RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. MARION K. PINSDORF

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

LEONIA, NEW JERSEY
JULY 26, 2011

TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Dr. Marion K. Pinsdorf on July 26th, 2011 in Leonia, New Jersey with Shaun Illingworth. Dr. Pinsdorf, thank you very much for having me here today.

Marion Pinsdorf: Delighted.

SI: To begin, could you tell me where and when you were born?

MP: I was born in Teaneck at home on June 22nd, 1932.

SI: What were your parents' names?

MP: … My father was a Pinsdorf. … He came from a German background. My mother came from a French Huguenot background and her maiden name was … Green. Her mother's name was Marinus, which of course is a very French-Huguenot name, and she came from South Carolina.

SI: Was your mother actually born in South Carolina?

MP: No, no, no … she was born in Teaneck. I'm not sure about my father. I think he was also born in Teaneck or New York City.

SI: Can you tell me what you know about your mother's family background?

MP: Well, I know more about my father than my mother. My grandmother was a very quiet person and I know she came from South Carolina and she had a sister who lived around the corner from us, but the dominating influence was really my grandfather's. There's an apocryphal story, which if you want to cut out it's fine. Everybody was named Katheryn and we were living with my grandparents when I was born. … My father absolutely said, "No, three Katheryns in one household, that's too much." … My grandmother was a very stern woman and wanted to have a part of this naming, so she decided I was going to be named Marion after "Swamp Fox" Marion, the great hero of the American Revolutionary War in the South. Thank goodness they dropped the "Swamp Fox" part of it. [laughter]

SI: Did you ever find out why the family relocated to the North?

MP: No, I didn't know. My family was not great on history. There were a lot of feuds going on all of the time. I don't know as much about it. I know more about the Pinsdorf side from the children of my grandfather's second marriage.

SI: Tell me a little bit about the Pinsdorf family.

MP: Well, the Pinsdorf family is interesting. In fact, if I'm giving you too much, stop me. There is a little village--they were originally from Vienna-- … a beautiful little village just outside Vienna called Pinsdorf, which the family founded. … When the Protestant Reformation went through Europe, everybody thought Martin Luther was a great reformer, but only of the

church, not otherwise. My family were Lutherans, they finally decided they had to leave Pinsdorf because if you weren't a Catholic--if you didn't convert to Catholicism--you either got killed or you left. … They went into Western Germany, a group went to Brazil. They went to Meissen, my family went to the Black Forest. Eventually, my great-grandfather migrated to the United States. There were three brothers. He migrated to the United States, very much in the German culture, and had a *bierstube* [beer garden] in the German section of New York City. … Out of that came three brothers, one of whom was my grandfather, so that heritage is pure German.

SI: Do you know how this family came to settle in Teaneck? What brought them there?

MP: Well … my grandfather Pinsdorf, he was a paper cutter, and he came out here because the train service was so good on the West Shore Railroad. I really don't know beyond that whether he had friends here or not. They made many friends. Also, he was a very devout Methodist and he came with a group of people who eventually founded the Teaneck Methodist Church. … For many years he was the lay preacher and very active in the church, proselytizing in Teaneck for Methodism. So, I think it was probably a combination of transportation, work opportunities--he continued to work in New York--and also church because this area of Bergen County was just then beginning to develop.

SI: You said you did not know how your mother's family came up from the South, but do you know specifically how they came to Teaneck?

MP: No. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Do you know how your parents met?

MP: Well, they lived a couple of blocks away from each other in Teaneck, and I think they were both active in the Methodist church.

SI: Tell me a little bit about your earliest memories growing up in this neighborhood in Teaneck.

MP: … Well, it's a kind of dichotomy. … I've done a piece on "Chosen Sisters" which describes the women I grew up with in Teaneck. … One other woman and I were the only two that were not children of immigrants--most of them were Irish, Estonian, German, *et cetera*. One is dead now [and] the other one--in fact, her son went to Rutgers. The other I've known since the second grade, we're going to have lunch together tomorrow. We see each other often. We were driven by parents who had very little education. There was only one person in the group whose father had gone to college. My father went as far as eighth grade. He read a great deal, went to the Mechanics Institute. It was a wonderful experience in a sense that I have lifelong friends out of this, mostly women. Teaneck was and still is a very splintered town economically. I was in the poor end of town and we formed a very strong bond which we still have. The rich end of town, which at that point was mostly Anglo-Saxon, today is largely Jewish and black. Teaneck also was very rigid in how it judged people. I'm wandering, but stop me if you want more detail. …

All the schools were named for poets--I went to Longfellow--and when we went to high school, it was quite a problem because we were thrown in with the other students who had a lot more money, more opportunity. … Some of the parents were very good to us. One woman who was probably the most brilliant woman I've ever met, took an interest in me, encouraged me and put books in my hands. … It was the extra influences that helped me a great deal in Teaneck. I was stuffed into a commercial course because I was blue collar and one of the reasons why I felt so strongly about Drew is that the church and a couple of members of the congregation, members of the staff of the high school, decided I was not supposed to be in a commercial course. So, they yanked me out and took me down to Drew. I still remember it was a retired minister who was appointed to take us down. My neighbor's niece was in the same group. They marched us into the president's office and said, "These are two good kids, they should come here." By the end of the afternoon I was admitted, I had scholarships, I could have gone at the end of my junior year. I decided to go at the end of my senior year. One of the things that has been enriching in my life is that people have always encouraged me, seen what I was lacking. One of my neighbors who was a very eminent professor at Columbia, he always talks about with high school, I missed thinking in numbers, I missed science, I missed astronomy and, of course, I was always focused on history. So, that's how I went to Drew. I'm very close to some of these people from Teaneck, the relationships are still strong. … Some of the people succeeded very well like Jack Beyer, who's an eminent architect who was in my class, but Teaneck was a very class-ridden town then. Now, it's more ridden along religious and racial lines. I don't … have much of a contact with Teaneck anymore.

SI: It seems like the church was pretty important to your family life.

MP: Yes, yes.

SI: Can you elaborate on that?

MP: Well, mostly my grandfather, he died when I was thirteen. He was a very, very wonderful man, not a great deal of education, but very, very loving as a parent. My father was busy trying to make some money in the carpentry business. My mother was very reluctant to reach out. It was not an easy childhood, but I have always been very fortunate that other people took an interest in me like Mrs. Marian Shelby, like my grandfather, like members of the church, like my friends. Just to digress for a moment, … a year ago today I couldn't walk, and people just jumped in and helped--all sorts of people--and they didn't know each other. So, just before Thanksgiving I gave a little party to introduce them and to thank them and I didn't know it was going to work because … most of these people didn't know each other. It turned out to be wonderful because years later my god son talked to the woman who was in his mother's second grade, they'd never met. My cousin had never met many people in the family. The other thing that happened which was interesting. I have a very dear friend from Drew who's a very eminent physician and he really helped me a great deal through this and my neighbor is a physician. They stood and talked. I can still see them in that doorway, Veena is an Indian, vegetarian, pediatrician and he's a big, tall Morris County Presbyterian General Practitioner. People just stopped and looked at this wonderful conversation. … That's one of the things that I think is strength in my life and is something I've encouraged. If I'm wandering too much, stop me.

SI: You were born at the depth of the Great Depression.

MP: '32, yes.

SI: By the end of the Great Depression you were only about eight years old. Do you have any memories of how the Great Depression affected the area or your neighborhood?

MP: We didn't have much. I mean, we were all readers and we would decide who would … buy which book, and then we'd circulate it around and we used the library a lot. My father … I think he was working with a company at that point and he was a very good carpenter, he just didn't like to do carpentry, he'd rather read. We lived with my grandparents. We didn't move away until about I think it was '41 or '42 … when my father bought a house in Teaneck. We were all poor so we didn't feel the Depression as a great change and, of course, the immigrant population was so large that they were just happy to be here out of the reach of the Russians or the Germans. … Most of the people came from countries around the Baltics. It was too early to have a lot of the Jewish migration because of Hitler.

SI: Did the groups get along? Was there a lot of exchange across ethnic lines?

MP: I was never aware of it. … We actually … took great pleasure in each other's differences and when I wrote this piece I saw ties which I hadn't known at the time. Cliff Spierer's mother was Norwegian-Swedish. They both came from desperately poor countries. They had great strength in their foods, in their traditions, in their religion. … Another one of our friends--and we never knew until much later--was Armenian and … there were lots of ties between Lily and Alice. She was Armenian and we loved the food. Her mother was a very gracious woman, these people were not working mothers so they took us in and they gave us a lot of tradition of the background and so on. … I remember going to hear Peter Balakian speak on how the Holocaust of 1915 marinated through his family and Alice said, "You know that's the first time I've really heard an explanation of why I had no cousins and uncles and aunts and so on." [Editor's Note: Peter Balakian is an Armenian-American writer and poet from Teaneck, New Jersey.] Actually, I think we reveled in the differences and the mothers, every one of them, educated or not, were very good to us and wanted us to know their traditions. … There was one woman in the group--her father was the only one with a college education and they were the only Roman Catholics. … The mother wanted everything her way and she wanted us all to marry very young and produce a lot of children. Well, that was not our aim, we just ignored that. … We were very fortunate to be supported. Mrs. Shelby was always supplying us with books. … There may have been tensions, but I think it was more on financial lines than it was on ethnic lines. Now, of course, Teaneck has gone through a lot of difficulties now, and a lot of that was sparked by the Methodist Church who believed that they had to integrate the town which they led. … One of the people who was very influential was Frank Burr, an officer of Chase Manhattan Bank, as it was called then. He was a lay preacher in the church, my Sunday school teacher and later mayor. He did the financing for Glenpointe. He just taught us many things, and I've had many conversations with his son who was a very good friend of Tom Kean, Jr. … I had more trouble with people from other parts of the town and money was the issue more than anything. Maybe I made it the issue too, I don't know.

SI: Particularly with your father's German background, were there traditions that lived on in your family, such as those relating to food or practices around the holidays?

MP: Well, there was a lot of, you know, entertaining at the holidays and Christmas trees and so on, but don't forget that New Jersey was a hotbed and the Schwarzkopf family suffered with us too. There was a lot of anti-Germanism and there were very active Bunds in Newark and New Milford and Saul Gittelman, with whom I went to college, has done a lot of work on how Germanism was expunged in large measure. My parents were delighted when I went to high school that I could study German because for a number of years you could not study German in the New Jersey schools. … Also, my grandfather who was born and raised here was going to work on the West Shore Railroad and he met a *landsman*, a fellow German, and they started talking German. Now, they just did it as, you know, as you and I if we knew Armenian, we might be talking Armenian or Greek or something. Anyhow, they were hauled off the train in Hoboken, spent the night in jail there until they could come with documents that he was American born and loyal and all of that. So, my parents didn't go into the Germanism as much as the Armenians and the Norwegians and the Swedes, the Irish, the Italians. They were all in the same little area, but the literature, oh yes. … I was encouraged to read a lot of German literature, I think just to compensate for what I was not getting in school, and when I went to Drew, we had a lot of professors who came from Europe to escape the Nazis. We had a world literature professor who was like a predecessor for--oh what's his name, the fellow in the *Dead Poets Society* (1989), Robin Williams was it?

SI: Yes.

MP: Who held up the book and said, "This year, we're going to read your interpretations, we're not going to read other's interpretations of the book." He pulled out the pages. Well, my professor valued books too much to do that, but I still have this huge book--like a German, like a family bible only the pages are thinner and the book is bigger. … He said, "This year we're not going to read anything originally written in English." … That was one of the greatest gifts I had because when I went into my graduate work I was perfectly prepared for writing about Mexico or Brazil or Peru, but my education in Teaneck was pretty "Anglo."

SI: You did not study the German language until you were in high school?

MP: Yes, I did study the German language in Teaneck. I think the year I was a sophomore, German could be taught again in the schools.

SI: Did you learn German at home before you entered high school?

MP: A little bit. My parents didn't speak it. My mother knew no German, my father knew very little.

SI: How did your family feel about Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal efforts to address the Great Depression? Was that discussed at home?

