Lois Blum Feinblatt Transcript

JEAN FREEDMAN: This is an interview with Lois Hoffberger Blum Feinblatt. I'm Jean Freedman. It's March 31st, 2001. And, we're in Baltimore, Maryland. OK. I always start out interviews the same way. And, that's by asking when and where were you born?

LOISE BLUM FEINBLATT: I was born in Baltimore on May 17th, 1921 in a hospital called Women's Hospital.

JF: OK. Could you tell me something about your family?

LBF: My family of origin?

JF: Mmm hmm.

LBF: Well, my father's family came from Austria in the late 1800's.

JF: And, your father's family were the Hoffbergers?

LBF: They were the Hoffbergers. They came to Baltimore. They lived in an area -- in East Baltimore -- where the Jewish people settled. My grandparents brought one son with them. Abe. And, they subsequently had six more sons, and one daughter. The daughter, whose name was Birdie - like a little bird - -died when she was two years old. And so, there were no girls in the family -- just the seven sons. Grandfather began a coal business. He had a cart and a horse. And he sold coal to the neighborhood. There's a little family story that when the other people in the neighborhood found that some of their neighbors didn't have coal, they called Mrs. Hoffberger, and she saw to it that coal was delivered to their house. Eventually, the story goes -- we're not sure about this -- but, my grandfather said, “You can't sell coal in the summer.” And so he began an ice

business. So it became Hoffberger Coal & Ice. And, eventually, they sold fuel. The family eventually moved to another section where Jewish people were living.

JF: And where was that?

LBF: That was called Forest Park.

JF: And, when did they move there?

LBF: Well, let me see -- we moved there in -- when I was 8 years old.

JF: I see.

LBF: So, that was the late '20's when the family was living there. My grandfather had died. And, my grandmother bought a whole neighborhood block. And she put up houses -- each one exactly the same. And, by then, the brothers were having children. It didn't matter if you had five children, or two children -- each had a house exactly the same size.

JF: (laughter)

LBF: My grandmother was a great believer in everybody being equal in the family. And, so, in the first house -- Harry lived. And he had five children. The second house was Abe. And, he had three children. The third house was Jack. And he had three children. The last house was Saul, and he had two children. And, I think that house must have been divided into apartments -- because somehow Grandma lived in that last house with Uncle Joe, who didn't marry until very late. And, he had no children. And then --

JF: So the whole family moved from East Baltimore to Forest Park?

LBF: And then, my family -- my father's name was Sam -- bought a house, just one house on the next street -- this was called Hilton Street. The five families lived on Springdale Avenue at Hilton Street. So, we lived one house away. And then, Uncle Mike -- lived one house away at the next corner. So, all seven brothers lived there.

JF: So it was a very close-knit family?

LBF: It was a very close-knit family. And, the boys -- the brothers had made up their minds that someone would visit grandmother every night. But they all apparently enjoyed it so much that usually every night, quite a big contingent of the family was there. And, supposedly, they emptied their pockets. And, grandmother was in charge of that. So that was basically the Hoffberger family. My father was the only professional person. He became a lawyer. In those days, you didn't have to graduate from college to go to law school. And then, he started his own firm, which was -- he started it with a member of his mother's family, and it was called Hoffberger and Hollander.

JF: Do you remember much about living in East Baltimore? So you moved when --

LBF: No, I didn't live in East Baltimore.

JF: Oh, OK. So --

LBF: No, I was born on Eutaw Place. And I lived there until I was seven.

JF: What was that neighborhood like?

LBF: That was a beautiful neighborhood. It was across from Druid Hill Lake. And Druid Hill Park is perhaps -- I'm not positive -- but I think it might be the largest public park in the country. There were rolling hills, and it was beautiful. And, we had what was called a row house, a very beautiful house on Eutaw Place. We lived there -- my brother and I -- I think my brother was born downtown. And, I was born there. While our house was

being fixed up on Hilton Street, we took an apartment for one year, because my parents had sold the house on Eutaw Place. And so we lived on Lake Drive. My little sister was born there. All these sections -- Baltimore's a very interesting place. All these sections were totally Jewish. There were probably no Christians there at all.

JF: Why was that?

LBF: Well, there were some people who -- some builders who then became the landlords. And there was a restrictive covenant -- it wasn't the law. But it was never broken. And, as far as I remember, and maybe it was different for other people, but we didn't even think there was anything wrong. We never wanted to live any place else. We had each other. And it wasn't like we felt that we were pushed out of anything. We had a very wonderful, warm family life -- with all of our cousins around. In these houses on Springdale Avenue -- there was no separation of the back yards. So, it was just like having a -- practically a football field of our own. And we all grew up together and played together.

JF: Can you tell me something about your brother and sister? There were the three of you?

LBF: There were the three of us. My brother was two years older than myself. And then, my mother had a bad kidney condition -- and had been warned not to have more children. But, as she got better, she wanted to have another child. So my sister was born seven years later. And the three of us were always very close. We called ourselves Cho, Ro, and Lo.

JF: What were your brother and sister's names?

LBF: My brother's name was Charles. And that's one of these family stories. My grandfather who, as I've said, died early, left seven sons. And they all wanted to name their first-born son Charles. And so, eventually, there were five Charles Hoffbergers.

And they were all approximately the same age. Just maybe -- oh, for the five of them, it might have been seven or eight years difference. And, it was OK when they were young. But, when they became teenagers, and older -- they found themselves getting each other's speeding tickets, and all kinds of different mix-ups. So, eventually, I think it was around the time of World War II -- they took their middle names. The oldest, Charles, became Chick. The next one who had red hair like our grandmother, he became Reds. The next was my brother whose middle name was Gerald. And people who got to know him, late in life, called him Jerry. But the family never would change. So, we called him Chuck. The next one -- his middle name was Bertram. He was called Bert, but we called him Little Charles. And one of the other older ones, we called Long Charlie. He was very tall. And so that's what happened -- this wonderful idea of having everybody have the same name!! But, the family had a good time together. And then, Jack Hoffberger's family and ours, moved for the summers down to the Bush River. And we had no phone. Our fathers liked it like that. Because they were under a lot of pressure all day. And they liked to relax. You had to go five and a half miles to Aberdeen to a phone. And, first, we lived upstairs from Aunt Mil and Uncle Jack. And then, eventually the house next door came up for sale, and we got our own house. At the same time, my mother's family was a very important family too, to us. My mother was one of eight. Their name was Miller. And they owned a -- what was called a dairy store. They sold milk products. And, my mother and father met - they lived in the same neighborhood, actually. My mother was a bookkeeper for the Miller Dairy Store. And my father came in. But the Hoffbergers and the Millers already knew each other. And, my mother's family also lived together -- just as the Hoffbergers did. They lived in another section -- which was also a Jewish section. Off of Park Heights Avenue -- above what was called Carlin's Park. And, quite a few of them lived there. In my mother's family, two of her brothers eventually married Christian women. And, although they had been so close -- my grandmother felt that she could not allow her sons in the house after they married Christian girls. And, the other children -- the brothers and

sisters -- stayed in touch with them -- throughout their entire lives. But, they were never really a part of the Miller entourage, again, which is pretty shocking when you think of it now. But, that's the way it was. My grandmother actually sat shiva for them. We happened to be over there the night that my uncle Chicky told my grandmother that he had married a woman named Leland, who was Christian. My brother and I were sleeping there. And when we woke up the next morning the mirrors were all covered with sheets and the family was supposedly in mourning.

JF: Were you close to your mother's family, as well as your father's family?

LBF: We were very, very close. The Millers didn't have the resources that the Hoffbergers had. And some of my mother's brothers worked for the Hoffberger family in different capacities. But they were very, very close.

JF: And you mentioned that -- your family -- the Hoffbergers had the coal and the ice business. And that your father became a lawyer? Did the other brothers stay in the business?

LBF: They stayed in the business. And my father's law practice was a lot about family businesses. My father, I think, was also the only one in the family who became involved in politics.

JF: Can you tell me something about that?

LBF: Well, he was very close to a number of the mayors and governors. We used to have, in our house on Hilton Street -- which was the house, one house away from the whole family compound -- we had what was called in those days, a club basement. And my father and mother used to have these large parties in the club basement. And the D'Alesandros were there.

JF: And who are the D'Alesandros?

LBF: I'll tell you how to spell that in a little while. The -- Tommy D'Alesandro, Sr., had been the mayor for quite a number of years. And, interestingly enough -- when the family lived in East Baltimore, the D'Alesandros -- Tommy D'Alesandro was what was called a Shabbos goy. Which meant that he came to light the -- turn on the electricity on Friday night. And do the things that the family, as very religious Jews, wouldn't do.

[phone rings; break in tape]

JF: OK. So you were telling me about when your family lived in East Baltimore, and Tommy D'Alesandro was the Shabbos goy?

LBF: Right. And my father eventually became the financial -- maybe it was called the treasurer for the state of Maryland for Franklin Roosevelt's campaign. And, my father had also run once for the city council, I think it was, and had lost. I think that's the only foray he actually made into elective office. But the Roosevelt campaign was the first time I ever worked on a political campaign. And --

JF: What did you do?

LBF: My father ran this office, and I -- a friend of mine and myself would stuff envelopes, and do things like that. But we remember that as a very important milestone for us.

JF: Because --

LBF: To get interested in politics, and national politics. And of course, we adored Roosevelt. But my father was very involved with city politics. He was a friend of Broening and Mahoney and Ritchie -- very close to Governor Ritchie.

JF: Were these people personal friends?

LBF: They were personal friends. The family was very -- I don't know if it was because there were seven brothers -- the family was very male-dominated. And -

JF: Could you tell me a little bit about that?

LBF: Well, all -- because we all lived together -- the sisters-in-law had a very close association with each other. And were like a circle of security for each other. I never knew that any of the marriages was anything but perfect. I heard later that, you know, there were some fault lines. But you never knew that, because everybody was always together. And, if a sister-in-law was having a problem, she had plenty of sisters-in-law to talk to about her problems. None of the women worked outside the home. My mother had worked as a bookkeeper before her marriage. But, she didn't work after. The women were involved -- and, certainly, my mother was extremely involved in the community. She was financial secretary for her Conservative synagogue which was called Chizuk Amuno. And she was financial secretary all her life. She was always proud of this job because just about all the time she had 100 percent paid-up membership. But they were the kinds of things that the women did. Interestingly, two of my aunts became very good golfers. My Aunt Mil, and my Aunt Rena. And won club championships and things like that at the Woodholme Club. But, my family didn't -- my mother never was an athlete of any sort. And, I don't know how I got that way, but I kind of felt almost sorry for the women. Because I felt that their lives could have been richer. Although I must say that they never complained. They seemed perfectly content to have their children, and have their nice houses, and have their large family. My mother visited her mother, I think, every day. Her mother lived maybe about five miles away. And she was very, very close to her own family also. One of her sisters died. And my mother was a big part of my Aunt Lilly's children's lives. But the women had a special role. They always looked lovely. And they ran the households beautifully. And they all had people in the household that helped them. And my mother -- some of the Hoffberger wives drove their own cars. My mother took up driving for just a short while, and I think the first time she drove down Liberty Heights Avenue -- somehow she got too close to the streetcar. And, the wheel of the car got caught on the streetcar. And my mother just panicked. And she never drove again. So, we always had a man driving my mother to

where she would go to pick up her money for her sisterhood. She often would just call the person and say -- are you home? I'll come over. I think the dues were $2.00. And, she would send her chauffeur up the steps to the woman's house to bring down the money. And that was just the way things were. Just very, very different. Very, very different from today.

JF: Did you feel that -- since you said this was a very male-dominated family -- did you feel that you and your sister were treated any differently from your brother? Were there different expectations?

LBF: Well, there were different expectations. A lot was expected of my brother. A tremendous amount. And I felt that, as I recall, that nothing was expected of me. And, in a lot of ways, that made life comfortable. And I think that I probably had some learning disabilities. But, we didn't know that.

JF: What makes you say that?

LBF: Well, since nothing was expected of me, I went to school. And, I did fine. And, I was sociable. I didn't read a lot as a child. And I didn't read quickly. In those days, you could get into just about any college that you wanted to go to. The other Hoffberger women in my generation had gone to Goucher, which was a school, in those days, right here in Baltimore City. Very good college. And, I remember when it was time for me to go to college, my father took me over to my Uncle Harry's --Uncle Harry was the titular head of the family -- so that we could talk about where I was going to go to college. And, Uncle Harry said that he didn't know why we came over to talk to him -- because, of course, everybody went to Goucher. And, I said I didn't want to go to Goucher. Then, finally, my parents said that I could go wherever I wanted -- as long as it was within a 50 miles radius of Baltimore.

