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On the twenty-eighth of May, 1998. So let me start out where I said we'd start out, which is the circumstances that brought you here. You were working as a librarian before, how did you get here?

An ad, an ad in the newspaper. I was working at another college and I was ready to make a change and I saw an ad. And just to show you the difference in how we operate now, it was a blind ad. We only did box numbers because at that point there was no Human Resource Department. So it was the department of the person who was putting in the ad who was soliciting for employees. So I answered this blind ad, it sounded interesting, it was right up my alley, and I was called in for an interview at Columbia College. I had never heard of it before. They called me and they said, they gave me an address, I thought I knew the location, I wasn't even sure of that side of the Loop, and I am a born and bred Chicagoan. And I came in and I interviewed with Bert Gall. And it went beautifully; they were looking for a librarian with a lot of different skills. One of the major things that he questioned me carefully on was the mission of the College and how I felt about certain students. And since I lived and worked in West Virginia for a couple years, I'm very familiar with first generation college students. So it was just a very smooth interview, he called me that night and offered me this position. And I've been here for twenty years now.

Now, you worked at DePaul before?

I did.

And you worked at another library before then.

Two others, before that. That is correct. I was at DePaul, and prior to that I lived out of state, after I married we moved out of state. First to West Virginia; I worked in the library there as I was finishing up my degree, and my husband was teaching college there. And I had been in another profession prior to that and I was working on my bachelor's degree. I was studying at Northwestern, then I was here and had the luxury to go full-time. So I worked in a library in West Virginia, where I did reference and technical services. I was trained by somebody from the Library of Congress. In a paraprofessional position they took a chance on me and it just was fascinating. It just pulled in a lot of my interests. When we moved to Indiana we worked for Commons Engine Company, a diesel merchant, and I established a business—I think that's where you're going—a business information center while I worked in a technical information center. So I learned to work with a very special, needy, demanding population at that point. But I worked first with those with very little skills to those who had the skills but expected you to do everything for them. So it was quite an interesting change. We moved back to Chicago and I moved to DePaul and then finally here.

Tell me about the difference between working at Columbia and working at DePaul and working at the library in West Virginia. And I'm thinking back to when you came here.

When I first came here? Very, very different. It was an incredible expe-

rience when I first came here. Immediately you felt a sense of family. There was a connection, everyone worked so together. There was a cohesiveness. It was like you knew immediately what you were supposed to do and they allowed you the freedom to do what it was to get to that point. It was like, if you proved yourself you were given almost carte blanche to do what you wanted. DePaul was very rigid, it was very specific, and it was one of the things that, after a couple of years, that finally got to me. There was a rigidity, there was a certain mindset, you had to do it a certain way. It was almost like you needed to raise your hand if you needed to take a break. I learned a lot there, it's a wonderful institution, I still know a number of people over there and I work closely with them on the professional level. But for me, as a person growing, I was starting to feel a little constraint. It was like night and day. West Virginia was very much like Columbia in a certain respect. Even



though it was a state-run institution, they gave you so many freedoms to explore techniques or avenues. I didn't know what I was doing. I had no library skills. Basically, I was taught by professionals there. And yet there was, by trial and error, you just saw what worked. And I think that a lot of that had to do with my social work background, my psychology background; that I almost eventually immediately knew what might be needed for the individual, I was allowed to do that, given freedoms to do that. So there was sort of a connectiveness between those two institutions, albeit very different.

So can you give me an example of this at Columbia, where you're free to do something you might not have been at some other institution?

I don't know how far back you want to go but initially...

Early.

Very early? When I first came in, there was a problem. We were on the eleventh floor, in one floor.

This is...

In the 600 building. It was the only building that they had other than the Dance Center and the Theater building. And it was pretty depressing: it was gray metal shelving; there was not a lot of action there, very few people were coming in, faculty or students. It was a very, very low turnout there. And I started to see a very interesting connection. So I started with a candy dish, and the word somehow got out. I gave sugar; I bribed the students, and have continued to this day. When I'm even doing library instruction I throw candy. It's a carry-over. Yes, I will bribe, I cajole, whatever. But the numbers started to increase. They knew that they could have a sugar burst up

