking another year of a science elective and I didn't find that out until almost my senior year, and the only time I had left to take it was summer school. So, I took biology during summer school in Texas, without any air conditioning. We had to make a butterfly collection, and it was the worst summer of my life. However, Daddy was stationed at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio. We were living in town. Whenever we could, my parents tended to live in town. There was an adorable eight-year-old boy who lived across the street from my parents, and Joe Barnes collected all of my butterflies for me, yes.

ZB: The eight-year-old across the street collected them.

ED: Yes, I gave him my butterfly net, and I said, "Joe, I need five hundred butterflies." He said, "Okay."

ZB: Oh, my God.

ED: It was the happiest summer of his life. [laughter]

ZB: Collecting butterflies.

ED: So, then, I had to label them and put them on a post-it thing, a corrugated [base] with a stick pin and take it up to class, of course. Well, everything was working out fine until I got to my dorm room, and I put my project on the dresser. It wasn't in a good place, I guess, because the next morning, not all of the butterflies were there. Either I hadn't stuck them in very well, or little things came and ate part of them. I took it up, and I gave it to my professor. I said, "Here." He said, "I know this hasn't been easy for you, has it?" and I said, "No." He said, "You're going to pass, don't worry." I said, "Thank you." [laughter] "Thank you, I never want to see this again." I'd see that professor on campus, on occasion. "Hi, Ms. Carter." "Hi." [laughter]

ZB: Oh, man, butterflies.

ED: Yes, I know, I had it rough.

ZB: I meant to ask this earlier, what was home life like for you? You moved around a lot, but what was it like?

ED: We moved around a lot, yes, we did. Well, my parents were like Ozzie and Harriet. They adored each other. There was never a cross word spoken. They always agreed, or they seemed to agree in front of us. Mom had to be super organized. Daddy was more, "Well, I'm going to work now, so, honey, you take care of everything else." Whenever there was a move coming up, my mom had everything organized. We tended to start packing two months ahead of time, and with every move that we made, we had less stuff. You just tend to pare down a lot, but I will say, anytime we had a move coming up, my parents always said, "Guess where we're going. This is going to be so much fun!" They presented it very positively, not, "Oh, well, we have to [move]. Oh, it's your dad's job and everything." No. "Guess where we're going now. This is what we're going to do!" So, it was always an adventure to be moving, to be going to a different place, a different country, a different state. Yes, it was always presented to me, and I always felt very positive about it, yes.

ZB: That is nice.

ED: Yes.

KR: What was it like for you, in your family, being the oldest?

ED: Well, because I spent so much time in the back seat of a car, I always had to sit in the middle, because I had two brothers, yes. My dad always made me feel as if I was the most--next

to my mother--I was the most special person in the world. "Now, Little Sweetie," that's what he [called me], Little Sweetie, "It's going to be up to you to help your mother [with] Steve and David." I always felt that whatever I did, they approved and they backed me up. With all of the school transfers, as I said, my mother was concerned because long division drove me crazy. At any rate, they always made me feel that I could do anything, and whatever I did was going to be good. It was going to be fine, definitely, and, "No matter what your guidance counselor tells you about business school, you're going to the University of Texas," you know, very positive feedback.

When I graduated from college, they were so proud. Number one, it was my dad's school. My mom was so happy that I had graduated, and it was a feather in their cap, really, yes. I have said, often--because my three siblings have outdone me in many ways--I always said I was happy to be the first, because I didn't have to measure up to anybody. My brother Steve graduated from the Air Force Academy. My brother David got his doctorate in drama. My sister Sam has a master's in theatre arts, and they were all very accomplished in their field. I'm the one who got married and had children, so to speak, but I had the grandchildren. [laughter] That was it, yes.

For the first five years of my life, it was only my mother and I, because Daddy was away. There was one point--I would say eighteen months to two years--they did not even talk on the telephone, because of where he was or was not. When he would come home for a visit, I didn't know who that man was. Mom had a picture of Daddy in his uniform on the coffee table or wherever, and [she would tell me], "This is Daddy." When this man would come home, Mom would say, "That's Daddy." "No, that's Daddy [meaning the man in the picture], not him." Yes, a little girl who's four, [would think], "But where's Dad?" Mom and I had a very close bond, because we traveled a lot. It was just the two of us, and that was life. That was life.

KR: I have got a question. When you were in college, John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

ED: Correct.

KR: What do you remember?

ED: Well, okay. The day that happened, I was walking across campus to my job at the ROTC building, and a good friend of mine stopped me on the quad and said, "Did you hear the news? Kennedy's been shot." I said, "Really, why?" "Oh, I don't know. I don't know why, but he was shot." Of course, it was in Dallas, and San Marcos is four hours away. It was, "Oh, he's in Texas and he got shot, oh." So, I was thinking about that, and I went on to work. When I got there, Major Moon was the commander of the ROTC unit, and he said, "Did you hear the news?" I said, "I did." He said, "Well, they don't know if he's going to make it." I said, "Oh." It was surreal. It was completely surreal. So, he said, "If you don't mind, I have some typing I want you to do," and I think he did that because he didn't want me watching television. He wanted to keep me occupied, so he gave me some typing to do. In the day room, the one television in the building was on. I could hear the cadets in there, "Oh, my gosh, oh, my gosh, oh, my gosh," and I'd go in every once in a while and kind of look, "What's happening?" "Well, this is happening or that's happening." It really didn't dawn on me, truly, how major this event was.

I went back to the dorm, and all of the television sets were on there. There was a television set in the lobby. On each floor of the dorm, there was a common room with one television, and all of the girls were watching television. It was just speechless, completely speechless, and then, somebody said, "Oh, my gosh, they're going to blame us," meaning Texans. I said, "Why?" "Because we're Texans, and this happened in Texas." When you're twenty-two, it just [was what you would think].

That weekend, we had a football game scheduled, and one of the big questions was, "Are we going to have the football game?" "Well, yes, we are," and a moment of silence at the game and everything. It was an away game; my date and I had gone with another couple. On the way back to campus, from Kingsville, we heard on the news that Lee Harvey Oswald had been shot, and it was mind-blowing. It was completely mind-blowing. Going back to campus then--I think the following weekend might have been Thanksgiving, because I remember seeing my parents after that, and they were just, "How could this happen? How could this happen?" One interesting note is that … [Editor's Note: A cell phone rings.]

ZB: Oh, that's all right.

ED: Okay, good. Lyndon Johnson graduated from Southwest Texas State College. He was our guy, and that made it even more personal, I guess you could say, yes.

KR: What was the feeling about John Connally, the governor of Texas, because Connally was in the car also and had been shot?

ED: "Was he okay?" "Of course." "Well, what about Jackie and Nell?" [Editor's Note: This refers to Jackie Kennedy, who was First Lady and wife of President John F. Kennedy, and Idanell "Nellie" Brill Connally, who was married to Texas Governor John Connally.] "Well, if Connally's okay, then Kennedy has to be okay." "Well, how bad was Kennedy? What do you think was missing? Where did the bullet go? Kind of gruesome details that you can't help but wonder about. But it was, "Well, if Connally's okay and Johnson's president, okay, I guess we're going to be all right." There, again, I wasn't a political animal, and I was in my cocoon a lot of the time. I think a lot of us were, a lot of the girls were, because guys were drafted, guys enlisted. All of that was male oriented, whereas we were at home being teachers or secretaries or things like that. Then, later, after I had graduated from college and I went to Washington, D.C. to work, when people found out that I was coming from Texas, Johnson was still president, it was, "Oh, you're the ones who killed Kennedy." So, it was a kind of a stigma, in a way, to have been in Texas at that time.

ZB: Interesting. That's really interesting, I have actually never heard about that before.

ED: Yes, yes.

ZB: Did you hear about that?

ED: Yes, or maybe it was something that we felt too. Number one, he was an alum of the school. He was a Texas boy. There was a lot happening. Was Johnson making the right decisions?

