

Voices of Feminism Oral History Project

Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College
Northampton, MA

FRAN HENRY

Interviewed by

KATE WEIGAND

October 22 and 25, 2004
Cummington, Massachusetts

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Narrator

Fran Henry (b. 1948) grew up on Long Island, graduated from the New School for Social Research in 1971, and earned an MBA from Harvard Business School in 1982. Henry's employment history includes a variety of feminist positions in government, including executive director of the first Massachusetts Governor's Commission on the Status of Women, director of the President's Citizens Advisory Committee for Women under Gerald Ford (1975–76), and Northeast Conference coordinator for the President's International Women's Year Commission under Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter (1976–78). She is the author of *Toughing It Out at Harvard: The Making of a Woman MBA* and the founder of the organization Stop It Now!, which has pioneered the use of public health strategies to prevent child sexual abuse. Henry has also served on many boards of directors, including the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers and the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.

Interviewer

Kate Weigand (b. 1965) has a Ph.D. in women's history and U.S. history from Ohio State University. She is author of *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

Abstract

In this oral history Fran Henry describes her childhood in a working-class family and community on Long Island and her experiences as an activist college student working to put herself through school in the 1960s. The interview focuses on her work in explicitly feminist positions in state and national government organizations in the 1970s, her experiences as a woman at Harvard Business School in the early 1980s, her work as a business consultant, and the ways her unique combination of skills and experiences gave her the ideas and tools to found Stop it Now! and pioneer new approaches to ending child sexual abuse. Henry's story details the ways she used the advantages and challenges from her childhood and family experiences to make important and unique contributions to the women's movement and the movement against child sexual abuse. It also illustrates mainstream women's movement's path through the 1970s and 1980s and the emerging influence of the Christian Right in the late 1970s and beyond.

Restrictions

None

Format

Interview recorded on miniDV using Sony Digital Camcorder DSR-PDX10. Five 60-minute tapes.

Transcript

Transcribed by Luann Jette. Audited for accuracy and edited for clarity by Kate Weigand.
Transcript has been reviewed and approved by Fran Henry.

Bibliography and Footnote Citation Forms

Video Recording

Bibliography: Henry, Fran. Interview by Kate Weigand. Video recording, October 22 and 25, 2004. Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection. **Footnote:** Fran Henry interview by Kate Weigand, video recording, October 22, 2004, Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, tape 2.

Transcript

Bibliography: Henry, Fran. Interview by Kate Weigand. Transcript of video recording, October 22 and 25, 2004. Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection. **Footnote:** Fran Henry, interview by Kate Weigand, transcript of video recording, October 22, 2004, Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, pp. 23–24.

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Transcript of interview conducted OCTOBER 22 and 25, 2004, with:

FRAN HENRY
Cummington, MA

by: KATE WEIGAND

WEIGAND: So, I'm Kate Weigand here with Fran Henry on Friday, October 22nd, 2004, at her house in Cummington, Massachusetts. And we're going to talk about her and her life for the Voices of Feminism Oral History Project. And I usually begin by asking people to talk a little bit about their parent's parents, just to sort of get a sense of their background. So, maybe you could tell me a little bit about your grandparents and where they came from and what you know about them.

HENRY: So, I know something about my grandparents, but I also know something about some generations before that that have been really helpful to me. So, you know, it's really short, but –

WEIGAND: You can talk as long as you like. I mean, if you think it's interesting, then it's interesting. And the other thing I forgot to say is, don't feel like you have to talk to the camera. You can just pretend like it's not even here. (laughs)

HENRY: My ancestry is German and English and on my mom's side, my grandparents came from Germany and lived in New York and worked in the trades. My grandmother actually died long, long before I was born, but my mother had a stepmother and she was my grandmother. They were great buxom German folk and she used to sing German songs to me. I have some stories that I got from my mom. German immigrants have such a complicated history in America, especially growing up in the 1920s and '30s, and my mother really downplayed her German background a lot because of what the Germans were doing. And yet, my grandmother was the person who sort of leapt over that and, you know, enjoyed sharing her German heritage with her grandchildren. So I still know some Christmas carols in German and just have a great sense of, really wonderful enjoyment of hearty, healthy — well, I don't know it that's considered healthy anymore — but hearty meals in that German tradition of sauerbraten and all of that, with all those German songs that went along with it. On my mom's side, that's pretty much it. I didn't

know the generation before my grandparents at all, but I knew them, a bit, through my growing up, my grandmother especially.

My dad's side was English and my grandmother was a single parent most of her life. She had been married and her husband went off to the silver mines in the West and, each time he came home, apparently, he made her pregnant. So she had three boys very widely spaced apart and then divorced this man. She wore a wedding ring for the rest of her life that she got inscribed with a little diamond for each of her sons, but with her own name in it. I have that ring now and every once in a while, I'll wear it and it just reminds me of how tough it must have been, how hard and tough my grandmother must have been, and how hard it must have been to raise three boys in the early part of the 1900s by herself.

She, however, was raised in a family of ten children and her grandparents were also English. Her grandmother had an incredible history all the way back from England to Virginia and the settling of the colonies, with lots of historical figures of lawyers and all that in Richmond, Virginia, a long time ago, the early 1800s. That's her portrait, actually, there, of my grandmother's grandmother.

Then, my grandfather from two generations before, my great-great-grandfather, was the father of baseball. He's not known. His name is Henry Chadwick, so he's known only to people who know a lot about baseball's history, but he was involved for 60 years in the formation of the game. His work with baseball began in the early 1850s. My grandmother, when she was in her twenties, typed for him and transcribed for him, and so she knew a lot about Henry's life and she brought that forward into the life she had with my dad and then the life that I shared. She lived near where we were brought up.

So, Henry Chadwick and all his personal things ended up coming to me and I was — I took quite a few years working with somebody who's a historian of baseball history and started a whole collection around the Henry Chadwick collection. In part, it was paying attention to that side of my history, my ancestry, that made me interested in my own history that I was creating, so it's a wonderful thing, too. I know it's not something everybody has, for a lot of different reasons — access to generations before and who they were and what kind of people they were. But I just have a strong sense that there are some things passed through people's genes that have nothing to do with their environment and, in particular, this particular great-great-grandfather who's a lover of all kinds of social life and connecting people to their environments and paying attention to things that are related to public health, because his brother, Sir Edwin Chadwick, was a pioneer in public health in England. I don't know, just certain things that I've come to appreciate myself and say, Oh, there's a little bit of history there. A little bit of appreciation that somehow comes through. So, that's the grandparent's side of it.

My parents – should I talk about them?

WEIGAND: Yeah. Let me just ask: you said your maternal grandparents were in the trades. So were they skilled tradespeople?

HENRY: Electrician.

WEIGAND: And on the other side, it sounds like they had sort of a middle-classish sort of background, in those further back generations. And I just wondered how that was by the time your grandparents were around.

HENRY: My grandmother ended up living on very, very little money.

WEIGAND: She's the one who's raising those three sons?

HENRY: She's raising these three boys by herself, and she just didn't have — my great-great-grandfather was an incredible intellectual, but he wasn't able to translate that intellectual power into something that brought him any kind of estate. He didn't collect money. He didn't do his work for money, and so that whole thing didn't pass down through the generations, and that didn't come through my mother's side either.

So, I was really raised, actually, in a pretty much in a lower-middle-class family. My dad was a carpenter. He put a really wonderful roof over our heads and built our house, and my mother worked as a secretary, and she put food on the table. So, between the two of them — they both worked the whole time that I was growing up. Once my brother was in school, my mother was working full time and that's what I knew when I was growing up — people work, and they work pretty hard, and that's a good thing. And then they played pretty hard, too. We lived near the beach on eastern Long Island, and we spent a lot a lot of time, when we weren't working, playing and enjoying ourselves. So that's kind of the environment I grew up in, that combination of work hard, and then earn your leisure and really enjoy yourself.

WEIGAND: Can you tell me a little bit about — you said it was in St. Albans, New York, where you lived, or were born and grew up?

10:50

HENRY: I was born in a Naval Hospital, which happened to be in St. Albans, which is in western Long Island. And then, probably within a couple of months, my dad had brought my mother and my older brother out to eastern Long Island, which is the community that he was raised in, that he spent most of his adult years in, and he built a home near where my grandmother was, and so then I was raised in Sag Harbor.

WEIGAND: Can you talk about that as a place? What it was like to grow up there? What kind of a community was it?

HENRY: Sag Harbor in the 1950s was — I had nothing to compare it to at the time, but I thought it was a wonderful place to be raised, because we

had all kinds of city people come every summer, because it was a beach community, and we had lots of exposure to New Yorkers. So lots of it was good, because we had lots of friends who came from New York, and some of it was bad because New Yorkers, compared to people on eastern Long Island, could be pretty pushy and that was a little bit hard to deal with, that sort of shift between the culture. It wasn't necessarily a bad thing either because it made you realize, Oh, there's a lot of different people in the world and who are they?

So we spent our summertime just working, as I said, once I was a teenager, working in various places and all kinds of little jobs that teenagers would get back then, but then plenty of time for skiing and going to the ocean and going to the beach and owning boats and being out on the water all the time and all that. And then, in the wintertime, it was a rural community, compared to the way it is now, and there weren't very many people in either the little hamlet I lived in, which was called Noyack, or Sag Harbor itself.

We ended up in the Southampton school system, which is an excellent school system, and it laid the foundation for my later intellectual work, but we spent a lot of time by ourselves and just having to entertain ourselves because there weren't a lot of kids around in the wintertime. So I kind of thought I had the best of both worlds — lots of activity in the summer, and quiet, which met my personality pretty well, and solitude in the wintertime. We had to be resourceful. And so that was sort of the general environment I was raised in.

WEIGAND: And how about your family life — you talked a little bit about the economic aspect of it. I wonder if you could sort of paint a picture of a typical day in your household when you were in your late elementary school, or early teenage years.

HENRY: Well, my mom and dad had their children all close together. So we all spent most of our years all in the house together. We were raised in a tiny little home, two brothers and a sister and, although when we were young, having all of us close together was very, very hard on my mother. She, and I, suffered as a result, because she just had too much to deal with when she had all these kids. It was too much. The isolation was too much for somebody who had been raised in the city and already had a profession before she met my dad.

But at the same time, my parents were really good about paying attention to things that their kids needed, sort of the basic maintenance things, like we had a really good meals cooked. My mom cooked, or when I grew up, I helped her cook a really good meal and put it on the table every night and everybody sat down at six o'clock and talked about their day and ate a really good meal together. That sense of social cohesion — I never would have used these words back then because we didn't understand the concepts — but compared to how loose people are now around their eating time, and all that, and family structure, I am

really grateful for that because it really is important to me, even to this day, when my family gets together — all the different members getting together around the dinner table. It doesn't matter how big the table turns out to be, but it's a really important part of what holds up together as a family. There can be all different wonderful things that holds families together, but this thing in my life I really appreciate, because it's a combination of caring about feeding people really well, people caring about eating well together, and just the kind of combination — easygoing banter that can happen around the dinner table, which is what happened in our family. It wasn't a harsh thing. You know, sometimes around the dinner table, things can get kind of harsh, but it wasn't like that in my family. It was really — it was good.

At the same time, you know, a lot of my adult work in recent years has been about preventing child sexual abuse, so I went through that whole period of time in my teenage years from the age of 12 to 16, when my father, you know, sexually abused me. So that was a tortuous period for me. I didn't talk about it and, personally, for me, those years — I had a very happy exterior which I tried to maintain as best I could and I had a tortuous interior life. The split between those two things — there will always be some kind of pulling together that I have to do around that.

I'm sure we'll talk probably a little bit more about [the abuse], but the overall family life in which my siblings and I were embedded, in the environment my parents worked to create, was a good family life. That's part of what has made me care about prevention, and to want to do whatever we can to pay attention to prevention so that these kinds of families aren't torn apart by a sexual abuse thing happening, which is what would happen in today's world if that happened to me and I'd told about it. So, I had good memories, lots of good memories about my family life.

WEIGAND: So you had, I thought, just looking at that yellow sheet you filled out, that you had three brothers. So which one of those — BJ, was that the sister?

HENRY: Yes.

WEIGAND: OK. I just assumed that that was a brother. OK. And so your siblings all got along well, too — as siblings do? (laughs)

HENRY: We actually did. It was one of those things that my parents had a few, really important principles, but one of the top ones was, they wanted their kids to get along well. They wanted us to know that we weren't going to be responsible for them when they got older, that they wanted to be very independent on their own, and that we were free. They wanted us to know that we should leave home when we turned 18 and that they didn't want us to be dependent on them after we turned 18. So

we were to plan for that. And a lot of that, compared to today's standards and everything, might seem kind of harsh. But at the same time, they were saying, "You're free." You know, "We want you to come back when you want to come back and you're free." And they always were like that. As adults growing up, it's like, they were always happy when we came home, but there was no requirement to come home or anything like that.

And what happened with my siblings around that is that they just wanted us to get along well, so they had these certain things they would do to encourage an incredible equality among us, which worked to the advantage that we did get along well when we were kids and we still get along really well. We still pay attention to each other's lives and that has really been a — each of us in different ways have come back to that across our lifetime. We value what my parents did.

At the same time, it was a little hard if you stood out at all — to let you stand out. That was a little bit hard for me because none of my siblings wanted to go to college. Probably they could have, but they didn't. My parents had a visit or conversation with the guidance counselor when I passed some test and did really well on it. The guidance counselor said, you know, "This girl should go to college," and so then they turned to me and said, "You're gonna have to pay for it. We have no money." And I was in the eighth grade or something. And then basically, they made sure that whenever we got grades, that I was not given any more attention than anybody else, that everybody was the same.

So I never had any sense that I had that much intelligence, or that I should do anything with that intelligence. I was not really very encouraged. I mean, they did some encouraging, but what I'm saying is that they made it such a level playing field that it took me a long, long time to realize, Oh, I'm intelligent and I, you know, I should do something with it. I have a passion about my intellect. I should do something about that. I mean, all my siblings, all my family is really intelligent. They have an incredible, sort of, native intelligence, but they didn't want to do something about it. And I think if I had been encouraged a bit here and there — I thought since I've lived here that actually, if I'd ended up at a college like Smith — I went to a state university which is a wonderful school, but I was with 10,000 students, you know, I was lost for the first three years — and had I gone to someplace that focused on you a little bit more individually, you know? I have no idea what I would have done differently in my life, but I know that my intellect would have come alive in a totally different way and earlier than I was able to do with the upbringing that I had.

WEIGAND:

Can you talk about — you said the thing about how your mother always was sort of overwhelmed when you were all little and isolated and that was hard for her and that made it hard for you? Can you talk about how?

HENRY: Well, her kind of overwhelmed — I can just picture this, and I'm sure it still happens today, but I think there are more services available. When my older brother was three, I was born. When I was nine months old, my sister was born, and when I was a year and a half — no, a year-and-a-half after that — so when I was two-and-a-half, my brother was born. So that's close.

WEIGAND: That's really close.

HENRY: So she had three kids in diapers at the same time. She had really no people to relate to around that and I just think it was harsh for her. And she disciplined really hard. We saw a part of my mom during those years, later, I realized, we never saw that part of my mother again. She would scream, she would hit, she would just lose it. I wouldn't say she was mentally unstable, but she would just — she lived in this sort of angry, fearful place. When you're really small, you know, I ended up sort of wanting to protect my siblings, my younger siblings all the time and that took a terrible toll on me, because it was just — just harsh.

WEIGAND: Yeah, well, you were really little, too.

HENRY: I was totally not able to deal with anything that got delivered to me during those years. And once my brother went to school, and my mother went back to full-time work, everything was totally OK. Again, that's another sort of one of those seeds that gets sown in you about how it's better to work than to have children. I mean, even though I tried having children for quite a few years in my middle thirties, it wasn't something I had always set out to do. I wanted children when I was younger and always thought I would have them, but it was also something sort of fearful in me. The seed that was sown was things get better when you go to work, not when you have children.

So I think that might have had something to do with my comfort with feminism, because from the 1960s and '70s, so much of feminism was about giving women choices, so that they didn't just have to stay home. It wasn't denigrating women who stayed home, but it was saying, You have a choice here, woman, and what're you gonna choose? So that whole message found a really ready listener when I was in my early twenties. It was a sensible thing to hear from a large social movement.

WEIGAND: Did you have any sense — I'm trying to remember. I think you were born in 1948, is that right? So, your early childhood's taking place in this 1950s atmosphere, and it sounds like you didn't really live in the suburbs. Do you remember if you had any awareness of the prescriptions and stereotypes for 50s family life and how your family fit into that? Or was that sort of outside of your sphere?

24:15

HENRY:

Well, when I was a couple of years old — I don't remember exactly how old — we got our first television, and it was a tiny eight-inch screen television. Huge console, tiny eight-inch, black-and-white screen, and we were only allowed to watch television for, like, half an hour a night on school nights and we were not allowed to watch cartoons. My parents really were very careful about what they let us watch. And I don't know if I fully understand all their reasons about that, because television wasn't available that much for them to even have made those judgments. But they wanted us to pay attention to our schoolwork on school nights and go to bed early and there was just a little bit of a window for television.

And I remember those shows that came in the late '50s and early '60s, you know, *Leave it to Beaver* and the *Donna Stone Show*, and *Father Knows Best* and, on some level, I could see us sort of fitting into that whole scheme, because there were usually a few different children and dad was pretty dominant in some obvious way — head of household — but the mother character was always really a strong character, which was true for those sit-coms. The underlying theme was the woman in that story was — Donna Stone, was she in *Father Knows Best*? I've lost track of this a little bit — but Mary Tyler Moore and *Leave it to Beaver*. I mean, the women in *Ozzie and Harriet*. Except where women were made to look ludicrous, and in some situations, they were. There were a lot of situations where they were a really strong. You could see that's what held the family together. And so there was — I don't know.

I guess I felt like, you know, being white and lower middle class, we sort of fit into what was happening in the culture. I didn't feel left out of it. I don't remember the McCarthy years. I was probably too young for the media to get to me during that, but I remember Adlai Stevenson running for president and my parents watching this on television with my grandmother. My parents were Republican, and they were just really critical of liberal ideas, and I remember in particular, in 1960, when Richard Nixon was running against John Kennedy and my parents, being Protestant and Republican, I just remember them voicing a concern that they had heard, that if John Kennedy were elected, the Pope would tell Kennedy what to do. And I can remember very much at the time, thinking really differently, you know, and being aware, maybe for the first time, that whatever my parents think, I don't think that. And when I listened to John Kennedy, I liked what I heard. That there was something really — it sparked something in me, and I didn't feel that way towards Richard Nixon at all. So, good. That's sort of my first political maturity at that age. I was 12, I guess, at the time, and I just remember, I think differently than my parents.

WEIGAND:

Do you have a sense of where that came from, like, what led you in a different direction from them?

HENRY: Well, I think it's partly how we were actually raised around this dinner-table kind of conversation, that we were encouraged to say what we thought and we didn't actually have to think everything that my parents thought. It was like, We want to know what you think. And I don't remember voicing my political concerns, because I think probably on some level they wouldn't have been that supportive of them. But, in general, it wasn't like what we thought was squashed so that we'd fit into the dominant thinking that my parents had.

