

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
JOAN HERBERS  
FEBRUARY 11, 2014

Q. Hello, my name is Maria Barbero. Today is February 11, 2014, and I am interviewing Joan Herbers. Her birthdate is?

A. September 8 and an undisclosed year.

Q. Good. So Joan, could you describe some of the positions you held or roles that you held at Ohio State?

A. Sure. I came here in 2002 to become Dean of the College of Biological Sciences. Now that's one of the colleges that no longer exists. I was recruited here from Colorado State University where I was Chair of the Biology Department. So I was in the Dean's Office as Dean of Biological Sciences for six years. Then I stepped down. I now am a professor of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology [EEOB], and last year I also was delighted to be appointed – it was a joint appointment – in Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies. And I am the principal investigator [PI] and project director for a program called [Project CEOS] Comprehensive Equity at Ohio State, which is all about gender equity, especially in the sciences.

Q. Getting ahead to some of our questions then. Could you talk a little bit about that program since you mentioned it?

A. This program is funded by the National Science Foundation, which is a federal agency dedicated to advancing the science disciplines in general, and I might use the acronym STEM, which is Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. That's an acronym that is very often used to encompass all the scientific endeavors. So the National Science Foundation has a program called ADVANCE, and ADVANCE is designed to promote

gender equity in the STEM disciplines, broadly speaking, with a specific focus on faculty and professional women, as opposed to undergraduate students or even graduate students. So they have several different kinds of grants; the largest kind, the most prestigious kind, is called an institutional transformation award. That's what we have here at Ohio State. An institutional transformation award is a five-year grant, and our grant was \$3.6 million, so a lot of money. And the idea is, these grants are expected to delve into the very deep cultural issues surrounding academic science, and try to chip away at whatever it is that is impeding women's careers. So we started thinking about submitting a grant to this program a long time ago. I was in the Dean's office and about three years of planning went into the actual proposal that went to the National Science Foundation. The planning involved long discussions about what the issues are here at Ohio State. We knew what issues were at other places and which units would partner in the program and what we wanted to do. So those discussions were occurring with the other Deans. The Dean of Engineering and the Dean of Veterinary Medicine at the time were very interested in this as well. And [there was] a separate College of Math and Physical Sciences. So there were four colleges originally – Biological Sciences, Math and Physical Sciences, Engineering, and Veterinary Medicine – that decided that they wanted to work on this project. It took us another year and a half to sort of put together the team because the National Science Foundation wants these grants to incorporate social scientists, the rationale being that in the early days of this program they gave grants to institutions and the grants were run by scientists for scientists. Well, scientists know a great deal about how to make widgets and how to fix air pollution and stuff like that, but they don't know anything about how to manage people. And cultural change of the sort that these institutional transformation

awards are designed to do requires changing people's behavior. So that's why the social sciences needed to be a large part of the project. So we assembled a team and the team included representatives of those science colleges, Vet Med, Math and Physical Sciences, Engineering, Biological Sciences, as well as social scientists.

So Jill Bystydzienski, who is Chair of the Women's Studies Department, and [Prof.] Anand Desai from the Glenn School [of Public Affairs were involved]. Another woman we had early on, [Prof.] Suzanne Damarin, who has since passed away, from the College of Education [and Human Ecology was also involved], and then our last original co-PI was Anne Massaro from the Office of Human Resources – a staff person but she was very involved with faculty development issues. So we put together this group and together this group just put together a dynamite proposal, absolutely dynamite proposal. We sent it in, and it was funded in full for five years. We're at the tail end of the project now, so we're in our sixth year because we had enough money to keep going and we hope we can have it a whole other year.

So in a nutshell that's sort of the process by which this proposal came to life, and what we are trying to do here. Our emphasis at Ohio State has been on retention of faculty, women faculty. We did a lot of analysis of the numbers early on and were able to show that our major problem here at Ohio State is not recruiting women to the faculty and the sciences. It's keeping them. They leave at a very high rate and much higher than men leave. So for assistant professors, we knew that fewer than half of our women that we hired into assistant professor jobs stayed all the way through. And for our associate professors, we also knew that women associate professors were not advancing in rank to full professor at the same rates as men. So those were the issues that we really wanted to

tackle. And we designed a series of programs to work on those issues. We've had some successes and misses. That's pretty normal in research. But overall it's been a really, really positive experience, and I think most faculty in the sciences know what we're doing, and the Deans and the Chairs are very, very supportive, and so that's really important.

Q. What are maybe some ways that you have been supported in the University with this program, and some ways that maybe there's been some obstruction?

A. Well, the support from the very top has been important. When we were funded, President [Karen] Holbrook was very supportive, and then Joe Alutto was interim President and then [OSU President E.] Gordon Gee of course. And now Joe Alutto is again interim President. And so there's always been support from the top in terms of the verbal stuff, the highlighting what we do and so on. The Provost's Office is the really important office to make sure that is behind us, because the Provost is the Academic Vice President and they're the ones that set the policies, set the tone, hire the Deans and so on. And then at the next level the Deans are really important. So we've had very good support from the Provost's Office. In fact, [Vice Provost for Academic Policy and Faculty Resources] Susan Williams, who is an Associate Provost, is one of our co-PI's now. So she's part of the project. Hazel Morrow-Jones, who leads The Women's Place, is part of our project. So we've been very fortunate there. We also have support from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The Deans have been very supportive as well, in terms of making sure that their faculty know about it, that we have access to data, those sort of things. And for the most part the Chairs have been very supportive as well. So we have across those units, we have about 20 Department Chairs.

Now, one of the issues of course is that over a six-year period, people change. So somebody who is a Chair now might not have been Chair early on in the project. The same way Deans have turned over. So that's always an issue when you're working on long projects. But for the most part that has not been problematic. I'll tell you where we get the most resistance. It's from the senior male faculty. Senior male faculty who don't think about their colleagues in the same way that Deans and Chairs do. For Deans and Chairs it's important that all their faculty stay vibrant and invested in their jobs. Senior faculty, they don't care. That's being a bit abrupt. So a lot of senior faculty think the work we're doing is just bologna. 'What women's issues? What's the problem? I treat everybody equally.' Well, that's because they don't think about it. They don't know what the literature has to say about implicit bias, about the way our systems are set up to advantage white men at the expense of other groups and so on. So that's where most of the resistance has been, and some of the resistance is simply passive. They ignore us and sometimes we get snarky comments and other things. But for the most part we've gotten a lot of support.

Q. How do you see the project? You say it's coming toward the end. You're trying to get one more year, but how do you see the progress? And maybe you could talk about some of the issues that you think that remain after the project.

A. Sure, sure. I mentioned that our two original goals were retention of assistant professors, and professional development and promotion of associate professors. Those were the two things. Well, we took a look at the data last year, and there's good news and bad news. In terms of the good news, we have more women on our faculty now than we did, which is great. The Deans and the Chairs have been really very aggressive about hiring women

and giving them support they need so that they can accept offers, and that's great. So we have more women on the faculty. More science faculty are women now. That's great. The bad news, though, is that we still have a revolving door at the assistant-professor level. We still see that women leave the faculty at higher rates than men at the assistant-professor level. Sometimes at fairly appalling rates.