KR: How closely did you follow the Johnson Administration?

ED: My dad didn't really care for him. He had known him in college and thought he was a buffoon.

ZB: He knew Johnson?

ED: Whatever my folks thought, I agreed with, and if my dad thought Johnson wasn't very smart, then I didn't either. So, there, again, I wasn't that attuned to things. I just felt that whatever decision was being made was probably the right one, but I was surprised when he did not run for another term. That's when I kind of thought, "Oh, okay." He was getting a lot of bad press anyway, and he was kind of a doofus in many ways.

KR: Your father was at Southwest Texas at the same time as Johnson.

ED: Yes.

ZB: Were they in the same grade?

ED: Oh, no, oh, no. I think Johnson was ahead of my dad, yes, and they might have overlapped by a year, but it was enough for my [dad to form an opinion]. Once my dad had an opinion, he had an opinion, and it could've been from Johnson not saying hello to him on campus to an actual conversation that they did not agree with.

ZB: Interesting.

ED: Yes.

KR: You mentioned the Vietnam War escalating and then the possibility of men getting drafted or enlisting. When you were still in college in 1964-1965 and you were working in the ROTC office, was there a lot of discussion about the Vietnam War?

ED: I don't remember a lot, to be honest, but the guys were talking about, "Well, guess who's got a letter this week. Guess whose number came up," although most of them had educational deferrals. There were some cadets who subsequently went to Vietnam and did not come back. We heard about that. I can't say that I was aware of a lot of Vietnam discussion.

KR: In the Angel Flight, I am curious if any of the women went on to do any military service.

ED: I don't think so. To me, I never thought myself of joining the Air Force. It never dawned on me that I could or that I would. I don't know. I somehow don't think so, because most of the women in Angel Flight were either dating cadets and that's why they were in Angel Flight, or

they were studying to be teachers. Once they graduated, they went home. Usually, they went back to their hometowns, got a teaching job there, or most of them married right out of school. Now, some of them married cadets, obviously, and whether they went overseas on assignments with their husbands, or if their husbands went overseas and didn't come back, that I don't know. That I don't know. I think, basically, for most of us, Angel Flight was more of a social organization, and if you liked being around military organizations, you kind of liked that too. I really don't know if there was a lot of deep thinking going on, to be honest, yes. At that time, it was you graduate from high school and either you marry your high school sweetheart, or you go to college, you get your teaching degree, you marry your college sweetheart, or you teach for a couple of years and then you marry whoever you're dating. Women didn't really have careers, so to speak. I was one of the few who graduated from college and actually worked without having a steady boyfriend, at the time, and that was considered being very independent.

ZB: What is the German Tags Club? I tried looking this up and I could not find it.

ED: Tags, T-A-G-S.

ZB: Yes.

ED: It's a social club. T-A-G-S is Texas Association of German Students.

ZB: Oh, okay.

ED: We thought it was very clever, and TAG is day, just FYI.

ZB: Oh.

ED: FYI.

ZB: I like that.

ED: It was kind of a social [club]. Everything on campus was social, I have to say. We would pretend that we would be reading German novels or German plays or things like that. We were probably going to Wurstfest [sausage festival] or having a beer or two or things like that, yes. It was basically for German majors and minors, yes. There's a big German population in Texas, and a lot of the students were of German heritage, like I am. I'm half German.

ZB: You mentioned that.

ED: Yes, like I said, most things in college were social.

ZB: Interesting.

ED: Or at least the extracurricular activities I was involved with were social. I wasn't a deep thinker.

KR: What was your first job after college?

ED: Right after college, I worked as a secretary right at Frost National Bank in San Antonio, and during my last semester in college, there was a government career day on campus. I spoke to one of the government [officials at] one of the tables for all the different departments and indicated that I was interested in working with them, but I hadn't heard anything by the time I graduated. I interviewed with Frost National Bank in San Antonio, and I worked in the credit department as a secretary. I was there about six months, and then, one day, my mom called me--I was at work, she was at home obviously--and she said, "Well, the government called today. They want you to come." I said, "Oh, when?" She said, "Two weeks." "Okay." So, that was when I went to Washington, D.C., but I had interviewed with the government agency while I was on campus. I told Zach I wanted to go to work for the State Department, military, FBI. Who else did I say, Zach? Somebody else.

ZB: I think that was the two you mentioned.

ED: Those were the two.

ZB: Yes, I think that was it.

ED: But the lines for interviews at those tables on campus that day were so long, and I said, "Oh, I have to get to class. Where's the shortest line?" So, I went over to the table with the shortest line, and I said, "Yes, I'd like an application." "Well, we're only interviewing men," and I said, "Oh, no, please." "We're only interviewing business majors who are men," attitude. I said, "Well, I'm a business minor. I want an application." "Okay. All right, we'll give you [an application]. He's got one interview left on the last day; it'll be quick." "Okay, fine." I went to the interview, and the man looked out the window the whole time. He never really looked at me. He said, "Well, you know, we're really interested in men. We want business majors," yada, yada, the whole bit. I said, "I understand that. I just want to put in an application. Here." He said, "Okay, but don't expect to hear from us." "Thank you very much, thank you." So, six months later, the agency called me. He said, "Yes, we'd like for you to come on a temporary basis." I said, "Okay, I'll be there." So, I did.

I flew into Washington, and I stayed at the Barbizon Hotel for Women. The agency got me that reservation. When I checked in, the girl at the desk said, "You're one of the G girls, huh?" and I said, "Yes, I am." "FBI, IRS, what are you with?" I said, "CIA." "Okay, room …" whatever, not impressed at all, yes. [laughter] I stayed at the hotel for a couple days, probably a week. She said, "All right, your shuttle bus will be here in the morning." No clue, no clue. The next morning I got up, went down, there was a shuttlebus. They took us down to a typing pool. We're all women, some were high school graduates, a few business school, some community colleges, very few full-blown college graduates. They put us in a typing pool, and when our name came up, we were sent to the agency for an interview.

While I was in the typing pool, there were a couple of day missions. They would ask for volunteers. We really didn't have any typing to do. It was called typing pool, but what could you do with us? We were sitting there waiting for an assignment. A couple of times, they would

ask for volunteers to go out on a day mission, and I was always, "Yes, I'll go." One day, I went out with another fellow--I don't know why he was there, because we were mostly [women]--well, anyway, this fellow and I, Roger, were told, "Get on this bus, go to this stop, get off, cross the street, go into that building, come out the other door," gave us a whole list of things like that. Okay, so we did it. We went to the airport, we got in a cab. We went to such and such, this and that, having no idea what was going on. "Mail this at that mailbox." "Okay," this and that. That went on for two days, and at the end of the second day, they brought us into a little conference room and they said, "You probably want to know what you're doing." "Well, yes." He said, "You were being followed by photographers, and they were photographing you every time you were told to stop." They were photographing us--we thought it was so smart--through bus windows, through this, through that. See, we had no idea, so we weren't aware of anybody following us. There were photographers following us to see if they could follow us and get pictures of us like making a drop or meeting someone or getting in one car and then getting out and getting into another. It was kind of fun. It was kind of fun.

ZB: Wow.

ED: Yes, yes. I was in the typing pool probably four weeks. In the meantime, I had become friends with some other women who were there, and we found an apartment. It was a hotel, and we wanted an apartment and we got an apartment. My name finally came up, I got on the shuttle bus to go to headquarters in Langley for my interview and went into the personnel office and, "Are you Elizabeth Carter?" "I am." "Do you know how long it took for us to get you here?" I said, "Well, the shuttle bus was only twenty minutes." "No, no, no, your clearance took six months," because they checked every transfer, every assignment Dad had had, every school I had attended, everything. "So, you're Elizabeth Carter? Okay. Well, I think we'll keep you, because we've spent so much time on you already." [laughter] So, I had an interview and then was assigned to a position, and it was a very interesting job. It was in the personnel department in--it was at that time called Clandestine Services Department and it was in the Eastern European Division. So, I was in the personnel department for the Eastern European Division of the Clandestine Services, and it was fabulous. I think I had been in that job, I'll say, maybe three weeks, and one of the jobs that we did was [that] any military personnel going overseas who had been assigned to a CIA office needed to go through us to get their clearances confirmed, to get airline tickets for their flight over to Germany, to just process them through all of this. One of the people that came through the office one day was a young Italian from New Jersey, and that was Nick.