there. I would stop people in the hallway, you know, if I saw them, "Oh yeah, what are you doin'? Hi. Hi. Hi." Talk, talk, talk, yadda, yadda, yadda, and then all of a sudden they say, "Oh, I'm doing this." I'd say, "I have something for you," or, "Let's try." And this was before the days of a lot of computerized materials. We had a card catalog; a lot of hands-on stuff. So it was far slower and painstaking, plus we didn't have a lot of connections with other institutions like we do now. We had just that. So I started to bring them in. Students started to show me their works; if they wanted me to do that I'd do a little bit of that, a little bit of sympathy, etc., and their numbers started to grow. I even allowed them to bring their lunches up there so they could read magazines, etc. So there was, I did allow food and drink, a little area where they could be comfortable. I wanted them to be like a second home, a candy dish always there, etc. And a lot of our students needed food. So they kind of knew there was a little haven; if I had something they were more than welcome to it. So the numbers started to grow. I also started to give a lot of service to the faculty. If there was something you needed, being very receptive to it, allowing certain materials to go, doing the, going the extra mile to get inter-library loan materials, whatever. Just to try to encourage usage of the library, and it worked. As a matter of fact, in the matter of a semester I think they were very surprised to see what our numbers were. Because at that point we started our accreditation process and it really benefited from it.

Yeah, because the library's a big part of the...

Accreditation process.

How many, who else was here?

They are no longer there, they are no longer there, the original people that I started out with. There was three of us plus a student. So there was two of us, well, actually three of us during the day, a paraprofessional for nighttime, and a student, one or two, actually about two of them. Which, surprisingly enough, I still keep in contact with even though she's married, had her own family now; she lives out of state. We write yearly. So that's one of them. This is what I mean about relationships and attachments that we were able to form here. One of the librarians who ended up going for her library degree, she came in as a paraprofessional, we tried to encourage her, she is still here, another twenty-yearer. Then when I went on maternity leave, they hired another one; she is also still here. So there are still a couple of librarians from that era that are with us.

What was your title when you came here?

It was like Reference; it turned into Head Librarian. They used the term "head"; they didn't use directors at that point. So I was running the library. Even that was interesting, because working very closely with Bert Gall, because every time, you'd have to hand-write orders for materials.

Like books?

For books, for magazines. You had to write invoices to the various publishers. And he would sit with you before the orders would go out and look at every one of them to see what we were ordering and why. Until it became almost joyful because I knew there would always be one or two he would question. He has an uncanny sense, because he's over the library and still is, he has an uncanny sense of something

not being quite right or skewed. He'd always question me on one or two. I had to be on my toes all the time.

Tell me, I'm curious about the administration. You worked closely with Bert Gall. Did you work with a lot of different kinds of things?

Yes, it branched out, to this day even more so. I do a lot with administration. And that's one of the other beauties of this institution is that you are not necessarily pigeonholed. You are allowed to explore, to self-actualize, and you're also given opportunities to pursue other things. And if they find you can do one thing, usually they can ask you to do something else. And it's a very close working relationship. It's pivotal and still is very instrumental in my staying at Columbia.

Did you work with other administrators?

Yes, yes. I worked very closely with Mr. Alexandroff up to this day. And as a matter of fact, Norman, his son, he teases me, I was his first test master. So they trusted me with their child, the Alexandroffs. I worked with Jane Alexandroff; charming, charming woman.

Tell me about her a little bit.

She was more than just a supportive wife. She was the most delightful, charming woman you would meet. Inspirational in terms of how to handle yourself. She was always in charge of the parties, the consummate hostess, loving, kind, friendly, remembers your name, appreciative. These are in-bred types of talents. And I worked with her, you know, on a number of events. She always felt free to call on me for whatever. And during her unfortunate passing when they had a memorial service for her I felt

honored when they asked me to be a part of the service, and I did my little part in assisting with the event.

So she was a big part of the College, in the College community?

Absolutely, and the thing is that she is one of the unsung heroes. She's always behind the man except when she was doing the artist abroad, which was a very interesting and fascinating concept. When she had her own, specific title other than Wife Support System. But, very charming woman, they made a lovely couple. And I'm very fond of her whole family, which I have gotten to know over the years and work with. And I still work with Norman; he called me today. I'm still working with Mr. Alexandroff as he's writing his memoirs in New York, about his career at Columbia.

Tell me about the students when you came here. What were they like?