So I think there's something. I can't put my finger on it, but there was something natural and native to that. It wasn't something they voiced or made an explicit value. Now that I've seen everything I've seen at this age, I see in some families that are more intellectually oriented, you know, debate and conversation and having people say what they think from an intellectual point of view as part of the dinner conversation. It wasn't like that in my household. It was sort of more passive than that. It was just sort of the way they were, as people.

And I think also I was in some really good school systems when I was young, and I had some teachers that recognized that this girl loves school and she likes to think and so, what do you think? I remember in the '50s in elementary school, coming home once and wanting to bring home an African American — back then we would use the word “colored” — girl home, and my parents wouldn't let me do that. They said, That's not the right thing for you to do. And I couldn't understand what was not right about it, because I loved this girl. She was my first real little friend in elementary school.

So there was that — there were these prejudices that ran through lower-middle-class life in the '50s — but there was a way in which they handled it that both sort of put me in my place, understanding where I was in the family, and also didn't do it in such a harsh way that I got traumatized about it or something like that. It just made me realize, I feel really differently about this, you know, and I don't understand all these reasons that they're giving me. But, anyway, it was just the way it was.

WEIGAND: Right. So you didn't feel like you could say, Gee, why? You just sort of said, Oh, all right, and thought to yourself that you disagreed but didn't pursue it further?

HENRY: I'm sure that I — I mean, I actually — that's one of those things that I remember, and I remember pursuing it with them to some degree, and that the reasons they gave me didn't make very much sense to me, but I was too young to really advance a point of view beyond the fact that I liked this girl and I wanted to bring her home. If I liked somebody, I wanted to bring them home, you know. I was too young to do much more with it.

WEIGAND: To have a bigger framework.

HENRY: To have a bigger framework, yeah.

WEIGAND: Do you remember anything, or did some of the other stuff that was going on in the 1950s have any impact on your consciousness? I mean, civil rights gets started and it sounds like you didn't have a framework to deal with that, but do you remember any of the TV coverage of those early civil rights demonstrations, or the word out there in the press, or some of the other stuff that was going on, that duck-and-cover stuff? Did you ever have to do that in school?

HENRY: Oh, my gosh, yes. I was — I mean, I had some horrific experiences around that and I don't know how much all of this is relevant, but I remember the Cuban Missile Crisis. That was what, 1961 or '62? So I would have been — and I remember some definitely duck-and-cover things when I was in elementary school, but I'm thinking about high school at the moment, and I remember with the Cuban Missile Crisis, the teachers, when they made us go through all these drills during those couple of days when we didn't know what would happen. I remember the history teacher saying, "If the Russians bomb, they're going to bomb New York and we're gone."

So I went home from school that day, going to my mother and saying, you know, Mr. So-and-so said that if the Russians bomb New York, we're gone. I mean, what would you do if the Russians bombed New York? And my mother looked at me dead in the eye and said, "I would take you down to the bay and drown you." And I was totally scared to death of nuclear war and of the Russians after that, which any child would be, because it meant that I was gonna die immediately, because the Russians would bomb New York and then my mother would drown me. (laughter)

But on the other hand, you know, I mean, there is this certain sort of irrational fear there, isn't there. But on the other hand, I realized as I was growing up, this is completely rational, because we ought to be afraid of nuclear war and, in fact, you know, even if — I couldn't imagine wanting to die at my mother's hands with her drowning me. On the other hand, it's true that this is something we should really pay attention to. So, on another level, that experience really heightened my consciousness about the importance of world peace and the importance of paying attention to what was happening in the outside world and it had a direct impact on what was going to happen to me. So, yeah, I had a real experience with duck and cover.

WEIGAND: Yeah, well, it sounds like you begin to get a more formed political consciousness in that era.

HENRY: And then, during that time — of course, this is true of the whole generation — but I was right in the heart of the 1960s. And I went

through from the age of 12 to 16 — that's 1960 to 1964, you know, right at the beginning of civil rights — that's when I was in this process of being abused by my dad, and then this whole outside world, you know, coming apart and coming back together around civil rights and everything. My parents, probably like most people, didn't know what to do with all that was happening in the outside society. They didn't know what to think about it. But I remember my parents stayed Republican during this whole time. They were nothing like Republicans as I know them now, who are so conservative and fundamentalist. They were more just basically politically conservative more than they were politically liberal. It was pretty simplistic for them, but — that's not fair. I don't know how simplistic it was or not for them, but it appeared that way to me.

My point of view around civil rights was just a really interest in the fact that these people, who I witnessed in my growing up years, being really discriminated against and I didn't like it. I could see them caring about what was happening to them and doing something about it. And I loved — I couldn't be part of it because I was too young — but I loved the fact that people were really doing something. And I think, in some ways, just watching that on television and being aware of it, I started feeling my own sense of power around wanting to change something. You know, being able to change something, that individuals (both voices) make a difference and change in something.

WEIGAND: And how racially diverse was your environment as a kid? I mean, there must have been some black kids in your school?

HENRY: There were quite a number of black kids in both of my school systems, and quite a few Indian children, because—

WEIGAND: As in Native American? (both voices)

HENRY: — and in my school in particular, and there was a lot of discrimination, just in things that people said. I had a couple of black friends in junior high school and high school, and I ended up marrying an African American man when I was in college. I have to say that going through the 1960s, looking at it from today's lens, I'd have to look at an awful lot of things that were probably prejudices in me that just came out of the 1950s, but there was a part of me also consistent with the 1960s that just didn't see that much what it was it all about. What was the color thing about? I didn't really understand what the big deal was. I understood what the fight for civil rights was, but I didn't understand why people were so concerned about the color of somebody's skin — the fundamental part of it. It didn't make that much sense to me. So, and that's really very simplistic. But it is the way that it felt to me.

And then, I remember watching, in 1968, when I came back from college, watching the Democratic convention in Chicago on television

with my parents. My parents were just beside themselves, not knowing what to do. You know, their whole culture falling apart. And I was just thinking, Wow, I'm part of this generation that's doing this. And so, again, there was just this separation. I just got more interested in activism, more interested in liberal thinking, and my parents just sort of stayed where they were. And, bless their hearts, they never put a dividing line between us and so they didn't during that period of time, even though we had very divergent views.

They did put a dividing line between us when I married an African American. They weren't happy about that and we didn't see each other for a number of years. They were very upset by it and they just felt — they were totally confused by it. I ended up divorcing my husband a few years after — the marriage just didn't work for a combination of reasons — and my parents just wanted communication with the kids enough to just keep the door open. And I can't tell you how you can talk through such different experiences and somehow still have a family, but that's one of the wonderful things about family life, is that people find their way through that. And you'd never do it with somebody who you weren't related to, probably. Somehow, families just do things like that.

WEIGAND: Wow.

HENRY: I have to trust that these things are relevant.

WEIGAND: They are. This is totally — this is excellent, fascinating and important.

HENRY: OK.

WEIGAND: Everybody says that. They say, Is this what you're looking for?

HENRY: Well, it's just that it lives in my head. Why would anybody else be interested? And I just have to trust that my view of the 1950s and '60s is relevant to some researcher in the future.

WEIGAND: You've talked about how your parents worked hard to create this even playing field. Did that work in terms of gender stuff, too? Or were there different expectations for you and your sister versus your brothers?

39:50

HENRY: In smaller ways. In large ways of, you know, work — no, because we were all expected to work. And we were expected to find something that mattered to us, but consistent with the 1950s and 1960s, my sister was a caregiver. She ended up being a nurse. You know, I was the intellectual. They sent me off to teacher's college. You know, teaching and nursing are what was available to girls in the 1950s and 60s. But it wasn't like we were supposed to be homemakers and not have professions and support ourselves. We were very much encouraged in that direction, and

they supported us as best they could to get the training we needed to support ourselves.

It was more in smaller things, like my dad was very — he had an engineering mind and had some engineering in his background and he was very practical about things. He would deal with the boys around auto mechanics and practical things and he wouldn't deal with us around stuff like that. It was just assumed that we wouldn't be interested or understand it. And maybe if we had expressed more interest, we would have gotten more from him, but it was just — we were sent to do the homemaking with mom and he took care of the boys, taught them engineering and auto mechanic stuff.

And there were certain things like, we were all equal to a certain point and we would all, for example, go and play hardball and softball together with all the kids. We had to kind of organize this baseball team when we were young and we just had a blast playing ball all the time. And I remember the day before Easter Sunday, I was a good pitcher and some kid hit a hardball right into my head and I had this huge black eye. I had to go to Easter Sunday church with this dress on and this huge black eye and my dad said, "No more hardball for you." And I loved hardball. We had to play softball after that. The ball didn't go as far, you know, and it was because I was a girl because I couldn't appear in Easter Sunday with a huge black eye. That is pretty mild compared to what I learned women — girls went through. But it was still important to me, because it was only because I was a girl and I was supposed to look better than that, and I just thought that was a pretty lame excuse for, You're not going to play hardball.

WEIGAND: Good story. How about in terms of other stuff — like, when I was kid and my mother used to say to me sometimes, Act like a lady, you know?

HENRY: Yeah. I'm sure we got some of that and somehow it just sort of all blended together, because we also, you know, were expected to go after school outside and play. My mother wanted us out of the house and playing outside as much as possible, and we had a lot of boys to play with, so, you know, we were allowed to roam as far as the boys roamed. It was a different world back then, which I'm sorry we don't have anymore, to be able to just roam through neighborhoods and get into all kinds of adventures. I don't remember actually putting any strictures on me about acting. Not much about that, about having to be, sort of, more feminine. Some of that happened. It just felt like it sort of happened naturally as a teenager. You just, as a girl, you just start wanting to wear makeup that looks terrible and dress differently and all that.

When I was younger, my sister was more of a tomboy than I was. She was called a tomboy at the time. She climbed through trees and did all kinds of daring things constantly, whereas I was much more a homebody than my sister was. But still, it wasn't like it was a better way to be a homebody.

WEIGAND: How were the sort of dos and don'ts of life defined or enforced in your household? You know, what happened if you stepped off the line of the way you were supposed to be?

HENRY: Well, every once in a while, one of my parents would lose it, like, in a very unusual occasion. I remember my dad washing our mouths out with soap once because we had sworn at my mother. It was so extreme and horrific. And when I was really young, as I said, my mom hit unmercifully and that was a horrible experience and stays with me still. But other than that, their discipline seemed — I mean, if we stayed out too late, if we weren't home by 10:30 or 11 when we were teenagers, you know, and we did that more than once or twice a week or something, then we couldn't go out another night. But they weren't harsh about it. I don't remember feeling like my parents were harsh disciplinarians.

My father — I don't ever remember my father hitting me, ever. And I don't remember — he used to get angry and raise his voice sometimes. It was more, I think, that my dad in particular had very high standards for himself and he had high standards for his children and it was hard to live up to those standards because there was a right way to do something and a wrong way to do it, and you're supposed to do it the right way. It's just like, you're supposed to do it right away. Is there another way? No. You're supposed to do it the right way. You know, it was more of that, just sort of where do you get the positive feedback is when you do it the right way. So maybe I have a little more perfectionist in me than I prefer because that's a little bit hardwired. But other than that, well, I guess that's a strong enough enforcement when you're a kid — being encouraged.

In a way, as I got to be a teenager more — aside from all the child sexual abuse, which is a story in itself — I could see that some parents of my friends didn't seem to care much about what their kids did, and I began to value the fact that my parents cared about what we did. They paid attention to it. So, that's sort of a mitigating factor, too, because it was good to have your parents care about what you did and pay attention to what you did. And so, it's almost like you wanted that support and enthusiasm from them and so you kind of did as many of the right things that you could. And in that regard, I think I probably kept my political views when I was in high school pretty quiet because it wasn't something that I could tell that I'd get much support for.

And I remember the first day I came back from college. I was planning to go to college from eighth grade and I'd saved my money and gotten a scholarship and the whole thing. The guidance counselor said, "She's gonna be a teacher. Send her to a state teacher's college." I got a brochure. It sounded good. I applied. I got in. I went. I never went to see the school. I didn't look at any other schools, you know, it was just one of those things, and my parents brought me at the school and

dropped me off and then I came back at Thanksgiving and my parents picked me up at the bus station.

For some reason I remember being in the car, and my parents were in the front of the car and they're driving me home from the station, with me having just been away for the first three months of my life, and for some reason, my mom said, "We're thinking about what to get you for Christmas. What would you like?" I said, "I'd like a Joan Baez album." They said, "Joan Baez! She's a communist." I said, "How do you know she's a communist? She's not a communist. Joan Baez is great." I remember this, like this is a very clear conversation. We read it in Al Capp — which is a cartoon, right? — and he said Joan Baez is a communist. And this is how my parents knew. And I just thought, Oh my god. It was my realization that our paths were going in really different directions.

And so, I didn't get my Joan Baez album from them for Christmas but I got myself a Joan Baez album. And it was just wonderful, really, a wonderful moment, because — painful, painful at the time — but wonderful to realize, Oh my god, they're just there doing their thing and I'm going off and I have this whole different reality. In 1966, you can imagine what a different reality I had from these parents. I mean, so many kids must have been going through that at the same time. What a time to live. But that's been talked about enough by a lot of people.

WEIGAND: That's a great illustration, though. I love that story.

HENRY: Sort of says it all, doesn't it? Where people were coming from and where they got their information and how even something like McCarthyism could happen because people had that sort of simplistic thinking.

WEIGAND: Well, if somebody says it, it must be true.

HENRY: Yeah, yeah.

WEIGAND: A really good story. What other stuff were you doing in high school? I mean, you were academic and you were sort of academically focused, it sounds like. Did you have other interests, too?

HENRY: Well, we had this situation where we were going to Southampton High School, which was ten miles away from Noyack/Sag Harbor, and we were sort of looked down upon by the Southampton people because we had to catch the bus right after school. We couldn't stay for any after-school activities. So actually, I would have loved to have been involved in things. I would've been the kind of person who'd been on the yearbook or whatever — you know, belong to some club or something. But we couldn't belong to activities all during high school because we had to take the bus as soon as school ended. And all the things I ended

up really enjoying in my high school years were things — aside from being in school itself and enjoying school — maybe it made me a better student on some level, just because I'd come home and do my homework, because I just loved homework and I loved school and, you know, I had more hours than maybe somebody else that stayed after school for a couple of hours.

But the things that all of us loved the most were everything to do with the water — being out on boats, skating, water skiing, walking on the beach, anything to do with the water. In the wintertime it was skating and in the summer it was all the water sports. I did little things that were more homemaking things, like learning to cook and sew and knit and all that kind of stuff. But mostly it was water sports. I can't tell you what kind of clubs I would have been involved in. Probably it would've been the kinds of things that my friends were doing, which were literary clubs and stuff like that.

WEIGAND: How about significant friendships from then? Were there individuals who were particularly important to you, or influential, or –

51:30

HENRY: Yeah. The first day that I went to Southampton school system, I was in the seventh grade, and all the children from Noyack the same year went. It didn't matter whether they were seniors or they were the first grade. But anyway, I think I was maybe sixth — so, I did sixth, seventh, and eighth in middle school in Southampton, and then high school in Southampton — but the first day of school, this girl came up to me and said, you know, "I know you're from Noyack and I want to be your friend." And she turned out to be my best friend for 40 years. Her name was Joanne Geyer. Her friendship with me turned out to be one of the most meaningful relationships of my life, because it spanned — we went through all those years of school together. We had a fantastic friendship, and then we went to colleges near one another in the '60s, so we traveled to each other's colleges. We were knowledgeable and involved in each other's weddings, and subsequently she moved to Boston, having been overseas, and then we spent some years together working close to one another, and then she moved to England in 1975 and made me very familiar with things in England because I went to see her a lot. And so, it was actually — it was a fantastic relationship, and made me realize the value, from a really young age, of having a friend like that, outside of family, somebody who was your peer, who shared your intellectual interests and, you know, just cared about the whole of you, without all the family stuff.

WEIGAND: Yeah, it's sort of like family without the disadvantages.

HENRY: Yeah, yeah. And they put in my yearbook, they put the little caption under my name, um, The most I can do for my friend is simply to be his friend. They didn't have another pronoun. But it was a really good

friend of mine who was the editor of the yearbook, and she picked that one perfectly, because it was true of me then and it's been true of me since. And partly it was because of that early relationship that I realized how true that was.

And then there were a couple of other people in high school I was close to and I'm still close to them. All these people I ended up close to are people who are, like, the top part of the class and so they really cared about their minds and they did well in school and we had an advanced English class. We're all sitting next to one another and that sort of thing. It was a very generative kind of experience of — I don't remember spending much time doing sort of gossiping things or things that I think a lot of teenage girls can sometimes get into, of pretty unpleasant things. I don't remember spending a lot of time doing that. It was more, you know, it — I was just one of those goody two-shoes people who really loved school, you know?

WEIGAND: I was like that, too, so I kind of know what you mean.

HENRY: I just really loved school. Anybody could hate me for that but, you know, my friends were like that and I was like that. Um, that's just the way it was. (laughs)

WEIGAND: Well, we're at 55 minutes here, so I'm—

END DVD 1

DVD 2

WEIGAND: So here we are, back again — tape two. You were talking about some of these other political things that you started to be aware of in the '60s, especially. I realize I forgot to ask you anything about the war in Vietnam and when you became conscious about that and how that affected your political development, if it did.

HENRY: Well, my first kind of political organizing — the first political organizing I ever got involved in was in college, and it was actually during the Biafran war and that was in — probably either '68 or '69. There were these horrific stories of the effects of this war on the children, on the women and children of Biafra, and it was just a horrible. It was the first thing I recalled of something in the rest of the world really affecting me personally, and I did some organizing on campus. We had some Biafran students who were part of the liberation movement and everything. I organized some speak-ins for that and speak-outs, whatever you called them then, and it just made me sensitive to the fact that, if you took the time and did some work around something like this that you cared about, then other people would come and get educated, and that's a great thing to have done, to have educated people.

I think that as part of that whole political environment I was dealing with in the late '60s, it started to dawn on me in a different way and that included civil rights, it included antiwar activism, and then I moved from being in a state university to the New School for Social Research in New York, and that was at the heart of political demonstrations. At the time I was married to a man who was at Columbia and I was at the New School, and between our two schools, you know, all this political activity was happening, demonstrations and marches, which we participated in plenty. It was a combination of really caring about what was happening in the world and wanting to participate by going to Washington or wanting to participate by marching, being part of some demonstration in New York.

But at the same time, because I had always supported myself going to school, I always had to work during the time I was going to school, and when I was at the New School for Social Research, I was working full-time at the Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital. I was studying psychology at the time and I was working at Bellevue Psychiatric to have a better understanding of psychology, so I had to sort of fit in demonstrations into what my work schedule and school schedule. That was just sort of the triangle of my life, realizing these things really mattered to me, but realizing that I had to pay for tuition and that, you know, I had to pay for rent. And so, I just worked that sort of triangle — my husband and I worked that triangle while we were in New York. So political activism was important, but I couldn't make it my whole life, because I simply couldn't afford to.