MP: Well, they weren't very political and I think if anything they were probably very conservative and probably Republican, but I don't really remember many discussions. I suppose if I pulled vaguely on this I would say there were times when they were anti-Roosevelt, but I'm not sure. They did not like Mrs. Roosevelt because that was not a "woman's role."

SI: Were there other times when they would express what they felt a woman's role was? You mentioned the fact that the school forced you into a commercial course. Were your parents supportive of this?

MP: Oh, they were perfectly happy to have, this is just between us, but they wanted control and … there's a line in my book where I say, "If the church hadn't yanked me out of our situation, I probably would have spent my life stuffing lipsticks into cardboard cartons on an assembly line." My parents wanted control and if I got an education, they wanted me to drop out of high school as soon as I could and I didn't want to do that. You know, that's all a very painful time in my life and my parents tried to diminish me as much as they could. They didn't succeed, thank goodness. My contacts, my memories, and my discussions were more with outsiders. Now, my grandfather and I were great Brooklyn Dodger fans, so that was a great tie between us. I don't remember much politics being discussed. My grandfather was asked to run for mayor of Teaneck and he didn't want to get into politics, and my other grandfather had the typical German attitude of staying away from politics.

SI: Was your grandfather who was asked to run for mayor involved in a political party?

MP: He was involved in town activities, and Paul Volcker Sr. was a neighbor. … I remember my grandfather leading the big fight not to have the subway come through the George Washington Bridge because when the bridge was constructed, there was an open area in the center and supposed to be for subways and he and Paul Volcker fought that. … It was a very exciting time in Teaneck because we had a very unusual township manager who really set up the idea that management was more important than politics. Whether the garbage is collected is not a Republican or a Democratic issue, it's management. He was very brilliant and had an even more brilliant son, his name was [economist and former Chairman of the Federal Reserve] Paul Volcker. … My grandfather was in that group of people, but he was not a leader or anything. He worked hard and he ran a section of Metcalf Woolens and he commuted and he was active in the church, so that was his major focus.

SI: Were you aware of what was happening in the world before Pearl Harbor? Did you get news from newspapers or the radio?

MP: Well, don't forget I was born in '32, so I was very young at the time. … The only thing that I remember from December 7th is that my mother was very horrified that I might say something that would get me in jail, and she said, "Don't give away any secrets." … She was just being hysterical about it and of course she and my father were very afraid of what the Germans would do, but there was no real political discussion in the home and I was not really aware of the conflict that was coming. So, I mean I don't think it's a lack of my memory, I don't think it was there.

SI: How quickly did you see changes in Teaneck after December 7th?

MP: Well, I certainly remember we were given lectures on what we could and couldn't do. … Rations cards, we were restricted in what we ate, we were restricted in how we traveled. I don't remember any particular trouble because I had a German name. … Also, there were certain civic activities, I remember we had a garden, the usual stuff. I don't remember anything really dramatic. … I remember that our neighbor's two sons were in the service, and one of them was in the South Pacific, so I wrote to him all the time. … When he came back, he made a great mistake. He asked my parents if he could take me to a baseball game and he took me to a Yankees game. I never forgave him, I was a Dodger fan. [laughter] … I remember seeing our neighbor's son going off to war, but I didn't really feel that. I felt much more in the Korean War because it was my classmates who went. … You are teaching me how little I know about that period of my life. … I plucked a lot of it out.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: I want to ask you a little bit about your time in Longfellow.

MP: In Longfellow?

SI: Yes, you were there until 1944 and then you went into Teaneck High School. Tell me a little bit about the quality of the education you received.

MP: When my parents died, I wish I had saved it. I wrote an enormous amount when I was in the third grade. In fact, when the third grade teacher died a few years ago, her sister was telling me how she remembered this. They used to put up the essays on a bulletin board with a yellow background. I was the only one in the class that had two and I wrote so much and I guess, well, the teacher asked my parents if I was plagiarizing or copying or whatever. My parents were horrified by that. I wish I had those early writings but they're gone, they were thrown out. It was spotty--I remember the fourth grade teacher, I remember there was a fellow by the name of Morris Janowitz went on to have a good career, and that's where I picked up my nickname because there were four Marions in this little class. Now, Marion is not a usual name so each one of us had to have a nickname and mine was Pini, based on my last name. I remember being introduced to science but in such a way that I didn't really get excited by it. I was always much more of a reader. I also remember a fifth grade English teacher. I've become very much … a World War I student, that's my war, and Lily Gardell went to Gettysburg, so of course the Civil War was her war. … We went to lunch one day and she was not a reader, she was not an intellectual, she had a very hard time raising three kids financially, and we were talking about a history tour I had been on, I had gone to Verdun, and finally she said to me, "I don't know a thing about World War I. … Finally she started to recite "In Flanders Fields" and she said, "Oh my heavens, I remembered Mrs. Dearing teaching us that," and we both speculated that whether she had lost a son, a lover, a father, a friend or whatever, but she had the intensity of learning that comes only through experience. I think that that's one of the themes of my life is that I wanted to talk to people who really know something, not just running their mouths. I had a wonderful, I'm jumping around here, but I had a wonderful experience when I was on the AMFAC board. I succeeded Admiral John Highland who had been CINCPAC. He had that wonderful feeling of

the Navy, you know, turning over a battleship to somebody, but fortunately for the Navy he was just turning over a board seat. … He took me through Pearl [Harbor] as somebody who had been there just before the attack, who had commanded there. He was the commander at Pearl and I think those two experiences years apart taught me that I want to remember people and I want to learn from people who have actually experienced something. … He told me some wonderful stories which I'm going to use in my next book. Just to digress again, he was Admiral Spruance's pilot and just before the Battle of Midway, the night before, he went up to see Spruance, and he was sitting there reading Herodotus. John said, "Admiral, Admiral, the battle is tomorrow," and Spruance said to him, "I know that, but if I do anything now I'll just mess it up, it's better that I read Herodotus than go on and tinker with the details." … I wonder how many managers today are that wise--they're not necessarily reading Herodotus--would just stay out of the way. … John taught me a lot about the war in the Pacific and I guess another theme that has come out of my education, starting with Mrs. Dearing but also going all through the education, is that character counts. … I remember when Linda Menton and I, she's the head of the historical society in Hawaii, when we went up to Punchbowl which is the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. We wanted to put leis on John's grave. … We didn't know where it was and we asked the Japanese woman who was running the visitors center, she was a widow of the 442nd. "Oh, he was a wonderful man. Let me buy a lei, I'll go with you." … I learned a lot about this in Hawaii, the feeling of people who have experienced something who bridge large divisions. I'm jumping ahead of time, but one other point I'd like it make about Hawaii and why I feel so strongly about what Obama said, when I was assigned to go to Hawaii with Hill & Knowlton, I knew nothing about it, and I had been in a pretty Anglo society. All of a sudden I had to report to a Japanese attorney, a black PR director. My best friend became Pat Saiki who was a Japanese-American. There were very few people of my background that I had to work with and I find that a very enriching occupation. … Also I learned more, I think, in casual encounters than I have necessarily from books. Henry Walker, who was the CEO, taught me so much about Hawaii, Molokai, and the language of Hawaii. We can get into that later, but I have been very fortunate in reaching out to people. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Just sticking with the war period in Teaneck, did you see the impact of the war on your school? Were programs cut or new things introduced?

MP: Well, we lost some teachers to warfare. I'm embarrassing myself because I don't remember much about all of this. I remember we had trouble finding soap, getting things that we wanted to have. We had to ride our bikes, well we weren't driving, of course. There were some anti-Germanism feeling, of course. The Pacific was not important to many people on the East Coast. I remember that we were touting heroes that weren't heroes; I mean the only Pacific I remember is "Bull" Halsey who was a bull. I remember discussions about him. There was a certain respect for people like Rommel and I think history justifies that, but we were still being stuffed with mostly English literature, English history, and very much pro-British, but I don't remember any, with the exception of my grandfather being--well that was World War I--being put in jail. … I took my German courses, I took my German literature courses, I never felt any animus because I was German. I think another teacher that impressed me was someone who only wanted to only teach Shakespeare and I belonged to the Drew Theater and I won't go to any Shakespeare troupe,

I go to the other plays. So, that was a kind of negative experience although he was a very good friend and I appreciated him very much. I don't mean to come up so dry, but I don't remember much. … I mean Korea was much more a factor for us because, not at Drew because that was a theological campus and very few people went in the service, but Korea was--one of my friends died there, a couple were prisoners of war who at thirty-five looked fifty-five. … One story, again it's in the book, I was at *The Record*. I started working at *The Record* when I was sixteen, and this was the summer of '50, and I was on "stay-late." That was the person who answered the calls, telephones and so on between the two shifts, day shift, night shift. All of a sudden, there were five bells on the teletype machine and that meant an important story. Truman ordered the troops into Korea. … The National Guard unit from Teaneck was on summer maneuvers. People started calling, calling. I didn't know what to do. I mean, it took this idyllic summer and plunged it into all sorts of military stress. … Fortunately, the night city editor came in, who was a hard drinking warrior from military and women battles. He took over, but I remembered how fast a bucolic day turned into horror. … There were … a couple of cases at Drew but, of course, as I said that was a theological campus and so the war didn't affect us as much there as it did in Teaneck.

SI: Did you enter Teaneck High School in 1944?

MP: Six years. It was junior and senior high school.

SI: I know that a lot of the schools in North Jersey were very crowded and had to go on shifts. Was that the case for you when you went to high school?

MP: No. … Junior and senior high school, which is on Route 4, was very big. I mean, one of the things that Teaneck did have was a vision and they expected that they were probably going to grow so I was not aware of any crowding, any alternating classes, or anything like that. It wasn't until after the war when you began to have a large Jewish population come in because of the education expertise, and also then later black, and they put up a couple of new elementary schools. I think we had seven when we were growing up. I was never aware of any crowding, no. I was never aware of any--now it may have been just my situation--but I was never aware of taking classes at night or anything like that.

SI: What activities did you participate in while you were in school?

MP: Sports, sports. We had a team we called the "Assorted Nuts" and most of the friends that I still have today were on that team. We played all the sports together and there was one woman that we liked very much, but she was a terrible athlete, so we always put her in right field. … I was very active in sports and some of the other clubs. We played every sport, every year.

SI: Was that seen as different or unusual for a young woman to be playing sports? Was it encouraged or discouraged?

MP: There were women sports teams and they were encouraged, oh yes. I won't say that they were terrific as far as promoting women, however let me go back on that. I was on the Bergen County Historical Commission for a while and then I quit and there was a request came in from

the library, which I'll talk about in a moment. … I kept saying, "You know, this was a town that really fostered women's rights before many other communities." Now, when Paul Volcker Sr. was township manager, there was a woman who was a clerk, a wonderful clerk. The chief librarian was a wonderful New Englander who encouraged us to no end. When we outgrew the children's room, she immediately let us go to the adult room. We were all a bunch of readers. … Then there was Helen Hill, the vice-principal of the high school and later became principal, who came out of the discrimination of the Irish in Jersey City. I'll never forgive the town when they became proper. She didn't have a PhD so they wouldn't let her continue as principal but she loved us. We loved her until the day she died. She came back to all our reunions. … One of the other things that bothers me is that the people are so stuffed that you have to have a PhD for this, that, or the other thing. I know as many dummies with PhDs as without them frankly. The library was a source for all of us. We were all readers and, and until she died, she was a very sparse New Englander came down, ran the library. We used to have lunch every Christmas until she died and she encouraged us to read good literature. One little vignette--my father was in the great books group and of course he didn't have even a high school diploma. So, the new librarians who came in and if he wanted to take out Plato, they would try to explain to him, … the librarians would try to explain that this was maybe not a book he should take out. … He always quizzed the librarian and said, "I think I better leave it here, you need to read it more than I do." So, Agnes Norton, head librarian, finally changed the rules that if a carpenter comes in and wants to take out Plato, leave him alone, he knows more about it than you do. … He was in this book club with Mrs. Shelby, who I mentioned before. She's probably the most intelligent woman I've ever met except my cousin. She's the same way.

SI: Going back for a second, was your father's employment affected by the war at all?

MP: Well, he was one of the few men left around, and toward the end of the war it was very possible that he was going to be drafted into the Seabees. He probably did more work with less equipment and materials than he had done before and because he was respected as a carpenter and he was there, he did a lot of work, yes, but he did have trouble getting materials.