They haven't changed much over the years. I find them to be a complete delight. These, I just adore just about every one of them. And I have come close to a number of them over the years; as I was saying, we still remain friends. And they view me, a lot of them do, they call me Mom; I'm sort of an Earth-mom type person. I think I resent that, but I'm not sure. Because they know that they can come to me for a lot of advice besides just work related. I have a lot of faculty and staff that I have done personal work for when it came to family issues, health issues, etc. People know when they come to me, as much as I'm a talker, they know I don't blab about a lot of things. So people are very comfortable with me. I'm just relating

what the students have said. They know they can always come to me for a couple bucks, for some food if I have it, for advice, you know, I yell and scream, and I force them to do their papers and I yell at them that they're not organized or on time. And they usually come up today; as a matter of fact, even one today told me he got an A on a paper we worked on. My feelings, if I worked with you more than twenty minutes, you better get nothing less than a B, just so you know the guidelines. So I'm very blessed that I have been able to become friendly and a lot of them allowed me into their lives. A lot of our students are needy. Some of them have never really done library research before. Have never really understood the concept of research. I've had people, I'll just state one as an example, who was a dance major who cried and was hysterical to have to write her first paper. We have a lot of visual performance type people who have never had to endure written work. I don't understand the high school situation or grammar school; we could talk about that ad nauseum. I have a daughter who has gone through the various systems and it's shocking to me what background some of our students have and what they don't. But a lot of them are very needy. And they still are. I found this semester, this Fall and Spring semester, some of the brightest students I've worked with in a long time. So it's a cyclical type of thing. And our reputation, I just want to say, I can't go anywhere now—I just came back from Turkey; someone knew about Columbia College. They knew about the Bulls, they know about Michael Jordan, they know about Columbia College. I take a taxi, one woman, they sent information to India for them about Columbia

College. So it's amazing, from the first time I came here I had no clue, never heard about Columbia, my parents never heard of it. Now they're clipping articles that they find, "Look, Columbia's in the news again." You know, everyone, a great majority of the people, knows Columbia now. So that's a huge change. We don't have to sell the institution; it sells itself.

Do you think that—let me ask about changes in the way the library's run. And let me just start out with what you do, does what you do changed a lot over time in certain things or what?

Sort of. I still do a lot of reference work, which means I'm on the reference desk and I answer questions. I do library instructions, that hasn't changed. That was a program that I started to initiate, how to, we have classes come in and then we redesign them because some are very subject specific to a specific topic or research item to a very general, English-type how to get started. I have young people come in on a field trip, which I find amusing. Some grammar schools come in yearly to use our facilities and we work on their projects. The Prospective School was in here from the Chicago Public School System. So that has changed, in terms that there's more outreach. I've gone to other schools and I've gone to the classrooms to kind of introduce myself, so that when they and other teachers want my ability of library instruction or organizational skills. The other thing that changes, I do a lot of events now where I work for the Development Office, I work for administration, the Provost, the President, and I work on a number of events. I do a lot of things out of the Student Life Department and I write up bibliographies for them. And we do our AIDS awareness,

sexually transmitted diseases, drug abuse. So I think that was another component where people see me, a lot of faculty/staff, in a lot of different venues. So I'm kind of a connection where I'm walking down the street and people will stop you and say, "I know you from somewhere or how," or asked me to do something for them. They'll come into the library certain times, "Can you get me started on such and such?" So there's a lot of stuff just from going from one building to another. So when my job has changed that I'm doing more events, as well as the rest of the things that I do, which is library oriented

Tell me about the rest of the library and the library staff. How has that changed over the years?

I think the general mission hasn't changed in terms of—we have very hands-on, service oriented. And that has not been changed. What has changed is the technology. The technology is phenomenal. We, you know, sometimes we have to stop and ask someone, "How much information do you need, what type, how much time do you have to do this?" Because we have so many indexes now, so many different avenues for them to explore, that we have to almost rethink the reference interview on what it is that you need and streamline them and organize them. The other thing that's changed for me a lot is that I have a lot of thesis work. A lot of students are working on their Master's thesis. So they come in and sometimes they need to make appointments with me, and we work on organizing, structuring the thesis, and get that process down, where do they want to go with it. And then if the committee changes completely again, then we have to

rework that. So I do more thesis work. Now that, another big change is part of that consortium of other libraries, many of them, since their students can use our facility, we find that they come in a lot because we are very service oriented, a lot of institutions are not. So they come in and they use us a lot. And I find that I have had several, this semester alone, I had a U of C and a Loyola, which are not a part of our consortium, surprisingly enough. Students come in and I've had to work on their doctoral thesis. You can't, you know, turn anybody away. So besides ours: usually Northwestern, School of the Art Institute I get a lot, some from IIT. We're, you know, getting it from all over that come in. They find us to be a warm, comforting oasis.