And so I'll talk about another intervention that we're doing to help cope with that. The really good news is that our most recent data show that for associate professors, [which is] the middle rank – [the ranks are] assistant, associate, full – promotion to full professor has now been equalized between the genders. So that gender gap is gone. And I think that's really an extremely positive step because when associate professors are unable to move to full professor, there are all sorts of issues that underlie that. There are issues of credibility. There are issues of status. There are issues of faculty getting frustrated. There are lots of reasons why that's bad for the institution. So we're really pleased about that. We have also been very active in helping faculty through with their career progression. So we partner with other units around campus. We're offering a lab management series right now for junior women, so that they can learn how to manage people, and how to make sure that their programs are successful.

Now, part of the reason why we continue to have real difficulty with our women assistant professors – those early hires – has to do with the fact that the world has changed for faculty. And women assistant professors have a different home life than do male assistant professors. More of them are partnered and partnered with people who are professionally engaged. And so the issue of partner placement is huge, huge, huge for assistant professors these days. More huge for women than men but still big for men as

well. So as a result of figuring that out, we're making sure that when we hire somebody, that person is not going to be unhappy because of what's going on at home. We have a supplement to our grant, a new grant that came in a year ago, to work explicitly on issues of partner placement, dual careers. And so we are working on two fronts on that one. First of all, we have helped to establish with a bunch of other educational institutions in the region, a Higher Education Recruitment Consortium [HERC], whereby all the institutions know about the hiring plans of every other institution and there's a central web site that will list all of the jobs. And so if there's a job in our Department of Physics and somebody wants to apply for that job and is partnered with somebody else who is a Geographer, the partner can go on this web site and find out what Geography jobs are available in the region. So that's one thing we're doing, is working with other academic institutions. And about a third of our faculty members who are hired have partner issues that will be helped with this approach. But then there's another third of our faculty members who are hired who have partners but they're not academic partners. They're lawyers, they're computer people. They're bankers. They're all around, all sorts of things. So we're working on another way to cope with a dual career issues that leave outside the University walls. And that is a work in progress. I don't want to say any more about it because we're not sure it's going to happen. But the HERC, the first one, is definitely happening. That's going to launch this spring, and the second one we're working on now.

Q. Okay. So you mentioned one-third, the other third?

A. And then a third of the assistant professors don't have partner issues.

Q. Other issues?

- A. Other issues, yes. So the deep-seated department culture continues to be an issue and they're not going to go away just by us talking about them. So what do I mean by that? I mean in some departments faculty meetings start at 5:00. So if you have kids in day care you can't attend faculty meetings. In some departments there are groups of senior faculty that have lunch every day together and they exclude others. It's those small tiny things that really get in the way of people being successful at work. We have lots of examples of inappropriate behavior, not horrible stuff. Not sexual harassment, but just inappropriate stuff. Calling women girls. Our students sometimes perpetrate things. They're called micro-inequities that you might not think are annoying but they really are. I'll get e-mail addressed to Joan and my husband, who is on the faculty, gets e-mail addressed to Dr. Wilson. That really annoys me. So it's these micro-inequities that build and build and build and build, that sometimes become too much for faculty and they leave for all kinds of reasons. But that's one of them. So that's one of the suites of issues we're trying to work with departments on, to help them think through what they do, whether what they're doing actually helps faculty or hinders faculty, all faculty.
- Q. That sounds great. So maybe we can backtrack a little bit. If you'd like to talk a little bit about your family and your background and experiences that shaped you prior to coming to OSU and undertaking the project.
- A. Sure. I grew up in St. Louis in a large family. I'm the third oldest of 13 children. I have oldest child stamped all over me. So I know how to cook. I know how to clean. I knew how to change babies [diapers] by the time I was about 12 years old, all that stuff. But my family also has always prized education, always prized independence. So Mom didn't wake us up in the morning. We had to get ourselves up. She didn't drive us to the library.



We had to walk that mile to the library, that kind of stuff. So that early environment where it was a combination of being independent but also being part of a large family. It was really, I think, fundamental to my ability to succeed in academic life. I grew up with brothers. I grew up with sisters. Academic life requires faculty members to be independent, to develop their own research programs and their own courses and so on, but also to work with others. And so faculty members who are difficult to work with don't succeed very well. They don't enter into collaborative research arrangements. They are not appointed to key committees and so on. So it's that combination that's really important.

I went to an all-girls high school in St. Louis and I think that was important for me because I didn't have to worry about what I looked like every morning, although of course we did. But I didn't dress for the boys. I dressed for myself and my fellow students. I went to college at the University of Dayton right down the road and really enjoyed that. Got involved with a bunch of honor students. So academic achievement was always prized in my family and among my cohorts. Because I was a biology major in college, I really liked the sciences and decided to go on to graduate school. Most biology majors were more interested in going to medical school than to graduate school, but medical school was not for me. Not interested in being a doctor. So I went on to Northwestern University and got a Ph.D.

One of my loves in college had been mathematics. I minored in mathematics, and so in graduate school I wanted to combine math and biology and back in the '70s when I went to graduate school, this was not that common to do. So I found an advisor at Northwestern who did exactly that, did math and biology. He was a fabulous mentor to

me, just fabulous. He was this crusty, gruff guy but he was the typical marshmallow. He really helped me when I needed it, kicked me when I needed it, made sure I had what I needed to succeed and so on. So he was wonderful. After graduate school I did a post-doc at Stanford University, and there I really learned a lot more about the high-pressure, high-status academic endeavors. Northwestern is a good place, don't get me wrong, but it wasn't at that time an elite institution. I think it's really climbed. Stanford has always been an elite institution, and I worked with one of the best in the country there, [Professor of Biology Science] Jonathan Roughgarden. And there I learned about what I was capable of and what I was not capable of. I learned my limits for probably the first time in my academic career. There were people way smarter than me at Stanford, way smarter than me. And I had to come to terms with what my limits were, as well as fundamentally accepting that even though I wasn't the smartest person there I could still do really good science.

And I think this is something that a lot of academics struggle with. You're not the smartest person. So is your work any good if it's not done by the smartest person? I went to a workshop once and the insight that I really like, is that university faculty tend to be insecure over-achievers, and that just explains a lot of their behavior. And that certainly could describe me. Now, if you were to ask most of my colleagues and friends, "Is Joan insecure?" They would say, "Hell, no." But we all have our insecurities about all sorts of things. So at Stanford I really, I think came to grips with the fact that I wasn't the smartest person there, and I wasn't the hardest working person there either, but I could still do good work. So I got my first faculty job at the University of Vermont, which is in Burlington, Vermont. A beautiful place. In the meantime I had met my now-husband,

Tom. He was a post-doc at Northwestern when I was a graduate student. He went to do another post-doc at the University of California Irvine when I went to Stanford. So we were at opposite ends of the California state but at least in the same state. We commuted. So when it was time to look for academic jobs, we decided we were really interested in being together. So I got the job at Vermont and he was unsuccessful in his job search that first year, but Vermont was willing to give him a faculty title without a salary and without any tenure associated with it. So it was called Research Assistant Professor. It's a research track.