JF: Why didn't you want to go to Goucher?

LBF: I don't know. I always had a little bit of rebelliousness in me. I don't know what it was. And so I went to Hood. And, as luck would have it, I married at the end of my junior year because of the war and ended up graduating from Goucher, after all.

JF: (laughter)

LBF: So --

JF: OK. I want to hear more about your education. So, why don't we go back and start with elementary school.

LBF: Well, I went to the neighborhood elementary schools. And, I went to School 61, which was at Linden and Ducatel Streets. I can't remember too much about it, except that there was a deli across the street. And I remember how far you had to put your arm into the pickle barrel to get the pickle that you wanted. I was only there a couple of years, because we moved when I was 8 -- to Hilton Street. And then, I went to School #64, which was a nice public school. Then, I went to Garrison Junior High. Then I went to Forest Park High School.

JF: Were these schools largely Jewish?

LBF: The schools were -- yes, certainly largely Jewish. Maybe almost entirely Jewish. Not Forest Park High School. And, maybe not Garrison Junior High. But the elementary schools -- because they were neighborhood schools. I remember liking school. Having a good time. But, when I hear my friends talk about some book they read when they were in 5th grade or something -- I realized that I didn't really get the full amount out of school. Now, I have these fabulous grandchildren. Brilliant grandchildren. But they -- some of them have been diagnosed as being learning disabled. Which just meant that they needed to learn in a different way. I don't know if you want me to get into that now?

JF: Maybe we'll wait until we talk more about your grandchildren.

LBF: Well, I was thinking about it more in terms of my own education.

JF: OK. Well, then, please --

LBF: I graduated from -- I got married after my junior year at Hood. I had been going with Irv for a year. And the war clouds were beginning to gather. And I decided I wanted to get married --- or, he and I decided. And, we were married just at the end of my junior year. And then, Hood said I couldn't come back because -- although I knew I couldn't be living with my husband, because he was going into the army -- they wouldn't allow a married girl to be living in the dorm. Because we would know about sex and things that -- they were afraid we would contaminate the minds of the unmarried girls.

JF: Oh, my word. So they didn't allow married women in the dorms? Oh, how --

LBF: I had to live in the dorm. It was in Frederick, Maryland. And nobody lived off campus. So, Goucher accepted me. Hood had written and told them that I was a great -- I would be a great asset, which I wasn't.

JF: Why do you say that?

LBF: Well, I wasn't. Because, first of all, I came in as a senior. I didn't even have a major that Goucher was giving.

JF: What had your major been at Hood?

LBF: I had been majoring in what was called Creative Writing. And, I had to take literature. I was a very slow reader. I mean, a point had never been made about it. I entered Goucher. Had to take all these literature courses. Had to read Chaucer, and God knows what else. And, that last year would have been a nightmare, if it weren't for the fact that all I was trying to do was get through it. Goucher was on a trimester system. And war broke out on December 7th. And then girls began to get married, as

their boyfriends were going off to war. And so, Hood got in touch with me and said -- why don't you come back and graduate with your class? But, I couldn't. Because I was on this trimester system. And so, I wasn't -- it just didn't work. And, my sister did go to Hood, and graduate from Hood. But, I realized I wasn't a student. I was a person who got along with people, and the teachers liked me -- and I didn't know why, but whatever. And, then I had my first child. Just exactly a year after I graduated from college. Because we wanted to have a child before my husband had to go overseas. And Larry was seven months old when his Daddy left. And, he was two years and seven months when his Daddy came back. During that time, I worked a little bit as a volunteer at the Red Cross. And took care of my son, and lived upstairs from my parents. Irv and I had had an apartment, but we had to give that up. And, I lived upstairs from my parents. And so, they helped with Larry a little. And, I could get out. Then Irv came home. And, about a year later, we had Jeff. And then, two years later we had Pat. And I began to do some volunteer work in the community. Found it interesting. I worked for some sort of social service agencies. And then when Pat was eight years old, we had gone on a family trip. We went across the country. Irv usually was busy in the summer. He was working in his family business. So, he was busy a couple of nights a week. And we were determined that we were going to take the kids on a family trip. It so happened that he sold his business that year. But he told the people who bought his family stores and with whom he was going to continue to work for a while that he had already planned to be away for the summer. And, we took the children across the country, and up into Canada. And, as Irv and I always had this little thing that we did at the end of every school year -- we would sit down and really talk about the children. How they were doing, and whether we thought that we were doing the right thing with their education. We were sending them to public school. And by then, a lot of our friends had sent their children to private school. And we were very much in favor of the idea of public education, but we didn't want to do it at the sacrifice of our children's education. So --

JF: Where were you living at this point?

LBF: We were living on Falstaff Road. We had lived upstairs from my parents in the apartment that I had lived in during the war. And, we lived there until Pat was about two. And then, we got our own home on Falstaff Road -- which was also a Jewish section. And we were thinking of what the children were like on this trip across the country. And Irv and I decided that they were too dependent on me. I remember that we - when we were in Canada, there was some kind of a -- they had a rainstorm or something. And, in those days, kids wore rubber shoes over their shoes. And our kids had to ask me whether they should put on their rubber shoes. That kind of thing. So, when we got home and we were doing this yearly evaluation, we said - -but, what could we do? How could we make them more independent? It would mean that I shouldn't be home as much. So that they would have to find a way to go to the library, or whatever it was. But I didn't have any skills. I had graduated from Goucher, and that's all that I had. And had done this little bit of community work. And had been president of the PTA. I had worked in the school a lot. And, I also had thought about going to work -- when I remember -- I was asked to be on a Saturday morning radio program to talk about -- because of my experience as a public school PTA president -- the fiscal responsibility of the community to public education. I suddenly realized that there was something wrong with this picture if they were asking me to talk about the fiscal responsibility -- when I didn't even know how to make my checkbook work. And, so then, I -- Irv and I talked about what I could do. And decided that what I would love to do -- if I ever had a real choice -- would be to become a psychiatrist.

JF: What made you interested in that?

LBF: Just because I had worked with these public agencies. And had worked in the PTA. And we had a mothers' group. We had a psychiatrist running the mothers' group. I just liked the fact that there were so many things going on in people's minds that -- if they were more clearly known -- could help solve so many problems. But, anyway, I knew that I couldn't go to medical school. And so, that was the end of that

thought.

JF: Why was that? You didn't consider --

LBF: Well, I was 36, I think. And, I hadn't been that wonderful a student. And, certainly hadn't been a good science or math student. So, we decided that I would go to the Department of Welfare. I had heard that you didn't have to have any more than a college degree to get a job there. I only knew one person who worked there. And, I went down and I was interviewed by a woman named Martha Quinotte. And she said, “What would you like to do?” And, I told her that I would like to get a job with the Department of Welfare, working with people. And she said, "Well we have -- we're going to start what was called an in-service training." And she said, "You could start that soon." And I said, "What would I do?" And she said, "Well it would be in public assistance. And you would interview people, and see whether they were worthy recipients for public assistance. You'd go to their homes." And the homes were mostly in the projects. And, I said to her, "Well, could I call my husband, and see what he thinks of this?" It never occurred to me that asking to call my husband was sort of a silly thing to do. It just didn't even enter my mind. She gave me her phone, and I called him at the office, and he said, "Of course you can't do that." He said, "I'd be worried to death all day with you out on those streets. Just tell that women you can't do that." She had told me, "If you ever feel that you're in trouble, or you don't like the neighborhood, we can get a policeman to go with you." And so, I hung up and said, "My husband said I can't do that." So she said, "Well, come back tomorrow. We'll see what else is available." I come back the next day, and she says, "I've just the thing for you -- you can be a receptionist." So, I said, "Oh, what would I do?" And she said, "Well, you would have these numbers written on a card. And the people would have the matching numbers. And, you hold up the number, and they would come forward, and you'd say -- you can now go to Room 103, or whatever. And you do that right here in this setting." So I said, "Can I call my husband?" She said, "Sure." And I call him, and he said, "Well, that's

ridiculous. Why would you want to be a receptionist down on Lanvale Street. If you want to be a receptionist, I know we could get you a job at one of the decent hospitals, or something that's close to the home. I don't think that's a good idea." So, I hang up and I say, "My husband said that wasn't such a good idea." So -- she wasn't disgusted with me or anything. She said, "Come back Monday -- we'll see what we have." And, I come back Monday, and she's on the phone... And she says, "They're just calling me to tell me that one of their workers in the adoption division is leaving. Do you think that you'd like to consider that job?" And she said, "Would you like to call your husband?" She told me what it was. You got to know the family a little bit at the office. And then, after you knew them, and knew what kind of people they were -- you went to their home.

JF: This would be to recommend them as adoptive parents?

LBF: Yes, yes. And, they wouldn't be strangers to you, and you'd know what kind of house, and whatever -- neighborhood. And so, I said, "I don't think I need to call my husband about that -- because we have some adopted children in the family. And, I think it's something I'm interested in. And I think that he'd approve of that." So, that's what I did. And the in-service training began the next week, as I recall. And that was three and a half weeks of full-time training. But not books, just learning what you do, and what you say. And how you interview, and that sort of thing. And what you're looking for. What you're looking for in references. I then did that adoption work there for nine years. And I loved it. And I became the screener for the whole city. Everybody who wanted to adopt in Baltimore City, I saw first. And screened them, and then sent them to what I had been -- which was a home-study worker. And I kept just about two cases to do home-studies, because I always preferred long-term. You know, didn't want to just see people for those first two interviews.

JF: That must have been fascinating.

LBF: It was fabulous. It's been a very, very important part of my life. But at the end of the nine years, Hopkins had a column in the paper saying – “Hopkins to train housewives to be psychotherapists.” And a friend of mine -- I didn't even see the column, but a friend of mine sent me the column. And it sounded interesting to me. And, actually, like 400 women applied -- it was only for women. And, you had to be 35 or over. It was in the late 60's when these different things were being started. 1966.

JF: Why was it only for women?

LBF: Because what they were trying to do -- there was a man named Reidlich – Dr. Frederick Reidlich -- who was at Yale. And, he had said -- what America needs is a good five dollar psychotherapist. And what is our untapped resource? And he felt that it was educated women who weren't working. Or who weren't professionally working. And so, he tried it in 1960 at NIMH. And that was the first place that it was done. It was two years of intensive training, and one year of internship. And then, the eight women who completed the course went out and got jobs. They were followed closely for a couple of years. A book was written about them. And they were very successful. But no other hospital or any other place picked it up -- because it was very expensive for the facility that was doing the training. They had to use their psychiatrists who would have been in the clinics or doing their work. Hopkins was the next place to pick it up. And that was in '66 when these different things were being tried. So, it was only for women. Because they were trying to see if this resource could be used to the advantage of themselves and to the communities. And many, many women applied. And then, they got it down to about 40 -- when they began to screen us. And they screened us from the 40, and got down to eight. That's how many they wanted. And it was three really intensive days of screening. With psychiatrists. One psychologist. Other professional people from Hopkins.

JF: What sort of things did they ask you?

LBF: Oh, it was very interesting. One day, we saw a movie of a patient being interviewed by a psychiatrist. But, you didn't know what the psychiatrist then told her at the end of the interview. And so, you had to tell what you thought. And one day, we interviewed an adolescent in a great big -- I don't know if the place was really as big as I remember. But, you interviewed this patient, an actual patient who had come into the adolescent clinic. You didn't necessarily have any interviewing skills at all. And, later on, one of my professors, who became my very good friend said -- that I was so bad in that interview -- but they liked me. And, they didn't want that to be the deciding factor. But, you were told what the child's problem was. And my child, who was as I think about it -- a 14-year-old boy -- had passed a picture around that he drew that was pornographic. And he passed it around the class. Well, I knew that. But, when I was asking him why he was there, he wouldn't tell me. And what Dr. Godenne said was that I'd badgered the poor kid to death. He never did tell me. But anyway -- they finally -- it was very, very anxiety-provoking. And, I had never -- as you can see from this story of my life -- I had never been in any competitive -- really competitive situation. And I thought -- if I weren't chosen for that, I would never compete for anything again. Anyway, I was chosen. And I loved it from day one. And that's where I still am. And that's 35 years ago. We had two years of training. So that was '66 to '68. Sixty-nine was our internship year. And, after my internship year, because we were the first class that Hopkins had ever taken -- by then they were screening for their second class. A new clinic was being opened. I worked at Phipps for one year. That was the mental hospital at Hopkins. In the out-patient department. And then, some doctors at Hopkins decided to start what was called the "Sexual Behaviors Consultation Unit". And, at that time, sexual clinics were starting all over. They were just growing up like dandelions all over the country.