When did Columbia join this consortium?

We first started out in about 1979 with Roosevelt University, '78-'79, where we had made an arrangement with them to have our students use their library. We paid them. Then I started working on a PALI organization which is an Illinois, small, private institution, so I started to get out there. A lot of people, the larger institutions, didn't want us. We were considered small, inconsequential. It really wasn't until about ten, eleven, years ago when these consortiums started to take off and we were included in them. But I can't give an exact date on that, but we were slowly leading up to that.

How come other institutions—I'm just curious about it, because of special strengths in the collection?

Absolutely, yes. Primarily in the field of film, art, photography, a lot. Especially film, film is a real biggie. Surprisingly enough, we're

finding even for a lot of liberal arts types of questions, which amazes me, I say, "Why don't you look in your own institution?" They just find us helpful. It kind of blows you away.

The unique collection here that other institutions don't have? That's exactly right. And then it sort of branches off because they like the service here, they did what they had to do, sometimes they come back. Because now that the Harold Washington Library is down here, the public library, we find that we get more walk-ins. You can always tell when they have the late hours; we have people coming in for the eleven o'clock hour, they're coming in to use our facilities.

Tell me about other things about the library. The library's moved Several times. We stayed in the 600 building and then we moved to the second and third floor. We quickly outgrew that and moved up to the fourth floor, they cut a stairwell through that. So we were at the 600 building, first the eleventh floor, second and third floor, then the fourth floor, and finally we moved over to the 624 building where we have now five floors, and at some time we may be taking over the sixth floor also. So we have just branched out tremendously. They realized that there was a need, money has been put into the growth of the collection, into the computers, we now have fourteen librarians. But fourteen librarians where we started out with two or three, there were three of us.

And how many books and other materials did you have? You mean when I first came in?

Yeah. Is there a way to compare? I know in the computer age...

Absolutely, there still is a way to compare. However, when I, this is sort of a bone of contention, is because when I first came in, they kept telling me, "Oh, we have this collection of thirty thousand." Well, the first thing I did was take inventory and I said, "Where are they?" In every report we would have this major amount, we would have about twenty or thirty thousand books. I never came up with more than twelve thousand. I said, "How you reconcile this is that you put in the report that I did a huge weeding to get rid of the collection." So there was a little dichotomy between the truth and actuality. Now we have close to two hundred thousand books that we can actually count on our shelf. Of course, with access to University of Illinois Urbana and Chicago campus, Northern, you know, Northeastern, I mean we have millions, we have millions. And through interlibrary loan, we have millions, and more millions, you know, that our students have access to. So that's why I really yell at them to get started on their papers early if we have to order things for them outside the state, or we've even had to order things outside the country.

Is there a particular time or special growth you remember, item from the library or is it... It's steadily flowing. I think what it is, as you mentioned, accreditation, you know, the finances, plus the grants. There's a couple collections. When the Arts and Entertainment Management program started, they wanted a special collection, and they were able to fund that and get a grant. Dr. Sam Floyd, when he was starting the Black Music Research Center, I had a separate area for him, he had his own grant

and I was allowed to order those materials. So I set up several different collections because of grants. When the, there was a big push in film, actually, photography, film and the art, we made a separate room just for that and they renamed that. You know, there was a special push for the little extra funding at that point. So there's been little pushes depending on programs and grants. Two of the biggest would be Arts and Entertainment Movie Management, the funding started that program, and then when Dr. Sam Floyd started his program.

Do you remember what year?

Yes. I say yes so quickly. The Fed Finance Program was about 1978; Black Music Research was early '80s.

Let me turn to a minute to other people. You talk about a lot of people. Are there other people so far that remember well at Columbia over these years?

Absolutely, yeah. You mean, instrumental in terms of... Yes, yes. There's so many I don't even know where to begin. I think that, I really have to mention our Building Services staff. I have never worked with a nicer, funnier, more caring group of guys in my life. They're there for you, there's never a bad moment. It's just surprising to me that they could be so upbeat all the time. The head of it, Larry Dunn, incredible. He's been here longer than I. Rich Woods, fabulous, always there. Mark Gonzalez, Jim Brady, he came with this building. Even, just incredible, Jake, who does all the...

