WILLIAMS: This is the first interview with Mrs. Glenn. We are at the Glenn home in Bethesda, Maryland, and today is the 31st of October, 1997. This is Brien Williams.

To get started this morning, you were just telling me about the state visit of the—what is it, the Premier?

MRS. GLENN: I call him the President of China, Jiang Zemin. With John’s long-term interest in following China, what had been going on there, began when he was in the Marine Corps. He was a member of a squadron that was sent to China. They were stationed at this Marine air base there outside of what used to be called Peking, and they were there to guard General [George] Marshall during the Marshall peace talks. They would fly along the Great Wall to make sure everything was under control. So he’s been really very interested in what’s been going on in that part of the world from way, way back.
When he was first in the Senate, he was on the Foreign Relations Committee, and his chairmanship on that committee was East Asia, so all of the East Asia area came under John. He has met with the present President several times on our visits to China. Also, when Jiang was here several years ago, they asked John to go with him down to NASA in Texas, so John was with him on that trip, too. So we were on this list to be invited to this state dinner and evidently it’s one of the largest ones.

The Clintons, I don’t know why, but they really haven’t had as many state dinners as other Presidents have had. I read in the paper the number of the CEOs and presidents of American companies that wanted to be invited, too. I think it was thirty-eight of them, I think. It was in the thirties, so it was a great big dinner. The others have always been in the Gold Room, and since it was going to be much larger, they decided to have it in the East Room. Also, they had the Clintons and Gores and both of the Presidents and wives up on a raised platform, sort of like you were at a banquet, which I had never seen.

I think the ones that came over from China, they wanted it to be in the— the Clintons, first they were going to have it in a tent, because so many people were going to be invited, and I understand that the Chinese wanted it to be inside, just like they did years ago for Premier, or President, Deng Xiaoping when he was here. So they decided that would be good.

Something that was very, very special was the program afterwards. Everybody was taken down to a big tent down on the south lawn and there was
going to be a concert by the National Symphony, which is very, very special. In this tent they had chandeliers, and it was just quite elegant. Everybody had fun.

WILLIAMS: What was an event like that like? How would you describe it to someone who will never have the opportunity to be part of a state dinner at the White House?

MRS. GLENN: Well, I’ve always believed, being invited there, that the women should wear a long gown, because the men are in black tie. The one that I was at when George Bush was President, I always have on my long dress, and I noticed there were more women wearing pants outfits or cocktail dresses. I think when you’re invited to the White House, no matter if the party of the President, I think it’s just to pay respect. The other night I only saw one woman with a cocktail-type dress, but it was very—now to a man it’s not that noticeable, because a man’s outfit is just always the same, maybe changing the color of a tie or something like that. But the other evening it was so noticeable, and even I wore a black long dress, which I have had for seventeen years, I expect. I think there were only two women that didn’t have on black. I thought that’s minor, but at least as some women commented, it was that black is very, very, very formal.

But what you do is you walk in the east entrance and your name is announced over a microphone, and then you walk on in and you pass the press there. Then you’re in the lower foyer, and then the woman takes the arm of one of the military men there and you are taken upstairs to the main level. A group of the Marine Band is playing music, and you are introduced to the social secretary. The other evening, the reception was in the Gold Room, which is a dining room. You’re in there for about an hour talking to everybody and meeting people that
you have never met before. The other evening, evidently, up in the family quarters they must have had a longer time to visit, because the dinner was one hour late.

So, after the reception, you walk out of the Gold Room into the next room and then out into the main foyer where they have the receiving line. Another microphone is there that the military aide announces everybody’s name, and then you go through and you shake hands with our President, then the President that’s being honored, then the wife of our President, and then the wife of the one that’s being honored.

Then you go into where the dining room is. The other evening was just very lovely. In the middle of the table were tall crystal candle holders with these pale autumn-colored roses. It was just lovely. The crystal candelabras were at least two feet tall. I wanted to lift up my plate to see which President’s administration it was. It was gold leaf and in the middle was our gold leaf eagle. The next time I’m there, I’m going to check on which one that was. [Laughter] I ought to have lifted up the plate, because I’m always quite casual at these things.