SI: He never went to work for a war industry.

MP: No, he wasn't very aggressive in employment. He would rather read than "carpenter."

SI: You previously mentioned your time in high school. I am wondering when you were put in this commercial course.

MP: Until I was a junior.

SI: Did that mean they were training you to be a secretary?

MP: Oh, yes, yes, of course. That's what women did, isn't it? [laughter]

SI: What did you see yourself doing before you had that life-changing meeting at Drew?

MP: Well, Mrs. Shelby was a tremendous influence. She came out of the German Texas community, grew up in Mexico. She was a great reader, her husband was one of the developers of TV for RCA, he was vice-president and chief engineer, and being in their home, I mean, just to see letters from another country. … She was the one who encouraged me enormously to read, to think about other things. She said one of the disappointments of her life was that I never told her how much financial struggle I had to go through college. She said, "My husband and I would have given you the money, we had lots of money." Well, she gave me a lot of other things, and she also was bilingual--Spanish, English--and she did the same thing with her two daughters. One is a very distinguished professor at the medical school at Duke, was a MacArthur Fellow. Her daughter, who was born one day before I, was a Foreign Service Officer and a translator from Portuguese to English. So, I think you could say that she encouraged all of us to be something other than just staying home and cooking, which she did for a long period of her life, but she read voraciously at the same time.

SI: How did you get involved in the newspaper?

MP: I needed the money. I was taking a course in journalism and they said *The Record* needed a high school correspondent and so I worked with a Teaneck editor at that point who was very good. … Then, I met Ross Wynkoop--you know, Bergen County was run by the Dutch when I was growing up--and Ross Wynkoop was the managing editor and a wonderful man and he always got a lot of jazz because he hadn't gone to college. … They moved me from town to town. At that point, *The Record* only had one paid reporter so when he went on vacation I had to cover for him. … It was wonderful, I went from Teaneck to Ridgewood and so on, and I always talked with the people I was covering. I'll just tell you one story. When I was covering the police department, he put me on Hackensack County seat when I graduated from Drew, I'll tell you that story. … I was on the police, fire, and political beat. … The Chief of Detectives was a tough, tough guy and I instituted a series of profiles of city leaders and I was talking to Paul, and if you ask dumb questions, you sometimes get wonderful answers. … Paul had been in the 1st Marines, he'd been in the northern island of New Zealand. He talked about how much he loved that land, he wanted to go back to that land. … He started talking about the poetry he had written when he was in the Marines and he looked at me and he said, "Don't you dare tell anybody here in this department that I wrote poetry." … Then, I asked the fire chief, you know, "Why he became a fireman?" and his father was a fireman at the time of the San Francisco earthquake and fire (1906), and he said, "I still remember the squeals of those Dalmatians trying to get away from the fire." … I was on the cusp, I think it's fair to say, of change in many ways, and I decided that tea parties--reporting just standard news--wasn't enough. … That's when I started doing the profile stories, and I covered some tough stuff, and I guess what I have found in my career is if you touch people personally, they never forget. When Hackensack, which was a very small department, lost five guys in one fire, it was long since I was on the beat. So, I got five roses and went back to headquarters, and of course the firemen didn't want to see anybody strange, they didn't know me. … I said, "Would you please tell the chief," he was the only person I knew there, "that signal thirteen is here?" They looked at me and they said, "Okay, we'll go up and tell him signal thirteen is here." That's firehouse slang for, "There's a woman in the house, keep your clothes on." … I've always taken the time to talk to the people around me and it's not always the obvious who teach you the most. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: We were just talking a little bit about your newspaper career. I am wondering if those stories you were telling me occurred after you graduated from Drew University.

MP: Well, I was at *The Record* four years while I was at Drew. … I guess one of the things that goes through my career is I'm always challenging people. … Arthur Jones, who was a wonderful professor and later head of the library, he asked us to do an essay [about] what we did last summer. … I wrote about my time in the city room, and I got an F. My first grade at Drew was an F. He said, "I didn't ask you to write novels, I wanted you to write reality." So, I called up Bill Caldwell who was the columnist for *The Record*, later taught at Rutgers, the only Pulitzer Prize *The Record* ever produced. I said, "Bill," and I told him the story, he said, "Okay, bring the guy up, we'll take him to the city room." Well, I immediately got switched from journalism to English and the F got expunged. I guess one of things I feel strongly--and it has nothing to do with what you do in life--but you should have a sense of realism. I listened to the speeches last night and I thought, "You know if you guys were in a corporation you would have been fired a long time ago." *The Record* taught me that, and I was fortunate to, you know, I would go to a raid on a house of prostitution in the morning, in the afternoon I'd hear a senator speak. I worked there four years part-time while I was at Drew. I would work on holidays. My senior year I lived in Rogers house and there was only one telephone. Three o'clock in the morning somebody came up to wake me up and said, "There's somebody on the phone. He sounds a little drunk but he wants to offer you a job." … It was the managing editor who said, "I want you to cover Hackensack," and that's the county seat. … He said, "I'm going to make it even more delicious for you. I'm going to hire a Harvard graduate to be your cub reporter." Well, we're still friends to this day. Then, when I was at Drew--as I say I worked all the time--when I graduated I left, of course, to be a full-time reporter and enjoyed it enormously. I covered Hackensack for four years. Learned about how our county seat is run, learned about all sorts of venal stuff, learned that what's obvious is often wrong. … Then, Wynkoop died, and they decided that I had to be woman's editor and I hated it, hated it, even though I changed the woman's department around a great deal. … At that point, also, I had married and my husband was in the production department and it got to be very sticky because if I criticized somebody making up my page, what was going to be the pillow talk that night? … Are you going to criticize me to my boss? So, that's when I left and eventually went into New York to work.

SI: I want to go back and start with your time in Drew. You talked about how you had gotten to Drew and what led you there, but I would like to know about your freshmen year. What was it like to make the adjustment to college? Did you commute from home or live on campus?

MP: I lived there. Well, I always had … the wind of, "Am I going to have the money?" at my back, but I guess I've always been driven by my mind and if you're driven that way, you make a situation more exciting perhaps than it would be otherwise. I edited the school newspaper. I was very caught up first in history, and then in political science, and when Bob Smith died, who had been the professor of political science, he had also been in John Cunningham's class at Morristown. So, I went back and I said that there were two things I remember about Smith. Now, a lot of professors would not be this flexible today. Number one, he wanted everybody to go to be a lawyer or Maxwell School or public administration, and I was already infected with

journalism. So, Smith gave me a wonderful gift--he invited John Cunningham who was at his apogee of his career at the *Newark News*, now dead, and we spent an evening together and we've been talking ever since. … I guess the essence of the friendship with John is not just history, but it's also how you look at things. We used to go to this kind of sports bar to have lunch, it was halfway between our homes, and we noticed the kids hanging around listening to us. … We found out they were all Seton Hall athletes, and finally John being John said, very politely, "Why are you listening to us?" and they said, "We're curious, we're curious." … Sidney Harman said this too when he bought *Newsweek*. "Curiosity is my driver," and I think it was John's driver, it was my driver, and Drew tweaked a lot of curiosity. … I talked with him on the telephone about a week or two ago, he's not in good health at all. … The other one was too, whatever is important at the time, look beyond the gestalt. … We had a series of comprehensives--three, three-hour programs at the end of our senior year. I did the first one and I went back and flopped in bed exhausted, and all of a sudden they were introducing *Brown vs. Topeka* (1954) and I knew that we were going to have the common law exam on Wednesday. So, I sat up all night and traced the Civil Rights trends of the court and everybody thought I was crazy, the exams were already written. But I knew Smith came in the day of the exam and said, "Okay, regardless of what's happening around you, you have to look at the whole gestalt." … He was a little nettled because of all the graduates, I was the only one who guessed it, who psyched him out, and he asked me how I did that and I said, "I just practiced what you were always preaching." So, I've been driven a lot by curiosity and John and I talk about this often and also I was interested. Harman who was a good friend, he talked a lot about curiosity too, and I had some very good teachers at Drew. Smith was good, but Brunhouse was the historian, now as I look back on it and Perry Leavell keeps shaking me about this, you know, he was a 1950s historian and you have to change and update because history moves too. There was not much influence of the Korean War on that campus because of it being theological as I said earlier. It was more among my Teaneck friends, some of who had to fight.

SI: You mentioned one was killed and others were in the prisoner of war camps.

MP: Right. …

SI: Were you to writing to anyone or were you in correspondence with any of the men or women who went off to the Korean War?

MP: I guess I did, but … they were not my close friends who were fighting.

SI: Looking at the Korean War as opposed to World War II, if you were involved with the war, it was very much part of your life, but for most people it was just something that they occasionally read about.

MP: That's right.

SI: It seems like more with your friends, but particularly with your exposure with the newspaper, it was a little more of a presence for you than maybe the average person.

MP: Yes, and they had all sorts of cartoons and posters around the city room, and as I mentioned the night city editor had been involved in World War II and my neighbor's sons were involved and I read a lot about the war. But typical of East Coast Americans, I didn't read a lot about the Pacific. It was only when I went on the AMFAC board that I had to read a lot about the Pacific.

SI: At the same time, the threat of communism was being heavily promoted with Senator Joseph McCarthy.

MP: Oh, yes. Yes.

SI: Tell me a little bit about that atmosphere, particularly working in the newspaper industry during that time. What do you remember about that?

MP: Well, I didn't see it. I mean I was covering a county seat. There was not much of it there. I guess the major thing that I remember was the great fight because J.B. Matthews--who was number two to McCarthy--had gone to Drew "Theo" … and Drew had to defend itself and before, and of course there's a lot in the Drew--I'm sorry, in the Methodist doctrines--that could be interpreted as communist. … I remember Bishop--oh what's his name--he went down and took on Congress and the Communists before anybody else did, Bishop Oxnam, and the Methodists had to make a strong stand against communism because their ideas seem to translate into communism which was not fair, but it did. I also remember that Leonia … was called the "Athens on the Hudson" and we had many, many people here who were at Columbia and we probably had a leftist cell for a long time. Also, there were a lot of physicists in town. Urey built the nicest house in town with his Nobel money, then he invited Fermi to come to town because his wife was partly Jewish. They couldn't stay in Italy. The two of them lived in Leonia as did many second rank people in nuclear fission. One night they all disappeared. That's when the project shifted from Pupin Hall, Columbia to Chicago. Then their families disappeared a little bit later. So there were always tensions, college versus non-college, professors versus non-professors, left-leaning. I was too new to town, too young to know whether they were actually communists, but there was a lot of dissention about what the Methodists were teaching. There was a lot of dissent on campus … but, you know, don't forget that during all this period I had to keep my head down to earn money and get good grades so I can stay in school. I was never left myself, although I see some of the doctrines. I think a lot of it was misused. … That doesn't really answer your question, but that's about all I know. …

SI: While you were on campus, was there a significant peace movement?

MP: I don't remember that, I think it was more--it got more into the race issue than it did the peace movement. I don't remember that. I mean, oh, Gray, I think his name was, one of the leaders eventually in Congress went to Drew Theo. I think the activity was greater in the theological school than the college because most of the kids were like I was--they were busting their butts to earn enough money to stay in school. … Gray started the great sit-in at the barbershop in Madison. … Also another thing I was very aware of later, there was a Methodist minister--I'm not very Methodist anymore--who came out of South Dakota, Black Hills, and there was a professor of theology in a college, and also Wes Pippert who was a journalist. They all came out of this little cluster of Methodists in South Dakota. One of them was assigned to be

a youth master--he was on the campus when I was there--youth master of a church outside of Chicago, and he met a young woman that he decided should be more aware of race relations in balance of financial situations and so on. … He kept taking her to Chicago, making her read [Dietrich] Bonhoeffer and the other great theologians which we had around campus too. They kept a lifelong friendship, and when he died some months ago, she came back to give the eulogy on the campus. Her name was Hillary Clinton. … We have always been very strong on women's rights because if you read Thorstein Veblen, women are the reserve labor force and they were needed on the frontier. They ran the homes while their husbands went out and hacked the land. I have had more support as a woman doing unusual things through my Methodism than I have from a lot of the ideology. But I never wanted to look like an unmade bed, I never wanted to challenge men all the time, and I think that if you hear this speech by Hillary, you'll see how much he did for her and how much he encouraged her to do what any woman can do, and that's the way a great number of us felt it at Drew. … Now, some went the traditional path but many of us did not.