So we went to Vermont and we both were pretty successful. Tom got grants that paid his salary. I started teaching courses and after about three years we realized that it just wasn't working out the way we had hoped because Tom wanted a tenure-track position. He wanted that security. Well, who can blame him? I had a tenure-track position. So after a lot of discussions with each other, what are we going to do? Are you going to move? Am I going to move? Are you going to change careers? Are you going to change careers? Blah, blah, blah, blah. We decided what we would do is ask the University of Vermont to take my full-time position and split it into two half-time positions with the second half going to Tom, which is what they finally did. Now, this was extremely unusual in the early '80s. This was really a revolutionary thing to do but for us it was the only way we could stay at that university. And we loved living there. Vermont is beautiful. New England is beautiful. The winters are horrible but okay. You deal with it. So anyway, that's what happened. So Tom started his tenure track career. I was three years ahead of him in the queue and we both got tenured and promoted and stayed there for another 11 years.

After 11 years of being half-time and tenured, we started to get itchy feet. We had our kids. The kids were in school. They were doing fine. We were a little more ambitious. So it became clear that we were not going to be able to get any further at Vermont, so we moved. That's when we moved to Colorado State University, where I became Department Chair. I was at this time pretty interested in academic administration. I had been a part-time Associate Dean at Vermont and really enjoyed that. And so I decided I wanted to run a department, so I became Chair of Biology at Colorado State. We were there for nine years and enjoyed it, but it was a hard job, and Tom just did his faculty thing. He got grants. He taught his courses. He's not interested in administration at all. And I was really surprised one day to get a phone call – it was at home – from Glen Hoffsis, who was at that time the Dean of the vet school here at Ohio State. He was running the search for the Dean of Biological Sciences and I had been nominated. So he asked me if I would consider applying, and I thought, "I'm not a Dean but what the heck." So I sent him my CV and all the process went all the way through and we moved here to Ohio State.

Now, one thing I really appreciated about Ohio State is the folks on that search committee did their homework and they knew about Tom before I brought him up. So they created a position for him. They told me that would happen without me having to beg and plead. Wonderful. That was, for me, a signal that Ohio State really understood the issues of women in science and were committed to diversifying its faculty. So here we came. Tom retired a year ago. He's older than I am. I was in the Dean's office for six years, as I said. So that's been my journey.

Q. Great. Maybe you could talk a little bit about how you identify yourself in terms of gender, race, religion, class, and so on, and how these aspects about your identity were throughout your journey.

A. That's a lot of variables. I do very strongly identify with issues of gender. This is something that, when I was a graduate student we hired, my department hired a female Chair. Neena Schwartz is her name. She is still alive. And Neena had a very hard time in that department, but she took all the women graduate students under her wing. She was a very early feminist, scientific feminist. And she met with us about every other week, all the women graduate students, and talked to us about what it meant to be a woman in the sciences. It opened my eyes. So she talked about the imposter syndrome. She talked to us about how the systems were set up for white males, and here are the issues you need to be thinking about. You're actually better than you think you are, all that stuff. So she was a hugely important influence on me. I remained interested in gender issues since that time.

Q. Neena?

A. Neena Schwartz. So at the time she was one of the founding mothers of an organization called the Association for Women in Science. It's a professional organization and I joined it as a graduate student and I remained a member for the next 30 years. I'm still a member. I recently stepped down from the Board of that organization. So I actually served as its President a couple of years ago. It's a great organization. It's all about gender in the STEM disciplines, whether it's in academics or in industry or in government labs or whatever. So that is something that's extremely important to me, as you can imagine. And in fact, before we started taping I told you that most of my research career has been involved with ants. Ants are female-dominated societies. The

queen is the ruler. And I loved working with ants. They were really a lot of fun. I went out in the woods. I cracked open acorns and looked at the ants inside, all that kind of stuff. But about seven years ago, I decided that wasn't where my heart lay anymore. I was really interested in finishing out my career working on issues of gender. So I closed my ant lab. I haven't worked on ants since that time. I published my last paper on ants just last year. And I've been working on gender issues full-time since then. So that is my new career and I'm having a blast. Learning about social science research. Learning things like interview techniques, qualitative research, all that kind of stuff, is new to me. In science we don't do that. But I've really enjoyed learning about how you do this kind of work, and I have a bunch of new credentials in writing papers in the social sciences. So that's been really important to me.

Now you asked about other things. Ethnicity – I'm white. Do I identify myself with white? I don't think whites ever think about that. But of course that's a lot of what I do. I have a lot of privilege because I'm white. I think about that occasionally. I grew up in St. Louis, which was torn apart by race riots in the 1960s, absolutely torn apart. My dad was a traveling salesman, and I loved my dad to death, but wow, was he a racist. So you never leave that early experience behind. I realize that one of the things I have to continually challenge myself with, is notions of racial superiority. Being white does give me privileges that other people don't experience. And we take them for granted. That's what privilege means. While I don't think about that a lot, I know that it's a very salient aspect of the way I think. And I've gone to the implicit bias test on the Harvard web site. Do you know about those? Project Implicit. There's a series of online tests that can show you what your biases are, whether you are an ageist or a racist or a sexist or whatever it

might be. And sure enough, I show up as racist on those tests, which didn't surprise me one bit because of my early experiences. So that is something I try to be cognizant of in my everyday life, although it sometimes does take effort.

In terms of religion, I was brought up Catholic and my family is still pretty staunchly Catholic. I have a sister who is a nun but I left that behind in graduate school in my 20s. I do not have any religious feelings at all. In fact, I came to the self-realization, probably about five years ago, that I've slipped across the line from agnostic to atheist. I just don't see it. I really don't see it. So for me it's just not important, but I know it's really important to other people. I'm firmly in the middle class. I've never experienced any serious need. We grew up in our family with plenty to eat and shoes to wear, so I don't worry. I don't see myself as being in a privileged class or an unprivileged class. I'm firmly there in the middle. What other kinds of things are there? Oh, intellectual. I am very much committed to the life of the mind. That's something that's really important to me. So it's hard for me to interact with people who don't use their minds to solve their everyday issues. It just is really difficult for me. And I'm a snob. I'm an intellectual snob. I admit that.

Q. Maybe you could talk a little bit about what it's like to be in partnership with another academic, because it seems like it's something that you've experienced throughout your whole academic career.

A. That's correct. There are a lot of wonderful synergies associated with being partnered with another academic. He understands my life. He knows what it means that I have a grant proposal due or when I'm writing up a paper or if I have a graduate student who is in trouble. He understands that because he's gone through the exact same thing. And that,

for us, has been really important. Tom and I, when we worked, we tried to have lunch everyday together, just to catch up on things. That connection was really important to us. It also has reinforced our prejudices about intellectual superiority, and not surprisingly, both of our kids are very intellectual as well. My daughter is a Ph.D. student. My son has a Master's degree as History. They are not as snobby as we are, I don't think. But being educated and using your brain every day is something that's just explicit and implicit in our families. When my daughter was about seven, she came home one day really grumpy and I said, "What is the matter with you?" She said, "It's just not fair." And I said, "What's not fair?" And she said, "I have two parents who are brainiacs. It's just not fair." Whereas, you know, her friends had moms who were stay-at-home moms or cashiers at Walmart or whatever. So she felt disadvantaged. I think she's changed her mind about that.