Then you meet everybody that’s going to be at your table. Then you have dinner—it was very, very good. Well, before dinner, out President makes his remarks. Well, that has to be interpreted, too, and then the President that is being honored makes remarks, and then it’s interpreted, even though we knew on our visits to China he can speak English fairly well. So at the end of his remarks he made some in English, which everybody got a kick out of. His son had gone to Drexel University in Philadelphia, and he majored in engineering just like his dad
did, but he’s back in China. The Chinese President went to the university in Shanghai.

Then after dinner—which at other state dinners that John and I have been to they are always in the Gold Room—then you go into the East Room to have the after-dinner program. Then after that there is dancing. Well, the other night, they had a great big tent down on the south lawn and all of us were taken down there on these old, oh, like an old trolley, and then we all went into this large, large tent and there was the whole National Symphony. With the chandeliers in this tent, I mean, it was just very, very, very special. Not casual at all, just very nice, very elegant, I would say, too.

Then you go back into the White House to go out the east entrance to await your car. So it’s quite exciting. I think you always will be excited, no matter the number of events there that you have been to. That’s like even driving towards our Capitol, John and I, we both have to look at that dome. It’s just something very special, I think.

WILLIAMS: During the reception period the other night, did the Clintons circulate during that, or are they even there for that?

MRS. GLENN: The honored President and his wife are ushered up above in the family quarters and then they will come down the steps together. Then they will come into the reception and that’s where they make the receiving line. But the other night was quite different. Maybe it’s because of the number of people and the press and everybody. They must have changed it; I have no idea why.
WILLIAMS: So you weren’t able to interact with either the President or his wife on a one-on-one basis?

MRS. GLENN: We did going through the receiving line and also with the Chinese President, too. Not long, but there was a little bit of conversation because we knew them both. At the gala at the opening of the symphony concert hall, during the intermission, we were in the little room behind the box seats where the Clintons were, to have something to eat and to talk. So I had a long talk with Hillary [Clinton]. So it was good to see her again. I loved her dress the other night, it was just very elegant. I was impressed that the color was a pale aqua satin, not like all of us were wearing. So it was quite noticeable.

WILLIAMS: I’m curious, what did you and she talk about on the night of the symphony?

MRS. GLENN: Well, since our daughter Lynn graduated from Stanford [University], I asked her about Chelsea [Clinton], and she really wanted to talk about it. She didn’t know that our daughter had graduated there, and so she seemed to really want to talk. She said that they were both going to miss us after John’s out of the Senate and wanted to really continue keeping in touch. It was just a very casual—and I’ve always liked her. She’s very down to earth and she’s easy to talk to, and she’s been a very good mother. I’ve enjoyed her. It’s just too bad that all of our people in our country haven’t been able to really, really talk to her. She’s very knowledgeable, caring, and she has a tremendous sense of humor. And I love her laugh; it’s just very loud and great. So I like her and John likes her, too. She’s quite very good out on the campaign trail, and they both enjoy people.
WILLIAMS: It strikes me that they are by nature a little bit less formal than the state events would ask them to be, but they’re able, I suppose, to handle that with ease, is that right?

MRS. GLENN: I would say that. I think in the other events, I think during the [Jimmy] Carter years, theirs were more casual elegant. During the [Ronald] Reagan eight years, there was not one Democrat member of Congress asked, not even the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Pell, Claiborne Pell. They were never even asked, which I think is too bad. But then, during the [George] Bush years, it had changed. So it’s quite exciting to be invited.

WILLIAMS: What is your thumbnail sketch of the President? You told me how Hillary strikes you.

MRS. GLENN: Oh, I really like him. When he talks to you, he talks to you. And his eyes, they aren’t trying to see the ones that are there or trying to ignore you, and he just really takes time and he really wants to talk. He’s always late at things because he’s the type of a person that really needs to get close to the people. We’ve gotten to know him right from the very beginning on the campaign trail, so he’s very kind to me. He always wants to hug me and give me a kiss on the cheek. I think he’s just a very genuine-type man.