ZB: Oh.

ED: I don't remember him at all. He always said, "Oh, I know what you had on that day. I remember you." Well, we met about a year later, yes. At any rate, I worked in the personnel office for the Eastern European Division and loved it, loved the work, just felt very at home there. The people were marvelous, everything, but I was always watching the vacancy positions posted because I knew I wanted to go back to Germany. So, at one point, the personnel manager for the Far Eastern Division told me there was an opening in Taipei and was I interested, and I said, "No, I'm not interested. I don't want to go to Taipei." A little while later, there was an opening in Berlin and one in Frankfurt, and I said, "I'll take Frankfurt." I was accepted and went

over to Frankfurt. The first day, when I walked into the building, I had to go through the guard post, everything; there was this Italian from New Jersey sitting at the desk. He looked at me and he was a bit hungover. "Yes?" I said, "I'm reporting for duty." "Who are you?" I told him, and he said, "All right, fine, sit down." [laughter] I went into the personnel office for that area, and they took me down to my office where I would be working. It was a very interesting job, and I loved being in Frankfurt, because that's very close to Wiesbaden, very close to Hahn and Sembach, and I was at home immediately. I spoke enough German to get around and yes, yes.

[Editor's Note: Ms. D'Angelo added the following addendum entitled "Still Traveling on an Airplane" to the transcript. I was transferred from Washington, DC to Frankfurt, Germany in November 1966. Never one to do things simply, I first flew to Colorado Springs, Colorado to visit my brother Steve at the Air Force Academy. From there, I flew to Austin, Texas for the wedding of a college friend. From San Antonio, Texas I flew into New Orleans, LA; my parents were stationed at Keesler AFB in Biloxi, Mississippi at the time and New Orleans was the closest airport. I spent three days with them and then flew from New Orleans to Atlanta to catch my flight for Frankfurt. Changing planes in London, I arrived in Frankfurt after ten days of traveling! This was before there were suitcases with wheels or e-tickets. These were also the days when everyone dressed for airplane travel. I did all of this in high heels and a business suit!]

KR: In Frankfurt, did you work at the embassy?

ED: No, no. We worked in the Farben Building. That's what it was called then, the IG Farben Building, and it had been Eisenhower's headquarters during World War II. It was called the Pentagon of Germany, and we were on the fifth and sixth floors. Only agency personnel were allowed on those floors, obviously. Everything was way Top Secret. I didn't work in the embassy until I was transferred to Bonn.

KR: I am just so struck by the coincidence of meeting your husband at two different points.

ED: I know, exactly.

KR: It is amazing.

ED: Yes, it's amazing, isn't it? [laughter] It is, I agree, I agree, because he wasn't drafted. He went in, he signed up, yes. For him to be chosen to be part of the agency and for him to be in headquarters building at that particular time and just everything, yes. Then, for both of us to wind up in Frankfurt, because he could have gone to Munich, Berlin, Hamburg, Heidelberg. Those were the main German stations.

KR: Before we talk about your relationship with your husband, could you give us a little background about your husband and his growing up?

ED: Well, he was born in Jersey City, and he lived in Bayonne his whole life. He was very close to his grandparents, to his father's parents, and he had a very stable childhood for the most part. I think his dad had a temper, so you had to walk softly at times, but my husband

understood that. He was the oldest boy. He had an older sister, who had a stubborn streak, and she did not always get along with their father. Whereas my husband always agreed with whatever his father said, because he realized that he was the head of the household and that whatever he said, it was going to be. I think he was happy growing up as a child. I think he had a good childhood. As I said, he lived in Bayonne his whole life, and that was his world, completely. Aside from being in the Army, that's where he lived.

He did volunteer for the Army, because his dad and two of his uncles were in the service during the war. My husband Nick always wanted to be in the Army, and he wanted to be a sergeant. That was the rank he wanted to attain in the Army. At one point, he graduated from Bayonne High School. He went to Pace College or accounting school and did not do well. I think he was kind of floundering, and at that point, that would have been '64-'65, Vietnam was escalating, and I think he just felt, "All right, I'm going to join the Army, because I know my number is going to come up eventually." So, he went down, he enlisted, he went to McGuire, or Fort Dix, and then down to Fort Gordon in Georgia. During some of his training, somehow, he impressed enough people that they recommended him for--I'll say--transfer to the CIA, for military guard duty, even though I think Nick expected to be going over to Vietnam. But it didn't work out that way, yes.

KR: Yes, of course. How did your relationship develop when you were both working in Frankfurt?

ED: I didn't like him at all, not at all. No, I thought he was a pop off. I disliked who he was. He talked funny. I talked funny. [laughter] I had a really thick Texas accent at that time. I didn't really care for him that much. I felt kind of sorry for him, because he seemed like a little lost puppy in some ways. I got over to Frankfurt in November, and one of the first things I heard, for whatever reason, was that, "Nick's going home for Christmas." I thought, "Why would you go home for Christmas? You're in Germany." Then, it was, "Because he's going to ask Nancy to marry him when he gets out of the Army. It's his high school girlfriend." This was the scuttlebutt. I thought, "Oh, good. Good for her, yes, wow."

The secretaries who were assigned to the Farben Building and the military guards who were assigned to the agency, we were a clique. Well, we couldn't really talk to anybody. We didn't interact with any other departments business-wise, because we were all very self-contained. We all had Top Secret clearances. Well, you weren't supposed to talk about what you were doing at work anyway, but because we were so contained, it was difficult to meet other people and so the secretaries dated the guards. We went to the movies together. We had parties. It was a social life. Even though we were in this huge building with tons of people, we were still isolated to a degree. One night, I think we had all been to a basketball game, and we were going to go have pizza somewhere. I happened to be walking with Nick, and he said, "Oh, I forgot my wallet. I don't have any money." I said, "Well, I'll loan you some money. Here." So, no big deal. He took to that mean, "I like you." [laughter] After that, it was kind of like, "Oh, my God." Really, I did not [want to date him], because number one, I had just gotten to Germany. This was a whole big adventure for me. I had things to do. I had places to go. I didn't want to be dating anybody. Well, he came home for Christmas. Two days before Christmas, this huge bouquet of red roses arrived at my apartment, and I thought, "Oh, my God, who's this from?" It's from Nick,

from Grandpa. I thought, "Okay," and so after that, we sort of became a couple. I put on the brakes as best I could, because, as I said, I wanted to travel. I didn't want to be tied down, so to speak. I had a roommate; all the secretaries had roommates. One weekend, Caroline and I went up to Paris, and another weekend, we drove to Amsterdam for the Tulip Festival. We went to Rome for Easter, and we just kind of did single girl things that you would do when you're in Europe. Every time I went away, Grandpa got mad.

ZB: It sounds like him.

ED: "Well, you didn't tell me you were going and why you were going?" I'd go, "Oh, my gosh, please." He was most perturbed when we went to Rome for Easter, because the previous October, Nick had been assigned to the embassy in Rome. They were adding an addition to the embassy, and they needed someone of Italian heritage to watch the workers, to make sure they didn't bug the addition in the embassy. So, Nick was in Rome for nine weeks watching workers, and he felt, rightfully so, that he was an expert on Rome. Here I was going to Rome for Easter and didn't ask any advice from him, and he was most perturbed.

ZB: That sounds like something Grandpa would be like, to be honest.

KR: Did he speak Italian?

ED: He thought he did. [laughter] I think, to a degree, he did; he understood a lot. He was the kind of person who could get along with people if he wanted to, if he wanted to.