Part two.

A couple women who have really been very pivotal to me, one older

and one newer, would be Dr. Zafra Lerman, an incredible woman, one of the strongest women I've ever met in my life; and then another strong woman, who is the Administrative Assistant to Dr. Duff, is Joyce Fulgium. These two women are the strongest women I've ever dealt with and it's a wonder for me to see strong women. And they have really filled out my backbone, you know, a little bit, especially Dr. Lerman. She knows how to run a meeting. I have just observed her and it's a thing of beauty, you know, just to observe her in meetings. So I have kind of taken bits and pieces from these two wonderful women. Joyce is incredible, just a very caring person, organized, together, competent; it's a thing of beauty. So those are two additional people. Marvin Cohen I've worked with for a long time at the Records Department. Janet Talbot, I mean, a lot of these people I knew and had worked with for a long time. It's wonderful to see how caring so many people are in putting together programs. Lou Silverstein I've known for a long time. His wife is charming, to see his children grow. This is what I meant about being part of the family. I can't really say that we've never had bad moments, you know, in working relationships it can't be helped. But again, like families, you kind of work through it. You know, you're kind of stuck together in a way. And I can honestly say I've never had horrid moments, just a few bad moods that have always worked out. I've never had arguments with Bert. We may not have agreed on things but we were able to argue, you know, discuss loudly, you know, our opinions and it never goes much further. I mean, I've seen his family grow, he's got a wonderful son. You know, this is what I meant about a family atmos-

phere that is here and you're just sucked into it. They all know my child, who is now developed and grown and she's in college herself and people ask kindly. People who have retired or have left here I'm still in contact with, Christmas time. And one woman who was very pivotal was Darlene Hayes. Darlene chairs and lives in South Africa with her husband and I still hear from her. She worked in Careers. Just to see what people, they let you see what they were doing and you were able to contact them and give a student full service. You knew who to send them to so that they kind of jumped through bureaucracy. So there's so many, I don't even know. I could start from one department and move on all the way down. Chuck Suber, who I've worked with for years and years and years; delightful man, is caring, competent. I've worked with his students very closely. Sam Floyd, wonderful, wonderful man. The program he put together and his staff, he has some of the best staff I've ever had an opportunity to work with and I was able to help him develop that in the library. And I appreciate the confidence he had in me with that.

Who do you attribute this family feeling to?

Mike Alexandroff. I truly believe that. There was a sense of community, I always say that, and poverty. You know, when you have very little you learn to rely on one another. I mean they just allowed you into your lives; they became a part of yours, you became a part of theirs. We had a goal and that was survival. And we all worked towards that goal and we all worked very, very hard towards that goal. We put in really long hours.

The hours Bert still puts in now just would amaze anybody, you know? A man of lesser character, energy, or strength wouldn't be able to survive that position. So I would say it was the atmosphere of the times, the compassion of Mike, the caring, the organizational skills of Bert, the freedom to do what you wanted to do, what you were allowed to do if you proved yourself, the family atmosphere of everyone pulling together. Like I said, from the Building Services staff all the way up, you could just call them and rely on them and it was done.

Now, do you think size has affected this little College, has grown tremendously in twenty years?

Absolutely, there's no way it can't. And it's a shame because a lot of people that come in don't understand the history and a lot of attitude is that it's just a job. But there's another thing; we're in too many buildings. The communication isn't as it was, where you could just walk to another office, you know, cut through a lot of things, a lot of tape in order to get what you needed. Now you have to fit this around cribs, this is just a given, the size, location, etc. We have, you know, if we were for example in the Sears Tower, where we can still go up and down, you still have to think twice about using the elevators, but you're condensed in one area. So I would say it's unfortunate, it's just a reality. Size does make a difference. We don't have enough, with activities, to make things more cohesive and friendly. I know that we're trying a softball team and not all of us are physical. Yeah, there's a little softball team going. But maybe, you know, sometimes we're invited to individual parties that, you know, people

put up but you know what? We don't have group things.

Did you use to?

We used to, there's a couple of picnics that were kind of put on on a Sunday.

That sounds nice.

Yeah, it is.