And he’s just crazy over Chelsea. They have been very good parents. At events that John and I have been there, Chelsea would invite some of her school friends, just like they’re having a party. Then the times that we talked to her—in fact, once we ran into her there and she was in her jeans and was very—I don’t know how in the world a child can grow up in a Governor’s Mansion for all those
years and now in the White House and to be so normal and down to earth. It proves to me that they have been very, very close with her. I think it would be tough to always be in the public eye, but, I think, from what I have read, they have tried to keep her privacy.

I know after John’s flight [Friendship 7], our daughter was asked to be the queen of the Apple Blossom Festival out in Winchester, and we chose to not—that that was going to be too much attention to a girl who was in the ninth grade, because the press, they could have really changed us terribly if we hadn’t kept as much control as we all decided to do. Also, even now I don’t like the press even to come into our place to have interviews either. I think being that way after John’s [space] flight, with all of the invitations sent that we had begun to receive; we just decided to say no to almost all of them. It made it much easier for us when he came back as a Senator, because we don’t accept very many invitations, because you could get really involved with—I call it artificial, because there is never enough time at most of the large things to really have a good exchange and conversation. If it’s going to be a dinner party that’s not too large, okay, but to be asked to all of these great big events, I just do not enjoy that at all.

WILLIAMS: You moved there from making a comment about protecting the family from the press, but then you’re also saying that you have limited the amount of social life that you conduct. Is that what you’re saying?

MRS. GLENN: That’s right. Well, plus when we first came to Washington in 1974, we wanted to have dinner parties. I learned quickly that to schedule one—maybe John couldn’t come or maybe they were going to be in late. I have talked to other
wives that are the exact same way; you just can’t plan on them being there or a lot of your guests are even able to come. It’s really too bad, because, I think, us being able to have a boat to take people out on the bay, we just call people up maybe the day before or maybe two days before. That’s the way to…

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

WILLIAMS: One of the questions I would have for you is, these state affairs and whatnot, you are called upon to make a lot of conversation and whatnot. My nature is such that I find that difficult to just sort of socially schmooze with people and so forth, but you and your husband have to have become easy at doing that.

MRS. GLENN: Well, if I hadn’t have had the speech therapy that I had, I would be a different person at these events. Now I can talk. In politics, I think the part of politics that I truly sincerely like is to get to talk to the different people, and I really like to get to know people. Both of us, during the Carter years, I would be asked to be at one table and I would be the one that is considered the hostess at that table, so I would make sure that everybody got to know each other before we all sat down. I’ll always remember when [Richard M.] Nixon was invited, and when we went through the receiving line, the press knew that Nixon was going to be at my table and I didn’t know that. They all wanted to know what I was going to talk about, what I thought, was I angry about it, because, I guess, afterwards I was told that one of the women didn’t want to be at his table. I told them he was our President and that was all right. So it sort of ticked John off inside, because the press really wanted to make that a great big to-do.
So, when I got to my table, Nixon was on my left, so at the beginning he was very quiet, and I talked to him more and more and more. He began to want to talk to everybody, so before the dinner was over—because our table then began to have a lot of fun—so before the dinner was over, I decided I was going to ask everybody at our table to sign my menu, and he got a kick out of that. So everybody did that then.

I forget the question. How in the world did I get on that? [Laughter]

WILLIAMS: I was asking about small talk.

MRS. GLENN: Well, I guess now that I can talk, I really like to get to know a person. I guess I ask more questions just to get them to open up, and it’s become quite natural, I guess. If I’m with people that have come from another country, I think it’s important for us to try to make them feel like they are really, truly welcome. I guess that’s me. I don’t know. I guess if I meet a person who is uppertish and thinks that they are a little bit better than anyone else, I think that’s more of a challenge because I wonder if they are a little bit insecure. I don’t know, but it’s a challenge to me to get through that, and that’s just how I am.

WILLIAMS: At the table the other night for the state dinner, who were some of the other people at the table?