SI: Can you tell me a little more about the types of stories that you covered for *The Record* in the early 1950s?

MP: Okay, I won't talk about the women's stories. I changed the woman's page around a lot, I did a lot of profiles of outstanding women. … I covered a lot of fires because Hackensack was an old town, a lot of old houses, and I covered many of those. There was a lot of prostitution in town, I went on raids of houses of prostitution. I did, of course, cover the city council and some of the personalities on the council. Some of the fights about how the town was going to develop--when it came to appoint new people there was often a fight because they had been a pretty white Anglo-Saxon town and all of a sudden it was going to change. I also covered many stories on the personalities of people who were coming into leadership. Also, the black community had been pretty much ignored by *The Record*, I covered the black beatings as well. I remember going to a party given by a black leadership group. I was the only white person. Wow, that was an adventure because I'd never been in that situation before. I can tell you what I didn't write, was the typical lady's stories. I didn't do any of that even as woman's editor. If I had to write one of those I assigned somebody on my staff to do it. There were certain fights about Route 4 and Route 80 that I had to cover. Now, I guess the story that the managing editor picked up and waved around as my best one was one of the little black churches burned on Good Friday. I wove in the race relations, the religion, what it did to the community, what people did to help the black church to still have services for Easter. And of course … don't forget there were a lot of investigations in New Jersey about official corruption and, well, I don't want to get into too much detail on this one, but there was a fire chief who used to--when he came for inspections he expected some money or some bottles in his car. … I told somebody the story and they laughed at me, and then when the guy came to inspect his plant, oh, yes. I think that what those stories did. … As I say I would cover a house of prostitution in the morning and Senator [Clifford] Case in the evening. … A lot of what I've written in the latest book is the surprise of crises. I covered automobile accidents, I covered lots of fires. … Until you see crises at the time--my neighbor is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon and he loves me when I keep saying most of the people who are running business today have never run anything but their mouths--and one of the things that this whole experience gave my was a cut at reality that I would not otherwise have seen and stayed with me still.

SI: You started working for *The Record* in high school and you worked pretty heavily part-time during your time at Drew. You said in your senior year, you became a managing editor, is that correct?

MP: No. The managing editor reference was he called me up in the middle of the night drunk and offered me the job.

SI: The job as what?

MP: As the municipal reporter for Hackensack. … Later, I became the woman's editor. … There was a lot of ill feeling about women in executive positions there. Now, there was not with Wynkoop and also there was a lot of religious fragmentation because the religion editor converted to Catholicism and everybody had to be Catholic, and so she created enough tension that the managing editor said, "You're going to be fired if you don't stop that." I mean, I think religion has a place keep but keep it out of the city room.

SI: They had a religion editor then?

MP: Yes. That was not me.

SI: How long were you in the job at the city desk before you went to become the women's editor?

MP: Okay, I graduated in '54, I covered Hackensack until '58. I left the paper in '61 or '62. I taught for a year in New Milford and I also did publicity for the school system. Then, I was offered a job. … I keep trying to tell my students who think in designs and programs and you're not ever supposed to be surprised. I really didn't like teaching, I really was a journalist at heart, so the managing editor of *Good Housekeeping* lived in Fair Lawn and he called me up he said, "We're starting a new section. Would you like to come and work for us?" That's when I went to *Good Housekeeping* and tangentials are often important. The woman who hired me was a chemist and she was one of the "old-crowd Jewish" who lost so much in the Depression. She was a wonderful woman. My job interview was all history, not anything to do with the magazine. Years later I asked Ruth and she said, "Oh, I knew you could do what you needed to write for the magazine. I just wanted to know if you were going to be a good luncheon companion." I stayed at *Good Housekeeping* for two years. I met a woman there that was a friend until she died, who founded *Working Woman*. Then, I went to Borden and I was there about, I guess, four or five years. I learned a lot and Augustine Marusi who was the CEO had been as a young naval officer assigned to Brazil. Brazil was terribly important for America during World War II. That's where all the supplies went to North Africa--Tom Kindre will tell you this--all the supplies went from Recife bulge to North Africa … because it was safer than sending them across the North Atlantic. … I also got interested in Brazil because of Barbara Shelby, Mrs. Shelby's daughter, was a Foreign Service officer and went to Brazil. … She invited Bill and me to go down. It was a wonderful experience and I got interested in Brazil. I found a whole branch of my family there, then went on to get my PhD in Brazilian studies which I have

now broadened to German-Brazilian economic relationships which were important in the last century but they're even more important now.

SI: From 1954 to 1958, that was the city desk, and then, from 1958 to 1961 or 1962 you were the woman's editor?

MP: … That's right.

SI: Regarding that last period, you said you never liked being the women's editor.

MP: I didn't like it, no.

SI: One of the big stories during that period was the Kennedy campaign, that sort of topic. Would you be able to cover that in any way?

MP: No, that was all political reporting. One of the reasons I didn't like being woman's editor is that it was very restrictive, and also I had just married and I was thinking about a home and cooking and so on. … I wanted to have children, but there were, you know, other responsibilities, and Bill worked at the paper as well.

SI: You said you did not like it, but can you elaborate a little more on what you did not like?

MP: Well, I don't like being put in a woman's ghetto. It's that simple. Now, I did a lot of stories on women's leadership, roles in the communities, because they were starting to phase in as council people, mayors, and so on. I don't remember doing any national figures, but I must have done some of those. No, it was just more, I didn't want to be slotted as just a woman, and I wasn't as covering Hackensack, but when you're a woman's editor it's hard not to be.

SI: When you say you changed the page around, are you referring to putting in these profiles of women leaders?

MP: … I did all the serious stories, things about women, but it wasn't enough to satisfy me but it was too much to satisfy the paper.

SI: Tell me a little bit about your year teaching in New Milford. Did you teach public relations there?

MP: I taught history and I handled public relations with the school system.

[TAPE PAUSED]

MP: … This is going to sound arrogant, but the department chair saw no reason in teaching anything but English history. I have a fundamental problem with that. Number one because it's not the dominant history in the United States. Number two, you use history to understand the future, not just the past. … I was the only woman in the department, I was the only one who hadn't gone to Teachers College, and I was the only one who didn't have a Master's degree, but

he laid on me pretty hard. He was always trying to insult me. Well, I'd been insulted by better already. So, we had this huge study hall one day. I was teaching World War I and I couldn't figure out the name of Ypres. I didn't think it was good to talk to the students about Ypres, so I asked him, "What was the name and how do you pronounce it for Ypres?" He asked me what it was and I said, "It's a small town in Belgium," and he gave me this lecture in front of all these students saying, "Why should a British historian know about Ypres?" … So I said in a very loud voice why you should know, "It's where the British lines stabilized in World War I." … Also, the assistant--I had no trouble with the principal and the superintendent of the schools were very much in my corner--but the assistant principal was a little, short Italian. His prime aim was to make women cry. … He never accomplished it with me but he tried and tried until the day I left. … Also, you had to be careful. I said the War of 1812 was not exactly a victory for us. The next morning, … a guy with a VFW cap on, I thought "Oh, I'm in trouble," and he said, "Mrs. Kelly, you're telling our students lies, we were not in the War of 1812." Well, by the time we got through talking he said, "Maybe I better read more about it before I talk with you again." It just wasn't enough for me, it just wasn't enough.

SI: You also did public relations. Was that the first time you actually had a job in public relations?

MP: Yes, sort of. It was pretty minor. I mean, that was just a part of my job, but it was the first PR, yes.

SI: A lot of PR people come from journalism backgrounds. Is there any kind of adjustment that needs to be made to go from journalism to public relations?

MP: Oh, you bet. Probably less today than there was before, but journalism you dug and dug and dug for the story. You talked to all sorts of people. You are more restricted when you were in PR. You … knew what the stories where, you had to write them, you didn't have quite the same freedom. Now, Hill & Knowlton was a wonderful experience because we did. … Instead of making the decisions on the news you had to make people decide on the news, which is quite different.

SI: You went from teaching in school to *Good Housekeeping*?

MP: Right, I was there two years.

SI: You were particularly focused on issues related to health and diet, correct?

MP: Right, right. It was just when the diet stuff was catching on and Hazel Schoenberg--who was an economist, home economist--and we were hired to do this "You and Your Diet" column. … In fact, Hazel and I still see each other; she and her husband come up from Texas every Christmas. … I was there two years and one of the things that I've run into in my life were toxic bosses, and we had a terrible one there. … Beatrice and I were very close and we kind of weathered it, and Beatrice left to found *Working Woman* and I left for Borden.

SI: I do not know too much about *Good Housekeeping*, but it seems like a magazine that might have attempted to impose certain roles on women. What was the atmosphere there like?

MP: Well, it was changing … and the editors were really very good. The food editor was a good old New England woman. She was probably, oh, sixty-five or so and she was just a wonderful person. She knew a lot about food, she wasn't frantic about it, she was a very good grammarian. I learned a lot from those women and they were the breakthrough generation, pretty much in the 1920s, and Ruth--the woman I reported to--was just marvelous. She was a chemist, she was a grandmother, she read a lot of history. She hired me because I knew history. So, these were the breakthrough women. They were no pushovers.

SI: So this was very different from being the women's editor?

MP: Oh, absolutely, absolutely, and it was a national magazine too.

SI: What would be a typical column you will write as part of the "You and Your Diet" series?

MP: Well, Hazel and I would sit with Ruth and we would decide what were some of the problems. You know … when I grew up, doctors never talked about nutrition. Now, we were beginning to talk about nutrition and calories and so on and exercise. … I would do the copy and Hazel would do the recipes. They were always tied in and why this recipe was good for you. … I was setting up a home at that point and doing cooking myself, so it was a nice little interlude. Two years was enough.

SI: This may be off topic but around this time the surgeon general's report comes out about the effects of smoking. Was smoking worked into this at all?

MP: We didn't get into the smoking issues too much. We were focused mostly on nutrition and food. I'm sure the magazine did something on smoking.

SI: I was curious because now it is much more related. Please tell me what your job at Borden was like.

MP: I was doing PR. … I did a lot of work with the chemical department which was developing. I did some food publicity because of my background. Once again I was very fortunate because Marusi found out I was interested in Brazil. When I went to Brazil he introduced me to some of the leading business people in Brazil. They all knew I was there under his aegis. I was … getting research for my dissertation. One of the Germans--I focused on the Germans in Brazil--and one of his very great friends was a German who founded the major line of drugstores which were very successful. He took me around and he showed me the one city in Brazil where cars are not important. It was designed by a German, it was a very beautiful city, Curitiba. I met a whole branch of my family that were entrepreneurs in Brazil. I don't think you should ever overlook in business the ties that have nothing to do, but everything to do, with the relationship. Now Marusi used to love to talk about "Os Sertoes" which is a very famous poem in Portuguese. He spent his young years there. Executives going to Brazil were like West Pointers. If you had the "black ring" you were going up. I'll just tell you one story about this.