JF: This was the early '70's?

LBF: Uh-huh. And Masters and Johnsons books had just come out. Masters and Johnsons had come to Hopkins to speak. And the whole sexual arena was changing. Hopkins felt that they were ready to have a clinic. We had doctors then who were doing the transsexual operation. So, we trained for that clinic. The clinic is now 31 years old. And we -- I just had a party here at this apartment, about four weeks ago for the clinic. We --

JF: So you're still -- are you still at that clinic?

LBF: Uh-huh.

JF: Was it sexual behaviors?

LBF: Uh-huh. And we just call it the Consultation Unit. We are much more a general psychiatric clinic now. We don't just do sexual cases. The transsexual operation is no longer done at Hopkins. The whole world of homosexuality has changed. We don't get people being so worried about their gender choice, or their sexual partner choice. You get much more cases of marital problems, and more general things. But the clinic -- and we don't know why -- we don't know if it's because of the subject matter-- whatever it was -- we have stayed a very close unit. And, although a lot of our doctors have gone and become heads of departments of psychiatry in different places, or are in private practice -- on Friday afternoon when we have our clinic, a lot of them come back. So that the party had a fair number of our old people. And it's almost like a family. It's very unusual for a clinic to stay together that long. But it's been a wonderful life for me. And I -- my dream came true -- because, although I'm not a psychiatrist, the work that we do - I'm not allowed to prescribe medication. But the work that I do is very close to being what I wanted to be.

JF: You're a psychotherapist?

LBF: Uh-huh.

JF: All right.

LBF: So, it's been a fabulous career. I work very little now. But I just like to keep my hand in it.

JF: Can I ask you some more questions about the work -- it sounds to me starting at a clinic like that in the early '70's, that you were really on the cutting edge. The attitudes towards sexuality were changing.

LBF: They were.

JF: So much. And I was interested when you said when you were a student at Hood, you couldn't even live in a dorm, as a married woman, because you would contaminate the minds of these tender young things who had supposedly never even heard of sex at that point. So...(laughter)

LBF: Well, the administration liked to think that.

JF: Liked to think that. So, I wondered if you could talk a little bit about the changing attitudes towards sex that you've seen in your lifetime?

LBF: Well, our clinic is thinking now of doing some research. We have such a fabulous bank of information. And, one of the things, if I ever would do it - -that I would be most interested in doing is just what you're asking -- which is to -- write about the changing attitudes. In the beginning, women --

JF: In the beginning of?

LBF: Of our clinic.

JF: OK. Clinic.

LBF: Women were coming in. They were reading or hearing about these new books that came out about human sexuality. The book that Masters and Johnson wrote. And Helen Singer Kaplan's book came out soon after that. And women were just discovering that they had missed a lot. They didn't know that they were supposed to enjoy certain -- different things. It hadn't been talked about or explained to them in that way. So, a lot of people came in, because they were anorgasmic. Or, they had never talked about sex at all. Some people had been married for 15 years, and had really never done anything but had just kind of been passive partners. This changed quite rapidly. Because once sex began to be talked about and written about -- it was like an explosion. Also, for ten years, our clinic did the screening for people who wanted the transsexual operation. Hopkins had started that because -- people came to Hopkins to have repairs. They had had horrible surgery done in Casablanca, and all kinds of awful places. And the Hopkins surgery started in the department of plastic surgery, I think. The doctors decided that if people really wanted the surgery, it should be done right. And, the people who wanted the surgery were -- they were zealots about it. They just felt like they deserved it. Mostly, they said, that they felt that they were a woman born into a man's body. And we screened them. There were certain guidelines. We would see them in therapy for two years. They would then begin to have their hormonal treatments and things like that. After 10 years, our very brilliant director -- his name was John Meyer -- decided to do a study of people who had had the operation. And people who had come, wanting the operation, but, for one reason or another, didn't have it. Either they decided that they could live as that other sex, without actually having the surgery. Or they didn't have the money for the surgery -- whatever it was. And, usually, the people who came and wanted the surgery showed very severe signs of depression, which they felt would be alleviated by having the operation.

JF: Were they being treated for depression? Or, was it assumed that the surgery would clear it up?

LBF: Well, they assumed the surgery would clear it up.

JF: I see.

LBF: At the end of this time, when the study was done, it showed that just as many people were still depressed, percentage-wise, as the ones that didn't have the surgery. And the ones that had had the surgery also were having a lot of terrible physical problems. Their whole urological tract, and all those things that whoever makes us, didn't mean for things to be so re-routed. And so, John Meyer took his paper to the powers that be at Hopkins. And, Hopkins decided not to do the surgery any more. Now, after that, our population changed. Because, if they weren't going to get the operation at Hopkins, why did they need to come to Hopkins? And, also by then, groups were beginning to be formed throughout the country -- where people could go and talk to other people about wearing women's clothes and --

JF: So, support groups?

LBF: Very wonderful support groups for these particular kinds of problem. So that was a big change. We still get an occasional person. But really, not very often. Another thing that changed radically was the attitude toward homosexuality. Now, we used to get people who wanted to know if they couldn't stop having these feelings of desire, and love for people of the same sex. Again, they found support groups within the community. And, eventually, homosexuality was no longer called a diseased state. I can't say that even today -- 2001 -- it's totally accepted. But it's a totally different story than it was. And the other thing is -- a lot about women's roles in their own sex lives. For a short time we had a problem which -- I don't think we see much of this now -- where men were suddenly having problems of their own with impotence and what-not, because women who used to be very docile, had become very aggressive. And they -- the men became very frightened and impotent, and whatever. So yes, there have been lots of big changes within the problems that our clinic has seen.

JF: Did your work make it very easy for you to discuss sex with your children?

LBF: No. Actually, by the time I was in the Sexual Behavior Clinic, my kids were already grown.

JF: Oh, they were grown?

LBF: Yes. And, the children and the grandchildren get kind of a kick out of the fact that their grandmother is working there, you know? But, even now, the grandchildren who are just in high school or starting college, or are in college -- well, I'll say something to them. And they'll say, "Oh, Grammy. We know that. For heaven's sake." You know?

JF: (laughter)

LBF: Everybody -- already, you know? It's such a different world. It is such a different world than it was when I -- in 1966 -- there have been so many revolutions in society since 1966 -- that it was just the cutting edge. I started to say that I realized that I was -- that I had this problem of a learning disability. And, one of the ways that I learned about it - -about myself -- was that I have a granddaughter named Natalie, who has just been -- she's deciding what college to go to. She's just been accepted, or put on the waiting list of every college she applied to. And she was -- she had a severe learning disability - - she still does. She and Ben read very slowly. So that they -- it takes them so much longer to do their work than it takes --

JF: And, who is Ben?

LBF: Ben is the child who graduated with honors from Yale. Won the anthropology prize for having the best anthropology paper at Yale. And he's just brilliant. But, he couldn't read. And, he was very -- very unable to make very close contacts with kids for a long time. He recognized that when he was in about the 11th grade. And, when he wrote that essay that you have to write to get into college - -he wrote that he had been a

severely learning disabled child, and had had all this help. And, didn't realize though that the one thing that he hadn't learned was how to read other people's emotions. And, at about sixteen and a half, it made him know, that although he was a good friend of children, he was in the science club, and he was in the chess club, and he had friends in clubs -- but he didn't have a close friend that shared very personal things. And he saw that as one of these problems that came from being learning disabled -- because he learned all this other stuff. But that he hadn't learned yet. And, once he learned it, he's a very -- he has very close friends, and close personal relationships. When I read Natalie's evaluation, which a very fine psychologist out in California did -- I called my daughter and I said, "Pat, I'm reading about myself." And I never realized it. But what I did realize was that I had learned and -- you know, whatever you call success -- not to become the head of the department of psychiatry, or anything -- but I've been an instructor in psychiatry at Hopkins for many years, and have been successful in my profession. My learning at Hopkins -- and, before that at the Department of Welfare -- involved no reading.

JF: Mmm.

LBF: None. I don't know how it worked. I don't know how that -- if I had been a folklorist, it wouldn't have worked for me at all. You see? I wouldn't have been able to integrate that fast enough to be able to get my Ph.D. before I was 90 years old.

JF: (laughter)

LBF: But I didn't know at the time that this was happening. This Hopkins program -- they knew they were not going to ask us to read. They didn't want us to become a Freudian, or these different schools. They wanted us to become eclectic. And then, we could learn whatever we wanted to learn. So it was just made to order for me.

JF: Mmm hmm.

LBF: And, I think, in my generation -- and, even in my children's generation -- not my grandchildren' s -- but my children's generation -- there were many people who had this problem. They were lucky, like I was. My life worked all right. I have one friend who became an actor. He said, it was because he had to memorize everything from day one in school. But nobody knew that it was really a - -just a different way of learning. And, so thank goodness, the world has progressed that much now. Are you getting anxious?

JF: No. But I have many other things that I wanted to ask you -- if you have the time?

LBF: Right.

JF: I'd like to know more about -- we touched a little bit on your -- on your marriages, and your children. But, I'd like to hear more about that. You said that you married when you were a junior in college. At the end of your junior year -- can you tell me how you met your husband?

LBF: I met my husband...

JF: Let me get his full name, first?

LBF: Irving. I-R-V-I-N-G. Blum. B-L-U-M. I met him, actually -- his brother, his older brother who's still alive. And is in his early nineties -- was a friend of a cousin of mine. And when that cousin's father died, my uncle Harry -- I went to the funeral, and I met this brother of Irv's. He asked me to go out. And I went out with him. And met Irv that night I went out with him. And that was Easter vacation of my junior year. And, we began to go together -- well, it was only May -- and then school was over. And I came home. And he was from a Baltimore family that owned a furniture store. But more general store. And, we began to go together that summer. And --

JF: Was he also a student at this time?

LBF: No, he had graduated from Hopkins. He was 6 years older than me, and he had graduated at about 20. So he was out of school a long time. And was working in the store. And, because he was working, he had a capacity that most -- everybody was older. His friends were much, much older. And so, when I began to go with him, we saw these people that were more -- some place between me and my parents' age. That didn't last very long. Because then I went back to school for my junior year. And, during that year -- we went together. He didn't take out anybody else after we met. And I went out for -- with people over that summer. And, then we decided as spring came, and we could see what was happening in Europe --

JF: This was 1940?

LBF: That was 19 -- I met him at the end of '39. And, so this was '40 -- we got married in '41. And we realized that we would probably want to marry -- if these war clouds continued. And, so when we wanted to get married, it was -- I think it was called Tisha B'av -- and you had to get married, either before it, or after it. And, we got married before it. So, it was a rather -- it was a big wedding, but my mother and father had to put it together rather quickly. He had already heard from his draft board. And we went on our honeymoon. His brother Alvin called and said, "You know, you've got all those telegrams." That's what you did in those days. You got telegrams the day you were married. Wishing you well. "You got a telegram from your draft board. You didn't pay any attention to it." And we said, "Oh we thought it was some practical joke." And he said, "No practical joke. The draft board is calling here, every day to say -- why aren't you answering?" So, we had to come home from our honeymoon. And he got a very short deferment -- like a couple of months -- to finish, close up stuff that he was doing at work. We had taken an apartment, but we only stayed in it a couple of months. And then, in October, he was drafted. And went to Officers Training School.

JF: Was he still living in Baltimore?

LBF: He was -- but then, no -- the school was in Virginia -- at Camp Lee in Richmond.

JF: And, you were living in your parents' house at the time?

LBF: I lived -- my parents had rented out the second floor. And so, those people moved. And I -- did they move then? I don't remember whether they moved right away, or if I lived with Irv -- well, by the time Irv left -- no that's right. So, that year that I went to Goucher, I lived at home. That's right. Those people were still living upstairs. And, every Wednesday, Goucher didn't have school on Wednesday -- I went down to Richmond and was with Irv. And then, he came home a lot of weekends. And that was October. On December 7th, war was declared. And, I could still see him because he was still in Officers' Training School. He graduated from Officers' Training just about four days before I graduated from Goucher. And that was the first time that we would have been able to live together anyway. And I went down to a terrible place called Camp Pickett. And --

JF: In Virginia?

LBF: Mmm hmm. We lived in a dormitory of a defunct college called Blackstone College. It was awful. And we knew a family in Lynchburg. The Schewel family who had a furniture store. And, in the rooms, there were two very small cots. Because they were what the girls had slept on at school. And through the Schewels, to they sent us a double bed -- cheap thing, you know? And a bureau.