MRS. GLENN: The one that was next to me, he was from Shanghai. The Chinese President was mayor of Shanghai before he was promoted. The man next to me worked with him as mayor, so he’s the Vice Foreign Minister—very interesting. I asked him about the way he was speaking English—was very, very good, and he said he had been in our country two different times with the Chinese Embassy and had
learned English then. So with our being in his country several times, it was easy to ask him questions and to get him to open up, too. I think at these events I don’t like to ask the person who’s next to me about policy. I think it’s important for people to feel relaxed and to have fun.

And there was Donna McLarty; and then Sandy Berger’s wife; another Chinese man, who I didn’t get to really talk to; and then the CEO of—I forget the company. Then the wife of the evangelical—a big group across our country, and he just got word the day before that their group is going to be able to go into China and really go from church to church and come back with a lot of information of really what’s going on there in the churches. I asked if they were going to be able to travel around, and he said yes. So that should be interesting for them to come back.

Then the one that was on my other side, and I really enjoyed him, was the son of Senator Dick Lugar. His wife couldn’t come, so he brought his son. I was completely enthralled with his—he’s just a very exciting young person. I told him it’s too bad he is not interested in getting into politics, because he’s needed. Then there are ten at each table, so I really didn’t get to know all of them. I would like to.

At the reception beforehand, we saw an old friend, Diane Sawyer, which was exciting because we had gotten to know her very well before she was married to Mike Nichols. So we had a long chat with her. And also, I got to see and talk a long time with Dan Rather’s wife, Jean, who I had known before, and we had a long talk. Then also the Pickerings, Tom and his wife, we had known since way
back in 1976. He was the ambassador to Jordan and then he was ambassador to
Russia, too, for a while, and we saw them over there. He retired from the Foreign
Service and then I think he was Secretary of State before [Madeline] Albright.

WILLIAMS: [Warren] Christopher?

MRS. GLENN: No, he was the one before. Well, anyway, he called Tom back into government.
Not Christopher. Christopher was before—oh, he was in Clinton’s first four
years. He hardly smiled. There were just an awful lot of people there that I had
never met before. John and I seemed to just want to talk to the ones we had
known and ones we hadn’t seen for a while. We know the president of Proctor
and Gamble because they are in Cincinnati. We didn’t get to see who all was
there because John and I came early, and in the room we weren’t up in the
doorway where everybody was coming from. We talked to Lady Bird Johnson
for a while, and Tom Brokaw very briefly. I really didn’t know, until I read the
guest list in the paper, there was a lot that I really didn’t even know that they were
there.

WILLIAMS: Was Senator Glenn at your table?

MRS. GLENN: Oh, no, they always have you separated. I don’t like that, but that’s how they
do that. I forget who were the ones at John’s table.

WILLIAMS: But a table for ten, that really doesn’t make for very much general conversation.
You’re primarily talking to the people to the right and the left of you?

MRS. GLENN: Well, because there were so many there, the noise level was very, very, very
high. At the dinners where there were, say, 120 to 150, then you can talk across
the table, but it was even hard to even talk to people that were next to you because of the noise level.

WILLIAMS: Anything else about the state dinner or that event that you want to talk about?

MRS. GLENN: There was one thing I’m sorry I didn’t get to see. I had read in the paper—I think this dinner was on Wednesday night, and I think in the paper on Monday night one of Georgia O’Keefe’s paintings, the owner of it presented it to Mrs. Clinton to be hung in the White House, and I really wanted to see that. But I didn’t remember that until we were out. I think it’s in the Gold Room. So if I’m going to go down there, if I’m able to go there to see the Christmas decorations, that’s one that I do want to see because I like Georgia O’Keefe’s paintings.

WILLIAMS: We were talking during the break about the symphony orchestra, I guess that was Friday night of last week, and that was a special occasion because the concert hall was just being reopened after renovations. I’d like you to describe what happened when Clinton was invited up to conduct the orchestra and how that all transpired.

MRS. GLENN: Well, the conductor said that the symphony, they had played the “Stars,” the Sousa music many times and he’s conducted it many, many times, and he just decided that there ought to be another person have the honor that night. He was a very well-known musician and all that, and he went on and on and on, then he introduced “Your President,” and out came Clinton. He was all grins. He was so excited. He did it very, very well. My being a music major, it was interesting to see that he knew the parts of the song where the different instruments would be louder, or he knew the part of the song where it was supposed to get softer, and he just acted like a real pro. The more that he did that, the more the audience—they
were so excited, and they laughed and they clapped. After the song was over, everybody stood up. It was lots of fun. He was having an excellent time, very, very, very good time.