Women could not at that point cover the office at noontime, that was too important for them to do. So, one day the fellow next to my next office, his wife and he had just had a child. He said, "Could you cover for me? You're going to work through lunch anyhow," and I said, "Of course." Well, as luck had it Marusi called down, he wanted some information on Brazil. So, I got the information. I took it up to the executive floor--at that point there was no woman on the executive floor, even as the secretary. So, Marusi thought he was doing something very kind for me so when Steve got back from lunch, he told him … how pleased he was that I had gotten the information on Brazil. … He [Steve] threatened to fire me because I was on the executive floor. I said, "Oh, that's very interesting. I guess I better go up again and tell Mr. Marusi you just fired me." … Women have come a long way and I remember distinctly women could not go on that executive floor. I had somebody interviewed for a job, I need somebody--in fact if you know of somebody--I really need a production person and a secretary. I can't keep ahead of everything right now. I got two more books on, I've got lectures, *et cetera, et cetera*, and I can't keep ahead of everything. … This fellow came to be interviewed by me. Number one, he expected a corporate salary. Number two, he looked down maybe because I went to Drew not Princeton. I said, "You forget … when I applied to college, I couldn't go to Princeton. Now, a woman runs it," and I think--I have to be fair--I think that it's a very hard time for a white, Protestant male, I think they're the most endangered species. That's why I wanted the cover what I wanted on my book. Now, I think of my cousin, who was a very, very wonderful man--came from a well-to-do family--went to Dartmouth and at Columbia P&S, … a great ophthalmologist. I think of the support system he had growing up. Number one, money, number … two, a wife, secretaries, everybody was taking care of him. … Now all that's been stripped away, the ground is much more even, so I don't think it's a shock for young men today. One of my students said to me, "You know, I know that my wife is going to have a better career than I have, so I'll stay home and take care of the kids and she'll work." Now, that would have been unheard of when I was growing up, except in sheer economic necessity. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: We were just talking about sexism at Borden.

MP: Borden, yes. I had one woman, very dear friend who was an economist, and then the woman who ran the test kitchen was a home economist. … They were two very, very respected women, but were respected only for their jobs, nothing more. … I wanted something more and I could see I was not going to get it. I wanted to grow.

SI: What are some other examples of things that women were barred from doing at that time? It seems so strange today that you were not allowed on the executive floor. What other things seem jarring when you look at today's world?

MP: Well, I look at Hill & Knowlton as a wonderful experience, I really do.

SI: I was referring to earlier when you were at Borden.

MP: No, no, this is the most dramatic story. You know, my name is spelled the masculine way. It's A-N usually is the feminine. In fact, when you see two Marion's meet they always say, "A or

O?" … The French and the Irish use O for both sexes. So many times I have been mistaken for a male, particularly with my background. At Hill & Knowlton, I had to really fight to get to be on the account staff and Tom was having a lot of troubles at that point so they needed to reorganize. … You know this about Tom, I guess. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

MP: It was hard enough for women to make the breakthrough to be hired in a non-traditional role. It was hard enough to see a woman with a non-traditional background. Now, I was fortunate at this point I was married, which took the sting off some of this. However, as women started to rise, that's where the rub came because maybe they would be okay to be an account supervisor, but how about an officer of the corporation? I had a little bit of difficulty with this … because of the person I reported to, but never Miller. Miller wanted that--everybody knew he wanted that--and the very good officers supported me a lot. They told me what their problems were in PR--expected … me to help them with, which I did. It shocks me, it shocks me, of all the officers at … Textron, I'm the only one left living. I was the baby of the group, but still.

SI: Going back to your time at Borden, what would you do in a typical day?

MP: What would I do? I talked to editors. I take editors out to lunch. I'd write releases, I wrote booklets. I was used a little bit on Brazil because Brazil was getting a lot of attention from Borden at the time. Also, the company was changing--it had been run by Middle Western dairy farmers and Marusi was an engineer and … he was very honest with me. He said, "You know Marion, I know a lot about chemistry, but it gets me into a lot of trouble when I have to decide who's going to eat and who's not going to eat," because you know so much of the fertilizer and so on in Latin America. … I think he was honest in showing that what was happening in business now was the responsibilities were very different. One of the things that plagued me in writing the book was to think about how things have changed, how you adapt to it, how you hold some values that are still useful and some that are not. … I think that he hit something very early. I've not been trained to figure out how people can eat or not eat. He was a very bright, a very compassionate person. I don't know whether he's still alive or not. I doubt it.

SI: How often would you go to Brazil in that job?

MP: Oh, I didn't travel. … That's another thing, women did not travel a great deal.

SI: I thought you travelled.

MP: I went Brazil four times. Once when I was at Hill & Knowlton, and they asked me to do a PR survey of Brazil. I went down once for fun, to visit Barbara, and then I went twice to work on my dissertation, which I must admit Hill & Knowlton was very supportive of.

SI: I thought you had gone to Brazil when you were with Borden.

MP: Some of that was at Borden, and some of that was at Hill & Knowlton. … I never went … specifically to Brazil for Borden.

SI: Going overseas was another thing they would not allow women to do then.

MP: It just didn't work. I mean, they had to, it just didn't work. I was there [Brazil] mostly for social and academic. So, it would be a stretch for either a man or a woman.

SI: What were your duties when you went to Hill & Knowlton?

MP: I was in creative services with Tom Kindre. I did a lot of writing. I did an ad campaign for AMFAC, which is introducing them as a new conglomerate on Wall Street. I did a lot of speeches. … Sometimes it would be analyzing client material, whether that was appropriate or not. It's a little bit of financial work, but not a lot because that's not my strength, and John Hill, whom I adored, was very good about using people. When he was making his first trip to Brazil, he asked me to give him some books, discuss Brazil with him. … He was something in his eighties when he died, and he still had a very thirsty mind. He was the founder of Hill & Knowlton--John Hill.

SI: Yes.

MP: You looked a little mystified.

SI: No, I thought you were going to say something else.

MP: No.

SI: Did the companies that you were working with as clients ever express any problem working with a woman or in the roles you were in?

MP: It depended on the client. Most of them did not. Most of them, if you knew what you were doing, … they were fine. Oh, you know, I should tell you one other thing, academic. My neighbor--two of my neighbors--across the street, one was head of the anthropology department, a Chinese specialist, and the other one was the head of the biochemistry department at P&S, world-recognized Guggenheim Fellow, *et cetera, et cetera*. When I finished my Master's degree, … both of them wanted me to come Columbia to get my PhD. Well, number one, I did it at night. Number two, they had not been very happy with the Brazilian--well with the Latin American Department. … The best department around here was NYU, which would let me go at night. … I was turned down at Columbia to go. Well, I don't like being turned down, so I'll shorten the story by saying Bill used to sit on the porch and wait for me to come home from work and Mort came over and he said, "What did Marion do at Columbia?" Bill said, "What do you mean? What do you mean?" When they turned me down I demanded an audience with the department chair. I demanded an audience with the person who turned me down, and they said stupid things like, "You never demonstrated you could write." I've been earning my living by writing since sixteen. Okay, then we had a long discussion. "Is there anybody at Columbia who could speak for you?" Well, I hadn't used any of their names. Well, there must have been about six or eight department chairs and professors from Columbia. I listed them all and upset Columbia. "You mean you turned down this woman?" So, Bill and Mort thought that was a

pretty funny story. They finally accepted me and I turned it down because I wanted to go at night. … Mort later said the department had never had a woman PhD candidate and they were not about to try. You know, it was academe as well as business, but I always found another way.

SI: So, you actually entered graduate school back when you were at *The Record*?

MP: No, I started going to graduate school at Borden.

SI: How long did you spend in graduate school overall?

MP: Oh, forever. I went at night. I think I finally got my PhD in '77, and left about six months later for Textron. So, I did the Master's and the PhD at night. It had to be a good ten-year stretch.

SI: You said that you went to Brazil twice for your dissertation. Can you tell me more about your research and how you collected it?

MP: How I did the research? Well, I had a lot of help. I found a branch of my family who had left Pinsdorf, Austria, first going to Meissen and then went to Brazil to establish businesses. In fact, I'm going back to Brown and I'm going to bring the contrast between how the Germans developed business in south of Brazil versus the way the Americans developed on the Amazon. The Americans failed, the Germans succeeded. So, my cousin was a very brilliant woman, she had worked for Alfred Knopf. She helped me, telling me the books I should go to, people I should talk to. … Another cousin was head of the Hans Staden Institute which was the collection of materials of the Germans in Brazil. … She introduced me to many historians, many people who migrated from Russia, from Germany, to Brazil. She took me down to Volkswagen and I went to talk to the people there and she was wonderful. She had a very narrow life herself, but she certainly helped me a great deal, and then, business people like Knopf, rather, who was one of Marusi's protégés. I'm sorry, the other way around, Marusi was his protégé. What else? I did a lot of reading. I went to Pinsdorf in Austria. I talked to a lot of people who were involved--Council of the Americas and a couple of the ambassadors got involved in this because they had been to Brazil earlier in their careers--and I had a lot of people who helped me a great deal, including my family are no creampuffs, they knew what they were doing. As a matter-of-fact, one of the stories, … I would be the actress and Bill would sit back and watch and when Barbara introduced me to the Pinsdorfs in Brazil, they had this huge genealogical chart in their office and they had Germans in Meissen, Germans--but they didn't have the American branch. … Bill said they looked at that and they loved that chart--it was so nice and neat and organized--and they didn't want to put the Americans on the chart, but they didn't want to leave you out either. They had a moral dilemma--they put me on. … He never left the paper. He got into alcohol and left.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to say about your graduate career?

MP: Well, I was very fortunate, I had very pragmatic people. John Flagg was my thesis adviser and he was departmental deputy and the department chairman was a good friend. They did a great deal to push me through. It was not easy doing it the way I was doing it. There was one professor who said he didn't like me because I came from business. He was pretty far left and I

was a woman, and he said he was going to do everything possible--almost when my degree was finished--everything possible to make sure I didn't get my degree. So, I went to John and I told him the story, he said, "Marion, just cool it, just cool it." The next time I saw this professor he was all sweetness and light. I said, "John what did you do?" He said, "Oh, just one word, Marion--tenure." And they were … wonderful traditional historians but they were very good to me. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Tell me about the decision to go from Hill & Knowlton to Textron.

MP: … It wasn't a tough decision at all. I wanted more; there were opportunities for women. I was not going to go anywhere in Hill & Knowlton. If they wouldn't make me a senior VP that was the end of it. Also, AMFAC was floundering, so I figured it was time to move. … There was an old newspaper man whom I had succeeded. I liked most of the people there. Miller was a very innovative, responsible businessman, nobody knew about the Federal Reserve at that point. So, it wasn't much of a decision, I wanted more.

SI: What were your new responsibilities in this job?

MP: In that job? I was vice-president in charge of communications. I had a department which included financial, governmental, publications, whole bunch--you know, traditional PR stuff and by and large with except one woman who didn't want to work, I had a very supportive staff except I had a Navy fighter pilot who was now out of the Navy and he said, "Oh, in the Reserves I have a woman officer as my superior. Now I have you, but that's alright. We'll deal with it," and he always did. I had no trouble at all with my staff. They knew … I knew what I was doing, I never did anything difficult to them. It was a fresh breeze in the department because Bob had been there a long time and he was very good, but he was very old in his ideas and his body. I had a couple--there were a couple of the officers who didn't like the idea, but most of them were very thoughtful and very good and the women directors too.

SI: You went there to work at Textron in 1977, and earlier in the decade the women's rights movement came into its own. Was there generally less resistance to the idea of women taking these kind of roles?

MP: Well, you know, it depended. I had two experiences in Providence. One was … the eating clubs, … women couldn't eat there. Then they would let women come in, but they had to go through the kitchen and the kitchen help didn't like all these women tramping through their kitchen. So, one day a woman from Drew, who is now head of the Rhode Island School of Design and one of the chief judges of the court, we arrived at the front door for a meeting at the same time. Okay, time to go in the front door and the three of us went in and that ended the segregation. You know, the old Yankee heritage if you know what you're doing, you're accepted a lot faster male or female, and the walls were coming down at the eating club. I could go to the main dining room now.

SI: During the time there, you worked on media aspects related to G. William Miller becoming the Treasury Secretary.

MP: First Federal Reserve [Chair], and then Treasury.

SI: Yes. What stands out as the challenges in doing that?