It sounds, it's interesting, interesting, the College in the '70s, I think. And it sounds to me, tell me if I'm wrong, as if the spirit of the times has carried over in spite of growth and in spite of, to some extent.

It amazes me, it has. And I think it's because we still have some of the administrators that have carried it on. If you hear any of the speeches Bert gives, it's there and there's a sense of it. There's been a continuity of administration that has carried over in the life of the school's mission. When I look back at some of the old catalogues or some of our old sayings, I look back to where Columbia was first formed, you know, or established, you know, in 1890. And when I found that the symbol was "To learn by doing" and this was when we were the Columbia School of Oratory, you know, so that is actually still very essential to the mission of this institution. Even our saying now "To be rather than to seem to be," this is something that is important. We have a lot of part-time faculty that are professionals in the field. This was, there's a reason for it other than survival, which is true, but I'm afraid that a lot of institutions and companies are going that route. But there's a reason for it, because we were giving the students a lot of hands-on experience. We were getting them internships elsewhere. So I think this is perhaps one of the, you know, that there is a conti-

nunity because a lot administrators, a lot of the chairs are the same that have been here a long time. Ed Morris, John Mulvany, you know, Al Parker, how could I not mention Al Parker, you know who, charming, delightful, kindly person, you know. So that has carried on, some of the old-timers—and I'm including myself in them—are still here, that remember. Will it change even more once they're replaced? Yes, there's no way it can't. But I think that a lot of people are aware of the type of personality that might be needed so, you know, I have hope that the people that may replace them will also at least have the same mindset.

Well, the phrase with some over here is how bare it is used as corporate culture, even with that phrase I guess, but would it be fair to say there's a corporate culture that's been established here that transcends some of those individuals, maybe?

Oh yes, yes, I think there is. I think it's stated every time you read the mission statement.

Do you think, speaking of the mission do you think that the mission... Well, no, let me try this again. Do you think that the College has affected higher education?

I would say that we are honest where a lot of institutions haven't been. We have always admitted to our open admissions policy. A lot of institutions are scared of that and will not admit it, where in fact they do. So I would say that this institution was not afraid of saying that. It's a comfort to a lot of students to know that they have a safe haven that they could possibly go to. Even the fact that we start

late every semester is a component of, you know, giving someone a hope, you know. And I think that this is essential. If other education institutions may sneer at, I don't know that they do, or, you know, say, "You're this, that, or the other," I think it's the students that know the truth: that this institution has given them a chance. And that's what I try and tell, even when young kids come in, "It's now in your hands to do what you will with everything that's given to you. You take it and you run with it. The opportunities are here; no one is going to spoon feed you at this point. You have to take control of your environment, take control of yourself and get everything that you need out of this institution, because we're offering it to you."

Do you think that, let me go back on the mission question, but what did it mean, what did "open enrollment institution" mean when you came here?

It just meant that we allowed any breathing soul that had money to come in. Actually, I found out that a lot of people don't have money. But anybody who had an interest in education, wanted to take a course, start a curriculum, the opportunity exists for them to come in. We don't even charge an application fee. This is astounding to a lot of people. This is a huge moneymaker for most institutions. When my daughter was applying for colleges we spent over five hundred dollars in application fees. And a lot of them put you through the motion...

It's a shocker.

It is a shocker. Well, the shocker is the costs of these institutions also. But it is an incredible, you know, there's an incredible opportunity given. No application fee, no rigor-

ous requirements to come in. We, for a long time, didn't even ask for, you know, ACT, SAT scores. I don't know if it's still on our application, that's not important. What is important is that if you want to do something, you know, the opportunity exists for you to come in here and make a stab at it. And everyone should have that opportunity. And this is why I am so caught into and was immediately so pleased with this kind of environment, and I've probably stayed on as long because I'm comfortable with that. There's some people who are not going to work here? Yes. My daughter's at Bryn Mawr which is a very fine, you know, rigorous institution, Ivy League; there's some people that don't fit in there, and they went through the process. So, some people just don't belong, period. The point is that you're given the opportunity here to do what you will with it.

Do you think that that aspect of the College's mission is threatened or is it pretty secure?