ZB: Oh, yes, that's like him too, if he wanted to.

ED: Yes. He liked the workers he was watching. They would invite him to their homes over the weekend, because he was alone. He had a room in a *pensione* that had a bed and a sink, and he was on his own. I mean, he walked all over Rome, thank goodness, but he could adapt very well. I think it kind of surprised him how well he adapted, but once he thought he knew something, he considered himself an expert. [laughter] Because I was going to Rome with three other secretaries for Easter, I should've checked with him.

ZB: You told me this before, but just for the record, Grandpa's father lived through the Great Depression, right?

ED: Yes.

ZB: It had an effect on him.

ED: Yes.

ZB: Would you elaborate on that just a bit?

ED: Yes. Nick's father--let me think--and Nick's grandparents were very much affected by the depression. They were immigrants. They had come through Ellis Island in the 1900s. His

grandmother spoke English, and she had been a teacher in Sicily, so she was more educated. His grandfather was a laborer. He did not read or write. He came over later. He was Nick's grandmother's second husband. Her first husband died under mysterious circumstances. She was running a boarding house in Bayonne. She had four children at the time, and he was one of her boarders and they struck up a liking for each other and then got married. They had a very hard time during the depression, and it left such an impression on Nick's father. Until he died, he was always saving money, shopping sales; he never could feel quite comfortable in his daily life, I guess. He was always stressing to all of his children, and Nick is the one who listened the most, "You have to save money. You have to have money in the bank, but be careful what bank you put it in and be careful. You have to transfer your money from bank to bank, because if one bank goes down, then you'll have money in another bank."

His dad graduated from high school, and I believe he went to a technical school. He was in the Army Air Corps and probably had some training there and, I think, had he had the chance, he would've liked to have stayed in the military, but it didn't happen that way. Nick's mother was not able to graduate from high school, because her family needed for her to work. She loved her home. She loved being a housewife. She loved cleaning and taking care of people and things like that, and that's what she did. Whereas Nick's father worked, and he was very smart. He was very astute with finances, and he died a wealthy man, but looking at him, you would never think it. His dad never got over the depression, and he would still talk about it even--well, not until the day he died--but he was still talking about it. Whereas my parents never talked about the depression, never talked about how hard times were, never made that a big issue. I think it had more of an effect maybe on immigrants on the East Coast than on families, generations, who had been in Texas and were settled and knew their roots there. I didn't know as much about the depression until I married Nick and listened to his father talk about it. I just had no idea how bad it really was and how people had really suffered, yes, because, as I said, my folks didn't talk about it.

ZB: I just realized that that is why Grandpa bought all that food and stocked it up all the time.

ED: Always, always.

ZB: Her basement is just filled with multiple stocks of stuff they probably don't need. She just brought to our house a bunch of mustard that he had bought in packs down in their basement, and I just realized the reason he did that is because his father probably said, "When it's on sale, buy it in bulk, so if something happens, you have it."

ED: That's right, that's right. If you ever need a can of tomato sauce or paste or anything or a pound of pasta, let me know. I've got it. [laughter] I've got it.

ZB: Wow.

KR: What did Nick's father do for work?

ED: He worked for the Pharma Chemical Company in Bayonne, which was a subsidiary of Bayer Aspirin, and he was in charge of the dye plant. He was a very smart man. Chemistry was

his forte, and had he been able to go to college, he really would've been a very successful businessman, I think. He was a blue-collar worker, took the bus to work every day, and was in charge of the dye-making part of the Bayer subsidiary there. Because he was always afraid of not getting a paycheck, he bought himself a pickup truck. He hauled dirt from place to place, had a little trucking firm that he used [on] weekends. He would haul dirt back and forth. He would haul whatever anybody needed to be done. He would transport groceries or food or anything that needed to be transferred from one place to another. He had a pickup truck; he'd do it. He always felt that he knew what was best for all of his children. Not all of his children followed his advice, and he couldn't understand why they didn't agree with him in many ways. He was a tough man, and he could be tough to live with. I found out early on that the best thing was just to agree with whatever he was saying, because I could not hold my own in a discussion with him. My husband was much the same way--so sure that they're right, that you could never be right. In his own way, Nick's father loved his family very much. He just had a hard time showing it.

ZB: I had no idea that he had run a dye factory at all. That actually is really cool, considering how your family is very much more theatre and liberal arts oriented and his is more chemistry oriented and Grandpa got more into it. You guys shared at least the military in common, but I just find that interesting, in general, how different you two were growing up.

ED: Polar opposites.

ZB: What you were interested in. The one thing you had in common, which would be the military, is what, funnily enough, brought you two together.

ED: That's right, you're right. We would never have met.

ZB: On topic of you two meeting, I was reading through and I saw you got married in Switzerland, and I find that very amusing. Can you explain how that came about?

ED: Sure. For two American civilians living in Germany and wanting to be married in Germany--and it had to be a civil ceremony--there was so much paperwork, an unbelievable amount of paperwork. So, a lot of the military guards assigned to the agency and the secretaries, like myself, who got married overseas, I don't know who figured it out, but someone figured out that if you got married in Switzerland, the paperwork diminished by a lot. There was less paperwork. So, that's what most of us did. Most of the couples who got married overseas got married in Switzerland because of the paperwork; that was the civil ceremony. It was close-ish. Some couples had the civil ceremony in Basel and then would come back to Frankfurt and have a religious ceremony, if they so chose. I don't know who it was who figured it out.

The University of Basel had a--still does--has a Catholic chapel on campus, and a Catholic priest is available to marry Americans or anybody who wants to be married in the church. Rather than traveling back and forth, we opted to be married twice in one day, in Basel. We got married on a Tuesday, because in the courthouse in Basel, civil wedding ceremonies are conducted in English. So, anybody who was assigned to the agency like us got married on a Tuesday, because the ceremonies were in English. That's the only reason, the only reason. We got married at ten

o'clock in the morning--that was the civil--and then went back to the hotel. I changed into--I had a white dress, and we went over to the Katholisches Studentenhaus Chapel at the University of Basel and we had our religious ceremony about twelve o'clock, I guess. We were married by a Dutch priest who did not speak English, but he married us phonetically. [laughter] My parents, who were stationed at Torrejon Air Force Base in Madrid at the time, drove up for the ceremony, and Nick's parents flew over for the ceremony because they had never met me. Number one, was I an American? Just the older son, the whole bit. Of the couples who got married overseas that we know of, we were the only couple that had not only one set of parents there but two.

KR: That is pretty amazing.

ED: It was. It was amazing, yes.

ZB: When you went back to Germany the second time--this time working for the government--were there any significant changes to it in general, such as in the culture there?

ED: Things had changed a lot. I left in January of '61 and I went back in November of '66, so a lot had changed, yes, definitely. There didn't seem to be as much of a military occupation, or maybe it just wasn't as apparent. Maybe things had been scaled down or softened maybe. When I was there in high school--that was '57 to '61--that was more critical, I guess I'll say. Also, when I went back to work, I didn't go back as a military dependent. I went back as a civilian, so I had a different lifestyle. I wasn't living on base, I was not a dependent, I was my own person, and I could come and go more easily. Obviously, I was older. I did notice that during the time that I was in the States in college, a lot of rebuilding had happened and everything tended to look a lot fresher and cleaner. When we were there when I was in high school, there was a lot of rubble still around everywhere. When I went back to work with the agency in the later '60s, Germany had kind of gotten itself back on solid footing. Deutsche Bank was in Frankfurt. Frankfurt had become more of a financial district, and it was more metropolitan, it seemed. But, of course, I had changed. I had changed. My living circumstances were completely different, but I felt very comfortable there. I just always felt at home in Germany, but I did notice that everybody spoke American, or English I should say, yes. When I went back the second time, everybody spoke English; whereas before it was very halting. They were very suspicious. It was kind of a different, yes.

ZB: Interesting.