WEIGAND: Right.

HENRY: So, I don't know what that explains about me, but it makes — I sort of let myself be passionate about things but I have to be practical at the same time, and maybe there's a way in which that's sort of flowed through my life. I am passionate about things. I put a tremendous amount of energy to it, but it also has to — I can't do it in a way that I martyr myself emotionally or physically or anything like that. I don't know what it says one way or the other, but it's been a workable formula for me because it's kept the rent paid and the food on the table and also I get to do something about something I care about.

WEIGAND: Yeah, that makes sense. Oh, you also said on that yellow sheet that you filled out and sent back to Joyce six months ago or whatever, that there were a lot of other important adults in your childhood, many different teachers at school, and your grandmother Worden — is that how you say that, Worden? So I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about some of those people and who they were and why they were important to you and how they've been important overall.

HENRY: Well, actually, almost as a segue to your last question, let me go back to being in New York City in the late 1960s and while I was working at Bellevue Psychiatric. I worked in the admitting office, which was quite a place to work and see what mental health is for the lower half of Manhattan in the 1960s, and there was a psychiatric nurse there who just sort of — we had a nice little professional friendship, and I remember coming in to work one day, like, almost the day after the Weathermen had mistakenly detonated a bomb in lower –

4:50

WEIGAND: In the townhouse?

HENRY: In the townhouse — I think it was on 11th Street, or something like that, and my school was on 12th Street, so it was, like, something that people were really paying attention to. And I remember having this conversation with this man and he was a middle-class African American man living in Harlem and he wanted to know what I thought of it. And I said, I remember saying to him, like, I remember this as if it were yesterday, saying, “Well, sometimes the cause is so important and some people have to die in order for this cause to be advanced.” And I was just very — I wasn't blasé about it, but I was very, just sort of, the ends justify the means argument. And he just looked at me and said, “Then you've lost the whole argument. If you're willing to trade off like that, then you tell me what you're going to put in its place. If you're going to tear apart society, what're you going to put in its place?” And I remember saying back to him, “Well, I'm too young to know what I'm supposed to put in its place.” You know, “I don't know what we're

going to put in its place, but I know what's happening now isn't going to work."

And that was a decent enough answer to be 20 years old and saying that to him, but his question actually stuck with me for a really, really long time, because I realized I didn't have enough sensitivity when I was young to a loss of human life or what people have to put themselves through to advance something. And that almost goes against what I was just talking about, with talking about sort of having to keep things in balance. But I had this sort of almost ideological side to me that would be willing to trade off life for an end.

And then I came to realize that, well, if I'm really going to feel that way, that the ends justify the means, then I really had to answer that question of what's so important that I want to put in its place that's worth the loss of human life. And there was just a way in which I began to understand some of what I was arguing against with the Vietnam War and all. Well, I had to be willing to say what I was arguing for, and be much better at articulating what I wanted to have happen instead of just what I didn't want anymore.

Anyway, it was just one of those moments. I feel lucky to have had people who were willing to talk to me and lucky to be willing to listen to what people had to say to me, and not just be so much of a zealot or ideologue myself inside my own thinking, that I was just going to advance it no matter what, without respect to how it affected other people and how they wanted to exchange with me.

So, to answer your question, maybe with a little more brevity, is that I had a few good teachers when I was in high school and a few good teachers when I was in college who were just able to engage me at just that level, you know, who didn't just take my answers at face value and not come back and push me on what I was saying. And even if I couldn't always acknowledge it at the time, or understand the value of what they were saying at the time, the way that they dealt with me really had a big impact on my later thinking, or the way I was with other people, or the way I looked on something. So, yeah, I've been really blessed with some good teachers of all sorts.

WEIGAND: Do you think that some of those people were instrumental in sort of encouraging you to take this different path from the rest of your family?

HENRY: I think if I had stayed within how my parents were raising me to think, I mean, I wouldn't have developed this whole, like, strong rigor of activism. I wouldn't have developed the capacity to take risks that I've taken around my ideas. I would have just sort of stayed so much closer to home. I would've become a teacher and, you know, without some of the really important fundamental values they put in place by the way they raised me and my siblings, I wouldn't have had the strength and self-confidence to advance my ideas. But it was the outside influences that I let happen to me that was the yeast, I guess you'd say, that was the

yeast to make, you know, something that was basically wanting to rise, rise. I don't know. You can overdo these metaphors sometimes, but —

And, I had another force going on, too. Again, I don't know how much detail to go into these things, but during my teenage years, my parents put us into a fundamentalist church, which was quite a terrible experience for me. It was very much church on Friday, church on Sunday mornings, church on Sunday nights. It encouraged us to not dance and have fun and do all the things we wanted to do in the '60s. We did those things anyway but we had this sort of church influence trying to push us in this direction of, you know, being saved by Jesus Christ. It was the sort of fundamentalist thinking of, there's one answer here, one way to be saved, and this is it. Participate in this process with us. My parents put us in that church, but then we also had sort of a freedom about it, because they weren't ideological themselves. So we sort of listened to it but we weren't forced to believe it or anything like that.

But when I was going off to college, I can remember well going to church the Sunday before going off to college, and the minister of the church called me up and gave me a bible to take to college with me. I still have that bible on a shelf over there. But he preached a sermon that day and the sermon was basically that colleges brainwash our children. Let's beware. And basically, I didn't go to church for a really long time after that. I just thought that was really the wrong message to be sending a young person away to college with. You know, in some ways, it almost divided me from my family more than it made me adhere to them, because I wanted to leave that kind of thinking behind. Anyway, just sort of an illustration about fundamentalism before —

WEIGAND: So where does that come from? I mean, that doesn't —

HENRY: Where did it come from with my parents?

WEIGAND: Yeah.

HENRY: Well, we were in a small community and the minister happened to have rented a home next to ours. He came and made friends with my parents and, you know, just talked to them about going to church. So it was a very personal thing. It wasn't like they thought up the idea and then found a church. It was just, like, maybe they thought that this would be a good thing — give some extra values to our children or something. None of my family goes to church. I'm the only one who goes to church now, of members of my family, so it's sort of interesting how those things unfold. I don't know if that was relevant or not but it had something to do with —

WEIGAND: Yeah, I think it is. I mean, it's another important, sort of, influence on your —

HENRY: But I worked in the women's movement later on, and I could see fundamentalism coming up against the women's movement, and it made me really understand what some of the power of that thinking was and to be leery of it. It just made me more convinced of how important education is and how important open-mindedness is, and getting good information to people so they can make free choices instead of being told what to do. Let's let you skip ahead here. I'm still keeping you back in those early years.

WEIGAND: No, I feel like I'm keeping you back there. Well, let's talk about feminism and, you know, when you start to be aware of — I'm phrasing it as if it was this external thing that you became aware of and maybe you had your own kind of internal feminist process going on before you ever came to organized feminism, I don't know. So I guess I'm wondering when you started thinking feminist thoughts and then getting exposed to the fact that there was a group of people out there who were feminists doing feminist things.

15:00

HENRY: Do you know when *Ms.* was first published?

WEIGAND: Nineteen seventy-two, I think.

HENRY: Nineteen seventy-two, yeah. I bought the first issue of *Ms.* in 1972. So here I am in the late '60s. I graduated from the New School in 1971. I was married at the time, and my husband and I moved to Boston because he was going to continue his education at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. It was just very much a time where I sensed this whole movement around African American people coming into their own around African American consciousness.

And there was a way in which feminism was almost in contrast to that, instead of in support of one another. I can remember my husband having a few attitudes that weren't very supportive of women, and I couldn't abide by it. I just — and I think that was the dawn of my consciousness, reading a few of those early articles in that first issue of *Ms.* and realizing that was the way I had already been thinking. Here was an articulate magazine. It was something in the culture. It wasn't like a xeroxed piece of paper but it was something out there in the culture.

And that just made me feel part of something much bigger than myself, which I had earlier — you know, when I went to Woodstock in 1969. And what Woodstock did for me is — I was there for only the first couple of days, because I didn't like to be so wet and clammy as we were. That was the way the weather was. But the experience of it was phenomenal to be walking there and then just be surrounded by thousands and thousands of people who were also walking there because you had to park so far away in order to get there. You didn't

even know what you were going to, but as you were walking there and there were thousands of other people walking there with you. By the time I got there — I had bought a ticket, of course, because I was a goody two-shoes kind of person — and they didn't even take our tickets because they had sold only 50,000 and 500,000 people came and they stopped taking tickets, who knows when.

And so there I was there at this place where they were half a million people and I'd never seen anything like that in my life and I had no idea what was going to happen. Nobody did. That's what Woodstock was all about and, you know, it was such an integration inside of me. I felt like this isn't just a solitary thing that happened on my college campus or something that's happening somewhere that the media happens to catch. This is like my whole generation has woken up. Look at all of us here. So that feeling was the same — the thing that got integrated by going to Woodstock and having that feeling, that we were half a million strong, that kind of feeling of that — I know I had the same feeling when I read the first issue of *Ms.* It was, My god, there are actually people out there selling a magazine, writing articles for a magazine, you know, paying attention to these things that I care about.

And there were just — I remember one of those early articles was about that click phenomenon — what's the thing that makes it click for you. And for me, it was reading a little tiny book, a little tiny piece in a little tiny book that said the diminutive term for the word brother is buddy and the nickname for the word sister is sissy. And to be a buddy, everybody wants to be, and to be a sissy, nobody wants to be. And was there any better dividing line between male and female than that? That was it for me. That was it. Because I had brothers and sisters and I knew that they were the same and I loved them all. And you know, to have that kind of dividing line around something so simple as that piece of language — that was my click. And from that point on, there was a way in which I could just easily view things from a feminist point of view and be completely comfortable with it. It didn't, or it could line up with other political things I thought. It didn't matter. It's just I could see things from that point of view.

And then, this was the early 70s and I was looking for work in Boston. There was an opportunity to work — there were state commissions for women, government organizations set up across the country, part of this whole governmental effort on behalf of women. And the first governmental commission was with a moderate, liberal Republican — he'd be called radical now, but he was a liberal Republican back then — named Frank Sargent. He set up a governor's commission on the status of women in Massachusetts in 1972, I believe, or early 1973. I was hired as the first executive director, and I was just 22 or something at the time.

I think partly they hired me because I had a government stipend that came along with my position. They could just take it from someplace and put it in the State House. But also, looking back, I bet they wanted

somebody who was not a political powerhouse, because they didn't know what they wanted this commission to do, and I was just young enough. But they sort of sized me up wrong, because I actually was a really hard worker and I knew a lot more than I realized I knew, and we did some phenomenally wonderful things in that little first governor's commission.

So that was the first time I had a chance to go — I didn't go the more common route of joining consciousness-raising groups or doing organized things in the streets or anything like that because, again, I was being so practical about working and going to school and everything. But I had the first chance I had to do this sort of governmental work on behalf of education, employment rights, and the ERA and abortion and all that, which is all the main issues in the early '70s. That was when Title IX was passing and some of the really earliest legislation. It was just a wonderful time to be able to do something so practical and work with so many incredible women. The first commission in Massachusetts had 40 people on it, and there were Republicans and Democrats and everything in between. It was just — it was terrific. I don't know. I should probably tell some stories to make it come alive, but just the whole experience was just really good.

WEIGAND: It was like you finally had a way to fuse the passion and the practicality.

HENRY: Yes. Yes, exactly, exactly. But one of my favorite — and one of my sort of silly favorite things about it was to — I remember the end of commission meetings, and again, this was Republican government, and back then, when I was voting, I didn't register as either a Democrat or Republican because I really liked a lot of Republicans I met and I actually didn't like some of the Democrats I met. They were just a little bit too — I don't know. It's so different now it's hard to imagine, but there were a lot of Democrats I met who were actually not at all nice people, and some of the Republicans were really good people, and I could just relate to them personally more. Maybe it had something to do with my family history. I've no idea. But it's also that they were very liberal and very moderate and you could talk to them intellectually. It was not like it is in 2004.

One of the things that I loved about this Republican commission with the Democrats and Republicans on it was that they would talk about all these issues, like how they're gonna advance abortion rights and what they're gonna do about the Equal Rights Amendment and all these things, you know, that you wouldn't expect — you wouldn't hear today a governmental commission doing. But then at the end of the meeting, they would sort of close their books and they would look at each other, and then they would get their purses out on the table and they'd open the purses, their little snap purses, and they'd get this little compact out and they'd open their compacts and look in the mirror and

they'd get their lipstick and they'd put their lipstick on, comb their hair, straighten out their faces and everything, and then they'd leave.

That whole image was of the young women out on the streets marching, burning bras — not burning bras but, you know, people accusing us of burning bras — not wearing any bras, you know, and just the whole thing. It was so much out of the '60s. And then you had these older women who were also quite acting quite radically one minute, not knowing whether they were or not, and the next minute they were putting on their lipstick with these little compacts. And I just — this is America. You can have those things happening all at once. And I loved that, that the women's movement could somehow let all of that happen — have room enough for all that happening without having dividing lines that said, Oh, if you're not a feminist in this way, you don't belong and whatever you care about, it doesn't have any place, we don't have any place for you. I liked it, that there was a place for people at any level to contribute at whatever they felt that they were good at. I don't know how much that illustrates that or not. But it did for me.

WEIGAND: Yeah, I can picture it.

HENRY: A young woman who wouldn't even wear lipstick, no makeup at all, like, very little underwear, you know, like the whole thing, and then you'd see these women, like (laughs). Anyway —

WEIGAND: So, how does your life change because of this click — or does it?

HENRY: Well, I think it made me feel like part of a much larger family. Again, maybe consistent with some of the things I felt in the '60s. And it also, it made me think about the education that I had for undergraduate school and realize that, you know, I hadn't had a demanding enough undergraduate education. It made me think about what do I want to do for my profession, and if I really wanted to do something professionally, then I'd probably need a graduate education. And it made me start thinking, in my early twenties, so what kind of graduate education would I like to have? I couldn't answer that question at first because I thought for a while I might be a doctor. I thought for a while I might be a lawyer.

It took me a while to realize that I really liked managing people and that a business education would be better. But as soon as I started thinking about it, I realized, This is just something I confine myself to. It came down to a very practical level of, from sort of having these global things that were able to be accomplished, and I can get what I need in my life to be part of those accomplishments, to make something happen. I don't know. That sounds completely inarticulate, but —

WEIGAND: Like it was empowering?

HENRY: Exactly, you know. That's a kind of funny word, but yeah. It was. It was. It just — it made me set my own standards for myself higher than I might have set them otherwise, and made me realize that it didn't matter that, before this, professional schools didn't accept women. They were going to now and, you know, why wouldn't I be part of that?

WEIGAND: So it was like you recognized that your options were perhaps broader than you realized?

HENRY: Yeah. And now, all these years later, I don't know how much it's true that young women would have any doubts about that. But back then, people lived inside those doubts. Profound. That the only thing that was available in high school was to be a nurse or a teacher for a girl. There's a lot of other careers out there. I mean, you think about it in this day and age, it seems — it's almost like when people at the turn of the last century wore corsets or something and those terrible old things that made your body unhealthy, like we couldn't think about that now. That's the way our minds were affected by what the culture would allow for us. So it was wonderful to have that all sort of dismantled.

WEIGAND: So you were saying that your husband at the time had sexist attitudes?

HENRY: He had a few. He was really wonderful on a lot of levels, but he had a few. I don't like to use that word. I was struggling, because of everything I went through as a teenager, I was really struggling. It didn't matter who I'd married. I would have struggled in relationship to anybody because it was just so hard. I mean, I literally did not know how to be close to somebody. So, yeah, I don't want to pin too much on him because he was a wonderful person with good attitudes about me generally. Very specifically, he had fine attitudes and then he had a couple of things that just were — I don't know. Those were the things that bothered me more than anything else and, in retrospect, probably had much more to do — what really bothered me was that I wasn't able to communicate easily and he wasn't either. It wasn't a political ideology, or from a political ideology point of view.

WEIGAND: So feminism then didn't necessarily contribute to the —

HENRY: I think it seemed more of an obvious contributor at the time, but it probably was one of those surface things and there were more underlying issues, underlying psychological issues.

WEIGAND: But it's during this time that you got divorced?

HENRY: I did. I got separated in 1973. We were married for three years. And then I was in Boston for a few years, still working in that women's commission. Then I moved to Washington, D.C., and in 1975, or late

'74, we held a huge — this might be much more material than you need — but we had a huge women's conference, a day-long women's fair in Heinz Auditorium in Boston, in January of 1974. It was called Yes, We Can. It was totally positive information about all the things women could do with their lives, and the local TV station, WBZ-TV, preempted all of its programming and just filmed from this place from early morning until midnight, except for news.

It was a major thing to have that happen and we had an incredible day. There was all kinds of information, and that's what woke me up to some of the ways to deliver information creatively. I took that experience and I went to Washington and then, because of the work that I'd done on the commission, I was able to step into a job that was the acting director of the Presidential Commission for Women. It was called the Citizen's Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and that was when the person who was currently the head — Catherine East, who was a very amazing, wonderful feminist in Washington — stepped out of it to do some things for the International Women's Year. This was getting ready for the next global conference in 1975, and I took her job.

I probably mainly got that job because, again, they wanted somebody who didn't have much political power. Catherine was fantastic and powerful, and I was just somebody who was capable but had no political power coming into Washington, and that's probably one of the reasons they chose me. But it still gave me a chance to do some wonderful work at a presidential level. I met some fantastic women who — this was in a Republican framework again, you know — within that Republican framework where we cared a lot about these issues.

And then, of course, that led right from there to Bella Abzug getting money for the International Women's Year Commission, which was commissioned in 1976, I believe. In 1975, and I was hired by the International Women's Year Commission. We had a staff of 40 or so people and we held these meetings across the country, state meetings that were publicly funded, and then this huge national women's conference in 1977. That was just an amazing experience to be right in the thick of at that.

WEIGAND:

Yeah, and I guess I want to know about all of this, even the Massachusetts Commission. Can you talk about some of the stuff that you did in that job, and what some of the high points were?

33:30

HENRY:

Well, one of the things we did, is we held hearings in Boston and in Worcester and in Springfield on the status of women. We had people come forward and just talk about their experiences so that we would put together some white papers for governor on the status of women in Massachusetts. And out of that, I think that one of the things we discovered out of that — and this is mainly the commissioners working with their contacts, it was a well-connected commission, this group of forty people — one of the things that people realized is that women

needed more information about health care, about child care, about education, and about individual rights. I don't remember how we addressed issues like domestic violence. I'm not sure we even did, the Massachusetts Commission. If I'm remembering correctly, that may have been when we got to Washington. But anyway, this fair I was just describing came out of that experience, because we realized that women just needed a lot more information than they had available to them. And a lot of women weren't going to buy *Ms.* magazine, so –

WEIGAND: So, the commissioners picked the people?

HENRY: The governor appointed commissioners.

WEIGAND: And then the commissioners picked the people were would come and talk at these hearings?