But yes, being married to an academic reinforces some of those issues that I talked about. At the same time, my husband grew up in South Carolina, the deep South. And I continue to marvel to this day that he is not a racist. He is not a sexist. He managed to escape so much of the environment in which he was steeped as a young boy. And I still don't understand how he did that. But he has followed me to three jobs. Now how many southern men would be willing to do that? Not very many. So I feel extremely fortunate to have found him, and we've been married 31 years. We still adore each other, have two wonderful kids, have a happy family. That is not a trivial blessing. Believe me, I understand that. Tom and I oftentimes talk about the fact that we have not had some of the stressors that some people in our family and a lot of our colleagues have. We have a happy marriage. We have enough money. Our kids are healthy. All of those things. So we



do feel like we've been given quite a few breaks. The downside to being married to an academic is we both work really hard. You have to accommodate each other's careers. But that's okay.

Q. And I know you talked a little bit about this, there are there other aspects you would like to mention, but did being a woman shape your experiences at Ohio State, maybe before or even prior to the project where you took on gender?

A. Of course it did. Now can I say this incident happened because I was a woman? No, but it's those micro-inequities that I talked about. So I was the first woman Dean in the College and there were some senior faculty who just couldn't deal with that. I had one Department Chair who was a pain. And how much of that is the fact that I was a woman versus his authority, it's hard to say. Let me go back, let me reel the clock back and tell you about an incident that occurred back in Vermont in which I'm sure gender was part of the issue. So I was a young faculty member. I was untenured. I came up for my review. This was in my second year, fourth year, can't remember which year it was. But the senior faculty in the Department did not like me. I was not a very polite person back then. I told people what I thought without realizing that academic politics could affect me; I really though the academic world as a meritocracy, which it's not. And so I thought, "Well I'm smarter than these people. I don't need to worry about their opinion." Well, the senior faculty voted to fire me. They voted not to renew my contract. And the Department Chair, his name was George, came to see me the next day and he said, "Joan, they voted to fire you. Now I'm going to tell you what I'm going to do. You're really good and I'm going to support you but you have to make me a promise." And I said, "Tell me what to do. I'll do anything." And he said, "You've got to change your

behavior. You've got to quit snarling at people. You've got to keep your door open, not tell students to go away. Shut your mouth. Don't roll your eyes in faculty meetings." And I said, "Oh." He said, "Yes, your behavior is getting in the way of your professional progress." I said, "Oh, okay." And I give both of us a lot of credit. First, him that he would do that, and me that I could hear that. So I changed my tune. If somebody said something stupid I just ... But one of the senior faculty came to me after that incident and he said, "The reason that happened is because you have two X chromosomes. Don't be crazy." Because there were other jerks on the faculty who were male. So being a jerk and male is okay but being a jerk and female is simply not okay. So that was perhaps the starkest example.

Then there's lots of other incidents. When I was a Department Chair at Colorado State, I had one faculty member, and he just had more nerve than you could shake a stick at. He came into my office once and we were talking about his assignments, because I did the teaching assignments, and he said, "Oh, I can't do that." And I said, "Why not?" And he said, "Well, because my time is valuable." And I said, "Well, my time is valuable too." And he said, "Well my time is more valuable than yours." He said that to his Department Chair. I mean, come on. And I wanted to say, "I know how much you make, and I know how much I make. My time is more valuable." But I didn't. So it's that kind of stuff. This one-upmanship that men do all the time. And if you don't play that game ... So what I learned, Maria, is to just name that behavior. So I became very adept at saying, "You know, I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to rise to that bait." And I would say that out loud to the person who was trying to argue with me. And that just deflated the whole thing. So yes, there were experiences that were explicitly because I was a woman

that affected me. And women in my generation, our coping strategies primarily were to become more masculine in our behaviors, because that became acceptable. So I was once told that I had very masculine behaviors and it was meant not as a compliment. And I thought, “Well, okay. It’s okay. I don’t mind.” But I try, I still try to fight that impulse, too, because I don’t mind having a good scrap, but a good scrap doesn’t solve problems. It just gets you into that one-upmanship thing. Here at Ohio State I would say for the most part my gender did not matter too much. There were occasions when I thought, “Oh gosh, here we go again.” It would be in a meeting and I would just say something and five minutes later a man would say the same thing and everybody thought it was the best thing since sliced bread. That kind of micro-inequity thing. But for the most part, by the time you get to a position of authority, you know how to deal with things. At least I feel like I could, reasonably well.

Q. And I know you mentioned some ways that you learned how to deal with these things, but maybe you can mention, what were some of your strategies?

A. Another thing I learned is that when a faculty member came in – or a student for that matter – and was just hopping mad, just really mad, what they mostly want is just to be heard. They don’t want necessarily for you to fix it. They just want to be heard. And so listening very carefully is really important. And this is something women are pretty good at, and men not so good at. So being able to listen without arguing every little point. It resolves so many issues, so many issues. And so after listening for maybe ten minutes to whatever the issues were, I would ask, “What would you like me to do?” And nine times out ten, the response was, “Well, nothing, I guess. I just wanted you to know about this.” Okay. That was time well spent. Whereas if I had started arguing saying, “No, that’s not

correct. You shouldn't feel that way." That doesn't get you anywhere. That just gets people madder and madder and madder. So being a really good listener is something that women tend to be good at, and that is a tremendous asset, especially in administrative life. A couple of other techniques, depending on the individual, so there are some faculty members that come in bruising for a fight. In those cases I do listen. I don't speak but I also am very careful not to show anything on my face. Women do this uh-huh, uh-huh thing, that sort of tacit agreement. It's a social glue. And if I stop doing that, then all of a sudden the social queues are missing from the conversation and you could see them get more and more uncertain of their position, as if I wasn't agreeing with them anymore. So that really worked very well in some circumstances as well. It just depended on the issues, depended on the circumstance.

Q. So the sort of resistance to agreement which men tend to do, it's a thing that women tend to do, to agree and acknowledge, and that's really interesting.

A. And sometimes that's the right thing to do and other times it's not. It depends on the issue and it depends on the person.

Q. What about other aspects of your identity that you mentioned and their impact on your experiences at Ohio State?

A. So the other aspect of my identity is I'm a parent and so that gives me empathy for what other parents deal with. I know how difficult those early years are with kids and how faculty with little kids, they just don't have time for anything else. That is what they do. They go to work, they're home being a parent or a partner or whatever it is. So I really understand that dynamic. And I think that's important. I understand from a mother's point of view because lots of studies have been done, and no matter how egalitarian the

partnership is, women still do more than half the housework. That is just the way it is. Whether you are a scientist or a lawyer or a banker or a checker at Walmart, you still do more than half the housework. And so that plays out differently from men versus women faculty. So I think having that parental experience is important.