No, I don't think it's threatened. Where you hear the most complaints is really from faculty that say that you have to start from square one. And this I attribute to the education that preceded these students. Whether it's their fault or their high school's, grammar school's, etc. You know, you can put the blame all the way down the line to the parents; wherever you want to place the blame. A lot of them are not equipped for college. So unfortunately, we have had to have to reassess this, and now we're doing testing. Last summer I assisted with the testing assessment process, we're doing it again. This is to really help place the students properly. A lot of them have fears of tests and that's why they didn't

develop, but this is non-judgmental. And I think this was one of the important things that this institution, should I say, is we don't judge you. You're starting a clean slate here. But unfortunately some of the faculty feel that you can't start where you'd like to, so they begin thinking that the people have the background because they just don't have it.

Do you think Columbia has had an impact on the arts in Chicago or more generally?

Well, I don't think that there's any way it couldn't. We're in the news everywhere; we're in the theaters. Whether we're in the front, you know, whether we're on stage, behind stage, you know, yes, absolutely. There's no way we couldn't have had influence. We had influence in the '50s in black radio where Columbia's mentioned in terms of, we've allowed—some of the disc jockeys at that point had an opportunity to go to school and to learn, etc. So, yes, I would say all the way back there has been—again, because of this, I would say, socialistic outlook that we have, the fact that we allow people of all races, creeds, you know, ethnicities, anybody; we allow anybody regardless of your educational background, etc. That there is this, again, this haven that allows people to learn their trade, their skills, and reach for their career, yes. I mean, I can go to a lot of places and I run into our students.

Do you think, are you saying that Columbia has helped to diversify the media and arts?

I would say, oh, that's an interesting question. Diversify? I think that it's the nature of the beast at this point that there are more ethnic radio, television stations. With the advent of cable, they're

on there with their specialties and interests. And I think that because of that, you know, all of our students who also have all of the schedules, background, and interest, are able to fit in very comfortably.

Has your own vision of education changed in twenty years here?

Yeah, I'm afraid so.

How so?

I'm dismayed, not with our institution, I'm just dismayed at the quality, the deterioration of education in the public school system. My husband and I are both products of Chicago Public School Systems. I live in the city. I could not send my child to a public school. The education that she received—and I'm just using her as an example, but then again, I do work with these, you know, pockets of students at different locations—is as good as, actually, I think better, because there's more money pumped into private schools in terms of technology than what we received when we got our education. So it just amazed me that you had to pay so much for getting an education if I was brighter and smarter and took advantage of this—my husband did; I didn't—you know, that she could have gotten years ago, the school system has deteriorated. Not that there isn't teachers who have big hearts and are capable and loving and help their students, cajole them, you know, yell at them when necessary to structure these kids. But I just don't see it all the way up and down the line; it's just pockets of people. Yes, this distresses me. Socially there's things that really distress me, the graffiti and carelessness, the tearing up of books and materials and not return-

ing things, the scraping of our elevators, etc., completely unacceptable.

Did this happen twenty years ago?

Not much, we didn't have it. So much money is being poured into maintenance and how do you maintain? It's an impossible task. I've gone into some of the public school systems; you cannot use their bathrooms. It is so filthy and old and etc. So I mean, it's not just indicative of this institution, but it carries over. There is a societal deterioration that bothers me. So if you ask me about education, yes, I'm dismayed about the quality of education. But I'm starting to see a resurgence of teaching things like Latin and other things, which I find kind of interesting, in the school systems and I think they're very beneficial. There are little pockets of that, but then again, I think they need a formal structure. I've gone back to a touch of gray. You need a very rigid system.

In the grade schools?

In the grade schools on up. I think you need to structure these kids and they have to grab sentences, which is the things I hated when I was a child, it may be needed. Because a lot of them can't put sentences together.

You think that holds for Columbia as well, it needs more structure in the teaching?

It's possible, I can't say where. You know, college level is very different, I think, than grammar school, high school, junior high schools. I would expect a different type of person when they're in college. You are supposed to be given freedoms. You are to blossom. You're supposed to be away from this structure. It is now you, as a young adult, taking control of yourself. So in that

aspect, no. Do I believe that students and faculty should be prompt and on time and hand in their homework and do all the things that are required for their courses to get what they have to out of it? Yes. But as far as anything else, no. Now on a lower level, yes, I think there has to be more structure.

Tell me, we're not quite going yet, but if you've got a couple more minutes, what are some of the significant events to occur while you've been here? You mentioned accreditation and you talked about some of the changes in the library and so on, those changes.