ED: They seemed more--maybe it was because I was in Frankfurt too--they seemed more, I'll say, Americanized rather than old-country Germany. Now, they had kind of come into the--what am I trying to say?

KR: Modernized?

ZB: Yes.

ED: Yes, yes.

ZB: That's the word.

ED: Yes, right. It wasn't as quaint. Well, that's not really a good word, but I think you know what I mean, yes.

ZB: Interesting.

ED: Yes, right.

KR: What was going on in Germany in terms of demonstrations and protests?

ED: I don't remember any, really and truly. Now, it could have been that they were happening and I just wasn't aware, or because of where I was working, I wasn't in that part of the city, I didn't see it, no. No, I have to say, Kate, I don't remember that, no. The wall was up in Berlin, and we went to Berlin for a weekend and saw the wall. Oh, I have pictures of the wall, but we couldn't--because we were agency employees--well, and other reasons--we had to be very careful as to where we went in Berlin. A good friend of Nick's was stationed in Berlin at the time, and George took us around and showed us what he could show us. But there were certain things that we weren't allowed [to do], not only because we were Americans, but because we worked for the CIA. We were very restricted in what we could see and do and things like that, yes, but Berlin at that time was a very sad city, very depressed. Oh, it was terrible, terrible, yes.

KR: I think the Berlin Wall is one of these major events in history that for young people now, it is hard for them to conceive of it.

ED: Yes.

KR: Describe what you remember of the Berlin Wall when you did that weekend visit to Berlin.

ED: It was intimidating, to say the least. It was this huge structure that just engulfed a whole area of the city, and we were able to, whether we were supposed to or not, George took us up to one of the vantage points, so that we could see into Eastern Berlin. It was very quiet. There were no people walking on the streets at all. The street leading up to the wall had these huge barricades, one on the right side and then one on the left side, so that you couldn't get a running start to get over the wall, whether you were actually running or in a car or pole vaulting or anything, because these barricades were in the street. There was a little girl on a tricycle out in the middle of the street going in and out of the barricades. She was the only person that we saw.

The Brandenburg Gate was behind the wall, and it was a very depressing sight. We went to Checkpoint Charlie, and there, again, you just had to be so careful. George would say to us, "Now, don't say anything. Don't do this. Don't do that," whatever it was, just, "Don't make eye contact, nothing. Keep your head down. You can look, but don't make it obvious." Really, just a very depressing city and so quiet. That's what struck me. Now, maybe because it was a weekend, I don't know, but it was quiet. It was a nice day, but all the buildings were gray and it was another world feeling, completely. Here we were on this side of the wall able to come and

go. We went out to eat. We went to a movie. We wore bright-colored clothing, as if there was this wall, literally.

KR: What was it like traveling to Berlin?

ED: We flew. We flew from Frankfurt into the airport at Berlin. I can't remember the name of--I should remember the name of the airport. That was a quick flight, and that was easy.

KR: Tempelhof?

ED: Tempelhof, thank you.

KR: My sister lives in Berlin.

ED: Oh, okay.

KR: It is not an airport anymore. It is a park now.

ED: Is it? Oh, wow.

KR: My sister goes bike riding there.

ED: Oh, my gosh.

KR: You flew into Tempelhof.

ED: We did, we did. There, again, we needed special permission to do that. Well, Nick did and I did too. Because I had quite a few security clearances above Top Secret because of the office that I worked in, I was given a debriefing well before I went and when I came back, even though nothing had happened. But Nick needed special orders, special permission, to fly into Berlin.

KR: Was it hard to travel into East Germany? Was that unusual at that time?

ED: We couldn't do it. We could not because we were agency people, and I don't remember many people being able to do that. Yes, we traveled as much as we could, but it was always Western [Germany].

ZB: Wow.

ED: There, again, whether it was because we were American or because of the nature of our work or our clearances, it was all combined. In a way, we couldn't travel as much as we wanted to. You just make the best of it and you travel where you can. What is your sister doing in Berlin?

KR: She moved there about five years ago.

ED: Oh, my gosh.

KR: Yes, she works for Kayak Europe, the travel company.

ED: Oh, okay.

ZB: Oh.

ED: Wow, and she speaks German?

KR: She does.

ED: Oh, my goodness. Good for her, good for her. Have you been over to see her?

KR: I have not yet. She keeps telling me I have to come soon, and my parents are going to go visit this coming spring.

ED: Nice, good. Yes, Berlin, from what I can tell now, is a lovely city, beautiful, happy, open, yes, much different from the Berlin I saw.

ZB: I am trying to think if there is anything else. Obviously, you cannot talk about a lot of stuff that you saw or did there. When did you and Grandpa eventually come back from Germany, when you moved back?

ED: Okay, all righty.

ZB: Were you together? Did you come separately?

ED: We came separately.

ZB: Oh, okay.

ED: We did, right. We got married in February, and I was pregnant and having a difficult pregnancy. Nick was scheduled to get out of the Army in mid-October, and that was very close to my due date. My due date was September, and in the military, you can't travel until six weeks after you have a baby, at that time. That was just really cutting it close, and then, I developed severe anemia. I had had mononucleosis earlier, and I was just having a very difficult pregnancy. It was your mother. [laughter] Timing became an issue, and we decided that I should come back to the States early, stay with Nick's parents, and have the baby in Bayonne rather than stay in Frankfurt with him and worry about having the baby and then needing to wait six weeks to come back to the States. As it was, she was late, and so that would've delayed us even more.

I came back to the States on July 4th weekend, 1968. I flew into McGuire Air Force Base, and I saw my in-laws, who I had met at my wedding earlier. That's all I knew about them. I didn't know anything else. I just knew they were Nick's parents. Anyway, I came back, spent the

summer with them, going to the doctor, trying not to faint, trying to be the good wife, the good daughter-in-law, trying to adapt to an Italian family that I didn't understand half of what they said, because their accents were so thick. They were eating all this unusual food. Nick's family, being Italian, they were calling every day, "How is she--how's Bessie?" They could not get my name. It's okay. "How's Bessie?" or, "How is she?" "Yes, it's fine."

At any rate, Angela was six days late, and it was driving everybody crazy, especially me. One Saturday night, Nick called from Frankfurt, and he said, "'What's going on?" and I said, "Well, there's no baby yet." "Well, why not?" "Well, I don't know." Anyway, so we talked for a while, and a couple of hours later, then I went into labor and had Angela the next day. She was born September 8th, and he got out of the Army on October 18th. So, he came home when she was about six weeks old.

He loves surprises. It runs in the family. I do not like surprises. [laughter] He told me he would be flying into McGuire on such and such date and for us to be there with his parents and the baby and everything. "Okay, fine." Everything was going along very smoothly the night before. We were in the living room watching television, and Nick's mother came upstairs from the basement and she said, "Betsy, Nicky's here." I said, "Nicky who?" [laughter] "Your husband, Nicky." I said, "No, he's not, he's not due until tomorrow." "No, no, no, he's here, he's here. He's in the basement." Well, he had decided to fool everybody and give us the wrong day, come home a day early. I was mad. [laughter] My hair was in rollers.

ZB: Oh, my God.

ED: I wasn't dressed, obviously, but he thought this was so funny. So, we came home separately, and we lived with Nick's parents for about a year. Then, I had had another baby by that time, and I said, "We need our own place." So, we got a small apartment in Bayonne. By that time, Nick was working for Brown Brothers Harriman & Company, and that's who he worked for for thirty-five years. [He] went in to Wall Street every day.

ZB: Wow.

KR: What were those years like when you were starting your family and settling in Bayonne?

ED: Difficult. [laughter] Difficult. I thought I could adjust to anything, because I always had, but now here I was married to this man that I really didn't know very well, when you think about it. I had two babies. I was living in New Jersey. My parents were in Spain still. I was lonely. I didn't have any close friends really, but things worked out. I adjusted, my folks came back to the States, and I made friends, but it was a very difficult adjustment for me.