One of the things that I'm very proud of, one of the knacks I have, that a lot of other people don't, is that I can find connections between topics that may not seem connected. And this has worked out in really interesting ways at Ohio State, because in the Dean's Office I knew what all my faculty were doing in terms of their research and their teaching and so on. And so when I had discussions with other Deans or Department Chairs or faculty or whoever in other meetings, I could say, "Oh, well, we have a faculty member who is doing this. I wonder if they can get together." And sometimes really interesting collaborations grew out of that. So we had our evolutionary biologist in my college who looked at how lineages changed over time. And then the linguists over in Humanities who looked at how languages change over time. They use very similar techniques. And so I helped to seed a working group between the evolutionary biologists and the linguists, and they've done wonderful things. That is something that I really enjoy doing: connecting the dots and trying to see where different things are and how they connect with each other. Now where does that come from? I'm not really sure, Maria. I don't know whether that is gender-related or not. I don't know. It's just something I do.

Q. Would you consider collaboration to be big in your career as a whole?

A. That's a really interesting question because I would say the answer to that is no. If you take a look at the papers I've published, very few of them are co-authored with other scientists. I have lots of papers with my students, my post-docs. But I have not served as

a collaborator. That's partly because in ecology – the work I do – collaboration is not the same. If you're in high-energy physics, you have to collaborate because you can't own a nuclear accelerator. You just can't. So that is a requirement of that discipline, whereas it's not the same in my discipline. But at the same time, I think that is something that I have not done as much of – as a lot of colleagues – collaboration with other scientists across laboratories. I don't know why. Just never did.

Q. But what about your work in gender issues?

A. Oh, you have to collaborate. I have strengths. So let me tell you about one of the projects we're doing that shows exactly why collaboration is really important in this arena. When we put together our proposal, one of the things that we suggested to the National Science Foundation that was really an important issue was the gender gap in tech transfer. Women do not have as many patents as men. They don't have as many start-up companies as men. They don't get as much industrial funding as men. This is well established. And so we proposed a series of workshops for women scientists to introduce them to this world of commercialization and tech transfer in hopes that they would become more interested in it. Well, I don't know beans about business. I know nothing about business. And so in order to do this we had to put together again a team, a collaborative team, with different skill sets. So the team we have is, there's me, who has been a practicing scientist, a practicing woman scientist, who knows how faculty think, knows the stresses that women experience. I have on-the-ground knowledge as well as from being an administrator and talking with a lot of faculty. We have somebody who is from [OSU's] Tech Transfer from knows that how that office works and knows what the common issues are that faculty don't understand. And then we have somebody who is in

the world of business herself, and who has done start-up companies and really knows what the environment out there is like. Well, it takes all of us to design a program that is going to be effective for women faculty. So that was a really, really interesting set of discussions, where I knew that I didn't even have a particle of the content knowledge, not even one particle, but I knew it was an issue, so I wanted to go out and work on it. And I had to go out and find collaborators. That was really a lot of fun designing those workshops, and we're still talking and designing more workshops.

Q. Great. Maybe you could discuss some of your mentors and people who have guided you throughout your experiences at Ohio State.

A. At Ohio State.

Q. Also, if you would like to back track and talk a little bit about before.

A. Well, I mentioned some of the people who were mentors to me before. I think at Ohio State, when I was in the Dean's office, the group of Deans were really an important group. Now that has changed a lot because of changes in leadership style in the Provost's Office. When Barbara Snyder was the Provost and Karen Holbrook was the President, there was very much the philosophy that the University future depends on us working together and solving problems together. And when Karen Holbrook left the Presidency and Gordon Gee came back, he has a very different view of what the President does. It's very top down, very command and control. The role of the Deans is to do their jobs and do it in a way that the Provost and President think is appropriate as opposed to the Provost taking his cue from what the Deans think is important. So it's just a really different model for how to run a University. So when I was in the Dean's office, the Deans really mentored each other, and in addition to the Deans there were very important

partners like Deb Ballam from The Women's Place, Judy Fountain before her from The Women's Place, where I could get some help with everyday issues.

Now, my most important mentor overall these years has been my spouse. Tom, I talk to him about everything. He's one of these guys that has to start giving advice as soon as I say something. So I get a lot of advice. But I also get some on the ground, "Have you thought about it this way? Maybe this is what's going on." It's really helpful. Re-framing problems. It's really helpful. So I've developed a support structure of other folks like me, and I've also relied a lot on just the wisdom that my husband brings to the table.

Now, you haven't asked about something that I want to talk about, because it was a very important issue for me. And I don't think gender has anything to do with it but it might. You've only been here a couple of years, so you don't know what it was like five, six years ago. So when I was recruited here in 2002, there were five colleges that were in the Arts and Sciences, and they were autonomous colleges. So I was Biological Sciences. Math and Physical Sciences, Arts, Humanities, and Social and Behavioral Sciences, five colleges. And they were loosely bound in a confederation. There were a lot of difficulties with that situation because the Arts and Sciences had a common curriculum and yet nobody was in charge of that because the colleges were independent and so on. So there were some issues, some difficulties with that. As a result, about three years into my Deanship, the Provost – Ed Ray was the Provost at the time – decided that the Arts and Sciences needed more structure, and so he appointed an Executive Dean who was going to have more authority over the five existing Deans. And that was a very bumpy transition because of the individuals involved, but it continued to limp along for a couple



of years. And after three years of that, Presidents turned over. Gordon Gee came in, Joe Alutto became Provost. A remarkable thing happened, remarkable in every sense of the word. In the space of four days, over a Friday to a Monday, six Deans were fired. We all lost our jobs. All the five Arts and Sciences Deans and the Executive Dean all lost our jobs. And instead they brought in somebody who had been President at another institution to run the Arts and Sciences and put interim Deans in place for each of those colleges. Now I was one of those who was fired. I was called to the Provost's Office, told I was fired, and he said, "I want your letter of resignation by the end of the day." And it was done very cruelly, extremely cruelly. None of us saw this coming. And the other thing that is remarkable, Maria, is it did not get in the papers. Six Deans fired and it's not in the papers. So at the very top of the University, they controlled what went into the newspapers. The word did not get out. I still to this day, it gives me chills when I think about it. So I was fired, and I was fired in an abrupt and extremely hurtful way.

So you can imagine what that did. I got a golden parachute, whoopee. I got a year off at full salary. But still I wasn't a Dean anymore. I was hired to come here and be a Dean. I had just been reappointed to a second term and then they fired me. This was extremely hurtful and it took me the better part of two years to come to terms with it. Still when I think about it, you can see that I'm upset still. Six years ago this happened. But it's one of the worst examples of academic politics that I have personally experienced, in which somebody at the top didn't like what was going on, and instead of trying to fix it with people in place, they just said, "Let's get rid of everybody. Just put new people in." Okay. That experience, it still is hurtful when I think about it. It really made me question, for a long time, "What did I do wrong?" I had just been reappointed. My faculty liked

me. The other Deans liked me. What happened? What in the hell happened? Well, what happened was somebody at the top with a corporate business model – and this happens all the time – said, “This isn’t working. Let’s just get rid of everybody and try it with somebody else.” That’s not the way academicians work. It’s just not the way universities work, as a rule. But it happened here. So I’ve come to the point where I don’t take it personally anymore. I know that I was part of a system that wasn’t optimally functioning. I admit that. And because I was part of that system, and somebody decided, “Let’s just get rid of all the players,” it was not directed at me personally. But I still took it really personally, as you can imagine.