WILLIAMS: Did Mrs. Clinton come out then, and was she presented with a bouquet of roses, and what happened then?

MRS. GLENN: Yes, she was presented with this lovely bouquet of sort of a coral color of roses. She was laughing, and she walked by the President and gave him a kiss and gave him one rose, also. Then they both came to the podium. It was very cute—not cute, it was very touching.

WILLIAMS: As you look back on your associations over the years with the Clintons, are there any other anecdotes that stick in your mind as being illustrative of who they are?

MRS. GLENN: They invited us to the showing of Apollo 13, and they had the actors and the actresses and the producers and everybody associated with that movie. We were all up in the family quarters, and she wanted to talk to John. She always wanted to be an astronaut, and she has bad eyesight. She wanted to talk to John about space. They’ve never been to a launching, so that’s one thing they really want to do.

Then up there at the get-together up there, then we all went down into the Gold Room for a casual dinner. Chelsea was there with her friends. Then we all went down to the White House theater. We are always given popcorn. So it was sort of a good way to see the beginning of a very good movie.
John and the President have been in contact right from the very beginning. They have a good relationship. John traveled with her at the beginning of the health [care policy] thing, and he got to know her very well.

John’s flown on Air Force One several times. She really is very sincere. We have been wanting to invite them out to have dinner, but we’ve always been afraid that they’re so busy, busy, busy. She said the other night that they would just love to do that, because she had been told by a lot of people about the change in the attitudes and the way that you don’t get to know each other in the Washington [D.C.] area, and about several years ago that people would have little dinner parties in their homes and how it had really changed, and it’s just not that way anymore. They really would like to do that, so John and I are going to ask them.

WILLIAMS: Have you ever had a sitting President to dinner before?

MRS. GLENN: Well, after John’s flight, LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson] and his wife were very good to us. Their two daughters would come to our place when we lived in Arlington [Virginia] to get to know our two kids and to get to know more about, well, to get to know each other. The Johnsons were very, very good to us.

So, after John’s flight, John was trying to think of some way to say thank you to a Vice President who has everything. So he decided, well, why don’t we invite them to our place to have dinner and I would cook. So he did, not expecting them to say, “Oh, fine. That would be fine,” and they accepted. So we asked two couples that were our neighbors, they were old-time Marine Corps friends, and also another couple and our two kids.
John had told LBJ that it was going to be quite casual and that John was going to wear a sports shirt and that I was going to cook. Okay. So when John opened up the door, there was LBJ in his tux, and he said, “Oh, you really did mean that.” So he went back to his limo and changed, and he put on his sport shirt and came in. Lady Bird, she had on a dress like you would wear to church.

So I had cooked my meal that all of us really enjoy and John enjoys it, too, and our kids do. I served my ham loaf and scalloped potatoes, which I do very well, and an apple Waldorf salad, and for dessert was my chocolate-do cake. I thought it was a very, very tasty meal.

Then afterwards we had everybody in our living room. Some of us were on the floor, and LBJ began telling us stories, and it was just fascinating. He was just a real storyteller. He went way, way back when he was young, all the way through politics and everything. Lady Bird interrupted him once and said, “Lyndon, they have had enough.” He said, “Oh, no, this is fun,” and he just talked and talked and talked. It was a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful evening. So that was our way of paying them back for everything that they had done for us. Our kids, they were—it would have been nice to have had on a tape, but that’s not fair, I don’t think, for an evening like that.

WILLIAMS: Were the Secret Service in evidence, too, or was he able to come quite casually?

MRS. GLENN: They were outside. Very casual. I think back then, see, [John F.] Kennedy hadn’t been killed yet. Neither had Bobby [Robert F.] Kennedy and Martin Luther King [Jr.], so…
WILLIAMS:  You were saying that the Secret Service must have been outside.