ZB: I could imagine.

ED: Yes.

ZB: Mom was born and then Aunt Liz is next, right?

ED: Your mom was born in September, and Lisa was born in the next August.

ZB: That must have been rough.

ED: Yes, but I was busy.

ZB: You were busy.

ED: I was busy, yes.

ZB: What did you do to pass the time, besides taking care of my mother? [laughter]

KR: There was no time.

ED: There was no time. [laughter] You've got to be kidding Zach, no. [laughter]

ZB: I had to ask.

ED: I know, I know, yes. I made friends with--I shouldn't make it sound so bad--I made friends with the other young mothers on our street, and as much as we could be outside with our [children]--everybody had a baby or two, we did that. We would go over to see Nick's parents every week. It all worked out. What can I say?

KR: You have three children.

ED: Correct, yes.

KR: When was your youngest born?

ED: February of '72, yes.

ZB: Uncle Nick.

ED: Uncle Nick, yes.

KR: Okay.

ZB: I forget that he is the youngest one.

ED: I know, because he's tall.

ZB: Oh, yes, because everyone on your side is tall.

ED: My side is tallish, yes.

ZB: Grandpa's side is tall too.

ED: Is short-ish.

ZB: Oh, yes, they are short actually. I am trying to remember, because it has been a while since I saw Grandpa's mom and dad.

ED: Yes, at that point.

ZB: I saw them very briefly when I was tiny. I was about four.

ED: Yes, yes.

ZB: Very vaguely I remember talking to my grandfather's dad around Christmastime or something like that. Yes, I wish I had known more about them or asked more about them.

ED: I know. You don't think to ask at the time. You really don't.

ZB: You really do not, yes.

ED: Yes, I get it. But Pop, my father-in-law, always seemed bigger, because he had a barreled chest.

ZB: Oh, okay.

ED: He seemed taller than he was, but, actually, he was just about as tall as Grandpa, as my husband. But because he was the patriarch and he carried himself very well, everybody deferred to him at all times.

ZB: Oh, okay. After they were all born, eventually, you have down here that you actually worked for the Young Women's Christian Association?

ED: I did, I worked for the YWCA.

ZB: How did that end up happening?

ED: Well, Nick was born in '72, and so for the next eight years, I was busy raising children and getting them into school. I became involved with the CCD program at St. Henry's Church. Then, around 1980, Angela was, say, fourth grade, Lisa was third, Nick was kindergarten, something like that, whatever it was. I was a little bored, and a friend of mine was working part-time at the YWCA and she said, "You know, we could use a typist. Do you type?" "Do I type? Yes." "Oh, okay." "Can I interview or just show up or whatever?" At any rate, I had an interview at the Y, and they needed someone, actually, to do some typing and to cover the front desk for a couple of hours a day and I thought, "Oh, good, this is fine. This is perfect." So, I started working at the Y. It was two blocks from where we lived, so it was within walking distance. The school where the children went was four blocks, walking distance. Everything was very convenient there.

I started working at the Y at the front desk from eleven to one, four days a week, and it was just pocket money for me. It got me out of the house, and I became myself. I wasn't somebody's mother or wife, and from that, the job expanded, and at the end--I worked there from 1980 to about '90, I guess--when I left, I was the administrative secretary to the director and I still wasn't working full time but maybe thirty hours a week. I had my own little office. I was a regular secretary. I was not at the front desk anymore. I had been upgraded. So, I worked at the Y for roughly ten years.

It was very interesting, non-profit. It was a completely different world for me. I enjoyed it, to a degree, but then I also kind of felt, "Well, we're always begging for money. We always seemed to be just getting by." It was a nice place to work. Everybody was very pleasant. It's all women, for the most part. This was the '80s, when a lot of things were changing and happening. Women were finally accepted into the military academies, and women were starting to come into their own jobwise. I enjoyed the YWCA a lot.

At one point, the YWCA of Bayonne and the YWCA of Jersey City decided to merge and become the YWCA of Hudson County. I was working there at the time, and I did all that paperwork and got them merged and everything. I worked in Jersey City for a while, and I wasn't happy anymore in my job. I didn't care for the people I was working with. I didn't like the work that I was doing. I needed a change. I had been with the Y for ten years. It was time for a change. So, I resigned, and I guess I was out of work maybe three months or so.

I saw an ad in the paper that Jersey City State College in Jersey City was hiring, and so I went over to campus. Lisa was going to school there at the time, my daughter, and she took me into the personnel office and I filled out an application. We were leaving, and someone said, "Lisa D'Angelo, wait a minute." A woman who knew my daughter said, "What are you doing here? Why aren't you in class?" and Lisa said, "Oh, my mom's applying for a job." So, Evelyn went over to personnel and said, "Whoever took her application, hire her. I know her daughter. She babysits my grandchildren." [laughter] So, they called me the next day or the day after and said, "Could you come in for some interviews?" "Sure, yes." I went in, had a couple of interviews, and got a job on campus working four days a week, initially. That's all the position was, and I liked it. I liked being on a college campus, very similar to being in the military, in a way, in that it was contained, it was safe, there was room for upward movement.

I worked on campus for about thirteen years, I guess, and enjoyed it and kept moving up jobwise. I worked in the alumni office and also secretary to the library director. In the end, I was secretary to the controller and financial vice president, something like that. At one point, Nick had already retired from the bank--he was driving me to work every day--I thought, "These young kids in the office think they know more than I do and they probably do and I'm tired." So, that's when I retired. I knew that my time had come, yes. Nick retired in 2003, and I retired in 2005. Then, the following--I'll just keep talking.

ZB: Go for it.

ED: The following September, we drove out to California. We had always wanted to do that. The fellow who had been the best man at our wedding in Switzerland was living in California, so we drove out to see him. We had a wonderful time. We were gone for a month. It was great; it was a wonderful trip.

ZB: What part of California did you go to?

ED: We were in Huntington Beach.

ZB: Oh, okay.

ED: We took the southern route going to California. We went down through Georgia, in through Texas to see my mother, and then out to California. Then, coming back, we took the northern route through Las Vegas, Denver--was it Denver?—Chicago, we had friends in Chicago, and then drove home. Yes, it was pretty much a month.

ZB: That is a long trip.

ED: No cell phone--did not have a cell phone--and we made it, but we did have EZ Pass. [laughter]

KR: Yes.

ZB: Oh, thank God for EZ Pass.

ED: And New Jersey EZ Pass works in California. [laughter]

ZB: Really? That is good to know.

ED: Yes.

KR: I am curious, living in Bayonne and your husband working on Wall Street, what do you remember about 9/11?

ED: I was working in Jersey City at that time, and I got a phone call from one of the librarians and he said, "Put on the radio. Something's happening. A plane flew into the World Trade Center." I said, "What do you mean? Was it lost?" He said, "I don't know, but something's going on." Okay, so, the day progressed. I got in touch with Nick through email at that point, and I said, "Are you okay?" He said, "Yes, what's happened?" "What's with this plane flying into the World Trade Center?" "I don't know." Campus was dismissed, and I went home.

Nick was there on Wall Street. He went through the World Trade Center every day on his way to work, and he missed it probably by about fifteen minutes. He had a meeting scheduled for that day, and he was on his way up to the meeting when he heard that the second tower had been hit and that the meeting was cancelled. I guess he went back down to his office area, and they could see a little bit out of their office windows. They could see the smoke. The bank shut down

completely, and Nick was there probably for three or four hours, because they wouldn't let anybody leave. They didn't know what was happening. They didn't know what was going to happen, and by that time, the Pentagon had been hit and the plane in Shanksville had gone down. So, you're not sure what's happening.

At any rate, the employees from the bank were dismissed, but, now, how were they going to get home? How was he going to get out of Manhattan across the river and back to Bayonne? There was a group of people who worked together there in the office, and he said, "We just started walking" and they walked uptown. Somebody had parked their car--I'll say Weehawken--could they have walked that far? I'm not sure. At any rate, somebody had a car, they got to the person's car, and they were able--because they were going away from the city--they were able to drive to New Jersey. They drove Nick down to Cranford to your mom's house.