Now, what has helped me is a bunch of things. I got a lot of very supportive messages from colleagues saying, “What? Are you kidding me?” Including a lot of my faculty who were just really unhappy about this. But I also know from my family’s experience – I have a brother who is a health care accountant. And he’s been a Chief Financial Officer for hospital systems. And he was fired like five times in the space of ten years, because somebody new came in to run the system, got rid of everybody at the next level to bring in his or her own people. This is what happens in business all the time. So it was a combination of all those things. Realizing that no matter who is in my position would have gotten fired, and knowing that this was the way business models work, and that we had a business-type President at the top. In time I was able to accept it and move on. Fortunately, it happened at the same time that this project got up and running, the Project CEOS. So part of the reason that I’m so interested in gender issues is because it saved me from really going into a blue funk, having this new project, a new direction, new people to work with, lots of energy associated with that, and it called on all my

talents that I have. That really helped me get through that period of time. So I wanted you to hear about that because I don't think gender was an issue but maybe it was. I don't know.

Q. What was the makeup of the Deans that got fired? Do you remember some of them?

A. Two women, one black woman, one black man, two white men.

Q. Did you know them?

A. Oh yes. I worked with them every day, sure. And we all got back to our offices and it was just remarkable, just remarkable.

Q. I know you mentioned a little bit support from the faculty, but did you have other support networks that you drew from? I imagine your spouse, of course.

A. Right, and my family was just wonderful. But all the people I had worked with, so alumni with whom I worked were just shocked. I was told, "Get out." And I could no longer contact people I was cultivating for gifts for the college, that was shut off. So a lot of things that I had been working on and building up were just gone. They were just gone. So faculty, I got a lot of support. Colleagues who learned about it, former students and post-docs, other Deans on campus couldn't believe it. They just couldn't believe it. And I think that action changed the relationship between the Provost, the President, and the Deans for the worse. Because the other Deans said, "Oh my gosh, if I don't knuckle under, my head is going to roll next." And if you can't disagree at a university, where can you disagree? So anyway, you're getting a slanted view of what happened from me because I was the one that was really badly hurt by it. But even so.

Q. How did you come back to your professor position?

A. Well, I was given a year without any responsibilities, basically a mini-sabbatical. When I was in the Dean's office I had taught a freshman seminar every year. So I hadn't really left interaction with students but I hadn't been in a classroom. So what I decided to do, I was given a lot of latitude of what my next steps were going to be. And so I went to teach in a new curriculum in the Center for Life Sciences Education, which I had as Dean helped to design this new curriculum. And so I was very interested in it because I had provided the support for it. So I started teaching in that class and I did that for two years. And then I taught courses in my home department for another two years. And this year I'm on sabbatical. Yay! Next year I'll go back in the classroom teaching in my home department.

Q. And can you maybe describe a little bit of the makeup of your home department?

A. Sure, sure. This is a big department. It has about 40 faculty. And let's see, in terms of gender makeup, I think we have eight women faculty. It depends on how you count. If you include regional campus faculty. But we have three female full professors. I am one of those. We have three female associate professors and two assistant professors right now. Most of the faculty are white men, but we have two African-American faculty members. No Latino faculty members or other under-represented groups. No Asian faculty members, which is kind of interesting in a science department. It's a pretty amicable department. People get along. There are disciplinary divisions. So to you, Evolution and Ecology sound like the same thing. They're not. They're different disciplines. So you know, we have these arguments at faculty meetings about all sorts of stuff, but that's normal. It's a good department. It gets really good grad students and in general it's been a good home for me. What else would you like to know about that?

Q. Maybe you could talk a little bit about the makeup of the graduate students who are coming in.

A. So this is something that is kind of interesting about my current position, Maria, because I don't do biological research anymore. I don't have graduate students in my own department. And so the graduate students who come in are about 50/50 men and women, and they are reasonably diverse. We have some African-American graduate students, some Latino graduate students, some Asian graduate students. And we graduate about 50 percent women among the graduate students as well. So Biology as a discipline has had gender parity in the students for about twenty years now. But in the faculty, not so much. And there's lots of reasons for that. The students that come in tend to really be attracted to field biology because you get outside, you watch animals or plants or whatever, and that's what drew me to ecology to me as well. I really enjoy that. But I don't know a whole lot about them because I don't have any students myself. Not having graduate students is something that is different for me. I've had graduate students my whole career, and then when I closed my lab, boom, no more graduate students. I'm 61 years old and I'm winding down my career. I'm not going to be working probably more than four or five more years. And so I'm not going to start taking graduate students now. But still, I love working with students and I've had a couple of undergraduate students working on science projects with me. And we have two graduate students who are GRAs [Graduate Research Assistants] in our program. They are both in the Glenn School of Public Policy, not in our own EEOB department. So working with graduate students is not the same as it used to be for me. And that makes me a fish out of water in my department. Every year when I have my annual review with my department chair, I say,

“Well, you know I don’t do a lot of things that other faculty in this department do.” And she says, “Yeah, okay, you’re fine.”

Q. Do you have any, and we’ve touched on this from different angles, any current concerns about equity issues in your department at Ohio State as a whole?

A. Yes indeed. And here is where gender takes a back seat. We have lots of gender issues in the University. So you will probably hear about a lot of those from other people, too. I work very closely with the Office of Gender Initiatives in STEMM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine], which works University wide, as well as The Women’s Place. So there’s all those issues there still for women faculty, for women staff and women students. Sexual harassment continues to be an issue, whether it’s overt sexual harassment or just being jerks. There’s plenty of that to go around. Women’s expectations being lowered for them because of the environment is something that concerns me a great deal. I’ll tell you an anecdote about that. So I gave a talk a couple of years ago to my home department about gender issues in STEM. And it was really fun to put that together because it pulled together a lot of literature from psychology and sociology and so on that I am starting to become conversant with. And so I presented this to a scientific audience so that they would know about issues like implicit bias and negotiation skills and all sorts of things like that. So afterwards, after a talk like that, graduate students have pizza with the speaker. And so I had pizza with about a dozen students in the room. About half women and about half men. And so I asked them what they were thinking about doing after they were graduate students. The men all wanted to go on and have research careers and the women weren’t sure. “Maybe I’ll work for government. Maybe faculty, but I don’t know about that.” It was just so striking that

their aspirations were really different. And so I started to probe that a little bit. I asked some of the women, “Why are you not interested in doing what these guys are doing?” “Because I don’t think I could have a family and be a professor at the same time.” And I said, “Oh really? Well, let’s think about that. There are eight women faculty in this department. They are all moms. You see these models around you every day. Why do you think you can’t do that?” And they said, “Oh, I never thought about that.” So we don’t model what we want our students to be able to do necessarily. So that was really interesting. And then that sparked a discussion among the graduate students about gender issues, and one of the men said, “Yeah, remember, you and I were teaching that course and you knew the material a lot better than I did. But the students always came to me to get their answers. They didn’t come to you.” So it helped them think through some things that they were seeing every day and had not put in the context of gender issues.