END OF CD 1

JF: OK. This is disk number two of the interview with Lois Feinblatt. I'm Jean Freedman. It's March 31st, 2001. And we're in Baltimore, Maryland. And we were discussing Lois's early years of marriage. Her husband was in Officers Training School in Virginia. And Lois had just graduated from Goucher. And, you were talking about -- you went to a place called Camp Pickett in Virginia -- which was dreadful. What was dreadful about it?

LBF: Well, it was one of these army camps that had to be made into a camp very quickly. So that it was just a mud hole, really. And the town was very small. And I was saying -- that we lived in a girls' dormitory. The officers. I don't know where the enlisted men -- I think they lived on base. And that was very interesting. Because a lot of the people were also recent brides. There was a great sense of camaraderie. And we were able to get this bedroom set from the Schewels. And, when we would come home for the weekend, we would give our bedroom -- our room to whoever either had an anniversary, or a birthday, or something -- so that having this double bed was like the prize of the camp.

JF: (laughter)

LBF: Soon after I got there, we knew that it would be inevitable that Irv would be going overseas, but we didn't know when. We decided that we wanted to have a baby. I thought that if anything were to happen to him, that I would want his child to be on this earth. And I soon got pregnant with Larry. And then, we moved around a little. We got -- we were able to find a little house.

JF: So, you were able to come back to Baltimore?

LBF: No, in Blackstone.

JF: Oh, in Blackstone.

LBF: I mean, if -- not in Blackstone. In -- what was it called? Yes, Blackstone, Virginia, I think it was called. But we had to share the house with another couple. Their names were Houston and Zacockey. And we had a lot of fun there. She taught me how to cook. And, we had - there were two other couples that didn't have any place to eat. And so, they basically ate at our house. And, then, Irv got sent to Shreveport, Louisiana. And I went down there.

JF: What was that like?

LBF: Well, we lived at this lovely hotel. It wasn't for long, because I was getting closer to the time when I was going to have my baby. And I was going to have the baby in Baltimore. And so, that was fine. And then, I came up to Baltimore. And Larry was born up here.

JF: When was Larry born?

LBF: He was born in April, 1943. And Irv didn't quite make it to the -- the night of the birth. He got stuck in Roanoke. He got up here the next day. And --

JF: Did you have anyone with you? Were your parents with you?

LBF: My sister and her friend were babysitting with me at home. And my parents had gone to the movies. And I didn't want to tell my sister that I was having contractions -- because she was only 13 and her friend was -- you know, the same age. And I thought I'd scare them to death. Then I thought I could just kind of -- be OK, until my parents got home. It made quite a quick dash for the hospital, which was nearby. And what I remember was -- that because it was wartime, there were no sheets on the bed. Just the ticking. You know what ticking is? The black and white ticking? I remember seeing that black and white ticking. And I had the baby very, very soon after I got to the hospital. And I stayed home with Larry and nursed him for six weeks. And then, oh we didn't know when Irv would be going overseas. And so I stopped nursing. We had a

nurse come in. I was living upstairs from my parents, so they were there. And I went down, and spent a little bit of time with Irv.

JF: He was still in Shreveport?

LBF: And, he was in, yes. But anyway, then he came back to Virginia. Because when we had a house with Larry, we were in Virginia again. And Larry was seven months old when Irv went overseas.

JF: Where did Irv go?

LBF: He went to England for a long time. He was in Liverpool. As the troops were getting ready for the invasion. And then, he went in on about D-Day plus four, I think it was. And he was the commanding officer of Black troops. They did that in those days. First of all, the army was segregated. So, there were all Black troops. And interestingly enough, there were four officers with these troops. It was called "The 24th Quartermaster". And three of them were Jewish. Three of the officers.

JF: Were all the officers White?

LBF: And all the officers were White. And, another interesting thing about that was -- that the day I graduated, I didn't want to go to the graduation, because that was the day he had to show up to get his first assignment as an officer. And so I remember asking this woman -- Dean Simpson -- if I could just get my diploma a few days early? She said no. She said, "You're lucky that your husband can even be here for the graduation." So, we had to stay through graduation. And then, when we got down to Camp Pickett, all the good assignments had been -- well, we didn't know good or bad -- because, in the army, it's all just luck -- whether you're going to live or die. And there were just two things left. One was graves registration. And, one was a quartermaster corps -- a car company. Well, he didn't have any idea what a car company was. But, he knew that graves registration was not what he wanted. So, he took the only other thing available.

And it turned out to be a very nice assignment. What they did was that they were the chauffeurs for all of the dignitaries that came to the European theater of operation. And I recently read a letter -- I don't know where I found that letter -- that Irv had written to -- I think it was to "Stars and Stripes" -- somebody had somehow put down his troop saying that they were just chauffeurs or something. And he wrote this beautiful letter about how everybody is all part of a team. And you've got to have that. And these men did a wonderful job. And, actually, they went behind the lines. And they freed a hospital in Belgium at the time of the Battle of the Bulge, and he got -- he got a -- I think it was the Silver Star for that.

JF: What was it like for you, at home with a baby -- and your husband overseas?

LBF: Well, you know, I don't think it was that bad, because it's never been -- when everybody's in the same boat. And we had this thing which we called "The Wives' Club" -- women who stayed my friends throughout my life. And some had been my friends before. Most of them didn't have babies. And they were working -- but, they -- but we all were lonely. And we all were anxious for the letters to come. And they came in bundles. You know? Like you didn't hear for two weeks, and then you got 13 letters, or whatever it was. But we had each other. And I had Larry who was sort of a “cause celebre.” You know, everybody loved the baby. And, having my parents downstairs -- and having my family around -- and everybody having really the same kind of worries -- and, I worked, I think, two days a week at Red Cross -- when there were emergencies in America. They wanted to bring the boys home when the father died, or the mother was sick, or whatever. And I did that kind of work.

JF: What did that involve?

LBF: Oh, it was just -- all sort of secretarial stuff. You had to find out where the person was. And then, you had to find out how to get him home. And how to get him home at the time that it was important that he be home.

JF: Was this volunteer work?

LBF: It was volunteer work. But mostly, I was with my little boy, and with my friends. I tried to take bridge lessons. And I thought that -- well, Irv had been a wonderful bridge player, and I didn't play. I used to play contract bridge. Auction -- maybe auction was the first thing we played. And then, contract was later.

JF: Now, contract is more complicated?

LBF: But whatever it was, I wasn't good at it. And I took lessons with other war brides. We would get together, and we would want to say - "Did you get a letter today? And how is he? And what is he saying?" And -- I guess I was the worst -- at not wanting to get down to bridge. The teacher was a zealot about bridge. And he was a lawyer. But, he only really wanted to -- he was only interested in bridge. And one time, after we had our lesson, he asked me to stay a minute. And I asked him what he had to say. And he said, "Would you mind if you stopped taking lessons?" And I asked, "Why?" And he said, "You're making me have a nervous breakdown." He said, "You are not interested in bridge. You're interested in your letters, and your husband" -- which I thought was perfectly normal. But he didn't. And then I didn't take bridge up again until -- soon after Irv came home -- and that didn't work either. I'm just not. Now that I'm 80, I'm sorry that I don't know how to play bridge. But, I'm not going to learn now. So -- anyway, what else was important, at that time? The family -- then Irv came home, and the family grew. And I went to work then.

JF: When did Irv come home?

LBF: He came home exactly two years and one month after he left. So, Larry was two and a half. A little more than two and a half.

JF: So, that would be '45?

LBF: Uh-huh.

JF: And then what?

LBF: Irv had always wanted to be a college professor. But his father had written him letters when he was overseas -- that he couldn't wait until Irv got home to take over the store. Work at the store. And, in those days, you did what your father said, pretty much. And, he decided that he had to do that. It wasn't wonderful for him -- but, anyway, he did it. And, in 1957, he had a great opportunity to sell the store -- to Reliable Stores. And he did that. And then he went into commercial and industrial financing. He had a much more interesting -- for him -- life then. And he was always very interested in politics. And politics sort of permeated the conversations at home. He never, never wanted to talk about the store. He never wanted to talk about business. And, later on, when his sons weren't a bit interested in business -- he felt that maybe he had made a mistake, to have never mentioned it, you know?

JF: Could you tell me about your other children?

LBF: The children are sort of three aspects of their father.

JF: That's interesting.

LBF: And, I wonder why sometime there's -- I can't say they're alike -- but, their attitudes are -- you know how some time in a family -- one is way over here, and two are way over here? They're not like that. I think that Irv and I, philosophically, were just very, very much alike.

JF: In what way? Could you --

LBF: In that -- we thought family was very important. And we thought that values were the most important things that you could give to a family. And, neither of us cared much

about material things. His family was in the furniture business. And so, before we got married, we got really nice furniture which is still in the living room -- and, I guess some in here. But we -- we wanted to live nicely. But we didn't want to live real glitzily. And we wanted to live in the city proper, if we could. We wanted our children to go to public school. We cared about -- a lot about the world around us. And he became very close to our rabbi. His name was Morris Lieberman. And Irv then became president of the temple. And he became the president of the Associated Jewish Charities. And, then when he got sick at the end of his life -- in his illness -- in the year he was ill -- he was ill exactly a year, he became president of the Council of Jewish Federations, which is all of North America -- Jewish thing. He was very interested when Israel had their Six-Day War. Irv actually closed his office, and went to work, just to raise money for Israel. And, so we, you know -- our marriage was pretty seamless. The time that was most difficult and really difficult -- was when the kids were in college in the '60's, and they all became very radical. And, that was just about two years -- say, four years before he died. Or, maybe it was longer than that -- it felt like forever - but I don't think it was forever. It was the late - he died in '73. He got sick in '72. And all this started in '68. So it was those years that were so difficult.

JF: Now, let's see. Larry was born in '43?

LBF: Mmm hmm. Larry just missed it sort of -- although he became a very - his thinking was very much that way as he matured. But he, at the time that Jeff was doing all this political stuff at the University of Chicago -- Larry was already at Oxford. And so, he was over there. And, a little bit away from it. He had graduated from -- he had gotten -- a graduate degree at Harvard, and went to Oxford, and was working on his Ph.D.

JF: So, did he get his Ph.D. at Oxford?

LBF: No, he got it at Harvard.

JF: At Harvard. I see -- so the other -

LBF: But, he didn't get it until the night -- he didn't finish his thesis until the night before his dad died.

JF: Oh.

LBF: So, his dad never really knew it was finished. He dedicated it to him.

JF: And the other children were born when?

LBF: The children were born in '43, and -- in '46, Jeff was born. And Pat was born in '49.

JF: '49? So they were classic baby boomers?

LBF: Uh-huh.

JF: Right? So, again, you were telling me that they were the three different aspects of Irv?

LBF: Right. Irv was -- he was really a true intellectual. And he had wanted to be a college professor. He was the most well-read person. He could read three books in a weekend. And, once there was a column in the Baltimore Sun in which they called him the "Philosopher King". He just thought of things in sort of broad terms. He wasn't a lawyer. But, people thought he was a lawyer, because he was a person who was able to pick up the lingo. When I became a psychotherapist, they called him Dr. Blum because they thought he was the psychiatrist. He just had that kind of ear and brain and he just -- that's what he did. He was always political. And Jeff was the child who was closest to him. Who listened at his feet as his listened to the news every night. And, was -- this community organizing that Jeff does, was just the kind of thing that, you know, that Irv loved to do. And, even in Jeff's job -- often involves fund-raising. And he always said he

never -- if he believes in something, he never minds asking people for money for it, because, he learned that from his father. That if you believe in something, you are not trying to sell a bad product, you know?

JF: And Jeff is a community organizer, right?

LBF: Mmm hmm.

JF: For?

LBF: Yes, for U.S. Action. Always been a community organizer. But, he had been very radical in college. And, when Irv died, the two younger ones were not in school. He died in August. And in September, they both went back to school.

JF: What was difficult about -- you mentioned that those years of the late '60's were difficult?

LBF: Well, they were. Jeff was a real radical leader at the University of Chicago. And got kicked out with 72 other students.

JF: For what?

LBF: Oh, they had taken over the president's office. And then, when they got kicked out, we thought they were expelled. It wasn't until he tried to go back to college that they told us -- well, he didn't tell us, but he saw on his transcript that they had changed the expulsion to, you know, a much more temporary thing. But, he didn't know that. He wouldn't have gone back to Chicago, anyway. Even though he was in his 5th year. He had enough credits to graduate. Well then, when he went back to school -- he went to B.U. -- he went there, and he took a nursing degree, because he wanted to have a profession. And he only wanted to go to school as short a time as possible. And you know, schools don't really take you for your senior year. So, he just went the one year.