MP: Well, of course Bob was phasing out, and I was phasing in, so we worked together and very well. The challenges first that people have to understand that and Carter didn't understand this, Clinton didn't understand this--going from a small state capital to a very large position in Washington is a big PR challenge. … I remember being asked the question, just who would ask a dirty question of Bill? He was a wonderful, honest, very sensitive guy, but that doesn't matter in Washington as we're seeing now. The tension was great because people were calling all the time. I mean, I would get calls at midnight, and then they expected me to be alive and well, and sharp with my answers. I had a good staff, we never broke. We worked with Bob Gray and Larry Speakes was the person who I worked with most. He was a wonderful man, and I feel very badly the way his career has tanked. I've lost track of him now. You had to be careful. You know, you had a dual role, you had to understand what was happening within the company, but you also have to understand how it was going to be looked upon outside the company. … That was my hardest lesson because Textron was so much a paragon, and so was Miller that they couldn't imagine what was going to happen when they got to Washington and I had to. Larry used to come up and come have dinner a lot together, just to talk over what we were doing. … They wanted to get as much dirt as they could on Miller and Textron. I laugh at some of the stuff I'm seeing now. I mean, one reporter got in when we weren't watching and he was going through Miller's telephone logs on his secretary's desk. … You had to be very careful of who you talked to, of who you trusted. Tremendous newspaper blitz because most people didn't know Miller, and then they started stories like he came from Oklahoma, he had high cheekbones and white hair, and everybody decided he was part Indian. … I was trying to knock down that story, and finally Bill came back and said "Forget it Marion, I'll be part Indian, we've got more important battles to fight," which is true. … Providence was a small town. I mean, I remember going to church one Sunday with two of the other officers and there was a petition going around, sign for--it was pro-abortion--and the three of us signed it and it was delicious, I used my Kelly name and one of the officers was upset. … "What was I doing?" I said, "Look at the other two names, there were two officers who outranked me." But you had to be very careful about that and also there was a lot of more interest in ethnicity than it was in New York. I mean the first thing they wanted to find out--not Textron, but the town--whether you were Catholic, Jewish, or Methodist or Protestant. So what, you know.

SI: When you were dealing with G. William Miller becoming the Federal Reserve chair, did that become your entire job or is it something that you do in addition to your regular duties?

MP: Oh, you had to keep everything else running, and Bob and I worked very well. He knew he was retiring. I had been hired to be his replacement. We really had the same philosophy of things and so we had to keep the department running--the annual reports, the regular reports, the press queries, the financial news, community events--oh, yes, we had to do all that too. Now,

obviously we put our focus on Miller to protect him, but Bob knew Miller a lot better than I did so it worked out.

SI: What other challenges stand out from your time at Textron?

MP: Well, they were very supportive. I was invited to teach at Brown and they were very understanding of that, a lot of them were Brown graduates, of course. I was traveling back and forth between Providence and here which was difficult, but they tried to make an accommodation for Bill. I guess the worst part I had was that I was bringing a breath of fresh air in New York into a department that stood still for a while and that's not an unusual thing to have happen and I had one terrible boss. … Also, Providence has a very different milieu than New York, so I had to adjust to that and I was much more … in sight than I was. In New York, you're just one of a lot. There, Providence is a very small town and the leaders are under a lot of scrutiny and Brown helped me too. The president was on the Textron board. The department that I taught in was very interested in Textron and business. … They were kind of my sanctuary unlike business school where they don't want you to know anything about business, they felt that that was an important part of them understanding and an important part of Providence.

SI: Can you kind of describe to me other ways that Textron was involved with this tie with academia on the one hand and on the other hand its relationship with the government?

MP: … Very much in the community. Miller was trying to turn Providence around. It had been an armpit city in a sense that when the textile mills went south, it was a very poor town. So we were very involved. Also, he had a lot of innovative programs, you know, education programs, trying to get old companies up to speed so we were involved in the PR part of that and the community relations part of that. I also gave some speeches you know trying to say what they're trying to do, what *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera*. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: We were talking about your time at Textron. You talked a lot about the work you did in relation to G. William Miller. Are there any other stories that stand out from that period before we move on to your next position?

MP: … Well, they used me as a resource for ideas, for change. There were a couple of very, very bright officers, one I was very close to, and we had great ideas not only for the company, but just for books and other things in general. … One was a helicopter-head of the helicopter division, which was a very far reaching future-oriented division so you had to have a wide range of ideas. … Also, the community expected certain things of you. None of this was a burden to me.

SI: What do you mean when you say the community expected certain things of you?

MP: They expected you to give speeches. They expected you to have intelligent conversation over lunch. They expected a certain outreach. … Also, we tried to bring Brown more into the business community a little bit because they're up on the hill and a lot of the Textron offices

didn't feel comfortable around academics--not Brown, anybody--but we tried to bridge that too. I think we did.

SI: You listed on your resume that you were also involved in getting the company out of Iran?

MP: Yes, well, not really. Just in one small way. I've always felt that you should read as widely and be as widely available as you can. Bob Ames, who was a wonderful man, he headed the helicopter division, very brilliant engineer, Columbia, did some of the high tech early introduction of aerospace. … Everybody was saying, "Iran's safe, Iran's safe, Iran's safe." Well, I always questioned the conventional wisdom. That's why, Jeffrey Immelt, GE, he's asking, and also the SOSH unit at West Point--they're asking the questions that should be asked. I read the *New York Review of Books*. I assure you there not many people in corporate life that read the *New York Review of Books*. There's too much closing in of interests. … There were all sorts of letters in the *New York Review of Books* showing that there were lots of problems in Iran. So, I went into Bob and he was probably the only officer I could have said this to, "Bob, look at this, there's trouble coming." … He said, "We've got some Vietnam veterans there. Let me have them ask around." He said, "Oh, sure enough the Shah is pushing too many modern ideas too quickly, there's trouble, there's trouble." Well, we were the largest employer, and we got everybody out except one idiot that cut his thumb. Everybody else got out safely. We did not suffer the business ramifications that many companies did. My point there is don't be too narrow in what you read and what you talk to--who you talk to--and Bob was an unusual manager in the sense that he would listen to me about that, check on it, and found out and avoided mistakes as a result. … It wasn't just because it was me, it was the fact it was the situation. That's what I meant there. I didn't haul anybody out of Iran.

SI: Well, it sounds like you were key in getting the information to the right person.

MP: Right, right.

SI: Why did you decide to go to INA?

MP: Well, Miller had left. The company was going to be a very different company as it turned out to be. A long time after this, they did what Immelt talks about GE. We stopped making things people wanted to buy and we had more fun and made more money slinging things around. Well, money around, well that didn't last very long, and also I had a boss that I really--I was never going to go anywhere with him. He was just a very rancid person trying to hold on to power, and I was approached by INA and I went. … Also, I was flying, commuting, between here and Providence was getting to be hard. Philadelphia was closer and also I could hop on a train.

SI: Tell me about your job at INA. You were there for two years, correct?

MP: Yes, I wasn't there very long. Well, that came out with the merger. I had the communications, annual report, civic giving, advertising--they had a very large advertising program--financial relations, the usual run of things. … Also, we reached out to the community a lot. Also, we had to explain later why the merger came about, what it was going to

accomplish. … We got this idea of, the equals INA and CG. … You had to be ready for surprises and it did not turn out to be equals. CG became a dominant power.

SI: Tell me a little bit more about the merger and your role in it.

MP: Well, I'll tell you one experience I had. We knew on a Friday afternoon that the merger was going to be announced on Monday morning and of course it was material information and nobody wanted to tell anybody anything. … I said, "Wait a minute, I've got to get a couple of members of my staff up to speed because they have to explain to the community why this is happening and they can't be upset themselves. I have to tell them what's happening." Right after the market closed everybody told me I was wrong, but I had no choice so I told a couple of people and I said, "You understand if this information gets out, it means your job?" Nobody leaked, nobody said anything, and the next morning they had to explain why it was happening to the community and they did it very well. Also, we had to do all the press interviews, we had to explain again and again why the merger took place. There was one man who said, "We're superior, we're brighter," *et cetera, et cetera*, and I said, "Yes, but you're not unified." We were a bunch of twelve entrepreneurs where CG had one very, very powerful management group and they won. Very few people carried over from INA. I had to counsel the chairman what he should be doing *et cetera, et cetera*, and I ended up counseling both chairmen at certain points. It was, you know, the standard meat and potatoes of merger information. And also we worked on the new name. We wanted to combine Connecticut General into INA, that's why it's CIGNA, because we used the three initials.

SI: Right after the merger you went to Smithkline Beckman. Was that of your own accord?

MP: I could see I was not going to get anywhere and I was offered the job at Smithkline, which was really a holding pattern. I really--I was no longer an officer, it was at the time when I was going through the divorce, so I couldn't think too long range. … I did the financial public relations, did the annual report, speeches for executives, cautioning people on what to say to analysts at public meetings. You know, all of these jobs, I did the "dirty questions book," which means you try to think of all the questions that might come up from the audience. … Then you go around the corporation and say, "What should you say? How should he answer this?" That's to avoid embarrassment. I mean, Bob Ames, he forgot sometimes he was talking to the press. That's another thing you had to do, and they asked him about selling helicopters and how it was done and so on. … He said, "Well, we're not selling helicopters to nuns." Well … he should never have said it, and he knew the minute it was out of his mouth he should never have said it, but you have to caution people.

SI: In the one anecdote you talked about impressing upon people that if they let information go, it was going to cost them their job. Obviously you cannot control everyone at the corporation, so how did you try to control leaks?

MP: … Well, you had to be … as honest as you can be within the parameters. You can't tell them all you know because some of it is classified information. You have to try to calm down the best people so they won't leave, and there were a lot of job losses when INA and CG merged and you have to do it the most humane possible way. This whole idea of firing by email I think

is awful. It's quick, it's inexpensive, you don't have to put up with any emotion--what you do to the corporation and the person--and it's more and more firing by emails today, everybody, straight out of Kafka.

SI: After your year at Smithkline, you joined the board of directors at Keystone Electrical.

MP: Yes. AMFAC was the big appointment, that was the board of directors too. I was on the board of directors when I was still at Textron and that was a wonderful experience.

SI: You told me some of the stories, some on the record but some off the record. Did that bring you to Hawaii quite frequently?

MP: Oh, yes, sometimes every other month. What I learned from the AMFAC experience was Henry Walker--he was a marvelous CEO--he was strong in his persona. He had more women on the board than any other company. There were three of us on the board that was listed on the New York Stock Exchange. He felt, although he was a Haole from an old New England family, he felt he had to open the avenues in two ways. One, he had as I said before, blacks, women, Hawaiians, all sorts of people on his board. The other thing he felt was, and he was absolutely right but he wasn't tough enough to do it, that Hawaii could no longer flourish as a … island that depended just on sugar and tourism. They were both very fragile when downturns came. … Also, that he had to reach out from his Hawaii base and that's when he reached into the Pacific, in the South. Northeast, he bought a potato factory, he realized sugar was vulnerable so he tried to look at other alternatives, did a lot of land development, but always with a sensitivity of what he was doing and how some people opposed it. There's one wonderful story, his brother-in-law was the senior VP and he was a graduate of Harvard and Stanford Business School, dressed like he was from both. … When they were trying to develop something, I think it was on Maui, Frank was sent down to explain the company position and there were a lot of tree huggers from the West Coast there. … As he started to talk they gave him a very hard time, so he switched to Hawaiian, and they gave him a lot of jazzing, "Talk so we can understand you." Frank [said], "Everybody in the audience understand me? Good. You forget I was raised bilingually," and most of them were, Hawaiian-English, and so he defeated the tree huggers. They gave me respect for another whole way of life--the beauty of Hawaii, of Punchbowl, Diamond Head, the foods, and so on, and I miss it enormously. That's why I want to write--the novel's half written. I talk to Linda often, I talk to Pat Saiki often and I would like to go back again, but I don't think I want to take the trip. It's a long flight.

SI: Are there other ways that your exposure to the other side of the world shaped your worldview?

MP: Well, I started off in Chinese studies because of Mort's influence and then, I realized the country was closed and I'll never master the language. That's when I switched to Brazilian studies. Most of the rest of the world is through reading and through friends, and one of the things I'm reading about a lot now is the arrogant Americans who think that they're the prime movers and shakers of the world are wrong. I mean, there's China, there's Brazil. Louise and I were laughing, there's a slang phrase in Brazil, "Brazil will be the land of the future, but they got to find the paperclips to put it together." Well, they found the paperclips and also, "God stays up

all night to correct the mistakes the Brazilians make during the day." They're doing that, and it's a very vibrant economy and everybody is teasing me now because I was talking about the ties between Germany and Brazil years ago and now it's important, I think the BRIC nations are very important and their ties between Brazil and China. … I'm tussling with the idea about how my next management book, do I say, "You're not going to be the kings of the world, folks. You have to figure out how you're going to compete with other countries." … What's going on in Washington today is such hubris it bothers me terribly, stupidity as well. Maybe hubris is stupid.