So all that stuff is still there. It’s still there. And there are a lot of studies now about how students treat men versus women faculty in the classroom, especially in the STEM disciplines. Students can be really very hurtful. But I’m actually a lot more concerned about issues of ethnicity. So I mentioned we had two African-American faculty members in the department. One of them is tenured; one of them came just last year. And there is a literature about the experiences of under-represented minorities in science departments that I think our department needs to know about and needs to be thinking about. And so I have tried really hard to bring up issues in general faculty meetings in a neutral way, about the classroom experience in particular. So for example, I know that at least one of our African-American faculty members has had student evaluations that use the “n” word. Anonymous student evaluations. That’s just

unacceptable. And this is extremely hurtful. Now I can't imagine that's the first time that faculty member heard that word used against him or her. But we need to know that that's the way students behave. And if our faculty colleagues are going to be experiencing that kind of crap in the classroom or on campus or wherever, then we need to think about what that means for their professional development, and what that might mean for the willingness to stay. So that's something that's of immediate concern to me. And I don't want our African-American faculty members to think that's the only way we see them. I mean they are wonderful colleagues in a lot of ways, but they do have experiences that we don't share, and we need to talk about those experiences in ways that will be supportive of the faculty members. I'm worried about that a lot, because we have a lot of faculty who are recruited here from under-represented minorities who don't stay. That's worse than the story for women.

Q. I know you said that you have two African-American faculty members. I don't know if either of them is a woman but there are intersections, right?

A. Right, right. And this is something that a lot of scholars are very interested in, and there's precious little scholarly work on this, the intersection between race and ethnicity. I'm sorry, ethnicity and gender. There was a study done about 20 years ago called "The Double Bind," that talked about the experiences of minority women in the sciences. And it's very clear that the issues are different for different ethnicities. So if you're black and a woman, your experiences are going to be different than if you are Latino and a woman or Asian and a woman, and your cultural background will give you different ways of intersecting with that treatment. That's about as much as we know from the literature. This is a hugely important set of unanswered questions and the reasons why the questions



tend to be unanswered is cause sample is so small. We have so few people to even ask about, and they don't want to be pegged in this way or that way. There's a woman down at North Carolina State, her name is Christine Grant, she's an Associate Dean in Engineering there. Chemical Engineer by training. And I've given a couple of conference talks with her. She always starts out, when she's talking to an audience that is primarily minority graduate students and post-docs, she starts out with saying, "How many of you went to graduate school because you're black or because you're Latino?" Nobody raises their hands. "How many of you went to graduate school because you're a scientist?" They all raised their hands. So she said, "That's the identity that's salient for you in your professional life, but that's not the identity that's salient for a lot of people around you, and you need to understand that." So that's a message I can hear, but I can't understand because I don't experience that. And so that's the way I like to think about it, that the way people identify themselves as a scientist or as a professor or as a man or as a woman, is not necessarily the way other people are going to be treating you. It's unfortunate. But I do worry about that. I'd like to help our department think through it. Now, so far they've just sort of had the expression of "Ew, do we really have to think about this? Ew. We're scientists. Don't we all treat each other equally?" Well, no we don't. And neither does the rest of the world.

- Q. What about at Ohio State as a whole? I know you've also been in the Department of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, as well as your experiences at EEOB. So for more broadly at Ohio State, what are some of the concerns.
- A. With respect to gender, the concerns have to do with the way we treat each other and the unspoken assumptions about what's normal. The unspoken assumptions about what's

normal are all based on the white male model. So what's normal is being able to work 80 hours a week because someone else is at home taking care of the kids. What's normal is interacting with other white men and not thinking about what that means. It's the privilege issue. The whole set of concerns about privilege. Now, scientists as you just indicated don't like to think about this because we're rational beings. We see the data. We treat each other [as if] it's not about who you are, it's about how good you are and what your thoughts are. Well, there are studies that show that that's not true, that scientists are every bit as subject to being human beings with all those failings and having gender issues and racial issues as anybody else. We're human beings. And science is a human institution. It is not an institution that was set up by robots. It was set up by people. So we continue, as an institution, to keep working on all of those issues. Whether it's with [OSU's] Kirwan Institute [for the Study of Race and Ethnicity] that has released a major study about implicit bias and how that works out with respect to race, or The Women's Place, which is hosting a series of conversations this year about implicit bias in gender, or whether it's with Dean's offices that are worried about why we can't keep our women faculty. There are lots of different ways to think about and lots of different dimensions in which this is played out at the University. With the University being so large, it's a little tough sometimes to get people in the right place. And people don't know each other very well. One thing we've discovered is that our programs for women faculty tend to serve two functions. It's not just that they learn about commercialization or learn about how to run your laboratory; it's also to meet other women faculty and start to form your community and enlarge your network. And that is as valuable as anything else we can do, is just help our women faculty find others who have similar experiences so that

they can think about whether the experiences they are having are off the charts or normal. And that's really, really important.

Q. Do you think that's it's difficult to find other women faculty? You also mentioned earlier, and so maybe this is for students and faculty, but you mentioned that students, for example, don't, they forget that they have models. Women may forget that they have models who are faculty and are mothers and have family. Or that there are plenty of women at Ohio State. Do you think that it's difficult to find those networks or to create them?

A. It's difficult to create them and I'll tell you why, because of the assumption that you should be in your lab 80 hours a week. And if you leave your lab you're not doing science. And many of our faculty come from high-powered laboratories where that was the norm. So what we have learned, Maria, is that when we offer programs like entrepreneurship or lab management, it's about professional development and women come to them but they have to give themselves permission to get out of their labs. They have to have a cogent reason for leaving their offices, and finding somebody who is like them is not good enough. So our programs in a very real sense give women permission to find each other and expand their networks, and develop a community. And that's extraordinarily valuable. Men do it all the time, whether it's on the golf course, the basketball court, or coaching little league or whatever. Men do it all the time; women don't. Women are busy. They have lots of demands on their time, and so we have to give them ways to give themselves permission. Does that make sense?

Q. Absolutely. Maybe you've already talked about this but what would you say was the most powerful experience you had at Ohio State?

A. Getting fired. Absolutely.

Q. And you talked about this a lot, but do you want to talk a little bit about how it changed who you are today. Or has it impacted you moving forward?

A. It certainly solidified my interest in gender issues because as I said the project that was funded about the same time really saved me. I could have spiraled down, I think. Maybe I would have; maybe I wouldn't have. I don't know. So that's one aspect. And for a number of years after that I tried to find another job. I had a couple of interviews and just didn't get any traction there, which in the end turns out to have been a good thing. But it also made me realize that I needed some other ways of expressing myself other than being a Dean, and so I became much more involved in playing music. I am a violinist. And I play string quartets on the weekends. So I play three or four times a week now. And for me that's wonderful therapy. Just fabulous therapy. So those have certainly changed who I am. I still am, what's the right word, wistful? I loved being a Dean. I loved being a Dean and I think I was a pretty good Dean, too. So part of me wants to say, "Damn it, Ohio State, you really screwed up." But nobody's listening. So I don't think it has changed me in other ways. I've been really pleased that my department has accepted me back in with open arms and there's no weirdness in the halls about that. Some of my former Department Chairs are a little weird but they were weird to start with. Most people are fine. And because I knew so many faculty as a Dean I can still say hello to them on the street, and I really enjoy that, being able to see a lot of people and catch up with them when I'm out.