ZB: Okay.

ED: By that time, campus had been evacuated. I was at home. He called me at the house, and he said, "I'm in Cranford, I'm at Ang's. Come get me." I said, "Well, Brad is here," Zach's dad. He caught the last train out of Manhattan into Jersey City and then took the bus to my house. So, I had Zach's dad with me, and my husband was with Angela in Cranford.

ZB: I remember that.

ED: So, I called Nick's dad, because we had been telephoning, of course, all day, and I said, "I just heard from Nick. He's in Cranford at Ang's. We need to go get him." He said, "Okay, I'm having supper. Let me finish my supper first and then come get me." I said, "Okay." I thought, "Never mind about supper." At any rate, so, my father-in-law, myself, Brad, and Joey, one of Nick's brothers, all got in the car, and I said, "I don't know if I can get across the Bayonne Bridge. I don't know how I'm going to get to Cranford." Pop said, "We're going to figure this out, don't worry." So, at any rate, we got to Cranford. We dropped off Brad, we picked up Nick, and then, getting back to Bayonne, there were checkpoints all along the way. I think--I could be making this up but it makes a good story anyway--I think we all needed to show our driver's licenses, that we lived in Bayonne, that we were going home, because by that time, I think the Holland Tunnel had been closed. All of that traffic eastbound had been stopped. Just to get to Bayonne was difficult, but, obviously, we did. When we got home then, we had several phone messages, because people knew that Nick had worked on Wall Street. "Are you okay? Are you okay? Have you heard from so and so? Well, what about this and that?"

As it happened, one of Nick's cousins died. He worked in the first tower. A lot of Nick's friends did not make it, and you didn't know who had died until--as Nick said, "You didn't see them on the bus or the train anymore, and then you realized they didn't make it." That was on a Tuesday. That Saturday, we had planned a two-week vacation to drive down to Texas, and so we did. Every place we stopped along the way, when they saw the New Jersey license plates, they wanted to know the story.

KR: Yes.

ED: So, yes, and even when we got back, Nick's office had been moved from Wall Street into a Jersey City business building, because of the smog--not a good word but yes--the air quality. I went back to work on campus. That was no problem there, but it was tough. For a long time, Nick didn't want to talk about it, because he had been through that building so many times. He had watched them build it and he went through it twice a day every day for years and years, and to think that it was gone and to think what could've happened, obviously, yes. Then, when he did start going back to work, he thought, "I never want to be stuck again on Manhattan and not be able to get home." That was 2001, that's when he thought, "It's time for me to retire." Yes, then, in 2003, he did, he retired, yes.

ZB: Wow, I did not know about that.

ED: That's the short version.

ZB: Oh, man.

ED: If Grandpa was telling it.

ZB: I would probably get his whole point of view of that.

ED: You would, yes, you would.

ZB: I could see that. Oh, man. What do I ask after that?

KR: I want to ask you about Bayonne.

ED: Okay.

KR: You have lived in Bayonne for …

ED: Fifty years.

KR: For fifty years. Bayonne is a very unique community. I was wondering if you could describe Bayonne when you first moved there, when you were starting your family, and then talk about how it has changed over the years.

ED: I refer to Bayonne as Brigadoon. It's my own personal joke, but some people get it, some people don't, but that's okay. Bayonne is unique; you're absolutely right. When I first moved there, it seemed to really be lost in the '50s, and everything in Bayonne seemed to be ethnically defined. People would ask me, "What are you?" and first I said, "Catholic," then I said, "Texan." "No, no, no, no, what are you? What are you?" I didn't know what to say. I didn't know what they were asking me, because I had never been asked that question before. Then, finally, my mother-in-law said, "She's German. She's English." They were asking me what my ethnic background was, and I had never thought that. I didn't know I had one. I didn't know I had an ethnic background. Then, I was more comfortable with it. I had never been so aware of ethnicity until I moved to Bayonne. I didn't really know if it was because I had married into such

a strong Italian family, or if it was everybody that this was a big deal to, and I think it's a little of both.

I had a very hard time adjusting to Bayonne, because most people who live in Bayonne have lived there their whole lives. They know their first cousins, their second cousins. They know who lives here, who lives there. I knew no one, and it was hard for me to make friends because nobody was forthcoming. They had their friends, yes. I was busy with the babies, of course, but until my children were in school and I joined the PTA, then I made friends--I was always Angela's mother--I wasn't myself. "Where are you from? You're not from here." "No." "Where are you from? You don't talk?" "Yes, that's right, that's right." I used to really give this long involved answer, and people's eyes would glaze over. So, I just kept it short; it's okay. "Met in Germany, State Department," because that's what I tell people, Kate. "I worked in the State Department." It's easier for people to understand. It may not be the truth, but that's my cover story. It's what I tell them. It's what I'm going [with], and it's easy for everyone. Everyone knows the State Department, and they know they work everywhere. Whereas if I was saying CIA, they go [Editor's Note: Ms. D'Angelo makes a surprised and shocked expression.]. So, I just say State Department.

Through PTA, I made friends. I became involved in the CCD program at church activities. I found my way, but I always felt the outsider, because I really wasn't from Bayonne. "Yes, but you're not from Bayonne." "No, I'm not, no." It wasn't until Nick's brother, Vincent, married Marie--they were living in San Francisco at the time and Marie was originally from Boston--it wasn't until they were married and Marie and Vincent moved back to New Jersey that I had an ally, because she was also a daughter-in-law. They didn't treat me differently or badly or anything, but I just didn't have an ally. Marie coming from Boston and a big Irish family, she understood East Coast ethnicity and she explained it to me. We had been married for twelve years at that point, and I still didn't really understand a lot of things. Actually, to this day, I still get brought up short every once in a [while], "Oh, that's right, this is Bayonne. That's right, this is Bayonne, yes." But because it's a peninsula, you have to be going to Bayonne. You don't go through it to get anywhere. [laughter] It's very insulating, or it was, yes. There's a mindset, I think, with people who are born and raised in Bayonne. It's a fine place to live, I have wonderful friends, but I cannot wait to move out and I have been trying--as Angela said to me, "Mom, you've been trying to move out for fifty years," still trying. There's something confining. As comfortable as Bayonne can be--and it can kind of be like a little Air Force Base--the mindset of the people can be difficult to accept at times.

ZB: That is interesting.

ED: Right, right. Now, Bayonne is changing so much. I mean, I can even see it. I can see it, what's happening to it, yes. As much as Nick wanted to move to Texas early on in our marriage--and of course, I did too, because that's where my parents were--I could never really see him living anywhere else but Bayonne. He can visit and he could feel comfortable in other places, but I could not imagine him living anywhere else but Bayonne, yes.

ZB: Interesting.

ED: Yes.

ZB: What was life like in the house with my mom and her siblings and all that? What was it like at home? I know that Grandpa worked a lot of time.

ED: Grandpa--yes, he worked--he had a nine-to-five job at the bank, Brown Brothers. Then, he went to night school, St. Peter's College, got his degree in 1977, and then he was also working weekends at an Italian restaurant. So, he wasn't home a lot.

ZB: I did not know about the Italian restaurant.

ED: Chris's Corner, yes.

ZB: Makes sense.

ED: Nick had known the son of the owner in high school, and he worked there. He worked at Chris's Corner before he went into the Army. One afternoon, Philip, the son, called Nick, and he said, "Father's Day is coming up. We could use some extra help in the kitchen. Would you be interested?" We figured, "Sure, okay, why not? It's just a weekend. You can pick up some extra cash, why not?" Little did we realize that would last for twenty years. At one time, he was working nine to five at the bank, he was going to night school two nights a week, and then the weekend at Chris's Corner, yes.

ZB: He must have been exhausted.

ED: Yes.

ZB: That sounds exhausting, just thinking about it.