SI: How early did you know that the BRIC countries were going to be the next big economies?

MP: Brazil?

SI: All the BRIC countries.

MP: Well, I have not followed the others as much as Brazil. I think that many things are understandable very quickly if you look. Now, I'm just reading a book about the Portuguese court that came to Brazil. If you look at Brazil in the 1800s, yes, it had the slavery question, but they had good thinkers, they were very minerally rich, Minas Gerais has more minerals than anything in Africa, they have just found a new deposit of oil off the coastline. They were very thirsty for other countries, don't forget the Germans pretty much ruled early Brazil. The Royal House was Hapsburg and they got all sorts of ideas. Dom Pedro Segundo was emperor during most of the 19th century. He was very thirsty, he wanted to know all about anything and he opened the Philadelphia exhibit, the World's Fair. They were not afraid about reaching out, they stood up for their principles. They had the slavery issue, I guess one of the things that I think is important with Brazil too. They solve problems without the terrible, as much as we have. The border is huge and a relative of my family solved all the border disputes without a gun being fired. They got rid of slavery by doing it, turning the spigot off a little bit at a time, Britain wouldn't leave them alone, but they did it. Finally, when the final manumission occurred, the emperor got on a slow boat to Portugal, and that was the end of it. The only bloodshed was some dumb fool who fell on his own sword. The writing is wonderful, I mean we don't know as much as US, I mean that's why Brown and Providence were great for me, … the whole writing. In fact, I was talking to someone the other day, I just finished reading a Portuguese book and she was saying how much she enjoyed [Jose] Saramargo and I said well, "The Brazilians are angry that the first Nobel Laureate in Portuguese language was Portuguese not Brazilian," but … great writers, but they had some wonderful and Barbara translated a lot of them so I've read a lot of them. I'm not surprised that Brazil is doing what it's doing now, not at all.

SI: Were you able to, in the companies you worked in, encourage them to look at Brazil?

MP: Oh, yes. … It was a slam dunk in Borden. I worked on relations between Hill & Knowlton and our Brazilian group, and the person who was sending the messages was very annoyed. He came into me one day and he said, "Why are they so angry? I keep sending them these notices about translating releases into Spanish." I said, "You idiot, because they speak Portuguese." … John Hill, just as he was dying, was going to make his first trip to Brazil, and he would come by every morning. I used to have to get in early because he was there early and he wanted to know more about Brazil, and I gave him all sorts of books to read. … The fellow who

had his office next to mine said, "Who's that old man who's always coming in here early in the morning asking you questions?" I said, "Oh, you better stop that." … Also, one of the people at Hill & Knowlton was Cuban and she was very interested in Spanish literature, so we used to talk about Spanish literature and also the Portuguese and the relations in the country and the PR possibilities. … I also talked a lot with the PR people from Brazil. Whenever they came to New York, we always got together.

SI: You were on the AMFAC board from 1982 to 1988. Does that extend out from the other boards you served on?

MP: … I served on a couple boards. … Keystone Electrical was Philadelphia and that was a minor appointment and I didn't stay on too long. Then, I was also on the board at Drew.

SI: Is there anything else you want to say about AMFAC before we move on?

MP: Well, I think of the two experiences I've had in business, Hill & Knowlton and AMFAC were the two best. … In fact, I just had a letter yesterday from the former VP of AMFAC, we keep in touch … and when I was in Hawaii and when I was ill, the AMFAC secretary worked with the Straub Clinic. … She made sure everything was taken care of for me and they have a wonderful sense of humor. I … fell against the bathtub one night and I broke a rib, and I had to go down to Straub Clinic and the doctor--you know, it was the strangest thing I've ever seen. These people coming in with flapping arms and, oh in the other arm they had around a surfboard. So when the doctor examined he said nothing, you know, "Just let it, it will be alright, just no strong exercise." I said, "Well, I wasn't planning to play football." He said, "That's not what I was thinking about." [laughter] So, they were good people and I'm still in touch with them. …

SI: You became a consultant for a few years?

MP: Yes. Well, I was consulting, but I was also doing some teaching, and I've been lucky in my flukes. I went to Pritiken to lose weight. I walked in the first night and there was a whole bunch of born yesterday guys hooping it up and there was one man sitting all by himself--a very distinguished looking guy. So, you know where I sat, and we talked for two weeks, at the end of which he said, "Hey, how about teaching?" and that was the dean of the Fordham Business School. So that's how I got to Fordham. I loved it, the kids were all thinking in systems. … "How did you come to Fordham?" "I gained weight, I went to Pritiken, and that's the truth."

SI: What year was that?

MP: It was the year before I actually went to Fordham.

SI: 1986?

MP: I was there sixteen years, yes, that sounds about right.

SI: Tell me a little bit about your career in Fordham. You were officially there from 1987 to 2003.

MP: Well, I had a very mixed time. Taylor understood what he wanted me to do. Taylor was very supportive, he pushed me to do all sorts of things, his endorsement in the book kind of captures what I was trying to do. The Jesuits started the turn off the money for the business school and also the business students were changing a lot, so Taylor left. Shortly after that he went to be president of Muhlenberg. I talk to him quite frequently, he's in ill health now. He was also the president at CBS. He brought Bill Small in, who had also been a high official at CBS. It was a very exciting group of people. Taylor constantly runs into the problem many people do. He has these great ideas, gets good people, puts them in place, but the old-timers don't want it. … He had the same thing at Muhlenberg. Also, I don't know how it happened, but I formed a very close friendship with Father O'Hare and I think it was because we loved to talk about books. … He and I retired the same year and … I still remember I had bought a Jesuit [Albert] Camus' *First Man* and I gave it to him when he retired and I said, "I know you have a thirsty mind." He said, "Oh, for a minute I thought you were going to say something else." We talked about how much that school master meant to Camus. Camus' father was killed on the Marne, his mother was illiterate, and it was the school master who pushed him to write. … One of the things I enjoyed about Drew was that when my classmate Dr. McKee was so helpful to me when I broke my arm. I couldn't give him money, of course, so I sent him the Camus book. He talked about how much Camus meant to him in college and I thought, "Well, Drew didn't just produce a good scientist MD, it produced a good reader too," Father O'Hare was that way too. When I went to through a tenure fight, he really made sure I stayed on the best opportune moments. Some of the students were wonderful; some of the faculty were wonderful. I … probably would have left under any circumstances because the students began sitting there wishing to get every little idea just put in their mouths, weren't willing to work hard--they knew what they knew even though they didn't do any research. I taught a class in the Duke case and one of the students said, "I knew those rich guys were doing that to that poor black woman, I just knew it. … After I read your book that you assigned us, I realized I was wrong and I have to eat crow now." So, what I did a lot of times was to try to get to the reality beyond the newspaper coverage. Then, I brought a lot of people in as guest speakers and some of the stuff that they talked about, like the fellow who created--oh, phased out a long time ago--Cabbage Patch dolls. The class kept pushing him and pushing him and pushing him and finally he said, "Don't you understand? It's curiosity folks, curiosity, curiosity," and I think that that's the one thing that linked a lot of us was being curious about the subject and getting to the bottom of it. Some of the students were just wonderful, others were there for the simplest things. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

MP: I wrote a lot of papers, I traveled a lot, … they were very generous. I went to the War College, they encouraged me in papers and books and so on. … In fact, I was talking to a friend the other day and I have to write to Jane Harman today, I think repotting is very important. It was time for me to repot go into another area and I had written three books and that's why I wanted to do the fourth one. … I'd been at flank speed a long time. It was time to just take things a little bit easier.

SI: While you were at Fordham, particularly going for tenure, what was looked at as being things you would have to do? Was the emphasis more on publication or classroom work?

MP: Well, I think universities are killing themselves. They want scholarly work done, but only the kinds of things done in the magazines that they read. I had a terrible fight over one magazine, I've forgotten what it was now. They want you to inspire your students, but not shake them up too much, good grades which even if they don't deserve them. … I didn't get tenure because Taylor had brought me in. He'd created the whole new department, we earned more than others. Taylor, when he was there, protected me, and then O'Hare. I didn't want tenure. … I didn't even want, that they wanted me to be department chair. Hey, I was in corporations and I earned a lot of money doing that stuff. No, I just want to teach and write and read and so on, and that's what I did.

SI: Most of that same time you are involved with the *Public Relations Quarterly*. You published quite a few pieces and you were also on the editorial board.

MP: And I used to lecture at the University of Florida, and I still maintained my ties at Brown. … I gave speeches around town on public relations, and was active in Leonia at that time, too.

SI: I know you are on the board of public library.

MP: Well, that was before I went to Textron.

SI: What other ways were you active in Leonia?

MP: Well, I started a program which developed into a concert series. It started out with lectures. I was on the Bergen County Historical Board where we tried to keep some of the Old Dutch mansions from being torn down. I did a little bit of that in town. I worked as kind of an unseen consultant for some of the councilmen who were running for office, but at that point I wanted some free time.

SI: You were also on the board of trustees at Drew. What were the major issues that the trustees faced?

MP: Well, I guess we talked a lot about curriculum. We talked about the future of the university, the usual things--who we're going to seek for faculty, and then also we had the change in president from Paul Hardin to Tom Kean. We also had the fight over the library, where we were going to put it, and then, as any campus, they had problems with space. … Both the one, the music … building and the library, caused a lot of fuss because they would have to be obvious buildings and many people liked the campus the way it was, couldn't stand still, and then, of course then we had to change from Paul Hardin to Tom Kean who l like a lot, and I think he was good for the university.

SI: What were the major changes that you saw between your time as an undergraduate and your time as a trustee? What did you see as important to retain from that era? You talked about how things had to be changed, but what did you think should be preserved?

MP: Well, that's a very complex question. It's going on now too. … You don't want to throw out all the old, but you have to throw out the dysfunctional old. … Many of us don't always agree with what we're throwing out and what we're keeping. Robert Weisbuch has been a big change in the sense that he's the first Jewish president of Drew. There had to be some change, I'm not always sure that he went about it the right way. … Also, how are you, it's terrible but, how are you preparing a student in college today for business in twenty years? Now, when I was there we had a pretty good fix on what was going to happen. It's also turbulent and fast today, it's hard to figure out. Drew went heavily into technology because we had a lot of people from AT&T, scientists, Bell Labs. See I happen to feel that technology may be important, but there are other things. The dean of the seminary who came in wanted to solve everything by computer--you know, getting a divorce, press D. … I think you still need a more personal approach and that's something that has to be fought for all the time right now because of cost, because some of the people who have the personal approach don't have the modern techniques. … Also, we were getting a new breed of trustees and bishops so we had to work out the accommodation and I kind of, I'm in the middle, I'm one of the old timers, but I'm not afraid of the new either. I think we're overdoing the technology, but that's beside my personal prejudice.

SI: That brings up something else I wanted to ask about. Throughout your long career in public relations, how did not only new technology but also a different way of approaching communications change the way you did things?

MP: That's a very complex question. When I started in PR you had a news release you wanted to hide it, you released it on Friday afternoon to the *Wall Street Journal* and that was the end of it. Now you've got instantaneous communication and it's very hard to get the actual honest facts out so you have to be far more nimble--you have to understand what people want, you have to speak faster. I don't think it's all a beneficial change however. I think a lot of stuff that's being poured out, … there was story I was reading a little while ago. They had the whole story out and then they found out it was wrong. … There's so much pressure to get it out first, get it out fast, and I almost don't want to read the *New York Times* anymore. Front page is more house organ stuff than real news. Also, you've got to get across to people who are used to having control. This is less and less the case. I mean, CEOs used to think that they could control communication about their company. No folks, you can't do that anymore, so you have to be very careful of what you do. You have figure out how the public is going to look at what you're doing. You can't hide. Now, I think we're killing ourselves with all this instantaneous communications. I mean I've been following the Rutgers case and I think that people don't understand what they're doing, so they had terrible consequences, and that's true of corporations as well. I was following a little bit of Murdoch. I have no sympathy for any of them, but I don't understand why he put all this money and effort into finding out how the former prime minister's son was doing. Who cares--it's a personal matter. Too bad for the poor child, but do you need to know that? What can you do about it? … If you look at the communications closely, it always has to be entertaining and sexy. I mean do it some night when you got nothing better to do, just dial surf and see what's on.