Q. Another thing that maybe if you'd like to talk about, as you get ready, you said you are looking at maybe five more years at the University and then retirement. How do you

envision leaving the University? What do you think will be some of the issues that are left or we need to keep working on at the University as a whole, in the sciences, in your department?

- A. Before I answer that question explicitly, let me share an anecdote with you. A couple years ago, two or three years ago, I was just getting really frustrated that we hadn't made more progress than I felt was appropriate on our project. And that the clock was ticking and the money was going to be gone in a couple of years and we wouldn't be done with our institutional transformation, blah, blah, blah. And then I read a column in the Sunday paper. There was a columnist named Ellen Goodman, who wrote for many years about all kinds of gender-related issues in our society, issues of women in power structures, issues of women as moms, just all kinds of different things. And I really enjoyed her writing. She was just a fabulous writer. So she retired and she wrote her farewell column. And the way she talked about retirement was really helpful to me at the time. She said, "You know, when I was a young woman in my 20s I thought gender equity was just going to be a sprint to the finish line. We just have to fix a few things and boom, we'd be there. By the time I was in my 40s I realized it wasn't a sprint. It was more like a marathon and it was going to take a long time, prolonged effort, but in the end we'd get there. Now that I'm about to retire I realize it's a relay race. So I'm going to hand the baton off to somebody else." And that was really a powerful metaphor for me, meaning that you've done a lot, Joan, you will have done a lot. The job won't be done. The work won't be over. But there will be other people coming along to pick up the baton. So that's the way I think about retirement for me. Yes, we won't have solved a lot of the issues, but I will have made a dent here. Things that our project put in place are still going to be here. And

that will help. It will be better than it was when I got here. And that's the most important feeling to retire with. That's a better place than when you stepped in the door on your first day. I think I will feel that way. I hope so, but we'll see what the next few years bring.

Q. I will not forget that.

A. Isn't that a powerful metaphor?

Q. Yes. To consider the metaphor, are there any people that you envision handing off the baton to?

A. Well, I already have. So this new office, it will be two years old in October, of Gender Initiatives in STEMM. Mary Juhas is the Director. That office was set up explicitly to carry on the work of our project. It's called GI-STEMM and Mary is a co-PI on our project, so she knows this stuff really, really well. So that's already there. That's in place. Some of the other projects that we've been working on are going to be taken over by Academic Affairs. The Deans and Chairs Training, the Search Committee Training, all that stuff. So a lot of stuff is actually becoming part of the institution's fabric, which is really very wonderful. Now it could also disappear tomorrow. I don't think it will but it could. So you just never know. You never know. And one thing that we learned from other institutions is, if you take the pressure off systems regress back to where they were. So keeping the pressure on is what's really important. And there are other folks that we are bringing along in our project and Chairs that are coming in that are really committed to the issues that we care about, the gender-equity issues. And so they will continue to work on it and keep pushing, I hope. That's all you can hope for.

Q. Lastly, before I ask you if there are other people you think would be great for interviewing, are there any other things that we haven't talked about that you 'd like to talk about or discuss?

A. Yes. Let me say a few more words about retirement and planning for that because a lot of people don't plan for it. And you're so young that you can't imagine what this is like. But for faculty members, retirement is very scary. For most people working a job, they can't wait to retire. They're just so sick of their jobs or whatever, but for faculty it's really frightening. And the reason is because most faculty have one identity and that's being a faculty member. So to prepare for retirement, I'm thinking about, okay what other identities are important to me? We talked about some of those. Being a parent. Well, my kids are grown and flown. I don't have grandkids yet. If I do have grandkids that will be a new identity. The music thing is very important to me. And I need to develop some other identities in the coming years that will give me the passion to enter retirement and keep working. I don't know what those are yet. But I've had a conversation with a really dear friend and she said, "Joan, you've re-invented yourself plenty of times in your career. It's going to happen again. Don't worry about it. You're going to re-invent yourself." And so I just have to be trusting of my own nature, that I will figure it out. I don't know what it's going to be. I don't know where it's going to be but it will be fine. I intend to live another 35 years. So that's a long time.

Q. You've talked a lot about your spouse and how you sort of lived this academic life together, and you mentioned that he has already retired. How do you see your path to retirement being different? Maybe because of your identities or because you are a woman?

A. And this is something I don't want in the record. My husband is ill. No, it's okay to record it. I'm not going to disclose the illness. But taking care of him is part of my emerging identity. And I don't know how long that's going to take, but he's not going to get better.

Q. Sorry to hear that.

A. We've had 31 years of marriage that have been very, very happy. So that's more than most people have.

Q. I think touching on retirement is really important. I think we should add it as a question on here because it's a really great issue. Do you see it becoming sort of an equity issue at the University? For example, in my department I'm seeing a lot of faculty being pushed toward retirement and they look pretty young.

A. Interesting.

Q. I don't know if that's something you see in the sciences.

A. Oh, certainly we do because, well, it depends on the discipline. In some disciplines they are desperate to hang on to their faculty because recruiting faculty is so difficult. So in some of the allied health disciplines, nursing, dentistry, they have a tough time recruiting faculty. They recruit from the private sector. Whereas in my discipline – biology – we recruit from a pool of post-docs and there's a gazillion people that want every faculty job. So a typical faculty opening in my discipline has 300 applicants. So it's no trouble recruiting faculty. In those disciplines there is more of a social push to retire just to make room for the next generation, make room for the next set of ideas. But as I said, retirement is pretty scary for a lot of faculty, and many faculty wait too long before they retire. And they generate resentment from their colleagues for taking up a slot and for not



doing the job as well as they used to do. That's not healthy. The University is not particularly good with dealing with that at all. And it's partly because they can't. Legally, you can't force faculty to retire. You simply can't. And you can't even mention encouraging retirement or you'll have a lawsuit on your hands for age discrimination. So it's a very tricky set of issues.

Q. Interesting. Okay. And then if there are other things that you would like to discuss.

A. No, we covered everything I was hoping to be able to tell you.

Q. Awesome. And then, do you have some people that you'd like to recommend to be interviewed for this project?

A. I've talked with Deb Ballam a fair amount about that and I've given her my suggestions. I think we can short-circuit that.

Q. Okay. And then you probably talked about the possibility of interviewing someone else?

A. Sure.

Q. Okay. And then I don't know if you brought any photos. If you did, we can make copies.

A. No, but there are plenty in the Archives.

Q. Okay.

A. I like old photos best, without my wrinkles.

Q. They have also a charm, right?

A. Time travel.

Q. So thank you. It's been a real pleasure.

A. Thank you, Maria. You've done a good job and I hope this is useful.