HENRY: Um, gosh. I don't remember people being picked.

WEIGAND: I guess I'm just wondering who the people — who they were? Like, were they other government people who would come and talk about –

HENRY: You know, what I remember about this is that I had a lot of organizing to do to set up all the logistics for these things, but I think the commissioners took care of — you know, they sat on the panel and they took care of hearing from people, so I actually don't remember how we heard from people. Well, I have to say, that's — I mean, nobody's ever asked me this question in 30 years or something.

WEIGAND: You don't have to know the answer.

HENRY: Well, even so, it's like I remember so much about my life, somehow I just assumed — it's just not there. What I remember most about that period of time was just the fact that these commissioners really dug into some of the thorniest issues of the time and found their way through them and gave their opinions to the governor of whether or not they were going to be supported. And I appreciated that a lot because, of course, this was during *Roe v. Wade* decision, so the issue of abortion rights was really important. The Equal Rights Amendment was really important. You couldn't really do something in the women's movement without addressing those fundamental issues, but they were very politically divisive, too, so the fact was that we struggled with them in commission meetings. The commissioners struggled with them, and then that we produced this big, day-long media event and really captured some attention. There were some people who demonstrated against us during this day because they wanted different things to happen. Sometimes people in those days just demonstrated because something was happening and they demonstrated against it.

WEIGAND: So the demonstrators were more radical feminists?

HENRY: Definitely, yeah. And I can remember Flo Kennedy was one of our guests at this day-long media meeting, and she was arguing with the people who were taking the microphone and trying to stop the day's events which were being televised by the media. And Flo Kennedy said, "All this good information is trying to get out there to people who were watching their television, and you're not able to tell us what you want to have happen instead. You just want to disrupt what we're doing. And that's not fair." She just had this whole incredible discussion. It was incredible to stand in the sidelines and watch this whole thing happen.

And again, you know, with the side I ended up on was the one that said, What's the most practical thing that can deliver the best result here? For me, that was never — I've never been somebody who has been so comfortable out on the streets demonstrating, you know, arguing in that form for change. I'd rather be working inside a system where I'm getting something to happen, because the practical side of it really made it work for me. And it didn't — I really didn't even have judgment about people who were out on the street demonstrating. It just wasn't — it didn't light my heart up. My heart lit up when I figured I can do something really to advance some practical reality here.

So I realized during that time — it made me more of a moderate because I'm willing to work with governments, whereas some people are not willing to work with governments at all. Governments are corrupt, businesses are corrupt — just *a priori*. And I can understand how people would reach that conclusion, but it's just not where I was. I ended up sort of working in sync with how I was as a person, so that was — that was probably good for me.

WEIGAND: How about race issues within feminism? Did they emerge during this Massachusetts Commission?

HENRY: Um, not that I recall. But, um, I just — I was looking through my papers and I saw that I had published a poem about child sexual abuse back then and I want to look at when that was published, because I thought it was published when I was in Washington and if it was, then I — I don't believe we addressed rape.

WEIGAND: Actually, I said race.

HENRY: Oh, race. I'm sorry.

WEIGAND: It's OK.

HENRY: I'm sorry.

WEIGAND: Rape is another interesting question.

HENRY: Well, yeah, I was just trying to remember, you know, when we started dealing with that issue, and I think it was within National Women's Commission. I don't think we dealt with race at all at the Massachusetts Governor's Commission. I don't think we dealt with it in any way that had any political teeth to it until we got into that IWY [International Women's Year, 1977] process and had the national women's conference. And then there was a whole minority caucus and all the work that Gloria Steinem did around that and all the work that those wonderful women that came from the states did. But I don't think we did very much in the early '70s. And I think it was partly because an awful lot of the women's movement, at least the part of it that I viewed in the government, had to start with where people were, and the people who were appointed to these commissions — they were trying to get young women jobs. They were trying to get people educational opportunities. They were trying to get people childcare so that they could go to work or get educational opportunities. Trying to get them basic health care. And so, although it ended up being considered a white women's movement, I think it certainly wasn't purposefully so. It was more practically so, because people were just paying attention to the issues right under their nose, and it took a while before it became a working-women's movement, before it became an issue of minority women having a chance to say what was important to them.

WEIGAND: Uh-hm. That makes sense. So, were there any particularly low points in all that, or was it a relatively satisfying —

HENRY: Low points. Let's see.

WEIGAND: I don't know, like a great disappointment or —

HENRY: I should probably go back and read my journals just to be really honest about this, because you could be doing a revisionist history without even knowing.

WEIGAND: Right. I mean, it sounds like it maybe wasn't a particular contentious commission.

HENRY: I think there's a lot back and forth between the Democrats and the Republicans. But to the extent that I've had any control over the things where I've been director, even if I was young, I would always be looking for ways of where can people agree here. What do we have in common? And I suppose if I had just taken a different take, and I was more interested in how can I throw a sand in the gears here and stir things up, then different things would have happened. But I'm not that kind of person. I'm wanting to know how things can advance, and in

order for them to advance, people have to come together and move together. Some people are completely comfortable with stirring things up. It's just not my personality.

WEIGAND: That's all right. You don't have to think of a disappointment. (laughter) Um, so then you moved from state government into federal government work. That must have been a real shift.

43:20

HENRY: Yeah. Well, also, there was a funny thing happening inside of me and that was, that goes all the way back to when I was 12, when John Kennedy was inaugurated and he said, "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." Unfortunately, it was the same exact month that my father started abusing me, and this combination of John Kennedy sort of coming into ascendancy and my father abusing me was an amazing combination for me, because the person who had been the hero in my life, my dad, all of a sudden he was just totally, you know, torturing me. And this person in political life was coming, this wonderful person with these ideas was coming up. And that particular statement that he made, even at 12 years old, just woke me up and made me realize that I could do something for my country. I could — this could — I'm inspired. I didn't have that verb for it back then, but when I came out of college, I decided I would dedicate my twenties to public service, because this is the way you think when you're in your twenties, right? (laughs) I can dedicate — I'll just dedicate my twenties to public service and then I'll go do whatever it is I want to do in my life, and I'll do this for John Kennedy because when he was assassinated, a couple of years after he was elected, it broke my ever-loving heart because my new hero was gone. The whole decade of assassinations made me feel like if you speak up, you're gonna be killed. So it was a very scary, a very scary time in that way. And it was one of my personal things, as a thank you to John Kennedy, was just to say I'm going to dedicate my twenties to public service.

I decided the thing that could make it interesting for me was if I worked at every level of government. So I started in the City of New York. I worked for the City of New York, and then I worked for the State of Massachusetts, and then I went to Washington and I worked for the federal government and then I did something international. And so I wanted to do something at every level, and then I'd go to graduate school. And lo and behold, that's exactly what I did. And then I sort of repeated that spiral all over again in my thirties and forties and fifties.

I didn't do it purposefully, necessarily, but in my twenties I was doing that. So, it wasn't a total plan to move to Washington but I was very open to it when I had the opportunity. And so from that point of view, to answer your question, very longwindedly, I was more prepared for it than you might be otherwise, because I just had this sense of, if you can do this thing at a state level, let's just — what could happen at a national level? And then that was an incredible gift. Washington, D.C.,

is a fabulous gift for young people to go at the beginning of their career, because it gives you such a perspective on the nation that you have a hard time getting when you're working in a local place. And for me, that was the case, because it made me, as soon as I got into national work, it made me not think in a narrow way anymore. It made me immediately think of all 50 states at the same time, and what can you do for all 50 states?

An awful lot of what we can accomplish in life is due to what our point of view is about it, and if you have a broad enough point of view, you can accomplish something broader than if you have a very narrow point of view and you have to ramp it up to something. It feels like more of a risk than if you just start with a broad point of view and then you just operate from that place. So that's what that experience gave me and it was — I didn't know enough to know that I was in a political hotbed by being the head of a presidential commission. I didn't really know enough about politics to have fathomed that. And so I just went ahead and did it and did some really good sort of in-depth work around comparing women and men and how they received benefits — employee benefits and health care, retirement and social security. It sounds sort of a little bit research esoteric. It was very important at the time because there were so many disparities between what men and women got and all different kinds of health and benefit plans. I published a report on it from that commission.

And then, one difficult thing. That was when I actually, to answer your last question — I had these Republicans — the people appointed to this presidential commission were all Republicans. It was under Gerald Ford and they weren't particularly conservative but they were much more conservative than I was used to in liberal Massachusetts, and they were still dealing with some of the issues, talking about some of the issues. But they also had some really conservative — not in today's terms, but back in those days — they had some conservative people on this Citizen's Advisory Council who did not let any moderate or liberal positions through their discussion. They discussed them and then sort of scrubbed them.

There were a couple of things that I wanted to put out in an annual report and they made me take them out because they were something that sounded supportive of the Equal Rights Amendment — or, was it the Equal Rights Amendment? I think it was more about abortion rights. And it just broke my heart, because it was a fact that I was trying to publish, not an opinion, but they didn't want that particular fact to be advanced. Maybe that was one of my first views of, Oh, there are some limits here to working inside the system. I had to pay attention to what those limits are, and maybe it helped me realize that in the long run, I don't belong in the system because I don't like being fettered in that political way.

WEIGAND: So what was this presidential commission targeting exactly, just doing research on finding out about these issues and the need for them?

HENRY: We were located in the Women's Bureau in the department of labor, so actually a lot of the issues took off from something to do with work or education more than it had to do with health care, for example. But the way Catherine East had set up this Citizen's Advisory Council, she reported out every year on sort of the status of women for the country. Now you couldn't even do something like that because it'd be so broad. But back then, it was the beginning of things happening so you could report on things pretty thoroughly. There were lots of legal decisions and all that. So it was a matter of — it was more of an information reporting and dissemination arm than it was a policy-making arm, because we were close enough to the president's office or in the White House. You couldn't do much with policy.

WEIGAND: So it was reporting out, primarily, to people in government or to —

HENRY: All over the place, so a lot of people out in the women's movement, working all over the place, who were interested in having a report from the government on the status of women. And it was kind of the group that would be in touch with these state commissions across the country.

WEIGAND: So then, it's from there that you moved into the International Women's Year. And you went right to the thing of being in charge of the Northeast Quadrant?

50:50

HENRY: Yes. You have a lot of information. And we divided the country into four, and that made me in charge of Minnesota to Maine. There were sixteen states, Minnesota to Maine.

WEIGAND: So it's the Northeast, very broadly.

HENRY: Very broadly defined. And there were only four parts to the country, and mine included Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands as well. So, for somebody who's 25 years old, this is a lot of responsibility.

WEIGAND: Did you feel in over your head?

HENRY: Not really. I didn't know enough to know. I just said, "Well, this is my job. I'm gonna go do it." And we just had the most incredible time. We just — we had an incredible time. We had these — I don't know how many commissioners were at the national level. The first one was under Jill Ruckelhaus. I think her husband was head of the Environmental Protection Agency and she was an activist in her own right in the women's movement. And back then, oftentimes, people will refer to what other women's husbands did because it was just relevant to their

political workings. In these days it doesn't make any sense, but back in those days, it did. And that commission had a lot of — the whole IWY thing just had a tremendous amount of energy and it just caught at the right moment. It was there at the right time to capture some of what was happening locally and sort of put it in whole other forum.

So, these state meetings — the national commissioners would approve who were the state representatives, the people holding the state meetings. And then those state representatives — in Vermont, for example, the state representatives would plan the state meeting. It was open to the public and at that meeting — it was meant to be a day-long kind of meeting where you present a whole bunch of information and workshops and then you'd have an election to vote on a platform of issues, whether you support them or not. And you would also vote on delegate that would be sent to the national women's conference. So it was a wonderful model, really, because it wasn't as if we were appointing these delegates from Washington. They were going through the state process, and also people were having the chance to express their points of view.

So my work as the Northeast coordinator was to work with getting these state commissions, these state representative panels set up. They had to be approved by the group in Washington, by the commissioners in Washington, but I was responsible for making sure they were diverse across all different kinds of categories — politically and racially and ethnically and age-wise and educationally and geographically. It was really phenomenal. We had to do this in two or three or four months, and get these state committees going. And then they planned their state meetings and they held them within about nine months of one another, across the whole country. They elected these delegates and then six months later, they were at the conference in Houston in November of 1977. So, that was a lot of work.

WEIGAND: Yeah. And we're running up on an hour again, here.

HENRY: Are we?

WEIGAND: We are, so why don't I turn this off?

END DVD 2

DVD 3

WEIGAND: Here we are, Kate Weigand and Fran Henry once again on, now, Monday, October 25th, 2004. And I think when we finished up on Friday, we had been talking about the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on the status of women and maybe had just — I think you had talked about how you had got hired on the IWY project. You said that you were sort of a neophyte and so they hired you because you weren't politically powerful.

HENRY: That was actually the Citizen's Advisory Council. That's a presidential council, and I was the acting executive director. So that's where, you know, because it was a presidential council, I was following Catherine East, who had been quite a powerful person — it was a statement that I didn't understand at the time, but it was a statement to everybody that they didn't really want somebody to come in who had all the connections and all the diplomacy and all the experience of somebody — Catherine was in her fifties or early sixties by then. So, yeah, I realized that later, but —

WEIGAND: But you didn't know it then.

HENRY: Yeah, and I did an incredible enough job in terms of just keeping the thing alive while the whole IWY Commission got started in the State Department across town. The Citizen's Advisory Council actually was disbanded after that. The IWY Commission was a presidential commission on women similar to some of the state commissions that have been since disbanded. They came alive and they did a lot of activity and policy work right at the thick of the women's movement, and then this huge International Women's Year process got started and then there was a commission along with that, a national commission. It eclipsed this presidential council. And there might even now be some sort of presidential council on women, but nothing that anybody I know knows anything about.

WEIGAND: Right. Hard to imagine what that might be.

HENRY: Really, yes. So, it wouldn't — anyway—

WEIGAND: That clears it up for me. So, um, let's see. So was it a big shift moving from — maybe I asked you this already — from state government to the federal government? Maybe we did talk about this.

HENRY: Well, we did. What we talked about was that I sort of had it in my own personal plan to work at every level of government.

WEIGAND: Oh, yeah, right, right.

HENRY: And that was sort of how I saw my twenties going. So, I was really ready for that shift to Washington when I got there.

WEIGAND: I remember this now. And we talked — I guess, you started to talk about some of this other stuff, about what you did.

HENRY: I was hired as the Northeast Coordinator —

WEIGAND: Yeah, and you went around to the different states and you sort of monitored or participated in some of those state meetings.

HENRY: Yeah, I think we did. Did we talk about the politics of it?

WEIGAND: No.

HENRY: It was the place where a conservative force, what was called the Eagle Forum back then, and Phyllis Schlafly, the group that was sort of getting organized against abortion, and getting organized against the Equal Rights Amendment. They were sending out — the women's movement was a place where the fundamentalists and conservatives — not necessarily the same thing back then in the '70s, fundamentalist religious groups, and conservative Republicans for the most part, you know, they joined forces in the '80s but they weren't necessarily one and the same thing. And especially Phyllis Schlafly's group was very politically savvy at a grassroots level and used the women's movement. Well, they didn't necessarily have that as their plan, but they did use the women's movement as an organizing tool.

And they organized against the Equal Rights Amendment, against abortion rights, and they did it really effectively. I was responsible for the Northeast and it was mostly in the Midwest, not in sort of the liberal Northeast, but in the Midwest that we could see the beginnings of some of this organizing. But the real organizing for the conservatives happened in the eastern part of the Northwest region, which would have been Montana and Idaho, and then of course in both the Southwest and Southeast. So during that state meeting process, which was a year before the national women's conference was held in Houston in November of 1977, from state to state you could see this sort of wave of conservatism.

As each state meeting was held conservatives would be in touch with each other in other places and would organize to get people to the state meetings where people were being elected to the national meeting. And then a platform was being elected, which was going to be the national meeting. We had the national plan of action coming out of that IWY meeting in 1977. So, we had many conservative delegates elected, legitimately elected, because they sent people to the meetings. You know, in some places where they were better organized and better put

together in some ways than we were. We were really caught off guard. And so was the whole country caught off guard in the '80s and since then, you know. It was the platform for a lot of what we've seen since.

Linda Dorian, as the general council of our IWY commission, she was at the forefront of figuring out all the legal challenges that were being presented to us and watching the organizing tactics. It's really a fascinating piece of our history, in hindsight, to see what that meeting gave the whole conservative movement in this country. During the IWY meeting in Houston, across town, they rented the Houston Astrodome, or something, the conservatives, to organize their own meeting and protest the meeting that was being held with some legitimate conservative delegates elected but not enough to defeat the national plan of action. But they organized a huge meeting of conservatives around women's issues — you know, anti-women's issues.

So, anyway, the whole thing was the most amazing period of time because we had gotten so many of the fundamental things that are important to advancing women's rights on the table then, politically. We had a lot of moderates in Congress who were willing to listen, hold hearings, start discussion, and there was good legislation passed in the 1970s. And then, it's been almost playing catch up ever since because of how well folks who were conservative got organized. And seeing some of it personally — because I was at every state meeting in the 16 states I was responsible for and I was at every state meeting and came face to face with some of these folks and watched — it was very hard to watch.

WEIGAND: Can you talk about some of these state meetings and how this –

HENRY: Well, I guess I remember the New York one in particular, because it was a very well attended meeting. It was in Albany. We had rented part of the state university system. I'm forgetting. We had a large, large auditorium and a huge space for these elections to take place, and [the conservatives] had bused in people from all over the state, and they just flooded the polling place. And we were set up to have a certain number of people at the meeting and we had some idea, because people had to pre-register, how many people were coming. But it wasn't required that you pre-register, we just asked that of people so that we knew about workshops and all the things you know about conferences. But it was a public meeting and all these people were bused in at the last minute and they flooded this place where I was trying to help the local folks set up the elections process so that it was fair. We had election booths and all that. You know, it was a very formalized process.

But the energy from these folks — it was just like, they were angry, they were pushy, they were demanding of their rights to vote. And the numbers were way out of line with what our meager resources were to get people processed properly in a democratic system could handle. It wasn't dangerous or anything like that, except I had some people spit on me. I mean, it got aggressive on that level, because the people who

came in and who were bound and determined to vote — they were told how to vote, they stood in line, they didn't go to any of the workshops, they didn't participate in the meeting at all. They were there only to vote for their candidates and against the plan of action that was being proposed in New York.

And it gave me a good sense of the vitriol that went along with it, this sort of hatred of what we were talking about when we're talking about women's rights without the willingness to sit down and have dialogue about it. It just taught me a lot about the value of keeping an open mind. It doesn't matter what side I'm coming from or what position I'm supporting, if my mind is so closed that, almost in hatred I'll stand there and be determined to fight for something, well, I think I've lost the battle. I don't care what I'm supporting. Because I watched — people were not able to be open to anything we had to say and they had no idea what it is that somebody like me was going to say to them. But Karen Burstein and Carol Bellamy, then state senators, were terrific at making sure the process was democratic.