And he -- I think it was just one year. It could have been 18 months. I think it was 18 months. And, he got an R.N. and a B.S. But he never nursed. But, he's very interested in -- in problems that have to do with medicine, and health care, and that sort of thing. Larry was certainly the philosopher that his father was. And Pat is this lawyer that's just so much like him. She's never been a lawyer that was in a firm or anything. She's always been -- first she worked for an agency, and then, she got this wonderful -- just so happened -- job at Boalt Hall -- they were looking for an immigration lawyer at the beginning of when immigration law became a specialty. And, she just happened to be at the right place at the right time. But they're just like him. You know? They would have - it's just a crime that he never saw them. And the grandchildren are - well, of course, he never saw them either. Because the children weren't even married when he died. And the only one he really knew was Judy -- my older child's wife. He had met her a few times. But the grandchildren are very, very much -- as of now -- very, very much like their parents. They're all committed. They all work for, they are escorts for abortion clinics. And they teach in the inner city. And they teach Jewish Sunday School. And they're interested in music which he was very interested in. And they're tennis players as he was. He was a magnificent tennis player. And they -- their minds are much more like his than they are like mine. They're you know -- so -- he would have had a wonderful time with them. He really would have. He died of something called glomerulo nephritis. They felt that it had been a virus that had attacked the kidney. Just like a virus can attack the lining of your heart, and you have something called endocarditis. That same kind of thing. And in those days, they didn't do a transplant, until they had the perfect match. They don't wait now until the person’s health has deteriorated. I mean he was just this gorgeous, healthy specimen. And he was just attacked by this. And six months later, his kidneys totally failed. And so, for six months, he was on dialysis, while they were still waiting for the perfect kidney.

JF: He couldn't have been very old?

LBF: He was 58 when he died. I was 52 when he died.

JF: So, what did you do afterward?

LBF: Well, I was already working which -- really -- was a saving grace. And, my clinic -- I-- the year he was sick, he was on dialysis at Hopkins. So, I was able to keep a few of my patients that I saw during those seven hours when he was on the machine. And, then when he died, my clinic very quickly gave me a number of patients. And I lived in my house. And I had a cousin who had to take a walk, because of his heart -- every night, or every day. But he took it at night. And he lived around the corner from me. And he -- so, we took my dog out every night, for the first 365 nights. Then, I decided I wasn't going to be a slave to the dog any more. I built a fence. But I didn't do too much else. I saw my friends, and I began to see an occasional date or something. And then, in the third year after he died, I began to take a creative writing course -- sort of like the one I'm taking now. It was at Hopkins. And we had to write where we were in our lives. And why we thought this was an important thing for us to be writing this stuff. I wrote this essay about how my husband had died three years before. My children were scattered to the four winds. Actually they were all living in Boston at that time, because the two younger went to school and graduate school up there. And Larry was an instructor at Harvard at the time. And I said I was sort of ready. I was 55 years old, ready to see if I could get any more from life. But I don't know what I meant. Anyway, soon -- like a month later, or not even that -- three weeks later -- I met Gene. I had known him all my life. But -- and, he was Irv's lawyer.

JF: Let me get his full name.

LBF: His first name was Eugene -- E-U-G-E-N-E. Feinblatt. And, I began to -- I met him on his 57th birthday -- I mean that was when I first saw him. Anyway, I don't know if you realize -- or if it happens to you -- but you see somebody all your life -- only you don’t pay any attention to them. And Gene was the kind of person who didn’t want you to pay

any attention to him. He was in a very unhappy marriage. And he was a very prominent lawyer. And he (laughter), it's interesting. After the war -- this now -- we are going back -- but, after the war, when everybody was sort of seeing who they were going to be friends with -- because years had passed, and people hadn't had a social life. Gene and his wife and Irv and I would get invited to the same parties. And the parties were small. We had simple friends who had small living rooms, you know? You didn't have a million people, you had ten people. And, Irv and Gene would go over in a corner and talk. They were both interesting. And they took themselves away from the party. So, we eventually stopped being invited with the Feinblatts. And, although I saw him -- he'd come to our house, or whatever -- and he had been my brother's roommate at college. Although I don't remember him particularly. But you know, he'd always known us. But it wasn't until that birthday dinner that we both noticed each other. And his wife was away at a hospital at the time. I went with him for many years, before we married. But then we had a lovely marriage. If there was anything that, in my life, you know, thinking about the interview -- I thought, I had both an ordinary life and an extraordinary life.

JF: Would you explain that? That's a really interesting way of putting it.

LBF: Well, I think that what was extraordinary -- and, again, you don't think about these things while they're happening to you -- was that I had two extraordinary husbands. And I don't think that most people have that. I mean, they might have a nice first one, or a nice second one -- you know? But, these were men in their own right -- nothing about me -- who were just extraordinary.

JF: What made them extraordinary?

LBF: Well they were alike in certain ways in that they -- when I first started to go with Gene -- Larry and I were taking a walk. We had a house up in Cape Cod. And we were taking a walk on the beach. And I was going to meet Gene. Larry said, "Tell me about him." And I said, “Well” -- and Larry had met him, but you know? And I said, "Well, he's

a very important man in the community. He's really one of the community leaders. And, he's a very ethical, very moral person, very brilliant mind." And Larry said, "Mom, that's not what I mean, you know? I know that's what you would be interested in -- but, I mean, what's he like?" Well, that part of him was very much like Irv -- what I've just told you. The rest of him was nothing like Irv. He was -- where Irv was a totally social animal, Gene was not. He was much more content to just be with me. Or, -- he had a lot more -- there were a lot more complications going on in his social being. He didn't want everybody to know him. He wasn't just “out there.” He wasn't like that. Because for so many years, when you've done something for so many years -- when for so many years you haven't wanted people to know that you really were very unhappy -- you can't -- I don't think that you can really keep things to yourself and be open. And, so, he was a much -- he was much more protective of himself. But he -- Gene actually changed the skyline of Baltimore. He was on the Greater Baltimore Committee, and the Head of HUD -- when they were making the decisions about the Inner Harbor. I don't know if you know what Baltimore used to be. We had a harbor, and we had a big ship-building industry. But, people like ourselves didn't go down there, because it was a dangerous area, we thought -- or, our parents thought. The house that we bought down there -- which had sold for like $1,600 dollars or something, you know, when the steelworker who lived there before us bought it. It is now selling for $350,000. But Gene was a visionary and saw the downtown developing. And his last thing he did before he died was that he was the real estate lawyer for Camden Yards. That's the stadium. He was responsible for getting all the people to sell, move, and make room for that stadium.

JF: How long were you married?

LBF: We were married 15 years.

JF: And you married --

LBF: He died just a month after our 15th anniversary.

JF: And, when was that?

LBF: He was sick for two years.

JF: When did he die?

LBF: He died two and a half years ago. Just about two and a half years ago. And he was sick for two years and four months. So, it's been --- this month was five years, since he had the stroke.

JF: I see.

LBF: But, I was married to these really wonderful men for almost 50 years of my life.

JF: It's a remarkable thing.

LBF: It is. I got married when I was 20. So now, I'm going to be 80. So, I didn't have that many -- you know I haven't had that many years alone. And, actually -- it was 10 years between when Irv died, and when I married Gene. But, I went with him for six.

JF: I see.

LBF: So -- and now I've lived a lot of a life, I think. And, you know, if you do the mathematics of it -- it's been a lot more good than bad.

JF: Certainly sounds like it.

LBF: And I appreciate that, you know? I don't always appreciate it. (laughter)

JF: (laughter) I don't think anyone can appreciate it 24 hours a day -- 7 days a week.

LBF: (laughter) No, I don't always love it. But I -- you know --

JF: We talked very little about being Jewish.

LBF: Right. We have.

JF: And I was wondering. Did you grow up in a religious family? You mentioned belonging to Chizuk Amuno.

LBF: My parents did. And I -- don't know how I came to go to Baltimore Hebrew from first grade Sunday School.

JF: Oh, you went to Sunday School at Baltimore Hebrew?

LBF: Uh-huh.

JF: Even though your parents belonged to Chizuk Amuno?

LBF: Yes. I think that I wanted to be where my friends were.

JF: Mmm hmm. Were these neighbor --

LBF: Although I just looked at my confirmation. I was with this friend of mine, last weekend when I was in New York, who got confirmed with me?

JF: Mmm hmm.

LBF: And she brought the confirmation picture. And, really, those people that we got confirmed with, hadn't been my friends except for her. And I don't know why I got to go there. My family eventually went there. And in the Baltimore Hebrew -- there's a beautiful -- just one of the prettiest rooms in Baltimore -- chapel to my Uncle Jack and my father.

JF: Mmm.

LBF: So they were very active members there. My brother was the president, and Irv was the president. And I think my Uncle Jack was the president. And Roy was very

active, although he wasn't the president. I had a good time at Sunday School. But I didn't learn anything about Judaism.

JF: (laughter)

LBF: I think luke-warm Judaism in those days, wasn't really -- wasn't very good. Do you want something else to drink?

JF: No, I'm fine.

LBF: I think I could use something.

JF: OK. I'll put this on Pause.

__: (Break in Tape)

JF: OK. We were talking about religion and synagogue membership.

LBF: Right.

JF: And you were telling me that you're a member of Baltimore Hebrew. Are you still a member?

LBF: Mmm hmm.

JF: And have been since childhood?

LBF: Yes.

JF: But when Morris Lieberman was alive, we were very active. I haven't really been crazy about the rabbis since then. And, Gene wasn't really interested in going to temple anyway. But I would have gone, if I had enjoyed it, you know? Morrie died - Morrie Lieberman died about two or three years before Irv died. And he had been our spiritual

leader. He was marvelous for us.

JF: What was so special about him?

LBF: Well, he was very -- he was very intelligent. But he was a very -- he was a practitioner. Like we went on civil rights marches -- we helped desegregate one of the amusement parks.

JF: Really?

LBF: And he was --

JF: Could you tell me more about that?

LBF: He was put in jail that night – for trying to desegregate Gwynn Oaks. It was an amusement park that African-Americans weren't allowed to go to. And it was in the late '60's. I went on the March on Washington - -the Martin Luther King thing. Morrie encouraged us to do all those things. And when I say "encouraged us" -- he encouraged us by his own values, you know? So, that to us, he was like religion the way it was supposed to be.

JF: Mmm hmm.

LBF: Although I have, in more recent years, regretted the fact that I don't know more about the actual religion. We were talking about how we knew about Jewish values. But we didn't know where in the Jewish texts that was so stated, you know?

JF: That's interesting. Where do Jewish values come from? Do they come from the family? Or --

LBF: I think that they do. I think that they come from the family, just like my grandparents giving coal to the poor neighbors. It just becomes a way of life. I tried to

take a course at the Baltimore Hebrew College recently. And it was way over my head. But, the very first day, I liked it. I said to this rabbinical scholar who was teaching it -- he said, "Why are you here?" And I said, "Well I just wanted to know what Judaism is about." And he said, "Judaism is to do good, and to do good." I said, "Well I don't have to come any more, because -- " (laughter) -- and I did come for a little bit. But I didn't really get any more out of it than that. This Rabbi Foreman says he could teach me a lot more about the roots of it. But I don't know about the Torah and the Bible and you know, all that. We always, always, always had a Jewish home.

JF: This is starting when you were a child?

LBF: Mmm hmm. We kept kosher until the war. And, then, I don't think it was a practical thing as much as that my mother was so demoralized by the war. And by the fact that her son, my brother was overseas for so many years. And was injured, and was hospitalized. And, my husband was gone. And that, I don't know -- we were beginning to know what the Nazis were all about. So, anyway, we stopped keeping kosher then. But, of course, my grandmother always kept a kosher home. But, we always had -- Judaism always meant a lot to us. And, my children know a lot more about it than I do. They married people who knew more. And their children know more. Which I think is wonderful.

JF: Did they go to Sunday School as well?

LBF: They went to Sunday School, but they didn't learn anything in Sunday School. Our Sunday School was terrible.

JF: Did they have bar and bat mitzvahs?

LBF: Mmm hmm. But they were just - they were rituals. But we always had -- we always celebrated all the holidays in big ways. And having a large family, you know -- we had big seders - that my grandmother on the Miller side -- there were -- you'd put up

tables that went all the way into the dining room and the living room, and the seder took forever. But it was a great time. And we went over to my grandmother's every Saturday. Every Saturday afternoon. Every Saturday afternoon. And, for the archives -- this woman in town asked if we would write a little something that was some memory of some little ritual, or some party that we liked. I wrote this little thing about going to my grandmother's every Saturday afternoon. And we all waited with baited breath for the sun to go down, so that we could -- because she couldn't spend money on the Sabbath. And, we would go down to this Jewish street, where there were delis and everything -- the minute the sun went down. And, there was already a long line of people waiting to get their Saturday night deli. And we all got the -- we got the same thing every week. And brought it home, you know? Brisket and corned beef, and pastrami and all that. But we couldn't get home until we went to the Jewish butcher. The kosher butcher. Somebody was remembering the other day -- his name was Mr. Thomas. Because we had a dog. And we couldn't bring unkosher dog food into the house. And so, we had to go there and he took these inexpensive cuts of meat, and ground them up in that grinder that he had. And then, we had our dog food for the whole week.