ED: I know, I know. When I think about it, I just don't know how we did it, but because of that, then, I took care of the house and the kids and soccer activities and CCD and whatever else had to happen, yes. Then, I started working at the Y, too. I mean, he was out of school by that time, but he was still working weekends. Every summer, we took a big trip, and this was the big event. Every other year, we would drive down to Texas to see my folks, and then, on the off year, we would go to Billings, Montana, or we had friends in Cincinnati. We drove out there. They were happy to see us. We would go down to wherever, somewhere, we would go somewhere, yes, because Nick loved to travel. He loved to see the countryside, the States. He had never been west of Philadelphia until he married me and we went to Texas the first time.

KR: I have reached the end of my questions. Do you have any more questions, Zach?

ZB: I went through all of them that I had on here. [laughter] I am trying to think if there are any other ones that I can think of at the moment. Out of all your years that you have grown up, the country went through a lot of changes and such. What is the most significant thing you think that has changed, in general, because you have been through a lot? You have gone through the

'60s, the '70s, '80s, and now we're in this era. Whenever I listen to interviews, they always talk about how different everything is now. What sticks out to you the most as what is different?

ED: Well, I love the fact that women are doing so well jobwise, although they can always do better. I love the ATM machine. I think that's the best invention ever. [laughter] I do think people need to listen better and not be so sure that they're right. I do think parents should have more respect than they do in a lot of families these days, and I'm not talking about you.

ZB: Oh, I know.

ED: But I think young people are always so sure that they're right until they get old, and then they realize, "Oh." I think in some cases, the respect for maturity has been lost along the way. It's okay to discuss.

ZB: Yes.

ED: But let's do it politely.

ZB: I just remembered, we were talking and you were talking how technology has changed a lot since you were a kid.

ED: Oh, my goodness.

ZB: Can you discuss that?

ED: You mean I got a manual typewriter when I graduated from high school and now? [laughter] Yes, it's absolutely amazing. The first time I used an electric typewriter, I thought that was the end of the world, little did I know. I think, in some ways, technology has taken away social skills from a lot of people. For instance, young people these days, they don't go to dances. They don't know how to interact. There was an article somewhere about a course that is being taught on how to date, how to actually interact and how to act on a date, and I thought, "Oh, you poor people." I think that technology is so wonderful that people have lost the human touch, and I know that you've probably seen the cartoon of the grandfather or the grandmother saying, and it's just them, "Everybody came to visit me today," and then it widens up and everybody's on their cell phone.

ZB: Yes.

ED: I mean, obviously, I have my cell phone. I love it for what I use it for, but there was life before cell phones, there was, and it was okay. We went to the library. There were encyclopedias. We had one telephone that was hooked up to the wall in the house.

ZB: Oh, man.

ED: There was one television.

ZB: You had to turn the knob for that, right?

ED: I had to turn the knob.

ZB: No remotes or anything like that.

ED: Turn the knob on and off, and then, for each channel, you had to turn the knob, yes. Kids went outside to play, and you played until the street lights came on. Families sat down to have dinner together. Progress is okay, but let's not lose the human touch.

ZB: Yes.

ED: Yes, yes, right, and I think patriotism is the best thing going. [laughter] I go to church. That's been lost in a lot of families and people. Yes, things are different, but my dad said his great grandmother--no, his grandmother, well, it doesn't make any difference--did not want to give up her ringer washing machine for a newfangled one. My dad said, "Yes, but it's going to make your life so much easier," and she said, "What am I going to do with all that time?" [laughter] He said, "You'll find something, don't worry." That's what she was used to [think], "Fine, okay, right, yes." She got her new washing machine and she loved it, because then everything is clean on the same day. That was it. That's fine. It's just that, don't lose your human contact.

KR: I actually have a question. You mentioned patriotism. Nick served in the Vietnam era military, and when he got out of the military, I am wondering how he was treated, because at that time, there was a stigma attached to being a veteran.

ED: Yes, he was treated with respect, yes. I do not think he felt any of the stigma. When he started working at the bank, he met a young fellow--I say they both started in the mailroom. It wasn't really the mailroom, they were a step above, but it makes a good story. His name was Paul, Paul Lozito, and he had just come back, literally, from Vietnam. He and Nick bonded over their military service, and I don't know that either of them were ever thought of badly. I do know we have a neighbor, at the time, who was a conscientious objector, and Nick just had a hard time talking with him. No matter what they were talking about, Nick just saw him in a different light, kind of like, "You didn't step up," no matter what your reasons. Nick was very patriotic, yes.

ZB: Yes, that makes sense.

ED: He just felt that it was his duty. He knew he was going to be called up. It was hard for him, in many cases, to have certain conversations with people, but as I say, I don't think anybody ever disrespected him because of his military service, that I know of. What bothered him more was being disrespected as an Italian, because jobwise, it hurt him. In the bank, it was very WASPy, and if you didn't go to Harvard or Yale, if you're name ended in a vowel, no, you weren't going to [advance].

ZB: Really?

ED: He always felt that the bank disrespected him, yes, more so.

ZB: Wow, I was not aware of that.

ED: Yes, yes.

KR: Would he talk about that with you?

ED: On occasion. He was a great talker, but not always with me. He felt more comfortable talking with guys, he really did. Yes, he did, and I think part of it could have been because, well, I was so busy having babies and doing things. We were ships passing in the night very frequently, but I also think that because he never saw his parents talk or discuss things. His father made the decision, and his mother went along with it. My parents discussed things, and that's what I thought we would do. I tried to talk to Nick a couple times about things, and he just kind of blew me [off],"Yes, I'll figure it out. Don't worry. Don't worry. It's all right." So, we did not talk as much as I would've liked to, but many times, when Nick was having a discussion with someone, you just listened to him. He was so sure that he was right, and sometimes he couldn't see the other side at all. Whereas I always tried to see the other side, and I think that might have bothered him. "Just agree with me," he would say. "Just agree with me." "No, no." So, at times then, I thought, "Well, he's not going to really listen, so, okay, all right."

ZB: He doesn't need someone to talk to. He just wanted to say what he was feeling a lot of the time.

ED: Yes.

ZB: At least that's what it sounds like to me.

ED: Yes.

ZB: Again, this is where I wished that I had talked to him more when I was younger.

ED: Yes, but once you started talking to him, you couldn't get away.

ZB: Oh yes, the few conversations I have had with him …

ED: Yes.

ZB: Oh, I brought up the '60s once, and he was not pleased about that. He went on for a very long time talking about his displeasure with that time period. Once he started, like you said, he just kept going. I was very caught off guard by that, but it was kind of interesting, just because I never heard somebody be so against an era of history. Like you said, he was very patriotic. So, from what I remember in the conversation, he did not like the movements disrespecting the things about the country that he believed in. He's a very opinionated person.

ED: Well said, well said, Zach, yes.

ZB: Thanks.

ED: Yes, and anybody that went to Canada, no, no. That feeling today is not appreciated by a lot of people. I think older people like myself, we're the patriotic ones in my mind. I don't think younger people really understand how wonderful this country is.

ZB: Well, times change a lot, as I've seen. It's one of the reasons why I love doing things like these. The interviews really shine a light on the periods of time, and you kind of just forget about it. You don't really think about it if you live in the present the entire time. Well, I do not have any more questions. You bled my questions dry. You got through all of them. [laughter]

ED: Did I talk too much?

ZB: No, it was perfect.

KR: At this point, is there anything you would like to add that we skipped over? Are there any stories that you really wanted to talk about coming into it that we did not focus on?

ED: Let me see. Let me think a minute. I guess not, if nothing's coming to mind. No, no, I guess not.

KR: Okay.

ED: I guess not. That's my story.

KR: Well, thank you so much for coming in and doing this oral history interview.

ED: Thank you for having me. Thank you.

ZB: It was fantastic.

KR: Okay, I am going to stop.

----------END OF TRANSCRIPT----------

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