So, I don't know. It was just — it was another one of those things that I saw some in the 1960s with experiences in college and stuff. It was just really an eye opener about the value of an open mind and how to encourage people to keep their minds as open as possible, and that when people keep their minds open, they will make informed choices on their behalf. And so, in the democratic process, you have to be trusting of that, and — anyway, so that was a little bit of an aside, just the ways it influenced my own value system.

But I was young. I was in my middle twenties, and I was still learning how the whole political process worked. I think everybody was learning. Bella Abzug and Gloria Steinem were very much involved in that New York state meeting and very concerned about these busloads of people coming in, of course, because these people had no interest in learning what the whole meeting was about. They had already made up their minds.

WEIGAND: So, did some of that happen in every state, to one degree or another? Or were some states freer? Were there any states where you didn't see that coming up?

HENRY: Yes. I didn't see it in any of the states that were organized and had their state meetings early on in the process. So, early in 1977, Vermont was the first state meeting in February of 1977. Nothing like that happened. I was in Vermont — nothing like that happened in Vermont. Very little happened in Massachusetts. Very little in Connecticut or any of the New England states. And part of it was just that they organized their meetings fairly early. New York State was in the summer, if I remember correctly. It was a July or August meeting, for sure, and by then there was all this stuff that had gotten started because people heard what was happening at other places. But I also think it's just — you know, in the

more conservative states, the states that had bigger fundamentalist and conservative populations, it was a lot easier to get people organized — and that's definitely the whole Midwest, the South, and a few states in the Rocky Mountain region.

And you know, during that IWY process, I also had a really eye-opening conversation with a woman, Wilma Scott Heide, who was one of the founders of NOW. Right then, I think she was probably in her sixties then, but she heard me at one commission meeting, or in some conversation as a staffer say something. I don't remember at all what I said, but I must have said something that was very typical at the time, very separatist and very, you know, "As women, this is what we're about." I wouldn't say it was extreme because people were really extreme back then. There was a lot of activity across the whole spectrum. But anyway, I said something that was just very supportive of feminism and the form of feminism that was, like, women are right and men are wrong kind of thing, a divisive kind of thing to say.

She took me aside and, in a conversation, not with everybody else, but she took me aside and she said, "Fran, I just want you to know what feminism is all about. It's about humanism. If feminism isn't about humanism, if it isn't about — if our goals as feminists aren't to make it better for everybody, then we've lost it. You know, what is it all about? It's not about, you know, if men have been on top all this time, it's not about putting women on top, and somehow disparaging men."

And I don't know, just the way she said it to me, and the fact that she pulled me aside and said it and that she engaged me in a conversation and she paid attention to it, really stuck with me. Because, actually, she said something that really represented my true values underneath whatever my rhetoric was at the time, and it was so helpful to have somebody with more understanding and experience and knowledge sort of reiterate and say something to me that supported the kind of value that I had, that I wanted to take forward. And her saying that to me at that time actually gave me some courage during the state meetings process, and then in things I did in the women's movement afterwards, to be able to advance a point of view that supports women and recognizes the truth of the experience, but also doesn't do it in a way to distance ourselves or to create a separatist experience around it.

And there were a lot of people at that time, even in the whole IWY process, there was a lot of conversation around separatists' agendas, you know. And I remember some people, especially, would get very, very upset and very energized around some of these issues that now seem like we've settled them out or we've discussed them enough or something. But back then, it was just a very vital time and people would have conversations like, if I were lesbian and I was going to have a child and he was a boy, you know, I would put him up for adoption. I mean, just really, you know — and you try to talk to them about it. I don't know. It was just the most — now, if I say something like that, it sounds like, Wow, people really did that? That's what they believed at the time.

And so, we had to have conversations around all that. We had conversations, on the one hand, with Phyllis Schlafly saying, you know, If we pass the Equal Rights Amendment, we're all gonna have to use unisex bathrooms — and that was the most important argument. We'd say, Well, we all use unisex bathrooms when we go on the plane, every single time we fly. If that's the issue, that's not a big issue. But somehow that was the way it was discussed. And then, you'd have conversations all the way on the other side about, you know, if I had a boy child, I'd put him up for adoption (laughs). It was just — it was a very alive time.

WEIGAND: Was there sort of visible pocket of people who made that argument that Wilma — I forgot her name — made?

HENRY: Wilma Scott Heide

WEIGAND: Yeah. Was that a sort of visible line of argumentation that you heard or was she a sort of quiet representative of that kind of tempered thinking?

HENRY: Yeah. I didn't hear anybody else using her language but certainly, I mean, first of all, we're a governmental organization, so there's a lot of moderation in what we were doing. Even with someone like Bella Abzug, who was not as moderate, you know, in order to get that money through Congress — we had three million dollars, which was a lot of money back then to do these state meetings and the national women's conference — to get that kind of money through, you needed the support of the moderates and what people in the political process understood that if we we're going to get the Equal Rights Amendment passed, we need a lot of the moderates because we weren't going to do it on a small margin of liberal activity in Congress.

So the voices of moderation — when you listen to Catherine East — there were all very strong moderate voices all around. Not at all moderate when it came to setting goals and wanting equal rights for women, but moderate in terms of [saying,] This is the legislation we need for this reason — working within the system. That's what I mean by moderation. It's different now. It's just a different political process in 2004. They would be considered very, very liberal in today's terms.

WEIGAND: On the feminist side of it, disregarding the whole Eagle Forum group, what were some of the kind of divisive issues that came up?

18:50

HENRY: Well, there were quite a few, actually. What was not divisive was everything right in the middle: equal education, equal pay, childcare — you know, basic civil rights. Those — everybody was for them, but around those issues were issues that were emerging issues. How do you deal with the issue of rape? Is child abuse a feminist issue? And there were commissioners — Catherine East, in fact — who argued against

including child abuse in our national plan of action. And I made a very strong statement. One of the earliest pieces of activism I did was to work behind the scenes with Gloria Steinem to get child abuse on the agenda. I couldn't, in those days, use child sexual abuse because I wasn't able to be public about what had happened to me, but that's why I did it. We put it under the whole rubric of child abuse, and Gloria made a wonderful argument, you know, that child abuse affects girls disproportionately — involves women. You know, we need to have child abuse as part of this national plan of action, and she was successful in arguing for that.

The issue of prostitution was contentious. There was a whole group of women way out in the spectrum, a whole group of women arguing that we shouldn't have any laws against prostitution. We call it "working in the sex trade" now. At the time we called it prostitution. Um, but you know, there were people arguing that we should abandon all the laws and legalize prostitution, and then there were people arguing we shouldn't have anything connected to prostitution as part of this national plan of action, one way or the other.

Women in the military. There were people totally opposed to the military, especially people connected with Bella Abzug's work. They didn't want anything about the military at all involved in the national plan of action, whereas, connected to the IWY Commission, they wanted equal rights for women in the military. So, there were lots of discussions back and forth about that.

Certainly the issue around lesbianism — and we called it, back then, sexual preference. We started the IWY Commission under Gerald Ford and it was definitely more conservative, and when President Carter was elected we kept some of the old commissioners but we moved into having some new commissioners, and some new issues [people] brought forward, and one of them was Jean O'Leary, an activist in lesbian rights. She argued successfully to have the issue of sexual preference, which is what everyone called it, on the national plan of action, and that forced all the state meetings, then, to vote on sexual preference. And that became, you know, another target of the conservatives. It was a good thing to get it on the agenda, but it was one of those things that became a lightning rod for people who were organizing along the other side.

That issue, inside of feminism, created a bit of a split in our own staff because it was fairly unusual for people to identify publicly as lesbians back then in a professional setting. People just didn't do it. But a few people did, and certainly Jean O'Leary, who is an activist, did. But whether or not we were lesbian or whether we identified as lesbian, those of us who were younger generally were just totally supportive of people having the right to have sexual preference. And so, again, that's what we called it back then.

And I remember Catherine East was dead set against having sexual preference be part of the national plan of action, and she was so liberal in so many other ways, but this — she was just dead set against it. And

Virginia Allan — who was my mentor at the time and who's this wonderful moderate, just beautiful, beautiful person in every sense of the word, liberal in many ways, Republican — had never at all identified publicly, never said a single thing that would indicate that she considered herself to be a lesbian. But she lived with a woman her whole life, all of her adult life, and you know, we couldn't discuss it with Virginia because she wasn't public about it. This is back in those days. But Catherine was dead set against this being part of the national plan of action and Virginia didn't really take action to support it, although there was enough other energy going around, you know, all the organizing, to get it accepted as part of the national plan of action.

But a few of us, younger ones, none of us identifying as lesbian, but we took Virginia out to lunch and we asked her what did she want us to do about this, because we didn't want to be part of dividing the staff. We wanted to be a whole team and we were very heartbroken that Catherine was organizing against this and was planning to stand up at the national conference and speak against it and we were all very concerned about this. And Virginia, with all of her graciousness and understanding about the complexity of these things, she said, "Well, you know, we took a torch from Seneca Falls to Houston, and an awful lot of those people who had to carry that torch weren't people my age. They were a lot younger. They were the people who could run this run from Seneca Falls, New York, to Houston, Texas, and the torch has to go to you young ones and you have to figure that out."

And that's all that she would say. And I just thought, My god, that's enough to say. I mean, she's just really spoken her truth for her. I didn't understand all the complexity of it until really much later, when the whole issue of gay rights was much more understandable to all of us. But what I understood back then is she just told us that for her life experience and the things that she had had to face, and with the choices she had to make, she had done the best she could. That was as public as she was able to be. You know, her partner was always a part of everything we did but it was not discussed at the time, and that was how she made her peace with it. God bless her. She really told us the truth. She said, "The torch is passed to you. You have to decide what to do." And we did. We did our best to talk Catherine out of it and we didn't change our position.

And then — a wonderful other side to that at the national women's conference is that this is a moment of a lot of tension when this sexual preference platform came up — and there were 15,000 delegates at this conference. It was a huge meeting, and it was very much like a political convention or something, you know, with states and banners and people standing up and making pitches and all this. When the sexual preference issue came up and Catherine East spoke against it, and her people did, a lot of conservatives spoke against it and everything, but all the people who were supportive of it had organized, had blown up these balloons — purple balloons — that basically said, "We are everywhere." And

then when it came time to vote, we just let go of these balloons and they floated through the whole convention. We are everywhere. It was just a wonderful, wonderful way to handle the issue and just sort of turn the energy around.

Anyway, so, that was — that's a really good example of taking an issue that certainly was contentious and people didn't know how to handle — and it was an issue, like all important issues that have to be addressed, that was ahead of its time — and to do an issue like that, staying connected, keeping talking, doing something with some humor, with some art, with some grace to it. I learned something from all that — that sometimes that's how you can advance people's understanding a lot better than just digging in your heels and, you know, drawing your spear.

WEIGAND: Right. And how did it work out in the end?

HENRY: Oh, it got passed. It's in there.

WEIGAND: Can you talk a little bit more about what your interactions were like with some of these big-name people? You've mentioned Catherine East — and wasn't Katherine Clarenbach involved?

27:50

HENRY: Kay Clarenbach was our executive director under the Carter Commission. Yep, and she was terrific. She was kind of one of these people who's — I mean, she kind of reminds me of me a little bit, sometimes, with some of the work I've had. I'm a reluctant leader because I'm somebody who really enjoys the thinking and the sort of behind-the-scenes staff work, but being right up in front and being a leader and manager, it's not always my favorite place to be. Katherine was very much like that. She was an academic and she held a lot of moral suasion about the way she went about things. But as you could tell, it wasn't her favorite thing in the world to have to direct this motley crew. It was really like herding cats, all these different staff people and we're all so young. But she did it well. She had a good attitude about it.

WEIGAND: And how about Bella Abzug: did you have much interaction with her?

HENRY: I did. And Bella was a complicated person for me personally because I — I found myself, in the middle of the IWY process, having quite a number of dreams about Bella Abzug setting up circumstances that I would get raped in. It was very extreme. And it was because Bella had this incredible personality which was aggressive. I mean her name, Bella, fit Bella most perfectly. She wasn't full of hatred or anything, but she just threw off her energy any time she wanted, anytime she vented toward anybody. If she didn't like what was going on and you happened to be standing in front of her, she would scream and yell at you, which she did to me at these state meetings, especially the New York meeting.

There were a lot of people around her who loved her and protected her and didn't like to see that part of her, but I just saw it really clearly, and I experienced it really clearly, and I didn't like it one bit. And I dreamt at night about it, in a way, because I had been raised in that circumstance where I'd been harmed by somebody who had just had power over me. So really, it really took a toll on me.

And she did a couple of things that probably weren't that big of a deal to some people, but they were a really big deal to me. Like at the national women's conference, when we were thanking everybody at the end, because it was a huge undertaking to have this conference, and she called a few of us up to the stage to have us recognized, and I was one of those people, but she didn't call everybody, and everybody had worked just as hard, and I was so upset by that.

And in a subsequent meeting in the staff, I remember standing, when Bella was talking with all of us and thanking us privately in our offices, in Washington — I remember that my knees were shaking, literally, and I was standing behind a chair, so nobody could see how my knees were shaking, and I confronted Bella, and I said, you know, "There were certain things you did that were really wrong from my point of view, and this is one of them, this is another one." I named them and, you know, I was so frightened to do that, because she was just the kind of person who would attack you if she didn't like what she heard.

And in that kind of setting — that's another thing I learned, is that she wasn't feeling any fear at that time, or feeling any anxiety — so she simply could hear it. That wasn't the trigger for her. It was when she was upset that she got triggered and got angry. So in that situation, we were all standing around, all of us, you know, 30 or 50 people as a staff, standing around and being thanked by Bella. And she heard what I said and basically took her hat off, which she never did, and just asked people to say a little bit more about that and then she apologized and said, you know, something really nice about how much all of us had done to accomplish IWY. I mean, again, that's a really personal story that maybe isn't so relevant for the big picture, but it was really relevant to me, because she had tortured me with those dreams. The way she was had tortured me, and I, for my own sake, had to stand up and come back at that.

So, that was my experience of — in a couple of other ways, too. She was very good at political organizing and didn't like it when people didn't agree with her. And there were a couple of things, later on, that I did some organizing about where I didn't agree with her and she was not nice. She wasn't a nice person. It's one of those things that, back then, I had this attitude of being an independent, politically, because enough people in the Democratic Party were really not nice people, and I didn't like working with them. And there were quite a few Republicans who were really good, solid people who I wanted to talk with, and who would engage in conversations. So, it was complicated to just sign up for one party or another. It's less complicated now. It's been

less complicated since the early 1980s. But, back then — it's one of the things that I'm nostalgic about, anything with respect to the political process in the women's movement — it's like, bring back moderation. Bring back, you know, dialogue and bipartisanship. I miss bipartisanship — just the attitude of exchange that happens when people get together and talk about it. I feel like I'm starting to sound a little corny, so let's go on to another subject. (laughs)

WEIGAND:

Let's see. So, what — in the Houston conference itself, what were you doing. I have some sense, I think, of how you operated at the state in your director of the Northeast quadrant position. In Houston, were you — I don't know, it just seems like it must have been such a huge, chaotic, but also well-ordered scene.

33:50

HENRY:

It was exactly that. There were a lot of things happening at Houston. And all of us who had done stuff to get ready for the state meetings — and again, the time frame of all this was really short, because we'd got these state meetings set up and organized from January of 1977, and it had to be finished by September of 1977 in order for delegates to come to Houston in November of 1977. So this is a very short time to get all this stuff in. So, all of us who did the state meetings, as soon as we were finished with our last state meeting, we were assigned to some job from the national women's conference, and it didn't matter how old you were. If you had some competence, you were assigned to a big job. One of the youngest people on the staff was assigned to handle all the exhibits, and there were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of exhibits. She'd never done it before, but she just had to learn how to do that and she did a really great job.

I was assigned to set up a whole space that was outside the political process, that was called Seneca Falls South. And we had 24 hours a day for four or five days, you know, art and music and theater and all feminist productions. We had a huge stage set up and we brought Sweet Honey and the Rock and we brought Margie Adam and um — trying to remember if Cris Williamson or Holly Near. One of them was there. We had 24 hours a day of activity, day after day, because we wanted to create another kind of environment for people outside the political process, and for all the other people who weren't able to get into the political process because there were only elected delegates in the room. There were people who were observers. We wanted to have this sort of celebratory national women's conference. And so, some of the things that happened at the exhibits at Seneca Falls South were the place where people could participate, but weren't right in the political process.

And that was actually perfect for me because there was some way in which having been through those state meetings, 16 of them, I was sort of jazzed by the political process itself, and almost overloaded, and I needed something that had a different kind of spirit and energy. And

being able to organize that — that whole Seneca Falls South — was just the perfect assignment for me.

WEIGAND: Cultural feminism.

HENRY: Yes, exactly, exactly. We sold posters and tee-shirts and, you know, it was terrific.

WEIGAND: So, was there any thinking about the national meeting and the possibility for — I mean, I assume some of these issues were very divisive there, too, like the sexual preference issue. Are there any good stories you could tell about the way some of that played out there?

HENRY: Well, the best one I could tell was the one I told about the people throwing the balloons up in the air. I mean, that was just a wonderful moment. And I think that another really powerful moment — and I wasn't actually in the political room of the convention center at the time that it happened — was when all the women who had formed a minority caucus got together and, you know, presented their caucus materials and did it in such a moving, beautiful way, everybody just woke up. Something really came together and was given birth to there. It wasn't divisive. It was a beautiful moment, really. And there were certain musical events that happened in the middle of the conference and certainly to end the conference, we had this beautiful, just spur-of-the-moment thing organized by Margie Adam. We got a piano up on stage and we created a whole beautiful musical at the national women's conference. Everybody stood up and sang. The spirit of it was absolutely fantastic.

That was a really fun thing about this meeting. If you had an idea you could just go ahead and do it. So, you know, I needed the permission of one person and then I just got a piano to the Houston Convention Center and we got Margie Adam there and we created this whole thing and we convinced Bella that was the right way to end the conference and that's the way we did it. So when you're a young person and you participate in something like that, you have a lot of leeway to make something different happen. It just gives you a sense of, we can do anything. You know, I bet you there are a lot of people who either came to that meeting or participated in it or worked for it or something or other who just had this different sense of what they were capable of after they came away from that meeting. It was a really big deal.

WEIGAND: And it was really so inclusive in so many senses. You know, like the delegation really did represent all these different groups and points of view.

HENRY: Yes, it's true.

WEIGAND: So, do you see it as sort of the end of an era?

39:30

HENRY: Yeah, yes. It ended, it really did, it ended. We didn't know it at the time, of course. We thought it was just the beginning, but it ended the era of that kind of feminist activism, and an awful lot of that was due to the conservatives that organized around that meeting and then, you know, looked right at the next election and, you know, got Ronald Reagan in. And then, with Ronald Reagan coming in, the whole tenor of what was possible in the country for the 1980s just shifted and many of the people I worked with in IWY — and this would include Virginia and Catherine, for sure — were kind of beside themselves with how they thought the national plan of action would be the foundation and then we'd lift up all these people and do this fantastic organizing, we'd get the ERA passed. All this stuff would happen as a result, and it felt like it just sort of happened and then fell flat.