JF: That's lovely.

LBF: And a lot of it was the lung -- I remembered he would say he would put the lung in there.

JF: (laughter)

LBF: But, the Jewish part of our life was pleasant, we liked it. You know, we enjoyed the holidays. And there was just something joyful about being Jewish. And, also the camaraderie about the fact that you were so close to -- bonded with so many people. But as far as really being knowledgeable about it -- I'm not.

JF: Did you ever experience antisemitism?

LBF: Never.

JF: Never?

LBF: Never.

JF: Isn't that interesting.

LBF: My husband - -my first husband -- lived not that far from me. But, in order to walk to school, he had to walk through a rougher neighborhood. And boys called him names. And sort of were threatening. So, he got an Italian friend who was big and strong to walk with him. But, I think my life was pretty protected. And, we didn't wander too far from (laughter) the compound, you know? When somebody asked my son, Larry, when he was around 7 or 8, if he thought that there were more Jewish people in the world or more other people? He thought about it. And then he said, "Well, I guess there are more Jewish people." And the person asked him why he thought that, and he said, "Well, in my family, everybody's Jewish. And, in my Sunday School, everybody's Jewish. And, in my school -- almost everybody's Jewish. So, yes. I guess there are more Jews."

JF: (laughter) That's interesting.

LBF: But then when Baltimore, after the war - they made these covenants change so that you had to be able to live wherever you wanted? There was a dividing line where I lived -- went right up to that black part. And then, after that was all Christian. It was divided by something called Liberty Heights Avenue. And then, we could move wherever we wanted. And my brother moved to a Christian area. But, we made up our mind, that we weren't going to use our children for guinea pigs. And they were happy where they were. Well, actually, it was before we moved to Falstaff Road. It was just when all of us were getting enough money together to be able to buy our first home. We were still living upstairs from my mother. And, but we decided that we didn't want to move any other place. And the kids - we brought them up in a neighborhood that was

wonderful for them. There were a million boys. And Pat didn't love it that much -- because there weren't a million girls. But there was always a football game, or you know -- always something going on.

JF: Did the Jewish neighborhoods change after the war? With the end of restrictive covenants?

LBF: Not particularly.

JF: Not really? So there's still some areas that are distinctly Jewish neighborhoods?

LBF: Mmm hmm.

JF: That's interesting.

LBF: Well, now where we used to live, on Falstaff Road -- they weren't huge houses -- but they were - -they had yards so that you could make them bigger. A lot of Orthodox Jews are moving in there now. Baltimore is the hub -- sort of the magnet for Orthodoxy.

JF: That's interesting. Why is that?

LBF: Particularly something called Modern Orthodoxy. But also, more of the conservative type. One thing is that the Jews from New York -- the Orthodox Jews -- it was very expensive to live in New York. And they were often frightened. And Baltimore's a much easier place to live than New York, because of that. And they began to move down, and the Associated Jewish Charities began to give them a big piece of the Associated pie for Jewish day schools. And so, they have a very good way of sending their children to schools. And, I don't think that Baltimore's Orthodox community is extremely wealthy. And they all have a lot of kids. A tremendous number of kids. But Baltimore's not that expensive a place to live.

JF: Mmm mmm. That's interesting.

LBF: They have what they call a - I'm forgetting what it's called. But, it means an invisible line.

JF: Yes, I know what you mean. I can't remember the name either.

LBF: And you could see them on weekends. On Saturdays, they can push their baby carriages. You can't push a baby carriage, if you are not within the -- whatever it's called. Because you can't do any work. So, they like it here. They have colleges and high schools, and all kinds of compounds where, if you have a minimum of seven children, you could live.

JF: We were talking a bit earlier about Baltimore's Jewish community, and some divisions in it, and the way that it has changed. And I was wondering if you'd like to say any of that for the record? Discuss any of that?

LBF: Well, I think it's interesting. We had two country clubs. Suburban, which was for German Jews. And, then I think the Woodholme Club started a little later. And it was for Eastern European Jews. Now there's much more of a mix -- and the Suburban Club for some reason isn't doing well. But the German Jews came here about two generations before the Eastern European Jews. So they already had a foothold. They were educated. When Gene's mother went to college, and then she moved to Baltimore, she was a college graduate from Hunter. She was one of the first Eastern European Jewish women that had gone to college, where there were many German-Jewish women who had. And so, they had money. They had education. And these people that they call "greenhorns," came in, and they just -- like you said -- at lunch -- they didn't want to be associated with these people who didn't have the manners. The German Jews had already been here long enough, and some of them had brought this with them, even -- to know how to dress and how to wear their white gloves, and how to decorate their homes. And having taste, and that sort of thing. A very famous family is the family that gave the Cone collection to the Baltimore Museum -- which is called the Cone -- C-O-N-E

family. They're from Greensboro, North Carolina. They owned the Cone Corduroy factory. There were 13 children. And Dr. Claribel came up here, and went to Hopkins. She was either the first -- I think she may have been the first woman graduate of Hopkins Medical School. And she had a sister named Etta, and a brother named Fred -- and none of them married. And they had this money from the Cone Family. They became friendly with Gertrude Stein, who was from a Baltimore family.

JF: That's right.

LBF: And Gertrude Stein took them abroad, and introduced them to the literati, the artists. And they became the main people who kept Matisse alive. And, the collection will open on April 17th -- re-open. It's been gone for two years. And we've just totally re-done what's called the Cone wing. It's really worth your coming many more miles that you'd have to come to go to the Cone collection. It's magnificent. It's one of the top impressionist collections -- if you like impressionist art.

JF: I love Impressionists.

LBF: It's as good as you're ever going to see. And it's going to be in the most magnificent setting. I'm on the board of the museum, and so I got to see the rooms and stuff just last week. My sister-in-law, Alice, the one who called before -- her mother was a Cone. And she married a man named Berney. They were all German-Jewish. And when Alice and my brother married, right after the war, I didn't even know that it was some kind of a cause celebre. And, but --

JF: Because one was German? And one was Russian?

LBF: Mmm hmm. And also, my cousin, Stanley, who's the brother of Roy married a family that was the Blaustein family -- who were German Jewish on one side. The Blaustein -- Mr. Blaustein - the original was an Eastern European Jew. But, if you made enough money, early -- and you married a German Jew -- apparently, that made you

accepted. You know, in a certain different strata of society. But, I heard recently that Etta Cone, the one that -- from the collection -- was furious when Alice married my brother. Because my brother was Eastern European.

JF: Oh my word.

LBF: And it just -- now, if I were to say this stuff to my children -- they wouldn't know what in the heck I was talking about.

JF: (laughter) So, you've seen a lot of changes?

LBF: Uh-huh. And now, it's true that the backgrounds of their spouses are all Eastern European. I never even thought of that, until just this minute.

JF: But nobody cares any more, is that right?

LBF: But they all were -- mine were also. You know? But I mean that nobody married anybody that was German.

__: (Break in Tape)

LBF: The German Jews owned all the big department stores. And they all married each other. So there are a lot of Hochschilds who married Hutzlers or this man I walk with -- whose name is Berney -- that was the same name as my sister-in-law -- owned a store called Hamburger's. And then, his family -- three cousins married each other -- three sets -- because they couldn't even find anybody that was good enough to marry. Oh, it was very -- if you would had 20 years to do some real historical digging -- it is a fascinating story.

JF: Well, as you look back on the changes that you've seen of your life -- what -- looking first of all, at Baltimore -- how has Baltimore changed?

LBF: Well, Baltimore has changed now, in a very bad way. Because Baltimore has totally lost its tax base. And this is all stuff that is very, very recent that we know -- through the census. A tremendous loss -- from like 131,000 school children to 85,000 school children.

JF: So, is Baltimore actually losing population?

LBF: Mmm hmm. Tremendous. Tremendous. And, the schools are 85 percent Black. And not really good. I'm doing a project -- my family, my children, and myself -- just my children and myself -- that is called the Blum Mentoring Program. Which is -- we just started it two and a half years ago, in memory of their dad. And, I thought of it and I never did it while Gene was alive. But, as soon as he died, we realized that we had put off this memorial long enough. And, we were all interested in public education. My children are all products of Baltimore public schools. And so were my husband and myself. And I got this idea really from the way I was trained at Hopkins. To have a mentoring program for new teachers. And we put mentors in five schools. We paid for five mentors. It took us a whole year to get the Department of Education to accept our idea. But it is just going great guns. It's just fabulous. Now we have 11 mentors in 10 schools.

JF: And these are for new teachers in the public schools?

LBF: Uh-huh. They're for new teachers, and it's just the way I was taught. And the idea -- you'll hear this word -- you know what -- you talk about changes -- you can't open a paper today. You can't listen to anything without the word "mentor" being used. It's like, hey -- how come you didn't talk about that ten years ago? But, it's such a wonderful way to learn. And, again, I didn't even realize two and a half years ago -- when I was starting it -- that I liked it because I couldn't learn any other way.

JF: Mmm.

LBF: And I don't say these other people couldn't -- but, in their classroom, where they've gotten out of -- often mediocre colleges -- and really haven't been properly trained to teach the children in the urban city. I mean in the urban schools. It's just the best way for them to learn. We have master teachers teaching them. And, the program is just being so widely accepted, and -- we are only paying for it for three years. But I think that it'll continue.

JF: That's great.

LBF: Mmm hmm.

JF: It's a wonderful idea.

LBF: It is. It's really -- it's really been a lot better than I ever could have dreamed.

JF: How about changes for women?

LBF: Well that's interesting. I was the first person -- I meant to say that -- when I went to work -- I had 15 aunts, including my mother -- I had 14 aunts, I guess. And I had a million cousins. And I had a lot of friends. And they had mothers. No woman, in our strata of society, worked. I had one cousin who worked because her husband didn't make a living. And so, she ran a little store of some sort. But nobody worked because they wanted to work. And, it took a certain kind of husband to encourage you to do that too. And, after I began to work, my best friend went to work about two years later. And then, people began to -- but, it was very unusual in those days. I've been working 45 years now. And I'm so glad. Oh, I am so glad. Not that plenty of people don't do a fabulous job -- I believe a lot in volunteerism. But, it is different. And, now, of course, that's the biggest change. My children wouldn't have thought about not working. I mean, it wouldn't have ever occurred to them. My daughter-in-law -- the one who lives in Takoma Park. They moved here from Philadelphia because she got the job of a -- being a speech writer for Carol Brouner, the Head of EPA. And so, she worked for Carol for

four years. And then she stopped, and is writing. And, she's published some. And she's published -- she actually published two – “how-to” books. She had started an organization when she got out of college called "9 to 5" -- which was organizing women office workers.

JF: She started that?

LBF: Mmm hmm.

JF: Wow.

LBF: With a woman named Karen Nussbaum, who's now with the Labor Department. And, they've written two books that were for 9-to-5 women in the workplace. One is a book on sexual harassment in the workplace. That is the biggest change. Life is so much richer, I think. Oh, I think it's so much richer. And I must say that I'm neither so tolerant and I never envy people who don't have anything to do, and have to find things to do, you know? There's so much to be done, it just seems to me. And women certainly can do it as well as everybody else.

JF: Could you tell me a little bit about the volunteer work you did?

LBF: I've kept my interest in adoption. And I have a lot of clients that people send to me, or that know about me over the years. That had to do with adoption. And I'm on the Adoption Alliance of the Jewish Family Services. And, so, some of my volunteer work has certainly been related to adoptions. I've been interested in battered women. Been on an advisory board of what's called the House of Ruth, which is an organization for battered women. I was the first woman and the second Jew to be on the board of a mental hospital called Sheppard Pratt in Baltimore. Their board had been -- they had been an organization for 155 years. And had never had a woman on their board. It wasn't fun, because they were mostly talking about money, which I don't know anything about. But, by the time I left, they did have a lot more women on the Board. And, I'm

not a good board member, and I don't even like it a lot. I'm a good hands-on board member if there was any - you know, if it's that kind of thing. But most boards -- I'm just the wrong personality for it, I think.

JF: Why is that?

LBF: Why? I don't like to sit there. I don't like to sit any place and have - be talked at.

JF: Mmm.

LBF: And I haven't had to do too much of it. I just got on this Baltimore Museum board because I liked the director, and she wanted me on it. I'm no good at it. I think that I'm not passive enough or something. Have you ever been on a board?