I think that the Development Office is a huge change because the events that are put on there, you know, the reasoning behind it, Woody White, Conductor White, what a delight. I just love working with him. Of course you have to hide your wallet when you're around him because he knows how to ask for money. I think on the whole, we've never been good at that, we've never had a foundation base. And it wasn't our style, but it's a necessity so you can do the things that are necessary to give the students the best education, best facilities, possible. So, excuse me, I would say that the Development Office, what they're trying to do, the events they put on, I think the Alumni activities that they're trying to do that I've worked with the last three years, these events to tie in a community. The Residence Center, I think it's really a wonderful means of getting a commuter college, which we normally are, giving a sense of community. This is where you meet your long-term friends and relationships, is when you live with them in a dorm situa-

tion. So I think that actually was quite pivotal. The events that came out of the Student Life, taking care of the social needs, perhaps even physical, medical types of needs, when it comes to drugs such as transmitted diseases, the awareness of it, I think that has been an important. The graduations themselves have been an event for me. I've worked them but when I would march in them, the sense of excitement, that that was a part of it. The beauty of not marching to "Pomp and Circumstance" but having jazz, you know, flowing through. To have the beautiful voice of Carol Loverdi or Bobbi Wilsyn belt out a tune, it's just so impressive, you feel chills. Every year you feel chills when you hear them singing. So I would say that's another huge event of, again, I guess a part of the development that we started with Dr. Duff. Like the President's Club, to have contributors come in and attend events. So these are the types of things that I think have been getting us globally, you know, having more people come into the community. Just as a quick example, I went to my aerobics class; my instructor's wife is an alum from here. Another instructor wants to be a student here; I brought her information. One woman overheard us, two of her children have graduated, the third is graduating this year from here. These types of things have really kind of branched out to get other parts of the community and a nice, warm feeling about Columbia.

Tell me, what was the first graduation you took part in?

It would be 1978.

It would have been as soon as you got here.

Yeah, as soon as I got here. I came in April and the first one, you

know, working was in June. Or actually it was May thirty-first or something, the last Friday in May.

And tell me about it, what was it like?

It was shocking for me, it was. It was absolutely overwhelming. Well, first of all it's the robe and marching with your colors and to see all of the others, it was just a fun affair and it was—let me think, it was at the Prudential Building, and from then we went to the Auditorium, and now we're at the Pavilion and it's just about outgrown the Pavilion. Even this year we've had to separate, where the graduates are graduating this Saturday as a matter of fact, and separating them from the undergraduates. However, not knowing what to expect and then hearing the horns and the jazz, and you know, I'm saying, "Huh?" This is what they're marching to and, like I say, it just made you feel part of something special. And my family used to attend all the time because it was a joyful thing, so my husband used to attend a lot of the events, so it was a real family affair.

Now, has it changed over time?

The concept, other than location, other than the length of it, keeps going; my part in it has obviously changed. I don't march anymore, I work with the VIP, I bring in the VIP from the limos to get changed. I work the limos and then I work Presidential seating. So, yes, it's a very hard crowd control; it's really changed over the years. As far as the essence of the event itself? No. That has been solid, it has been steady, the excitement is there, the thrill you feel, it's not classy being, you know, at the Pavilion but it's just a wonderful event.

I've heard about, a little bit about, Mike Alexandroff's speeches. Can you...

Oh, incredible, they're incredible. I mean, this man can make you do anything. As a matter of fact, he does, thank you. He can make you do anything. His speeches were so wonderful. I mean, you would just, you would wish he would make them all the time. You know, give a monthly speech, set up an intercom somewhere because he's inspiring, he's emotional, he has a great presence about him. My daughter used to call him Santa Claus because when she first met him he was very bearded and distinguished looking; just inspirational. You're right, this man, his speeches, I'm sorry I wasn't even mentioning it. I was so involved in the music and the pomp of it. But just marvelous, marvelous presence. And they read good, too.

Really?

Yeah, they read it. Bert is giving very impressive speeches too. He has really made some marvelous speeches. He is the bluegrass of the institution; the statistics, the background, he can pull it all together. And if you especially get him impromptu, I've seen him give an impromptu speech at a graduation or a ceremony where we do a toast for the graduates or some other events. It was just, you know, very inspiring. So he's developed along nicely also.

Our time, I think we're over.

Are we?