But what I saw instead was that people had taken something about the changes that the women's movement was really all about — the changes about what I'm capable of, and setting goals for myself as an individual woman — and people just took that so much to heart that the culture actually changed in support of it. And then people took those changes and put them into their lives in various ways, in very personal ways, and then come out and have these different ripples. So the way I felt about it, in retrospect, it's sort of like that part of ebb and flow. It was really the flow part of the women's movement, then it took a long ebb and it's still — there's a quality of ebbing that's still happening. But I don't necessarily see that as a bad thing.

I mean, it may be even better if it could've flowed longer and some other things could've gotten in place, but you know, it's not as if the women's movement died, and that was people's concern, that it died. I never felt that way, that it died, because in my own heart and in the hearts of all my friends I kept in touch with, all the people I knew, it hadn't died with any of them. It's just that it took a different form.

WEIGAND: That makes sense. How did you feel about the document that ultimately came out of it all, the plan of action?

41:50

HENRY: I thought it was great. I thought it was a very much an accurate compilation of what people were capable of at the time, and I can't — I haven't studied in preparation for this interview — I didn't go back and read the national plan of action —

WEIGAND: Yeah, I didn't either, and I should have (laughs).

HENRY: — remember everything that was in it and things that didn't get in it, and I know that we as a staff, at the end of the whole process, we said, We should write a book about this, because we thought we should do, you know, an IWY behind-the-scenes kind of thing, because we witnessed

so many incredible things. I can't remember most of the stories any more, but that's why I'd love to get together a few people, because we'd sort of spark off one another. We had so many stories about it, you know, things that did get in, things that didn't get in and all the compromise and process that's necessary for all that. When you're young, you don't understand, you know, the necessity for some of it or a lot of it. But, you know, it was part of the democratic process, and some things that were really important that should've been in didn't get in because somebody didn't stand up and say the right thing, or it just wasn't time for it, or whatever.

Yeah, I was really pleased with it, and I was pleased personally to have seen all the state meetings address the issue of child abuse, even though at the time, in my experience, I thought, maybe that's as much activism as I'll ever do on that. It was just wonderful to get it brought up and addressed.

WEIGAND: Yeah. It was a big deal. So have you stayed in touch with a lot of these people that you met during that time?

HENRY: I've stayed in touch with a small group of them. There's probably three — Sheryl Sived, Susan Rubin — that I stayed in touch with. Well, the older ones, who now are all gone, Virginia Allan and Catherine East and Mildred Marcy, Kay Clarenbach. I've stayed in touch with, some of them more than others. Virginia I was in touch with on a really regular basis. And then, we all — you know, Linda Dorian called us together 15 years later, in 1992, to have that really wonderful gathering and conversation. There's been a couple of official things recognizing that IWY meeting, and I haven't been in a situation — for whatever reason, I haven't been in a situation to attend those, so I haven't done sort of official things, commemorating it. But for quite a few years, the couple of us who were young staff people, we would always get together and talk and remind each other of some story or another. It was a really good group of people who ended up working on that conference.

WEIGAND: Yeah, it sounds like an amazing way to spend your twenties devoted to federal service.

HENRY: Exactly (laughs). It was — yes. I guess, when you're younger, you don't understand these things, but I just thought that's the way people — I thought that's the way it was. And now, I see now, the certain circumstances that you're in, if you're in the 1980s, I think, if you were young and in the environmental movement, or around gay and lesbian organizing in the 1990s, you know, so much happened. It's just — it's wonderful to be right in the heart of something when there's all that shifting happening.

WEIGAND: So what was it like once all that was over, to leave that world? I don't remember what you did, exactly, after that?

45:50

HENRY: Well, I took a few months off and, again, I don't remember — I don't know exactly how relevant for this process, but it's one of the things that I've figured out in my life. I've known that I work really, really hard when somebody's paying you to do something, and then I need to really rest when that's over. I actually took a few months off and I was in Washington, D.C. I didn't have very much money but all the museums in Washington are free, so I spent about four or five months, every single day, going and spending a lot of time in all the museums, all the art museums especially, but some of the others, too. I just really sort of fed myself in a totally different way. I didn't have to organize anything. I didn't have to say anything to anybody. I'd just go to the museum and look and read and learn.

And then, I had this goal of doing something international, also, in my heart from this pledge I made to John Kennedy's spirit, and so I ended up working as the communications coordinator for an international company called Appropriate Technology International. And that was just a small company, funded by the government, that did work in developing countries. I made some trips to Asia and Africa and South America. It just gave me a little bit of a view into the rest of the world, which is a wonderful thing to have. And it wasn't anything feminist, but still, I'm glad that I had my feminist understanding, because every place I went, I paid attention to the role and the situation of women.

I just did that for a couple of years and then I applied to business school. Then, in 1980 to 1982 I went to Harvard Business School, so that got me started in a whole different direction. Then I was ready, you know, I had completed my commitment for my twenties and I was 30 years old and I was ready to do something. What I thought was, OK, I'll do something in the private sector, and partly because I had enjoyed management enough, I figured going to management school was the right place for me, instead of getting a professional degree, because I didn't really want to do something in the formal professions, like law. I wasn't suited for medicine or anything like that. And I wanted to go to a graduate program that reflected what I most wanted out of my education, because I hadn't had a chance to do that for undergraduate school.

And so, that was really wonderful that I applied and was accepted. And Gloria Steinem actually wrote a beautiful recommendation for me for my IWY work that I was so pleased to send that in with my application because that's the way I wanted to be accepted into that business world, with my feminist principles intact. You know, when you're young, you have these principles and when I'm older now, I just live them. But back then, I had to, like, state them, and be more explicit about it.

WEIGAND: So, it sounds like the Appropriate Technologies thing was an interesting transition, since it was private, but it was funded by the government — was that what you said?

HENRY: Yes, yes.

WEIGAND: So that — I could see it could be sort of a good middle ground, between government work and —

HENRY: Yes, it gave me a different view of what non-profits could do in the world. And I knew, coming out of the IWY experience, somehow, I just knew that I wasn't slated to work in the government. I just had too much energy or something. I would have loved to have a career in the government, especially in that State Department. I think I would have really enjoyed being a diplomat or something like that. But I couldn't — I had too much energy for it. And so, then I just — that non-profit work seemed like just the right mix. You're right.

But when I came out of business school, I thought I would do something — I thought I would do the rest of my career, actually more in the private sector, and I did that for ten years. I formed my own — first as a partnership with somebody and then I formed my own business, and then it was a surprise to me to discover that I wasn't as interested in staying in the private sector as I was going back into non-profit work.

WEIGAND: Can you talk some about your experience at Harvard Business School? I mean, I know it must have been — I know you wrote that book about it called *Toughing It Out* or something — that it wasn't all fun (laughter). So, yeah, I mean, if you could just sort of describe what that was like?

50:25

HENRY: Yeah. Well, again, you know, part of the spirit of this process is, you know, what's not written. And there are an awful lot of the stories about what it was like to be a woman in a business school. Um, so —

WEIGAND: You're right. It probably doesn't make sense to spell it all out again.

HENRY: Yeah. It's — it's easily accessible in that book and I'll make sure to put a copy of that book into the collection. And it was real — maybe what would be fun is to talk a little bit about how the book got to be written. Because there was a book, at the time, that had come out about the law school called *One L*, I think it is, by Scott Turow. And the same publisher was — the editor at Putnam was a woman and this thing of women coming into the business world was just a hot thing at the beginning of the 1980s. She just decided that she wanted a book about a woman coming through a business school, and she had contacted some people in New York who knew that I was at Harvard Business School

through women's connections and asked about how to find somebody to write a book about the experience.

So I made a list of people and sent them a memo and said, you know, "This person would do this. Is it accessible this way? And we'd write this kind of book," and da-da-da. And I got all the way through this list — people I'd gone to school with who I felt might be good at writing a book like this — and then I realized that I had a lot to say about this. I care about it. I've always kept a journal. I particularly again felt that sort of middle ground of — well, I have a lot to say about this experience of just having been through two years at Harvard Business School, because I watched this process and am aware of it, but I also, you know, I sort of want something in the middle. I wanted something that's feminist and that says, This really happened. You know, this is different for women than it is for men, but I also wanted something that was fair for Harvard Business School, because I thought it wasn't a bad experience and I was really glad to have been there. I thought that the education I got was fantastic and I didn't want to have them write a book that ended up with somebody bashing Harvard Business School. That wasn't where I was coming from.

And, you know, I went to Harvard Business School. I went to a business school, first of all, because of what I saw in my twenties. Our country is organized around the principle of capitalism, and it has excesses, and it does a lot of things wrong, but it also puts a lot of people to work, and produces a lot of philanthropy that funds a lot of social change. I appreciated all that in my twenties, and said, I want to understand this system. And where could I understand it better than at a business school. So that's what — being sort of the — I was almost a little too practical about that in a way, but that is the way I was thinking about it.

So I kind of wanted a book that caught some of that. And I don't know if *Toughing It Out* achieved it, necessarily. I ended up giving them this list of people and then I said, "And I have some thoughts about this myself and if you're interested, just give me a call." And so this person called me back and said, "We're interested in what you have to say about it." So I just sat down that very afternoon when I got her note or call or whatever, and I just typed out, like, I said, "These are the first four pages of the book that I would write." And I just wrote off the top of my head. You know, I started it out from my first day of school and just wrote these four pages. And they ended up the four pages of the book. I mean, somehow, I had a lot more in me to say about this than I ever realized. So, they wrote back immediately and said, "Well, this is perfect. This is exactly what we want."

So then, all of a sudden, I had this book contract and I was an author and I was writing a book. And that was amazing. It was the first thing I can say that I was aware of, that came to me, that I hadn't identified and worked for and made happen. And that was also a blessing to realize that sometimes things come to you that way.

WEIGAND: So, was it enough? Did they give you an advance and actually give you time to devote a whole year to it or whatever?

HENRY: They gave me an advance which, for me at the time, was really generous. I think it was something like \$15,000, maybe half of it when I signed the contract and half when I produced the book, but they only gave me four months to write the book. I don't know if this is a good part of the story, but you know, having just had that Harvard Business School education, which is very goal-oriented — and I was already a goal-oriented person — I remember signing the contract in June or something and saying, "All right. Now I have to produce a book by Columbus Day. I've got four months." I remember thinking, How I'm gonna do this?

So I went down to Harvard Square and I bought a book on how to write a book, because I'd never done this, and it basically said, you know, get organized in this way and that way, and I'm an organized person. So I just followed exactly their directions on how to write a book; how to think about it. You know, I didn't even know how to think about organizing my material and all that. And then I said, OK, I've got the steps one, two, three, four of how to write a book, and then I counted out the days and I gave myself a half day a week off, and I divided into the number of words that I had to produce, and I said, all right. You have to write a thousand words a day, and that's how you're gonna write your book. And that's what I did. I wrote it like that. It's embarrassing to admit it now, because I don't think I could put myself to that kind of task at this point, but (laughs) it's nice to be young, and just sort of not know what you're doing and just jump into it.

WEIGAND: Yeah, well, and it worked.

HENRY: And it worked. And the other thing was, when the editor got the book and she said — she is a wonderful person, Christine Shillig at Putnam — she got the first draft and she said, "This is really good, but I have quite a few suggestions for you and I'm sending it back for changes." And I said, "Don't send it back. I'm coming to New York, and I'll work it out with you." And she said, "You will?" and I said, "Sure." So I came to New York and spent the afternoon with her and she gave me, like, the whole — this was before computers, of course — the whole manuscript and all marked up. So, I just said, "Well, give me a couple of hours in a room, and so, she gave me a room and I came out, like, two or three hours later and I had made every single change on the text and I handed it back and said, "It's finished." And she was in shock, because she said, "I want all of my authors to be graduates of business school now." I said, "But it's just very practical." And she said, "Well, where's all the angst about it?" I said, "There's no angst. I think your suggestions are good."

So, that was just, like, it was fun. It was fun to just be so practical about it, and realize this person who was an editor knew a lot more than I knew about how to communicate to an audience and I was being blessed by her advice, and I could really learn if I just listened to what she was saying. So, that was fun.

WEIGAND: There you have it. This is 57 minutes.

END OF DVD 3

DVD 4

WEIGAND: Can you just say a little more about the book? I just wondered what kind of response you got from it, once it was out. Did you get fan mail?

HENRY: Yes, I got fan mail. It was great. I hope I kept it. I think I probably have it. It's probably in some of those papers. I got wonderful letters from, you know, mostly young women who had read it after they went to school and realized they felt the same way. Some of the things I had said in there inspired them to — or some people read it who — I actually inspired them to go to business school, because they had thought it wasn't for them for this reason or that reason and I sort of made the experience doable. It was just a very — I felt like, um, for doing something that I hadn't planned on, that was somebody else's agenda, and then actually writing it — seeing that I could write a book, that it could be published and received well. It got some really nice reviews. And didn't sell huge numbers but it sold out all of its first edition and went into paperback.

And then, a wonderful woman called me from California who wanted to do a screenplay based on the book. She ended up doing that. It never got produced into anything, but it was just wonderful to go through that whole process for a couple of years. And then, do some speaking as a result of it, on a couple of college campuses, around the role of women in business.

You know, the issue back then was, can you be a feminist and be in the business world? A man's world, we called it back then. And you know, do you have to wear certain clothes? Do you have to give up your definition of femininity, you know? Can you be yourself, basically? And it's a moot point now, in so many ways, because we've just totally eclipsed it just by being who we are. But you couldn't see back then, 25 years ago, you couldn't see that that was the way it was going to go. So, it was definitely an issue. It was something to be thought about and talked about — you know, how much you can be yourself in the work world.

WEIGAND: Right. Well, at Harvard Business School, did you feel that you had any kind of a feminist community? I mean, were there other women who identified as feminists in the business school?

2:40

HENRY: Not really. There was definitely a women's student association and there's now a women's alumnae association, but most of the activity is more about, what kind of networking can we do as women to support one another? It's not like a political agenda of advancing feminism. It's more, in order to do what we need to do in our careers, it's helpful to be able to network with other women and talk about it. It's practical and sort of career oriented. I'm not so much using my business degree from a career perspective that I'm wanting to connect with other people who

were graduates of Harvard Business School. That wasn't why I went, although it's helpful for some people to have that huge network of contacts. So, um, I haven't really — I didn't participate very much in those sort of organized activities because they were so specifically career focused.

But when I went there, and since women were 25 percent or more of the student body — I don't actually know what the number is right now, but back then, it was 25, 30 percent — that's a good number of women. We weren't just tokens. We didn't have a token presence in the classroom the way it was definitely true in the 1960s, when they first let women attend classes without matriculating. That's how it would happen in the early, early years. So, there were a lot of women and a lot of different kinds of women there, and it was wonderful. That's the kind of thing that I would be working for, not like everybody was like me, but that there were a lot of different women who could be where they wanted to be.

And, um, I don't know. I felt at business school that my experience there was one of, if you worked hard and participated in the system that they had set up — and Harvard Business School was organized around the Socratic method. There aren't any textbooks or anything like that. You just study 800 cases across two years. So every single day, you had three to five cases and you did a case a class. And after doing 800 cases, you really knew how to think about problems differently than when you started that kind of process. You wouldn't go there if you didn't appreciate and want to learn that way, I suppose, but if you participated in that process, it didn't really matter whether you came from another country. Not much mattered except did you participate in that process and bring your best thinking to it and join in the classroom discussion. And the professors were wonderful at bringing everybody in, including everybody.

It was different kinds of diversity and they worked hard to create individual classes that had a lot of diversity in them. I mean, this is within a whole capitalistic structure, so we're not talking about political diversity, necessarily, people who didn't agree with capitalism, but you know what I mean. It's like, each class had some humanities students, some business, previous business students, some engineers, some computer scientists, some people who had law backgrounds, some older people, some really young people right out of college, and people from across the world and not everybody from one place. So it was a wonderful, wonderful learning environment. I felt very grateful to have been exposed to that kind of learning environment. It was just right for me, because that's kind of the way my mind works, being able to draw conclusions out of the thoughtful process, rather than having to learn something from the textbook and memorize it. I suppose maybe graduate school isn't like that anywhere, but um, definitely, it was the right kind of educational process for me to be in.

WEIGAND: So, when you finished there and you finished your book, did you have to figure out what to do next, or did you already have ideas in mind?

HENRY: I didn't know when I started business school what I'd end up doing. The year after I came out was really taken up with having written that book, then it came out the following spring and I had to devote a lot of time to speaking about and that took another nearly full year. I had no idea that would be true, but it took a whole year to sort of get the book out and deal with it.

7:00

And then I moved from Washington, D.C. — I'd been there for ten years or more, and I moved in 1984 up here to Western Massachusetts. And I did that really purposefully because I had a sense that, if I had stayed in Washington with that graduate degree, I would have ended up in the government for a non-profit organization and I would've probably worked my way up into some relatively powerful position or whatever. All of my friends would have been so much like me, and I would have had all of my career goals met, but I wouldn't have the inside of me developed. I could just sort of see Washington was a perfect place to be in my twenties, but there was something really missing inside of me and that's when I started to really wrestle with all the abuse that I'd dealt with when I was a kid.

I realized that I had to spend some time developing the inside of me or I wasn't going to be a whole person. And I wasn't going to be able to do that in a city with all the wonderful, positive career distractions. For me, they would take me away from being able to be a whole person. I didn't see how I could put all that together in one, in one Fran Henry in Washington, D.C.

And then I think part of it was that in order to be a powerful person, I needed to be a whole person. I wasn't willing to be a powerful person and not be a whole person. So, that drove me to this Western Massachusetts area, which, for me, is full of good ideas, it's full of wonderful people. It's close to an airport. I had started a consulting practice with a partner at the time, and thought I'd have a practice in New England but I ended up with a practice in Washington, D.C. So I flew down there a couple of times a month. It kept me in touch with the city, but I had this precious time in my thirties. And it's not as if all of this was in foresight, but the part of it that was in foresight is that I needed some time in my thirties to just become a more whole person than I felt myself to be.

And that's what I ended up doing with that period of time in my life, which, when I was living through it, felt like I'm going nowhere, I'm confused, I'm not doing good enough things in the world. Maybe part of that was just having spent my twenties in such an intensive political environment and then having an intensive graduate program. I sort of cut a standard for myself, or had some experience that I was trying to keep active. But actually, that time was really, really fertile time, because I did sort of step off the career ascendancy. I spent some time in

group therapy. I spent some time in personal therapy. I got myself much more healed as a person, understanding who I was inside. All the things I felt I needed to be able to voice those abuse experiences in a safe environment and heal from them. It needed some attention. It wasn't something that I was going to ignore.

So I had a consulting practice. It was successful enough, and my partnership, the person that I was in partnership with and I ended up doing a very large piece of work for the National Academy of Sciences, which took us traveling all across the world. We worked in maybe 25 or 30 developing countries in all continents, and you know, we did some wonderful work for the National Academy. It also gave me an experience of the rest of the world and how poor so many people are, how much they struggle. It helped develop my sense of humility around being an American and seeing our power and privilege and how important it is not to abuse that power or privilege — which we have not lived up to. Which, you know, at that time, it just — you know, I saw first hand that the importance of paying attention to what's happening in the rest of the world.