JF: No.

LBF: Oh. You'd hate it.

JF: You touched a little bit about -- on the civil rights movement. And, you mentioned integrating an amusement park, and going to the March on Washington? I wonder if you could talk a little bit more about that?

LBF: I can't really say anything about it, except that justice has always been a part of the family ethos. My son, he's a philosopher -- and in about another month, his book is going to come out called, I'm Not a Racist – But!. It's been a sort of a family theme of -- I mean it doesn't have too much to do with African-Americans -- it just has to do with justice, that's all. But I haven't, you know, haven't really done anything active about it. In the old days, at the time -- soon after integration, a lot of middle-class Whites thought that we would have Black friends, and we'd invite people over, and it just didn't go any place. I have a strong relationship with a man whose mother was my laundress. And he is now the head of the hypertension clinic at the University of Maryland. But -- and even

then -- sometimes I feel very friendly toward him. And we see each other a lot. And then, months go by, and I don't hear anything. So, you know, I can't really know how close a connection it is. He was very instrumental in helping me get a kidney for a friend of mine, so I'm forever beholden to him. But, now I think with civil rights -- I think I need to leave to the other generations. And, I think that things are maybe a little better. I don't know. What do you think?

JF: I certainly think they're better in some ways. But, there's still room for improvement.

LBF: Yes, lots --

END OF AUDIO

ADDENDUM

Interview with Lois Blum Feinblatt by Brenda Brown Rever

November 8, 2002

BRENDA BROWN REVER: My name in Brenda Brown Rever and today is Friday, November 8, 2002. We are in Baltimore, Maryland, and I am interviewing Lois Blum Feinblatt. This is the Weaving Women's Words project. Today we are going to talk about…this is a continuing interview, parts of which were done before -- this is really an interview to fill in some of the blanks that I know are there because I am a friend of yours and I would like to have you share with other women, because I think it's important. I want to start with the close friends that you have had in your life. If you could describe them and how they've played sort of pivotal roles with you in your life.

LOIS BLUM FEINBLATT: That's an interesting question. My friends always meant an awful lot to me. I had two friends named Rozzie and one named Netsie. When I was, let's see, like fifty years old, my daughter wrote a poem about me that talked about the two Rozzies and the Netsie. I thought I was going to have them with me forever. They're all gone now. They all died. One quite young; she was in her early fifties, and the other two died later. It has been a great loss for me. But I have thought about them a lot, and about what their friendship meant to me. I still have wonderful friends and I have been very, very fortunate. I've never looked for friends but I've got a lot. I don't know if it's because of moving around or whatever I do. I don't know what I do and people come into my life. And I have a, sort of a sickness, I guess, which is that when somebody is really in my life I never let'em go, and so that people that have moved out of town or whatever has happened, I still keep in close touch with them. Sometimes it is pretty exhausting, but I love my friends. I've lost, as I probably said in the other interview, my two precious husbands, and what has sustained me besides my sweet family is my friends and the consistency of what they have given my life.

BR: Good.

LF: I think that as friends you see yourself through others' eyes and it makes you know much more about yourself. One thing I've also found out, it sort of hit me, was that, this is going to sound horrible, but I really like smart women and women who basically do something with their life. I always knew that I liked smart men and I thought that was because I was brought up in a society where the men were the more important, smart people. But what I found as life went on was that I love smart women; women that I could learn a lot from, and that's who my friends have been.

BR: Tell me a little bit more about what you have shared with your friends. Was it the kind of relationship that you think girlfriends have today? Did you tell each other everything? Did you do things together? By that, I mean, did you have causes together?

LF: No, not causes. Just last night, my oldest friend called me. I didn't get the call because I was already asleep, but she lives in Cambridge, Mass. We've known each other since we were about nine. Her name is Betty. We dogged the fact that we've known each other for over 75 years, and well, whatever it is, 70-some years. We've shared everything. My mother didn't like to talk about a lot of different things that her mother was willing to talk about, so I learned a lot from her mother as well as from her. I think we shared all of our thoughts. Everything about our boyfriends, everything as we were developing sexually, which were the funniest conversations in the whole world. My friends then, when it was Betty and this first Rozzie and I, were a triumvirate when we were very young. We shared so much.

The second Rozzie came into my life when I was under ten also – we were Scouts together and we just stayed really friendly. I shared everything with them. I have a sister who is very precious to me but she was seven years younger; when I was young we didn't really talk about important things.

Of course when I got married, and when I had children, that was what we concentrated on. You know, what do you do now, and what does this mean, and how do you know what you are doing with these kids. I was lucky; we became a very close group, my friends and their husbands. This was interesting. I was the first person married before the war. I was twenty, and most people were sort of waiting until the men came home to get married. Although some were married – we had what was called a wives' club; the women whose husbands were away. When everybody's husband came home, I was very nervous – would my husband like the husbands of my friends because I knew that that would be an important part of my life. And it worked. They, the husbands, did like each other a lot, and we formed a very, very close group of husbands and wives. I already had one child, and we all had our children at the same ages and the kids got very friendly and they all called those friends "aunt" and "uncle" and yes, they were everything. I can't believe that none of them is here.

Since my dear friends aren't here, I have stayed very close to their children. Next week I am going out to Michigan to the wedding of my dear friend Netsie's grandchild. And I have gone to everything – the bat mitzvahs, the bar mitzvahs, the other weddings of these children and grandchildren because they're not here to do it. In that way, it's kept me on the airways, but it's also been the chance of my lifetime.

BR: Tell me about men friends. Do you have men that you consider to be your friends, and did you then?

LF: I think I have them much more now. As I grew older and got more confident, and as I worked more, I got more friends that were men. When my second husband was ill, he was sort of housebound, and so for two years we had a lot of company here just to keep him company. I did it with my first husband, too. There were a lot of his friends that came over that were men, and the husbands of my friends, and they kept being my friends. I have some very close men friends. It's interesting because the couple of them that I'm friendliest with were friends with both of my husbands; sort of an unusual thing to have. Of course, my second husband was also an old friend, so maybe it's not that unusual. These men mean so much to me; they're really good to me and bring a little dimension into my life that maybe I wouldn't have. A lot of my colleagues have been men and I'm very close to them.

BR: I wanted to talk to you a little bit about widowhood, because you became a widow twice. Tell me about this time when you became a widow and what you kind of thought. I know they were productive times for you.

FL: I didn't think about them as that they were going to be productive. That was the furthest thing from my mind. But it so happened that they were, you're right. When my first husband died I was already working at the place I still work, but one of my interests had always been adoption. A friend of mine who was a social worker and myself were seeing that there were many adopted adolescents in the adolescent clinic where we were

working in the hospital. We decided to investigate why there was an out of proportion number of adopted adolescents coming to the clinic. We began a little of study of that and we formed something called the Adoption Connection Exchange. I didn't have any idea that what I was doing when my husband died was really building a whole family for myself. This adoption group became like a family to me. We met very regularly because we were going to put on a big adoption day. I've stayed very close to a lot of those people. That became a big project for me. About a year and a half after my first husband died, we culminated this project in the adoption day. I realized that as time had passed I had made a whole new group of friends – these adoptees and adoptive parents – and it just helped me, because I was thinking about something, I guess, other than myself. It was good.

I re-met this man that I married, and right after he died – we were together for a number of years – I found myself again, not consciously, plunging into another project which I had never been a part of at all before; a project that is ongoing now. It's called the Blum Mentoring Project. I did that with my children in memory of their dad, who by then had been gone for twenty-four years. We had never done a memorial for him. We thought, you know, if not now, when? I just got totally immersed in that and, if anybody asked me for advice, which they don't, I would say that a wonderful way for you to try to get through your grief is to put your energy into something where somebody else is going to benefit and you're not thinking all the time about your loss. Not that you don't think about it; it's with you all the time, but you're busy and your mind is busy, and your day is busy, and your nights are busy. You find that a month has gone by and six months have gone by, and you're still putting one foot in front of the other. It's a quite a wonderful way of getting through the first year, the second year.

BR: I want to ask you two things about that. You've done other philanthropic projects. I know these two were great successes, and I know that you put a great deal of passion into both of those. And actually, everything you do. But there was one project that you

did, CASA, I think you once told me, that was not successful, and you had to deal with that. Tell us a little about how you felt when you had invested so much.

LF: Well, when did CASA start? It was some time after Irv died, and this friend, who'd been Irv's friend and was also my friend, Clint Bamberger, asked me if I would be interested in doing something that was kind of a part of the University of Maryland Law School. I listened and it sounded interesting to me. It was called CASA, which was Court Appointed Special Advocates for children. He knew that it encompassed a number of the kinds of things I'm interested in. I became quite involved with it, particularly because it was through him I met a person who is my dear, dear friend now, and had been through that time too, Susan Leviton. And we quickly got a wonderful Director for the project, and I gave the first money for it. We thought we would have this Director part time.

Then, the Abell Foundation gave twice as much as I gave and we were able to have a full-time Director. It started off as a wonderful idea and we had a marvelous Board. Although the Board knew more about social work than they knew about running an organization. At any rate, I was very involved in it at the beginning.

And then, I don't know whether my life got too busy for me or what. I wasn't a person who was very used to Boards because the whole time I was married to Irv I worked after the children were older, and I was never was on Boards. I think I really didn't understand them. After our wonderful Director, named Sharon England, had to move away, we got another Director who was totally awful, but I didn't know it. The rest of the Board didn't know it either. And we just kept throwing good money in after bad and she didn't know what she was doing. No, we got another President, that's right; Chairman of the Board, who was one of these people who was, what I want to call a "divide and conquer" person. Instead of making the Board cohesive, she got everybody fighting with each other, and I did exactly the wrong thing, I think. That is, I just sort of gave off and thought

that some of these other people would know better what to do, and they didn't.

So, this organization that had great potential and that had done marvelous work in other cities just finally collapsed. I had gotten my sister interested in it and my sister became a CASA and is still a CASA, and has done the most magnificent job of really saving more than one child; mental health, I think it was.

But what I learned, or what I think I learned, was that if you are in something and you're putting all your money into it, you'd better be there and really know what's going on and not leave it up to these other people. That's what I learned and that's what I then did with the Blum project.

BR: Now I want to get you on something a little bit different, but sort of related. You had two wonderful marriages and I'm wondering, when you were a teenager, when you thought about your life, because you once told me that you didn't say anything more than "please pass the butter" until you were 35.

LF: When I went to work, that's right.

BR: What were your expectations as a teenager? What did you see yourself as a woman? When you looked at your life, and what it was going to be, what were your expectations of yourself and of what a future husband would be?

LF: Well, my mother was a very good role model because she was the oldest child of eight and all of her family lived right around us. She was like the head of that family. They visited each other often. I saw a woman's role as sort of a head of a family. My mother had been a bookkeeper before she was married, and I sometimes did think that she should be doing something that was a little more gratifying for herself. Although that was all my imagination and not hers, because she was totally happy with what she was doing.

At any rate, when I went to college, and when I was in my sophomore year – I was nineteen then, we were asked to write about what we thought we'd be doing ten years from now. I wrote that I thought I would be a journalist writing about social problems all over the world. The reason I remember it is because the teacher read out loud that I had written it. I was at an all girls school. Every single person had written that she would be married and raising a family. I don't know what got into me, but I just spontaneously wrote that. As it happened, war looked like it was going to break out and I was going with Irv. We decided we wanted to get married; if there was going to be a war, we wanted to be married before that. So, I was the first person in the class to marry. What were my thoughts? Well, certainly I always thought that I was going to be married and have children. I must have had some idea about it, but those first years I wasn't thinking at all about working. Really, not at all.

I think as I look back, the beginning of the women's movement had an influence on me. I didn't know that, I mean that's all a very subtle kind of thing. I'm sure I've told you before, the reason I went to work was really because my husband and I were thinking that the children were too dependent on me. I loved my role as being a mother. I loved being a Scout mother. I loved being a Cub mother. I loved all that stuff, and I loved baking cookies. But, the kids were growing up and they were asking me to take them to the library and should we wear boots today, and the kind of things that they should have been doing for themselves. My husband and I decided together that maybe I could find a job that I would like as well as the job that I had at home. And I did…I was lucky; I found a good job right away.

BR: Tell me about the current work that you do. You're with the Hopkins Group. Tell us a little bit first about what their mission is, and then tell us what you do for them.