SI: Let us talk a little bit about your books and what led you to write each one.

MP: Well, the first one was *Communicating When Your Company Is Under Siege*, and they came to me and asked me to write that. I would be the first to write to that and I thought it was important. The next one was pretty much my dissertation--*Germans As Builders of Business in Brazil*. Then, I had another one, *All Crises Are Global* which is a kind of updating of the first book, but it also delves a lot more with the global aspects of it, and then, this one that just came out. … I did a ton of articles. I'm cleaning out my office now, which is a mess, and one of the things I think I'm going to do is put aside stuff that's going to be early writings because I've written all my life.

SI: Is there any book you would like to talk about that was a challenge to write?

MP: Well, I mean they all fit a pattern except for the German one and that's because when I looked into my family, looked how the Germans migrated to Brazil, why they migrated to Brazil, what they did in Brazil, who came to prominence in Brazil who were Germans, like the three generals, Geisel one of whom became president. … Also, trying to get across the feeling that Brazil was an important country for the future, which most people in the '70s did not understand or wanted to listen to. Now it's different. I think the book that I've just written is kind of a summa of all those books in the sense that I took it on my own pace, it's not the book I really wanted to write. It combines though history, military, economics, public relations, newspapers and, in fact, I have an email on my desk I'm writing to the *Times*, so much business writing today is same old, same old, pushing people who are already wrong, pushing companies that are already wrong. … That's why I glom onto people like, the people I honor the most are Merkel and Lula and Immelt of GE. … Also, I keep saying don't throw out the old. I still think that Paul Volcker is someone who should be listened to, and I stunned somebody at a dinner party the other day. I said, "Okay, ten years from now who is going to be the better chairman of the Federal Reserve, Volcker or … [Alan Greenspan]?" Well, you know, it's his successor, who didn't believe in controls and who got us into a horrible mess. Also, I have a section in there, "Reading for reality." I think there's so much puffery and dishonesty. I've been reading Gretchen Morgenson's book--whom I like very much--but she wrote it too fast. To really write a book and think about it, you need time and you need leisure and so many of these are just being dashed off. … I wanted to say something different. I have one section, which is "Reading for Reality," I have a very complex Scott and Amundsen's race to the South Pole and how it was decided more than by nationality than anything. I mean Scott was unwilling to do anything that wasn't pro-British, Amundsen went out and discovered how. … I have the one on Manassas, which is history doesn't repeat itself but it rhymes, and one of the things I'm trying to do with Manassas is they keep repeating the same mistake. … One of them is not looking closely enough at their enemy and … one is first Manassas, second Manassas, Mauling of the Mall, and Disney, … The Mauling of the Mall, this big shot land developer came in and he was going to build all these sorts of wonderful things, pressure on the land around Washington and Manassas is close by. He looked up his opponent, she was a little old lady about sixty years old, she owned a farm, but with Bull Run running part of the way through it, but she was just a push over, mention Battles of Manassas and she cried. But he didn't look up to see that she was first woman in the Marine Officer Training School and the first woman to go to law school in Pennsylvania. So, he was facing not only a little old lady, who honored the terrain, but a Marine officer and a lawyer. He lost. Let's see, and then I also have ways of defending yourselves from tough bosses, spotting them and defending yourself. I have a short collection of case studies, some

people that I knew, some people that I've read about. … I wanted to get out the realism of it, and I think that when you read the endorsements, you'll see that particularly Harold Burson and Sydney Harman and Taylor got at while I was trying to get at. I don't know, does that answer your question?

SI: Yes.

MP: If I am giving you more than you need, tell me.

SI: No, this is good. Are there any classes that you teach that you would like to talk about?

MP: … Well, I started on "Looking for Leadership" and I followed Bob's instructions too well. … I couldn't offer it again, but I had to give that up. In the fall I'm going to be working on "Leadership in Business," a course at the Bergen County school. I'm going back to Brown, I will definitely lecture on the Amazon and South America. I may do a little bit more about Brazilian entrepreneurs. I was supposed to speak in Leonia then I got sick that day I was supposed to speak at the library on the book itself. I probably will start talking about the new book and that's easy to pull out because the stories are almost all done, and if I give a talk in Teaneck, I'll certainly talk about "Chosen Sisters." … I also want to get back to the novel. So, I'll do some of that will be teaching, some of it would be promotion. I'm hoping that either John Leo or Jane Harman can make an introduction for me. I used to be a lot on the TV program with Ali Velshi who is a CNN business editor and, you know, you have to be careful where you take advice. He and I got along very well, and I remember him laughing like hell when he asked me what would be my PR advice for Mrs. Lay. I said, "Keep her the hell off of television, and don't let her dress in clothing with coif and furniture around her that's far more than the average worker's monthly salary." … Then, you know, they were asking a lot of me, and I didn't mind when I knew the subject, but they were asking me about IBM, so I asked for money and that was the end of that. …

SI: Going back to the earlier discussion about how technology changed the environment, what about television and the job has changed because of the business cable networks?

MP: It's such a sore subject with me. Barbara Shelby's father was the inventor of black and white television for NBC, a brilliant man and so was his wife. I grew up with the tradition that TV, this was the great hope. TV was going to introduce people, it was going to give the shut-ins a way of getting out. … You think of some of those early programs, like the "Sunrise Semester," I used to get up at 6:30 in the morning to listen to what the NYU professors were saying. Now, I realize that it's money and I realize there's a change in the mentality of people. … Every once in a while I channel surf and I used to, after writing all day, I would try to watch television. I can't do that anymore except for the History Channel. The New Jersey channel--if you don't care about cops chasing people, fire engines, Turnpike accidents, weather, the cops being laid off, being rehired--what is there to watch? I mean I'm almost glad in a way, as much as I adore him, that Mr. Shelby isn't alive because he had such a great idea of what television could be and it's not. I think the thing that worries me most, there are two factors and changes. One is the dumbing down. My godson, his mother went to Gettysburg, she was always talking about "Gettysburg as my war." When I went to Gettysburg, I visited him and his son--her son was

about twelve at the time. … We started talking about the war and his father said, "That was the greatest battle of the Revolution." I said, "Cliff, your mother would have you pulled up by your thumbs if she heard that." I think I'm working on the son, he's coming around, and for Christmas I'm going to give him John's book. But the dumbing down is, the fun is always been back and forth, back and forth. … My friend who used to live across the street, taught at John Jay called me the other day. She is an authority on … Italian history, prisons. I haven't read her book. … She was talking about Saramago the other day and so we started talking about overlooking the Portuguese and how good Saramago was to take the conceit of blindness as an infectious disease. Well, you know, that's kind of fun, but there are more and more people I can't have that kind of conversation with. … A couple of people at Fordham used to say I asked too much of the students and somebody, it may have been the President I don't know, said to them, "Good, good." … I have a friend also who went to Princeton and interviews candidates for Princeton and he called me the other day very disturbed. He said, "They have such high expectations, such high esteem, and they don't know anything, Marion," and that's Princeton. You know, and I think the changes, they're dim right now, but I think you're seeing--I happen to feel that we've lost something special. What's his name? Who used to be on *Need to Know*, who wrote the biography of Jackson, he said the other day something that I hadn't thought about. He said, "George Bush the First is the last gentleman president we'll ever have," and I think he's right. I mean Obama, George the Second, Clinton--they're not gentlemen. … Also, how do you defend yourself? I've been reading a lot about Norway, and I think one of the traps they got in was that they trusted too much. I mean, imagine cops walking around without guns. It's important to the Norwegians but it's also committing suicide. … I'm thinking a lot about how do I balance the changes that are essential versus the changes that are transitory. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

MP: My neighbor had a son who was very bright and very big. He had a lot of trouble because he asked questions, so they put him in Catholic school and he did the same thing with the priest, I think the priest lost. Anyhow, when he wanted to go to college he wanted me to write a letter of recommendation for him. He used to come over and talk. He was very interested in Mcluhan. I let him read whatever he wanted to in my library and I tell this story with infinite sadness not hubris. His mother worked for the College Board, so I said, "Sure, I'll write the letter, but I want you to do the word processing and then show it to your mother to make sure that this is what I should be saying." … I had no trouble with that and Maureen told me later that he came walking into her and said, "Do you realize she's a professor?" Maureen said, "Of course, why do you question that?" "Well, she let me talk, she asked me questions, she honored my opinion, she showed me where my opinion had to be strengthened," and he said, "I've never had that before." Now to me that's a terrible indictment because, you know, I was just sitting after he shoveled my snow, it was no big deal. I think the professors are too specialized, too positive, because they've never been tested, and I find that the appeal I've always had is I don't do that to any of the professors or to any of the intellectuals I know. Why am I still a friend of Tom's? It's because we've had the wonderful conversations. … I don't put the students down. I wasn't put down at Drew, why should I put anybody down now.

SI: I just thought of a question based on the fact that a lot of people that I have interviewed in business have military backgrounds. What do you think of the role of the military in society? Is it particularly beneficial in the business contacts that you've known?

MP: … Well, I just have an article published in *Camaraderie*, which is World War I, but battlefields can teach boardrooms and I think that there comes a time on the battlefield where you've got to produce or get killed. I think that the time of realism, I think with the exception of Immelt there are very, very few business executives who are really understanding the change that has to come. I mean I use a phrase in this article, which I thought I would get into trouble with him. I was talking about SOSH at West Point, I said, "Just remember, Petraeus is no clone of MacArthur." Well, the military realizes that they can't fight the war that MacArthur fought, which wasn't a very good war anyhow. I don't know how many people in business don't think the same old, same old will go on. What I'm seeing in Washington is same old, same old, and I think you have to change and you have to give the change agents room to do it. …

SI: Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

MP: I think what you have to have is good friends, you know. The fact that I met Tom Kindre forty years ago, the fact that the woman I've known since I was five years old, we're still friends, and I think that's where the *veritas* comes from--that's where the truth comes from. … Sometimes we have to tell each other terrible things. I have to be with Ruth because her husband just died and now her daughter is troubled. We don't mess around. We talk with compassion, we don't ignore each other. That's true in business, it's true the military. … You know, Steve told me he just had gone up to Walter Reed because one of the very favorite people whom he had commanded just lost an eye in Vietnam. I think you need that kind of understanding and that's why I was touched by what people did to me when I was ill. I think a lot of business today is so nasty, so unpleasant. Also, I'm talking, I'm thinking about the invasion of privacy. With all the equipment we have, I mean I found this in the hospital, they would ask me lots of questions which I wouldn't tell them the answers to, and then they'd go find it somewhere else. … I was talking to a lawyer the other day, he said, "My sister said thirty years ago that the Internet is going to change the world." I think it has. Now, he didn't see it, I didn't see it, but she saw it. I guess I'm also saying you have to honor people for what they are, and they're not going to be always be strong and they're not always going to be right, but so what, neither are you. … Keep being curious, I guess that's the word that I'm using more than ever, curious. You'll get a much better feeling for me if you read the book and if you read *Chosen Sisters: South of Angell* and also--do you have an email?

SI: Yes.

MP: … Also *Battlefields Teaching Boardrooms*. Those are my most current thinking. … Now I have to write the one about Franz Kafka, and I also want to write about my two grandfathers.

SI: Thank you very much.

MP: You're welcome.

SI: I appreciate all your time.

MP: Well, it's been fun, but I'm embarrassed because some of these things I haven't given you good answers for.

SI: I think you have been very forthcoming and I have enjoyed talking to you. I think it will be of benefit to leaders. You have the books that you mentioned that would be great resources for somebody to go from this interview to reading those books.

MP: Don't hesitate to call me if you think of something else you want to discuss or something I haven't explained well.

SI: Thank you very much.

MP: You're welcome for sure.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

Reviewed by Kara McCloskey 11/11/12
Reviewed by Nicholas Molnar 11/20/12
Reviewed by Dr. Marion K. Pinsdorf 1/4/13