And so, in the midst of having time to become this more whole person that I wanted to become, I also had a lot of really amazing work experiences that have stayed with me. One of my mentors once said that every single thing that happens to us is relevant for every single thing that happens later. For example, you don't know why you meet this or that person, or why you have that conversation or why you read that book, or why you do — but sometime later in your life, those things will come back to have a part of what you need for the next step ahead of you. I feel like that time, in my thirties, was very much that. I couldn't understand all of what was going on inside of me or around me, but it was a very fertile time for what came later.

At the end of that time, at the end of my thirties, I was sort of coming into my own much more. How do I say that? Because I came into my own before that, but I was in my own sort of, I don't know. In my twenties and thirties I felt like I had a lot to prove to the outside world and a lot of skills to develop inside of me and a lot of things to put out there in the world, and by the end of my thirties, I had done some of those things and I was more, like, OK, am I really living up to my full potential as a person?

And I went through a couple of years of really not knowing. I really liked working for my clients. I liked what I was doing, but it wasn't as much as I could give back to the world. So what is that thing? And I realized that I didn't want to be in the private sector as much as I wanted to do something in social change and activism. I realized that that work that I'd done in the twenties — some of that feeling that you have when you're doing those kinds of things, that was still available to me. It took about three years to sort through all of what it might be. And then, it started to dawn on me that what I really wanted to do was something organizing to prevent child sexual abuse. I don't know what it was —

two, three, four years, something in there — it took a long time for all the pieces to be in place, for me to realize that. But then, I did. It just — I had one of those clicks, like, Well, I really care about that issue. I really know something about that issue. I really have a point of view on that issue. You know, why don't I just do something on it?

That's the way I work. It just sort of dawned on me. And then, the way these things also work is at the same time, I had met a really fine man and we decided to get married. We got engaged. And right at the time we were getting engaged, maybe the same month or so, I just had the realization at the very same time that I wanted to form this organization to prevent child sexual abuse.

13:48

At the time, I understood that the reason that I was ready to do some activist work on child sexual abuse at that moment was that I, by then, had met many people. One of the reasons I was doing this is that it came out of that experience as a teenager thinking I was the only person in the entire world to whom that happened. And then so many people, because it was something I never forgot and I talked about it — not a lot, but enough that people knew about it — so many people told me about their own experiences. It just totally freaked me out. And I realized, This is never going to stop unless people who had the experience do something about it, speak up about it. And I had that whole experience about the women's movement about speaking up, you know, organizing for change.

But I also knew that because it was so painful and had harmed me so much that it wasn't something I was going to easily be able to do to begin with. I knew I wasn't able to do that without being in a solid relationship with somebody else who provided some levity to the psychic pain that it was going to cause me to organize. And at the time, I couldn't have put these words on it, but I know exactly that was what was happening, because I was aware that something that was so painful, that had happened to so many people, that had gone on for so many millennia — why hadn't we changed it? There were very few survivor activists out there making something happen in prevention. Not just surviving and helping other people heal from it, and having speak-outs, but also organizing to prevent it.

So I thought, now, if that hasn't happened and Fran, you think you can contribute something to that, I mean, let's pay attention to why that hasn't happened. It's because it's a really hard thing to do. And you can't just pretend as if you could go off and do that, as if you were, you know, baking cakes for a cake sale, for a fundraiser. You know, it's like you could be into psychic overload, and the thing that would bring the levity into that is to be in a good relationship with somebody else who would take my mind off it when I was in relationship to that person and just provide a whole different kind of balance in my life.

So right at the same time we got engaged I thought about starting the organization. Just at that very same time, the way these things work out, just two months before, Anita Hill had, you know, argued before the

hearings that Clarence Thomas shouldn't be appointed to the Supreme Court and why. And I found myself that fall, so it was probably — I bet you have these dates right, it was probably October or November of 1991 that Anita Hill was testifying before Congress. And I listened to every moment of those hearings that I could, which is not that common for me to listen to that much media, but I did. I listened. I was totally fascinated by Anita Hill doing what she was doing.

And I can remember in December, just a few months later, when I said, I'm gonna start an organization. This is what it's going to be about. It's going to prevent child sexual abuse and going to focus on prevention. It's going to use tools of public health — because I thought about things that I had been aware of in my lifetime, especially the issue of drunk driving that had been so common in the 1960s and I'd lost friends to, and about how people learn to pay attention to it as a behavior that can be changed. We're going to learn how to apply those kinds of tools of public health to this issue, and that we're going to involve people who were perpetrators in the solution to it, because it can't be another thing that women have to organize all by themselves, as if men weren't part of the problem. So I had to figure out a way to bring the people who were most needing to change here into the solution.

And just as I was putting all those principles together, I remember sitting, you know, quietly one morning and saying, "And I don't want to name this organization something that's like a Washington-type name, that would be the National Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse. Somebody's gonna make some sort of acronym with it, and then, forever, it's gonna be A,B,C, you know." I said, "I want it to have a name that's an activist name that has a lot of life in it." And immediately, I saw Anita Hill in my head, and Anita Hill was answering, I think it was Senator Arlen Specter's question — or was it Orrin Hatch? Orrin Hatch or Arlen Specter was asking, "So if this happened to you all that time ago, you know, why didn't you say something? Why didn't you do something then? Why are you coming forward now?" And she said, "I just wanted it to stop. And that wasn't my goal to seek any kind of revenge or change. I just wanted it to stop."

And I just had this click. Sometimes we have clicks, and it was click, click, click. That's what we want. So many of us have been through this. We don't necessarily want to wreak havoc and revenge on the people who perpetrated against us. We might, but so many of the times, we just wanted it to stop. We wanted it, you know, our brother, our uncle, our dad, our grandfather, our, you know, whoever, teacher, to go back to the way they were before they abused us and start again. You know, we wanted it to stop. So then, Stop It Now! — the name just came to me like that.

And as soon as I realized it was Stop It Now! then I realized the acronym to that is SIN. And I said, this is going to be terrible, so I know from a marketing point of view, every single time somebody uses the word SIN as an acronym for Stop It Now, I have to politely correct

them, which, for 14 years, I did. And now, it's Stop It Now. The way American Cancer Society is known as American Cancer Society and just taught everybody consistently, just correct people politely. And so, lo and behold, we have the name Stop It Now! And then, at the same time, when somebody says, "Do you realize it means sin?" I say, "Well, if there's anything that's a sin in the culture of our country, it would be child sexual abuse. So let's just leave that standing. But the name of the organization is Stop It Now!"

So, anyway, it was so wonderful to be able to name it simply, to have the concept for it come out of that, that incredible answer that she gave when she was put under that pressure, that kind of pressure that so many women are put under. And certainly, boys have dealt with it. But you know, that whole thing of somehow, you're to blame if you didn't correct that wrong when that happened. You, who are the victim of something, somehow, you affronted society by not correcting it when it happened, when you were at your most victimized and powerless state. So, anyway, that's just a little bit of a window into that transition from that confusing time and coming out of my thirties time and making-myself-whole time into something where I was ready for activism again.

WEIGAND: So, how did you go about then getting all this started? I mean, I wouldn't even know what you have to do to start this whole –

HENRY: How do you start an organization?

22:35

WEIGAND: Yeah (laughter). In particular, what did you have to do to start that organization?

HENRY: Well, part if it is that I knew that I would have to get — that it would take me a while before I would have the ideas properly enough articulated. So, I had a consulting practice at the time, and I said, "What I'm gonna do is keep my consulting but cut back to the number of clients that I can handle." So I dedicated — donated — about half of my time for a year and a half of still having my consulting practice to Stop It Now! I donated a chunk of that time just to get Stop It Now! off the ground. Because I was used to being in private practice and keeping track of my time, I knew when I had to serve clients, and then I had all this other time that I just devoted to starting Stop It Now!

And what I did at the very beginning was put out a proposal that basically said, I need a year of study and reflection to know what kind of program realities I want to produce with this organization, but these are fundamental values — the ones that I just spelled out — that would be in it. And being completely neophyte to fundraising, I did research about it, who would support something like this, and I sent this proposal out to 20 or 30 people or organizations or foundations or whatever and got absolutely no positive response whatsoever from anybody. Then I

realized, I'm just gonna have to support this out of my consulting practice to get it started. I'm not gonna take this as a no.

And then, by doing that for a year and a half, and I basically had eked together a little bit of money from this private donor or that private donor. In particular, one person with whom I worked really well and is a wonderful supporter, and his family foundation came through with a grant in the beginning of the second year that basically purchased a chunk of my time and I could close my practice in July of 1993 with plenty of advance warning to the clients and everything.

So I started work full time [on Stop It Now!] in July of 1993, not having had that year of reflection about what do I want to do, but being really forced, even now I would say, in hindsight, a little bit prematurely, to spell out all the program goals. But that was not necessarily a bad thing, either. I mean, I was a thoughtful enough person that I was able to do that. I wasn't fully confident that I had hit the mark. It took quite a few years of testing.

We spent the first few years at Stop It Now! — and Joan Tabachnick volunteered early on to do some pro bono work and then I was able to hire her as a consultant. Then, in 1994, I was able to hire her. She was the first employee. Was it 1994? No. Yeah, yeah, 1994, October of 1994 — ten years ago now. And so, what we just did in the first two or three years of being able to work full time was we went to treatment programs where there were sex offenders. We went inside the prison system. We talked to family members of people who had abusers in their lives one way or the other. I bet you a couple of hundred people we somehow interviewed or involved or got their feedback on the kind of messages we wanted to put out there.

We did our best to learn, what is public health? How do you approach public health? How do you approach a social change issue from a public health perspective? And I don't know, I think it's a combination of those underlying qualities that anybody's going to have if they're really going to make something happen. You've got to be really persistent and not have No mean anything to you. You have to really believe in what you're doing, and be self-disciplined and just be able to forward your ideas without necessarily having very much support at the beginning.

And then I also went through a very tough period where I wondered, Am I really articulating something that's going to be good for women in the long run? — especially this point of view of involving abusers in the solution, people who are potentially at risk for abuse — I didn't have enough faith to know that. There wasn't enough actual — people who could come forward and help were so afraid of being at all recognized for having abused, or even wanting to turn their lives around, it was really hard for them to come forward and easily talk about it. So I went through a really difficult period of, like, is this even possible?

And even now, these almost fourteen years later, it's — there's a way in which this principle in this organization and what we're trying to

advance is ahead of its time. We are just constantly ahead of our time. But for many, many years, I've paid attention to what my dreams tell me. And I asked for a dream that would help me understand this. Was I doing something that was really good for women? And I had this incredible, powerful dream that, without telling you the whole dream, — it's not necessary here, but it ended up with sort of every — I was on the ground looking up and every single woman I had ever known was flying across the sky, all in sort of beautiful Grecian flowing robes. They were like geese connected to one another, flying across the sky, and they were telling me that what I was doing was a good thing for women — this procession of women flying across the sky. And I woke up from that dream still doubting myself. I felt, I don't understand all of what I'm trying to do here, and it frightens me, and I don't see all the benefit it might have. But there's something underneath it that is going to be good for women, and if I keep true to that purpose, then it will work itself out.

And then specific to help me get through whatever doubts I had at the beginning, I wrote a letter to 20 of my friends or so, and I said, "I'm working all by myself." This must have been in 1993. "I'm working all by myself. This is really hard material to deal with. And it's got the best of me sometimes. So if you would just call me, rather than me have to reach out to you, and tell you how awful this is to discover every single day somebody new who's been sexually abused, would you please call me a couple of times. Sign up for a certain week, and then call me a couple of times and just say something cheery like, 'How're you doing? I just think you're great.'" And I got 20 of my friends to sign up for a whole week. It took a half a year of my life, in 1993, each week somebody different signed up. And of the 20 friends, like, almost everybody remembered their week and called me two or three times and said, "Oh, I just think you're terrific." (laughter)

And it was such a good reminder that, you know, we need support and we can't always get it in the way that we need it but we can organize for what we really need. And anyway, I don't know if that's relevant to anything except that it's good to know that trying to organize difficult things that aren't entirely clear to you except long after in hindsight — you know, that when you're actually going through at the beginning it takes a lot of perseverance, and it is difficult and you can't know all the answers, but you can do things to take care of yourself and help yourself, you know, have the energy and stamina to withstand all the negativity, skepticism and negativity you're going to naturally get at the beginning.

And that's the nature of social change. It's going against something that's condoned. And it's not like I'm so brave or courageous or have any kind of particular qualities that other people don't have. I think I've been blessed with some good work habits and good ways of connecting to people around things that I'm not so secure about — I don't know, is this relevant for the kind of —

WEIGAND: Yes, definitely. How about — I mean, were you just about to go on and say something?

HENRY: Well, I just wanted to say one other thing there that, you know, right after *Toughing It Out at Harvard: The Making of a Woman MBA* came out in the early 1980s I was working with a group of business women in New York called The Committee of Two Hundred, and I worked on a whole draft of a book called the “Self-Confidence Workbook for Women.” I know this draft is in the papers that I have put in the collection. The book never got published. I forget all the reasons why, but I remember thinking through, what have been the building blocks of my own self-confidence? You know, it’s just the kind of thing you think about in your early thirties, as if your life was completed at that time.

But one of the things I realized consciously, that I had used in my twenties and come up with and just used — and it’s not so relevant in my mid-fifties anymore because I’m one of the older people now. But back then, when I was really insecure about something, or really didn’t know — I was having to make a management decision and I didn’t know if I should do A or B, or I had doubts that made me worry at night or something like that — I would take out to lunch or dinner somebody whose opinion I really respected. And back then, it was gonna be somebody like Virginia or Catherine. Most of the time for me, back then, it was Virginia Allan. I’d take her out to lunch or dinner. She always ended up paying because she had so much more money than I had, but you know, I invited her out and said, “I’m paying for your lunch this time.” And I would lay out the whole business problem that I was having and then I would say, “And this is how I’m planning to solve it, but I really want your opinion. Do you think this is a good way to handle it?” And then she would tell me this and tell me that and go back and forth about it.

What I realized is that it was not so important, the advice she gave me — which was important enough at the time for something specific — but what was really important about my decision to do that and do it consistently was that I put out there to somebody else whose opinion I respected, things that I didn’t know, that I was insecure about. I put out my vulnerability about how I don’t have the answer here. And by being willing to display what I didn’t understand — and I made a deal with myself that if I had this kind of conversation, earnest conversation with somebody who I really respected, then whatever this person said and I decided as a result of talking with them, it’s not like I would follow blindly what they said, but the discussion itself would produce the right answer. Many times, of course, the way I’d thought about it was a decent enough way to approach it.

But I would just, like, make a deal with myself that after that moment I would not have any doubts about whatever it is I was going to do. Because that was the deal I struck with myself. If I was going to take

the time of somebody whose opinion I respected, to go over something like that in detail, then it would be a waste of time if after that I didn't even listen or respect it and then just went off and was all worried again. But that was the deal I was going to strike. And then, that's the way I just organized and built up my confidence about my own capacity to handle things — from having put out my insecurities with people whose opinions I respected and then abide by whatever it is I came up with as a result. Period. And then that doubt had to be finished and I was free to go onto other doubts, but I couldn't doubt that one.

It becomes a building process then. You build your sense of resilience around tougher and tougher problems to solve. So I kind of think that's a good thing. I'm glad that I learned how to do that, and it's probably not a bad thing to offer in this kind of setting, because we have doubts about all kinds of things all the time. But it's nice if they can get to the higher order of doubts, then we can be at some point finished with most of your earlier doubts. (laughs)

WEIGAND:

Right, right. Well, I was going to ask what kind of reaction you had from other parts of the anti-violence movement, if you can talk about such a thing. What kind of responses you got from the larger world to Stop It Now! once you started putting it out there.

35:30

HENRY:

Yeah. Well, actually, your questions are really great ones because it was when I first organized Stop It Now!, I thought the people who would most be likely to support and want to work on Stop It Now!'s behalf would be feminists and survivors. I went to those communities in various forms to vet the idea and, you know, garner their support and I was met with incredibly consistent skepticism and sometimes real, just total dislike of what I was doing. One story is one that I've told in some different settings with Stop It Now! You might see it in the papers somewhere, but probably it's before Stop It Now! — and, you know, early 1992. By 1994 we were out there in various public settings, especially in Vermont, and there was a conference of survivors of child sexual abuse in Vermont back in, probably, late 1993 or early 1994.

And it was a conference — again, I couldn't believe that 400 people are at this conference. It was, like, there shouldn't be even one of us at this conference, and there's 400 of us at this conference. Anyway, so I was holding a workshop on preventing child sexual abuse and talking about these ideas of reaching the abusers before they abuse and dealing with it from a public health point of view and everything. I had this whole description in the conference brochure and there were 400 women at this conference. I don't remember any men there but maybe there were a few. But anyway, it was a women's conference. And not a single person came to my workshop. Not a single person. And I sat there at the beginning of the workshop in my little room, and I just decided, I'm going to sit here for two hours and I'm going to think about this, think about having a conference of 400 survivors and not a single

person has come to my workshop. And I'm gonna think about what that means. And I did. And you know, I decided — and that was one of the things during that time when I was saying that I had this dream and you know, I was really needing support from my friends. It was like I had to think about, can I do something that's valuable to this issue if I don't have my feminist sisters around me?

I had to really do a lot of soul searching to be willing to take the idea forward. And I actually — that's when I came back to that principle that Wilma Scott Heide had laid down for me and said, "I just have to trust that this issue is so painful and so difficult for people that people have to enter it from all different points of view, and it may take a long time before somebody is willing to engage in prevention at the level that I'm trying to get this dialogue going." And I realized at the time that I had an incredible advantage, as difficult as the abuse was, I had an incredible advantage, because every time that I went back and confronted my — Well, first of all, I never forgot that the abuse happened between the age of 12 and 16, that it was my father that abused me. I was never confused about that. And that every time I went back and talked to my dad, he admitted that he did it and he apologized and extended whatever understanding he could with himself, toward me at the time and said, "Whatever — if you need to come back and talk to me about this again, please do." I confronted him once when I came back from college. I confronted him another two or three times, in my twenties and thirties, and each time with my mother present and, you know, as limited as my family had understanding of these psychological things, my dad really stepped up to the plate and took responsibility for what he did and did not put it back on me.

And I realized, as I was sitting in that workshop, thinking about this, I thought, so many people's stories about hurt have been about being dismissed, being denied, being lied to, being lied to about something so hurtful, so powerful, and then I couldn't really expect people to automatically come around and think abusers are going to take responsibility for this just because I had this particular experience with the person who abused me. But I also had to trust that he wasn't the only person out there who's abusing who wanted to take responsibility or was capable of it, and that somehow, it was such a complex issue that part of the solution we were talking about with prevention had to fathom that, had to wrestle with that. And then I was sort of stuck in this place of wrestling with it and realizing that I couldn't expect support from people who just weren't there yet. And then, again, that's the time that I asked for this dream, and got sort of psychic support around that.