MRS. GLENN:  Yes. When we said goodbye to them, all of us went outside of our front door. I don’t know if they were in another car, or if they were in the limo, or maybe he didn’t even have any. I don’t know. I don’t know.

WILLIAMS:  So you haven’t put on the calendar yet when the Clintons are coming to visit here?

MRS. GLENN:  No. I have to consider what I’m going to have for them, too, and who I want to ask, because I don’t want it to be very big. I don’t want it to be completely about politics. Maybe the [Leonard] Slatkings would be very good to have, because just talking to them both the other evening; I think I would really like to get to know them better. So, we’re both trying to think, because I don’t want it to be more than maybe eight or ten, because I want them to be able to be at our home comfortably. This is an evening that I would like, I think I would like to ask Lynn in, but if you ask Lynn, then you have to ask Dave and Karen, so I’m not even sure how to do that. I’d like to have Chelsea if she’s ever back. So, we’re both sort of toying, too.

WILLIAMS:  When I was preparing for today, I thought maybe a place where we might start was your describing your home. The post office is Bethesda, although I tend to associate this more with Potomac. Lay the groundwork here, where we are on Halloween in 1997.

MRS. GLENN:  Where John and I had lived for about sixteen years was a place called Potomac Falls, and it’s about four miles away from where we are now. Over there,
everybody had at least two acres. It’s next to a little town called Potomac. Back when we lived over in Arlington, before John’s space flight, after church we would drive over into the Potomac area, because it was called the hunt country, and you had these great big beautiful farms and the white fences made out of wood. Now they are made out of plastic now, I think, because they are shiny. But it was just a very tiny town and then there were two places over here where we would like to have lunch after church.

Well, it’s really changed now, and this is where a lot of people sort of like to build, and some of the homes are a little bit—they are way, way, way, way too big. But the place where we are now is on the Avenel Golf Course, and you are members of what’s called the Avenel Homeowner’s Association. You don’t have to take care of your lawn or your leaves. We only have three-quarters of an acre, and they trim your shrubs and things like that. Our place looks down on the tenth green and also the eleventh green.

On the other side of this valley, the post office is Potomac. On our side of the valley, it happens to be in Bethesda. The back side of our property is on the Maryland park land, and then down below that is the Avenel Golf Course. There’s a bridle trail that’s always been here, even before they built the golf course, and we can watch the riders all the time, too.

The houses are closer, but the way John put our house on our—we bought our lot before any others were here, and he chose to put our house so when other houses were being built, we would have privacy on both the front and back of our deck and patio. It’s just completely private and quiet, and the trees in the park
land are nice. I am adding, each year, mountain laurel, because I have learned and I have noticed in other lands around, off of Avenel, the deer do not bother mountain laurel. So each year I am adding more mountain laurel, even if it’s in the Maryland park land. Because we have lots of deer, and I have to keep our azaleas sprayed with what’s called “Deer Away,” that I have learned about and it lasts two months. I have learned what annuals to plant so the deer won’t eat them, and my perennial bed is not as large because of what they eat. So it’s been a challenge. [Chuckles]

WILLIAMS: This is such a country atmosphere here, and yet your location is very good for the Senator to get to Capitol Hill. Is that not correct?

MRS. GLENN: It’s ideal. If people have to come to the other side of Potomac to cross the Cabin John Bridge or to get on to the beltway, they have these long lines at this one traffic light. So where we were over in Potomac Falls, we were right up above the Potomac River, Great Falls, and we were on the south side of the traffic light. So he would just have to drop down, because the Clara Barton Parkway up onto the Cabin John Bridge, and they have on the right lane it’s a continual flow traffic that wanted to go on to the G.W. [George Washington] Parkway. But coming off of the G.W. Parkway, they also have a right lane that’s a continual flow, so there’s never, ever a backup for John to go across the Cabin John Bridge, which is during rush hour. It’s just a huge traffic jam.

WILLIAMS: So he actually leaves the home here in Maryland and goes over to Virginia. Is that what you’re saying?

MRS. GLENN: Most of the time.
WILLIAMS: And then travels down the George Washington Parkway and then crosses the river again.