At the very same time, I was invited to give a talk to the coalition — the Domestic and Sexual Violence Coalition, all the organizations in the state of Vermont who were organizing against rape and against domestic violence. They had an annual conference and they had me give a speech. Again, it was early, it was 1993 or 1994, or maybe it was 1995, but it was right in there, and I gave my talk about Stop It Now!,

what we're doing and the program we're starting in Vermont. People were so cold. That wasn't individuals not coming to a workshop who were survivors. This was organized people working professionally in the feminist community. And I mean, they were so cold. At that meeting, I gave this talk and then I just literally had to go to the bathroom and throw up, I was so — I was so moved by how cold everybody was, moved in a negative way, just so — ah, chilled me to the bone. It made me sick.

That was just the other — that was like I just had to go forward, understanding that that's where people were. That they hadn't had the experience that I had and that I just had to trust that the experience that I had had was valid. I realized that even if it was ahead of its time, then we had to slow it down and make it part of its time, which we did the best we could.

And over the years there are still people now who are very much opposed to some of the principles that Stop It Now! supports, about bringing abusers into the solution and making them part of figuring out how to solve this thing. But here are also a lot of people who are working professionally — feminists who are working professionally against domestic violence and against sexual violence — who want to find ways to reach out to perpetrators whether they be male or female. So that's also the nature of social change. You can't — even on this issue that had hurt me so much personally and so much — I had to deal with it on a personal level every day. I also have to realize that it's a big world out there and it takes a lot of different kinds of solutions to solve something that's as pervasive as child sexual abuse. And it takes a lot of different points of view and a lot of different kind of dialogue to move something forward. And maybe even that experience that I had at IWY of just seeing really nasty, thorny, difficult things be sorted through, I just realize, Well, that's part of the nature of social change, and I have to do my best not to take it too personally.

WEIGAND: So, you feel like in your years that you were part of Stop It Now! more people did come around to understanding or supporting your point of view?

HENRY: Yeah, lots and lots and lots of people have. I think we can get sort of hooked up on trying to make people who are really dead set against you agree with you, and that's not the way to get social change to happen. I think it's too — if it's a good, solid healthy, whole idea, then you just look for the support where you can find it and build from it. And if it's a really a true solution that has something to offer society, it's either gonna come through it and stand on its own two feet at some point, or it's gonna be blown off the face of the universe because it's really not a valid idea.

So, yes, other people did. Especially people who were in the criminal justice system, or people who were in the system of treating

sex offenders and they saw these people come to places of great social change inside themselves, great individual change inside themselves. And people in the public health system that saw all the capacity of public health to contribute to the issue. Yeah, lots of people came around. And lots of people who were feminists came around, too. At least, if they were very skeptical at the beginning, they said, I'm skeptical and I can tell you that, but I'm not gonna organize against it, I'm just gonna be skeptical over here and watch and see what happens. And that's OK. That's good enough. It's fair enough.

WEIGAND: It's interesting, the way you just put it makes me think about some of that stuff about in feminism, the personal is political. By hoping to change people individually, or, you know, making them come to terms with what they've done individually and tried to figure out how to stop doing it, you're really helping to create a large-scale change. I was wondering, you know, because of Nancy's work and talking with her about this stuff, I was wondering about whether this whole bunch of people who are — well, I can't even remember when this happened but there was this whole sort of public discourse that challenged the whole idea of recovered memory —

HENRY: Oh, yeah, the false memory syndrome.

46:13

WEIGAND: Yeah. What kind of interaction has Stop It Now! had with them? I mean, have they latched onto particular people to rail against, or—

HENRY: Yeah. Well, we actually have never had any direct dealings with people from False Memory Syndrome Foundation, who are the people who support that. I don't really even know how vague any of that is. It was just more, I think something that had some reality to it and then the media took a hold of it? It was sort of like that myth got started back in the women's movement that women burned their bras, when that was just — what an incredibly bizarre metaphor. And the media just loved that because it had some juice to it, and I think there was some juice to this metaphor of these women claiming these things happened all those years ago and then people being harmed by the accusations.

But because we were dealing in prevention, there were a lot of survivors that didn't easily come forward and deal with us directly. Those are the people that the False Memory Syndrome Foundation was dealing with. And because we were going into prisons and treatment programs where men were saying, I did this terrible thing — I mean, it was like the opposite of false memory syndrome. What are they gonna say to that, you know? Somebody has tricked you into saying that? What a terrible thing — being falsely convicted.

Anyway, because we were dealing with that side of it, whenever I was dealing with those questions from the media — and that especially happened in the early 1990s when you'd get journalist's questions from

that point of view all the time — and I would just say I don't have much to say about that. We're dealing with people who have admitted it and they're trying to figure out what could've happened in their lives to prevent it, because it destroyed their life, you know, so I can't go there and have that conversation with you. You know, it's just not a relevant conversation.

WEIGAND: OK.

HENRY: I would always say, "You know what? I'm sure there are a few people in this country who've been falsely accused, and I'm sure there are some parents who have abused children and want to deny it or have actually forgotten it for some reason or another. But I can tell you that I know an awful lot of people who come up to me after a workshop or a speech and they whisper in my ear and say, I've never said this to anybody but having heard you speak, I'm gonna tell you that I was sexually abused and I just want you to know that. And I said [to the journalist], "Every single person who's done that with me, you know, I look at them in the eye and I say, 'I am so sorry that happened to you.'" And my heart is breaking for that experience because I know exactly what they went through. And I said, "Where do those people fit into false memory syndrome? They're not telling anybody. They're not — they're hardly telling me, you know? That's the truth of my experience in dealing with this issue."

And so then the journalist would go off and ask me other questions after that, because what do you say? It's the most profound phenomenal issue, really, child sexual abuse. It hasn't even begun to be dealt with in any kind of straightforward way in our culture. We're just — even Stop It Now!, with all of its hard work and everything and all of the people who have been doing the wonderful healing work around survivors, we're really just scratching the tiniest little surface on it. It's so profound.

WEIGAND: It seems like in a way, somebody almost had to have your kind of background to start an organization like that. I mean, do you think that's true, somebody who — I mean, you sort of straddle this position of having your own business, having all this experience with social change stuff. I don't even know what I'm asking, exactly.

HENRY: Well, you're asking me what I thought. Like, in my late thirties, that's exactly what I thought. When I thought about the issue I cared about the most, and I cared the women's movement and feminism when I was in my twenties, but I actually hadn't experienced that much discrimination, that I was aware of, anyway, as a woman. The worst thing that had happened to me in my life was around this child sexual abuse and I thought, if I'm gonna spend my time organizing, how many other people who went through that have this combination of skills and

experience, and spent this time in Washington? I understand things from a national perspective. How many people are just willing to do this. It just — it was like a real call there, like, Fran, no matter what you were planning to do with your life, you have kind of a responsibility to do this. And so, I really answered that at that level, and it was exactly that.

And I hope I can say that, with exactly the right feeling I have for it. It's a lot of humbleness around how big of a problem it is and how small a person I was compared to how big the problem was. But it's also from having sort of cut my professional teeth working with other women who were becoming themselves in the world and taking their ideas seriously. It's like, if I didn't take my own ideas seriously and do something about it and sort of step up — it was time for me to step to the plate. If I didn't do that, then I — it's like I felt like I had failed the people who went before me to make me have a chance to have those opportunities, to have that, you know, business experience and to have all that exposure that I have.

And so, I didn't want to be, like, coming from somewhere else. I wanted to be myself, which has a bit of sort of the reluctant leader to it, but I also didn't want to be falsely modest and say, Oh, you can't do this, because I could, and I should if I could — I should. So, I think your question is really relevant. I mean, I don't know if it's relevant to the people who are watching this tape at the moment that they're watching it, if that matters to them, but it mattered to me at that moment.

WEIGAND: So, do you feel this has sort of helped your process of becoming a whole person, as you put it?

HENRY: Oh, my goodness, it really, really has. Yes, and I actually think some of the most important work that I have to do — and some of it really is ahead of me, based on everything else I've done. But to take something that caused so much personal pain — I don't really talk about the personal side of it that much anyplace, and I'm not in this tape because it's something that's intensely private and I think it should remain private. You know, maybe as I think about it more and I have more decades on it, I'll have some more things to say about it, but I just experience such intense pain. And it's still — it has cost me a huge amount. Now, I've done some public speaking about this, how it just kept me from having an intimate relationship that's a long-lasting one, kept me from being in a situation where I could have children, which is a crime to not be able to be in a stable enough situation to have children, if you really want children in your life.

So this issue has really cost me and I've suffered a lot with it. And you know, I married somebody who was a beautiful, beautiful man but who had a very difficult childhood and he had a lot, a lot of difficulty and my husband committed suicide in 1997. And he didn't speak about it to anybody at all, but he had a history of child sexual abuse. And to work in Stop It Now! daily, and be married to somebody who ends up

taking his life in the middle of your marriage — I mean, this profound psychic pain, I mean, just — I don't want to really go into it, because it's just too painful. But those of us who have been through those experiences, I think, if we have the capacity to do some work around it, then it's our responsibility. That's our calling to do some organizing around it and do whatever we can to help the people who come after us so that they don't have to live with that kind of pain. So, I've actually lost track of your question, which I haven't done too many times but it's just like, it's a very difficult thing.

WEIGAND: Well, my question was, did you feel it helped you sort of heal from the whole thing? And it sounded like at the beginning, like you thought it did.

HENRY: Yeah. Well, that's — the way you're asking it now, I've always found it a complicated question because I guess if I answer it backwards for myself, which is to say, if I just wanted to heal from it very personally, then I would have not done any organizing work on it whatsoever, because it's painful for me to be so public about something that hurt me so much. But it's helped me to be a whole person and maybe if you equate wholeness with healing, then yes. But it's helped me be a whole person because — because I know that one of the reasons this hasn't changed is because people who've been through these experiences so painful haven't been capable of doing effective organizing. And that little light's blinking.

WEIGAND: Oh, OK.

HENRY: Does that mean the tape's out?

WEIGAND: Almost, yeah.

HENRY: Yeah. Sorry. (laughter)

END OF DVD 4

DVD 5

HENRY: — we should do it for each other.

WEIGAND: That would be interesting.

HENRY: Yeah. You should do a little vignette as part of this. This is my recommendation to all of you, is that when you finish your interviews, or close to finishing, then you could do just a little interview of each other, like, of yourselves, just something about your take on the whole thing, because you will have incredible — combined with your own life experience, you would be in incredible position to comment on, to be observers of something about where society is right now.

WEIGAND: Well, I also think, too, that, you know, part of this whole process is about, at some level, each of us who are doing interviews, because our thinking and our points of view are influencing the kinds of the questions that we ask.

HENRY: Absolutely.

WEIGAND: And, on the front page of the transcript, you know, there's some material that includes the birth date of the person interviewing, and I said, you know, I think we ought to have our birth date on there, too, because we have an historical context that we're coming from. So, just in that sense —

HENRY: Oh, yeah, and even more than that, yeah. Well, maybe I'll say something to Sherrill [Redmon] about that.

WEIGAND: Well, I also — you know, I'm kind of uncomfortable with the idea that we're here to extract all this stuff from people, their experiences and their thoughts and their private feelings and yet, we just take it all in and don't, you know, give any back. It seems sort of un-feminist. But I think we all do that, if not on tape, then during the rest of the time we spend with people.

HENRY: Well, I think you should put it on tape myself. I'm going to say something to Sherrill, because I think you have such an incredible perspective on everything you've heard and listened to. You'll be the only people, when you get together, the couple of you who've done this, who will have heard all these histories during this period of time. I think that's a very precious resource.

WEIGAND: Well, it's been a privilege, like I said. It's a great thing to be able to sit and listen to people. But anyway —

HENRY: You have to get to class.

WEIGAND: Yeah, I should ask you, uh, you've made this decision to leave the organization that you've founded, and Joyce tells me that you've engaged in this very thoughtful and careful process of leaving over a period of time. I guess I wanted to know what made you decide to do that. Is this sort of something that is part of your personal philosophy more generally, or is it specific to this project?

HENRY: It's definitely part of my philosophy generally. Back when I was writing articles for management-oriented articles in the 1980s, one of them I wrote is, you know, is your organization a victim of founder's syndrome. And I passed that article around to the board and staff a number of years ago and said, "OK. Time for me to walk my talk. What do you guys think?" and I had a sense of humor about it. And it wasn't the easiest thing in the world to do, but I knew at the very beginning of Stop It Now!, as soon as I knew we'd actually have an organization, that I would dedicate as much time as I could to it, but that I would really do a plan for leaving the organization so that it wouldn't become an organization identified with Fran Henry. I didn't want the Fran Henry story to be, like, the central part of it. And that's why — all the way back when I was in a business called Enterprise Associates with a partner and then I named my own business Management Consultants, which couldn't be more straightforward, but I didn't want a business that was named Fran Henry Associates or anything. I just don't — I want to be the person who's behind ideas and I wanted Stop It Now! to have the benefit of being informed by my personal story, but I didn't want Fran Henry's personality to be the center.

And I also knew, you know, it's very true that when you start something and it's as difficult as what you're trying to do, that it takes somebody who's willing to have some story, who's willing to have some of themselves out there, who's willing to be a leader and all that in order to get it off the ground. You can't be too self-effacing. You just can't. I used to view myself as the point of the plow. And when you're the point of the plow and you have to get through stony ground, you have to be really tough. And I had to develop a lot of toughness to do it. But that same quality of toughness that you have to become in order to do something like that, it can become very brittle inside the organization. And you know, it becomes a situation where you know all the answers. You've already seen that before. You've tried that, it hasn't worked.

Anyway, we weren't quite to that point necessarily when I started talking to the board about this or started talking to the staff about it. But I just had the sense that it was going to require a couple-year planning process. It was in 2001 that I just began to realize my horizon was going to be — you know, it's gonna take two or three years to go through a transition planning process and I was able to see that I didn't have the

skills on the board to help make it happen. So we recruited somebody I went to Harvard Business School with who's really good at middle-growth companies and transition processes. She came on, chaired a transition committee, and then, to do some things with the board in order to get the board prepared for the process, we added some board members, and then went through a whole plan-ful discussion of what kind of CEO we're looking for and then we went through a year-long search and then the person came, Maxine Stein came, and she was chosen by the board and then came last spring. I had four months to work with her before I left.

And yeah, it was a really plan-ful process, really above-board. Everybody knew about it and it wasn't like it was completely flawless, or that I didn't make a few mistakes in the process, which I did, but I just feel really good about walking my talk there, about saying, you know, it's a really good idea and it has to live on its own and the only way it's going to have a chance to do that is if I step out and let new management take over.

And it's also true — and I learned this at business school — that some people are really good at starting things and other people are really good at managing and maintaining them. And in general, in my life, when I look at the things I've been best at, it's when I'm starting something. I have the stick-to-it-ness to take it through to some success. But you know, for me, 13 years was enough of that, and then it was time for somebody else to manage it.

I've been really blessed with some patronage that lets me spend some time this year just reflecting and thinking about what I learned at Stop It Now! I don't know what's ahead, but I know that I want to do something in the violence-prevention field, and probably use some of the principles that were developed at Stop It Now! I just have a chance to do some reading and some talking to people and some thinking and doing a little speaking and just get a new level of some ideas out there.

Especially having experienced, you know, other form of violence then, having lived through my husband's suicide. And suicide prevention is one of those things in the whole field of violence prevention that's an important thing to prevent because, of the two million or so people who every year across the globe are killed violently one way or another, 815,000 of them are suicides, which most of us wouldn't understand and most of them are not in this country. We've got 80,000 in this country. So, that would give me a chance to do some at-a-distance work, but some contribution on another issue that unfortunately I have a reason to really care about.

WEIGAND: So, it seems like in the past you've done things that have kind of put together new ways things you've done before and it sounds like you're thinking about doing that again.

HENRY: Yeah.

WEIGAND: Can I just ask you one more quick thing?

HENRY: Sure.

WEIGAND: This is sort of changing the subject, but I noticed that you were on the board of the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund. Can you say a little bit about that? What it was and how you see that as connected to what else you've done?

HENRY: Yeah. Well, one of my clients in Washington, back when I had the consulting practice, was a woman who was very active in some foundation work and had her own business. She was a consultant in the changeover from the Soviet Union to all the Russian states, and she was sort of a practical economist, I guess is how I'd describe her. But anyway, she did some foundation work and she was connected to some people who, a month or two after Princess Diana was killed, knew immediately that they needed to start a foundation in the UK and in this country, because so much money came forward from the public in honor of Princess Diana. This former client of mine was put on this board, and then for a year or two, we just talked about it and, because she was a client of mine previously, I just gave her some advice. In that process she realized I had a lot of interest in helping that foundation figure out how the money should be donated in the United States.

And I just had a lot of personal respect for how Princess Diana handled herself in the midst of everything. I mean, she had the most complicated life I can imagine, really, and somehow, in the middle of that, she handled herself with a lot of grace, and I really admired her a lot. For totally different reasons, not connected with the women's movement or anything, I just found myself admiring her grace and her strength, really, and respecting her vulnerabilities. And I was moved by her death. It happened the same — the first couple of months after my husband died, so I was particularly sensitive that year to tragic, young tragic death. And I mean, I probably would be anyway, but that particular year, I was very vulnerable.

So, Catherine asked me to join the board, and then the chair of the board, right when I was joining, needed to step back because she was going into a pregnancy, and the board asked me to be the chair. So I was the chair actually from early 2000 until we closed the fund at the end of 2003. We were able to get many millions of dollars to youth-led organizations dealing with young people dealing with issues where they were marginalized, in all kinds of ways — eating disorders and gay, lesbian, queer, transgender youth and disability activists. All young people leading these organizations. It was really a phenomenal way of honoring her legacy.

And it fit into my life in that, again, there were an awful lot of beliefs about what Princess Diana and her family were about, but in my

dealings with Princess Diana's sister, her brother, her attorney, the other people in the UK fund, other people associated with Princess Diana in the UK, I was just really struck with how respectful and engaged they were in honoring the legacy of who she was as a person. The complexity of who she was as a person. There's just something true there. It wasn't about marketing spin. It wasn't about what looked good to the public. It wasn't about public relations. It was about, you know, let's get down to what's really true here, and that's where our philanthropy came from, is doing something we felt, really in a true sense of the word, represented what the legacy she would have wanted to have left behind with that money that the public had donated in honor of her death.

So, it was something — it was a way in which it just struck a cord of truth in me and I just felt really blessed to be able to serve in that way. And after dealing with my husband's death, it was just a wonderful way to take a lot of my vacation time and do something really positive, proactive, helpful, organized, with it. And so, that's the real thing in my life. It's like another one of those things, maybe like the book, where it just appeared to me and then I could bring myself to it, and I did.

WEIGAND: Well, that's all I have to ask.

HENRY: That's enough. That wasn't short. You've got to get to class.

WEIGAND: I have to go, so, thank you.

HENRY: You're welcome (laughs).

END OF DVD 5

END OF INTERVIEW

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