MRS. GLENN: He also keeps his radio on, just in case there’s a traffic accident over there, and, if so, then he will keep on the northern side of the Potomac River to go in on Canal Road. But you really have to get to know the traffic patterns during rush hour in this Washington area. I’m now not afraid of it. I’ve gotten used to, and John, also, which lane to be in and which lane not to be in. But I guess, now, from reading in the *Post*, the *Washington Post*, this last month that the Washington traffic during rush hour is number two next to L.A., which is unreal.

WILLIAMS: So both you and Senator Glenn do your own driving?

MRS. GLENN: Oh, yes. And maybe after an event where we are both going to be going to, I will drive in and meet John and then leave his car in there, and then we will both come home together, and then I will take him back in early the next day. It’s one way to get to talk to each other.

WILLIAMS: You have other homes.

MRS. GLENN: We have one in Columbus [Ohio]. It’s a condominium. We had built our house up there before he was in politics, and it was going to be our house forever and ever. I just loved that house. It was everything that we both loved. Then he decided to get into politics and we kept it for about two years. To have the lawn being taken care of like the way that we wanted didn’t prove to be right. Then to make sure that the house was air-conditioned or the heat was on, it was just beginning to be more work. So we decided to put the house up for sale, which I cried when we signed the papers, but it had to be done.
Then we bought in a tall high-rise condo building, and it’s much easier because you can lock your door, and if there’s any problem, you can have them take care of it. The heat and air-conditioning is always correct. Plus, my mother’s last ten years of her life, she moved up from New Concord, because we didn’t want her to be living alone anymore, since both of our—my dad had died and John’s parents had died. We moved her into our condominium up there. We knew that she was close to other people and she was going to be protected and cared for. So it was a big adjustment Mother had to make, but she made that adjustment. Every morning she would put on her makeup and her good clothes and she would go down to what was called the breakfast room. She made new friends.

John liked to keep her busy. Every time we would come to the Columbus area, he would take her to all the Democratic dinners and meetings and everything that was going on. I think it was good for her.

She happened to fall. One morning she lost her balance getting into her clothes, and broke her hip. She was ninety-two. She never lived more than a month later. So I’m glad that she had those last good ten years and she didn’t have to go into a retirement home or anything like that. She could keep her own privacy, which I’m happy we could afford.

WILLIAMS: So she was there for ten years?

MRS. GLENN: Yes.

WILLIAMS: And the dream house you described that you built, that was in the Columbus area?
MRS. GLENN: It was in the Columbus area. It was along the Scioto River. There were a lot of old black walnut trees, which the tree people said that we should have insured, because out in the woods poachers were cutting them down and all that. So there were these handsome old trees. We had solid wood beams. They were from Oregon. Our house outside was cedar and inside was rough cedar, in a lot of the house. We had inside and outside a lot of brick floors. John’s favorite was his great big fireplace, which was open on both sides. He loved that one. It was just a very homey, warm house.

WILLIAMS: It sounds like it.

MRS. GLENN: I loved it.

WILLIAMS: And then you’ve spoken of a place in Vail [Colorado].

MRS. GLENN: We have a condo in Vail. We had been going to Vail for several years and we would always rent an apartment. Then our daughter was married to a doctor out there, so we decided to buy a condominium because we really enjoyed that area. I like it better in July and August and September, plus all of us were good skiers, too. So we decided to buy. There are two condominiums connected, but it’s in an enclave where we have eight tennis courts. We have a big pool and also a restaurant there, too, and it overlooks the mountain of Vail. We also get sun all of the time, and so that would help cut back on the expense, too, of the heating bills. It’s been enjoyed by all of us now, and our grandkids are to the age now where John and I have decided now we’ll never do any other remodeling, ever again.

But anyway, our two grandkids were to the age where they shouldn’t have to share a bedroom and bath with their mother and dad, so we decided, well, we
would add another room and bath. And there, the club area, you aren’t allowed to add anything on the outside. If it was going to be done, it had to be on the inside. So we decided on a way to do it and had to move out all of our furniture and everything. It’s been a tremendous job, but at last it’s all done.

WILLIAMS: And then do you have a place in Florida, or is that not so?

MRS. GLENN: We don’t have a place in Florida. We were part owners with our oldest friends in the Marine Corps. He had been the head of Marine aviation, and he’s retired now. It’s General Tom Miller and his wife, Ida Mae. Our kids grew up together. Tom and Ida Mae, they were able to keep their house that we built side by side in Arlington. When we had to move to Texas during the astronaut days, we had to sell our house there so we could buy a place in Texas. But Ida Mae and Tom had more money at that time than we did, so they were able to keep their house. So they were going to buy a place in Florida, too, so we decided to put our money together, and we bought a boat. So we are part owners of this boat, and during the warm months it’s over in the Chesapeake Bay, and then in the month of November, it goes south on the Intercoastal Canal to the Keys in Florida. We have a captain and first mate on it, too. So whenever it’s going north and south in the Intercoastal, Tom and Ida Mae are usually on it, but every now and then John and I will join it, as much as we possibly can. I know after John’s out of the Senate that we’re going to make longer trips on it, because we really enjoy that boat.

WILLIAMS: What about property in New Concord? Have you kept your family home?

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MRS. GLENN: Well, after, when we moved Mother up to our condominium in Columbus, my sister Jane and I decided to lease the house and to keep it. My dad developed Parkinson’s, and when he got worse and had to retire from being a dentist, Mother was dad’s caregiver. So she had let the house—it wasn’t being taken care of the way it ought to have been done and so Jane and I took on that responsibility.

We happened on to the daughter and son-in-law of our cousin, and they needed a place to live after they were married. He was the son of a contractor. He would do a lot of the things that had to be done and he wouldn’t charge us. Then after Mother died, I talked over with Jane that, let’s don’t—the ones that had been living there decided that they wanted to move. They wanted their own home and to remodel an old house that they had bought. So I talked it over with Jane. I just didn’t want to continue with the upkeep, and there was a lot more that had to be done, so we decided to sell the house that I grew up in.

We have John’s house yet. His mother and dad had made it over into an apartment up above, so we have these two apartments rented. We have asked this real estate group to sort of watch over it and things like that. It’s not like it was when his mother and dad were there, but it’s being kept up, anyway.

WILLIAMS: I think we probably will wind down pretty soon now, but we’re sort of doing a moment in time today. Tell me about Lynn and about David. Not the history, but where they are right now.

MRS. GLENN: Oh, okay. [Laughter] I wondered, when did you want me to begin.

WILLIAMS: No, just right now.
MRS. GLENN: David is married to Karen and they have two boys. Daniel just turned fifteen.
   Zachary will be turning thirteen in a month. They live in the Berkeley area, San Francisco. Lynn is living in St. Paul, Minnesota, and they both live too far away, but thank goodness we have telephones.

WILLIAMS: Your husband announced his retirement in February of this year, and so he will be serving in the Senate for another year and a couple of months. Do you have plans? Do you know what you’re going to do when he does retire?

MRS. GLENN: Well, we are going to continue living here in the home here in Bethesda and we will continue owning our own place up in Columbus, too, because he will be connected part-time with Ohio State. He wants to be closely connected with colleges up there and working with the young people to get them turned around to wanting to be involved in politics. Also, he will be closely connected with the Columbus Institute. It’s called COSI. It’s the Columbus Institute of Science. So we will be traveling back and forth like we have been doing, and also we want to be on our own schedule. We want to be able to be on the boat more, we want to be able to be with our kids more, and John wants to write. He loves to write poetry and I want him to begin doing more of that.

   I took the Evelyn Woods speed-reading class, which really changed my way of reading, but it’s been thirty-five years, so I want to take that course over again, because I really want to just read. We both want to do more on our computer, so I think we’re going to be kept occupied.

WILLIAMS: I think we should stop at this point here, and pick up next time probably with your story of your first date with young John Glenn.
MRS. GLENN: My first date. I don’t know if I can remember. That was so long ago.

[Laughter]

WILLIAMS: You’ve got a few days to…

MRS. GLENN: Has he remembered it? [Laughter]

WILLIAMS: I’m not telling. I’m going to stop the tape now.

[End of Interview]