LF: This job that I just said I got was at the Department of Welfare. It was in the Adoptions Division. That really took over my life for the first ten years of my work life. As

you say, I always said I couldn't talk at all; that's true, I absolutely do. When I got to work I found my voice, and I loved it. I worked four days a week, till, I think, 2:30. It turned out that my daughter wanted me home from school after she was home. Anyway, I changed the hours. Then, one day Hopkins put an article in the newspaper and it said, "Hopkins to train housewives to be psychotherapists." It sounded like such an exciting idea. I didn't even see the thing in the paper. But our friend Netsie saw it and sent it to me and said, "This sounds like something you might like." I applied – that was a very scary time for me because I'm not a very competitive person, and I hated the competition to get into this plan. They ended up choosing eight women. It was only women. It was women that had to be thirty-five years or older and they had to have raised their children "successfully" in order to apply.

The concept had been done once before by NIMH in 1960, this was '66, and they felt that they were successful. No other institution picked it up because it's a very expensive program. It cost the institution a lot of money and Hopkins was able to do it. They took their psychiatrists right out of their clinics and gave them to these women that they had chosen. The psychiatrists were our supervisors. For every two hours of patients that we saw, we had one hour of supervision. It was a very interesting way of teaching because there weren't any books involved. Because each psychiatrist was his own person, we had a rather eclectic view, based on this one and that one's views. We had two years of that teaching and a lot of being together as a group and then being with our separate individual psychiatrists. The third year, we had an internship year and we worked at what was called the Phipps Clinic, which was sort of a community clinic. At the end of that year, a couple of people at Hopkins threw out the idea of starting a sexual behaviors clinic. It was then 1969 and it was just at the time when Masters and Johnson's breakthrough work had come out about the human sexual response, which they had written up in very medical terms – it was sort of like they didn't want people to really read it or understand it. They came and talked at Hopkins and then these two people decided that they would try to start a clinic and they got the approval of the Department of

Psychiatry. They asked people that they knew at Hopkins – mental health counselors like myself, a couple of our nurses, psychologists – if we would be interested in working at the clinic, seeing what it was like. It was very interesting because it was on Fridays – today I'm going to the clinic; it's been Fridays ever since the beginning – and people said yes, they'd like to do it. They dropped out like flies. We never exactly knew why but there was always somebody else to take his or her place. So finally after about six or eight months we got kind of a core group and that group has consistently stayed with us.

BR: Tell us a little bit about what the mission of that clinic was.

LF: Well, you know, it was the days when – first of all, Hopkins was doing the transsexual operation – they had just started it. Christine Jorgenson had been operated on in Europe and John Money and others brought the operation to America. Hopkins was faced with a dilemma because many came to our surgery because they had had the operation in these awful places – Mexico and Casablanca, awful places – and they came to get repaired for the operation that they already had; to be repaired at Hopkins. Hopkins thought, well, if people are going to have it they may as well have it in a good hospital. That's how it started, and our clinic did a lot of the screening. We saw the people who wanted the operation. In those days, you had to be in therapy for two years so you were positive that this was what you wanted. So that was about a third of our work. In those days also, gender was thought of very, very differently than it is now. You recall this was thirty years ago. Some people came because they were homosexuals or feared they were and thought that maybe they could get "fixed". We saw a lot of gender patients. It was just the beginning of a time when women were beginning to read and see that maybe sex was more than what it was to them – that "hey, we're missing something here". We had a lot of people who hadn't known that women could really enjoy sex in the way that they could. They were the three sides of what our clinic did in the early days.

BR: Here you were, this nice Jewish girl. You grew up in a very insulated group. What did you think about all this?

LF: Well, it was very interesting. My husband Irv and a woman I'd immediately got very close to, Ellen Halle who shared an office with me from the beginning of our time at Hopkins, and her husband who was also my husband's friend and my friend – plus the other people in the clinic -- we saw a lot of each other and we talked a lot about how we were feeling about all this, and didn't talk about it much with other people because it was still not something that you just went around, "Oh yeah, I'm doing this work in this sex clinic". We all kind of learned together. A lot of the men were residents who got on the staff. They're still with me and they're celebrating their 60th birthdays or are even in their sixties now. They were just little guys who were getting married and getting divorced and whatever, and we mostly talked with each other. It was a great learning experience. I think the people who stayed with the clinic were people who had sort of a decent sense of themselves and a lot of us had really good relationships ourselves. It was always, always interesting. We used to have wonderful conferences and we always had fun together and we still do. Things have changed some but there's that core group that is the reason that I don't want to stop working; it's just wonderful.

BR: Do you learn something new every day?

LF: I was going to say, by the same token, things have changed a lot. Many years ago Hopkins stopped doing the sex change operation. After ten years, the head of our clinic did a little research project. When people came in because they wanted a sex change, they were generally depressed. Then, they were going to go through all of this surgery and make their body into something that, whoever our maker is, didn't mean for it to be and they had a lot of urological problems. A lot of problems. The study showed that the percentage of people that were depressed ten years later, even though they'd had the operation, was the same number as the ones who hadn't had the operation. By the

same token, the ones that had had the operation and were depressed also were having many medical problems. With that in mind, Hopkins decided to stop doing the operation. We no longer had that population; we have a little bit of it but nothing like what we used to because people still go other places and have the surgery or some of our old patients come back for one reason or another. We got more into marital counseling and that's what I like best and what I do.

We had our clinic on Friday afternoons at 4 o'clock and my friend Ellen and I are still in it together but occasionally she's away; sometimes I'm away; we always talk to each other after the clinic and invariably we say, "How could you have missed it today, it was the most interesting case we've ever had." Really, that's the way we feel about it – it never, never stops, it's the human condition and every single case is totally different. Sometimes, I might say as I did last week, "Oh yes, we had a woman that had a similar problem about 20 years ago." Ellen and I are sort of the historians. Others are too – Dr. Schmidt's been there the whole time. Basically, it's just like no two people are alike. No two problems that come to us are the same and it's always, always interesting. We know so much more – I feel really sorry for those people that I saw that first year – I want to bring them back and say, "Eeeee," but how can I say that? It's been a great career.

BR: You certainly didn't see yourself in that career when you were young.

LF: No, I mean there wasn't even such a thing in existence, much less that I would be in it. No, absolutely not. I wouldn't have had the nerve to do it either, had I not had those ten years in Adoptions. You know, I couldn't have come right out of my kitchen into this. I needed the social work experience and that taught me a lot about the world and about myself.

BR: Let me ask you this. I admire your philanthropy a great deal and what you do. How do you decide what to do? How do you pick and choose?

LF: Well, I'm not a good one at it because I've never had a board who had some other ideas. A board that would say, "No, you do too much in that direction." The board has just been my children and myself and fortunately for me I think, the children think a lot the way I do or whatever it is; we think alike. I never planned something that they would not like. When we planned this last mentoring project, they were very involved from day one and it was good. The reason we formed it the way we did was because their dad, in whose memory we were doing the project, had gone to public schools here in Baltimore. He graduated from City College and my boys had graduated from City College. My daughter had graduated from Western and I graduated from Forest Park. We were all public school people. They already were interested in public schools. They always felt that, although there were a lot of the refinements of certain parts of their education that perhaps were missing, they liked what they learned by being in public schools. They felt that they wouldn't have given that up for anything, so when we were thinking of a project that involved education it was obvious for our family that we should do it in public education. A lot of the other things that I do in the philanthropic world – everything is important, and everything has a lot of meaning. I'm thinking now that the things that are the way to go – I was just talking to this man about it before you all came in – we were talking about a hospital he was interested in and why people give to certain things. I think that people are mostly interested now in making a difference with their philanthropic dollar, so that it's not so much trying to spread it across the board but rather to see if you can't really make a difference in one spot. I'm not sure about that – I was just at a little conference that was called "Making a Difference" and so maybe I was influenced by it. I've just sort of run the foundation by the seat of my pants with a fair amount of input from the kids about what they think are important things in the world.

BR: One time I was at a conference that you were at – that was probably 10-12 years ago before we knew each other well – you were there and they were talking about what kind of things to put in your will. Did you want your kids mostly, or your foundation, to follow what you've done or did you want them to do something different? I was very

amazed when you got up and said, “I don’t want my children to have any strings from the grave. I want them to be able to make their own decisions.”

LF: You know, I remember that. That was when there was just the beginning of a lot of talk about how to pass the foundation on from one generation to the other and what the younger people were afraid of was that their grandfathers had started this foundation because they were interested in associate Jewish charities or whatever it was and they gave their money to that. The next generation was afraid that the grandfather would somehow be looking down on them or looking up from the grave. I remember saying something about, “Your grandfather can’t see from the grave what you’re doing and wouldn’t care if you weren’t doing what he had in mind.” Really, there were things like people left all their money to Mt. Pleasant, which was a tubercular hospital, now a Jewish hospital. Then, tuberculosis was no longer a problem and what do you do with that money? There were a lot of things like that and actually, because of that, I helped form a group that aid at the Association of Baltimore Grant Makers. It’s an inter-generational group and that’s what we work on. It’s called family philanthropy but it’s really about how much influence you want to have and everybody has a different idea about it. It’s very interesting to hear how people handle that.

BR: Well, speaking of children, I know that you have three rather remarkable children and that you’re very proud of them. You helped them, probably, so in the future they’ll make good decisions in terms of where they want their money to go. Tell me, I think that you let them have a lot of independence growing up, don’t you think?

LF: You’d better ask them that.

BR: What would they say?

LF: I don’t know if I let them have a lot of independence. They all were ‘60s kids and I don’t think I had a lot to say; they were going to be independent no matter what. I don’t

know what would have happened if they'd hit those years at a different time. I don't think I had to think about it because they were out of here.

BR: And you now have grandchildren that are adolescents or even past adolescence. You have a really wonderful relationship with your grandchildren. Tell us just a little bit about that.

LF: Well, maybe because of my work or I don't know what, but I really feel that the acorn doesn't fall from the tree. The kids, although they were very independent and did their separating sometimes in a difficult way; we're a very close family. Although they live in different places we stay close. One of the things that's been a wonderful break for our family is that we have a summer beach house that was big enough for everybody to come and be together in the summers. We're also a very, very talky family, so that there's a lot of conversation about what you think and what you feel and what you're doing; that kind of thing. The grandchildren heard a lot of stuff – they're quite a remarkable group of kids. I don't want to exaggerate it but they want the world to be a better place because they were in it. They don't want to work on that all the time; they want to do whatever they're doing and have fun. A lot of the kids in the family are very musical but a lot are also interested in teaching. They're interested in the things that our family cares about and they like to be with us. The kids have done a good job of that I think. We've been lucky – who knows, none of them is married yet, none of the grandchildren. Two of them are working and it's not their permanent work. They'll both probably eventually go to graduate school; one of them does have a Masters degree. He's a teacher in the public school that he went to in Cambridge, Mass.; he's teaching math. He's already gone to represent the school at a conference for multi-cultural education. My granddaughter's working in a group that sends film to refugee camps all over the world – a very interesting group that feels that these people are just languishing in these camps with nothing to do and the best thing for them is at least to have some movies, some entertainment. They see them on the sides of great big trucks. They're

interested in the things that they've heard about but that's sort of the way everybody is. I don't think either one of these children is going to keep those jobs forever but they're good beginning jobs I think.

BR: Good values; the kids have good values.

LF: I think so. I hope so.

BR: You've really had quite a remarkable life. I just want to go back for one minute. I talked about expectations that you might have had as a young woman but I want to ask you about expectations of marriage; expectations that you had for yourself as a woman in a marriage and expectations that you had for your husband in a marriage.

LF: That's a very interesting question because, you know, I don't even think I had any. I really don't. I met Irv when I was 18. I was away at college and I saw him on weekends. Before we knew it, it looked like there was going to be a war and we wanted to get married. It wasn't like we were thinking of any expectations, it was just like – can we get married before you have to go overseas and then it was, well yes, you finish school that day and then the rabbi said, "It's going to be Tisha B'av," or something and you've got to get married either before Tisha B'av or after Tisha B'av. I think it was Tisha B'av. You got your dress and you got your whatever, and you got married. Then he said, "You promised me you'd go back to college, you wouldn't give up college". I had to go to college and then he went to the army, then overseas, then I had this baby and there wasn't any, "What do you expect of marriage?" It wasn't anything like that. I just never thought about it. I just was crazy about him and I thought, you know, life is going to be good. The things that haven't been good, I didn't expect – that wasn't a part of it. After 32 years he died and then what did I expect? I really didn't expect to get married again. I was 52 years old and that's when I did this adoption thing and my kids all had lives of their own. In my family, the men had died young – my father's brothers and my mother's brothers. Nobody had remarried. I had one aunt who was an in-law and she remarried;

that was the only one and so it wasn't anything I ever saw. Then I met Gene and what did I expect of marriage? As I say, I was 20 years old when I married the first time and here I am now, when I met him, 55 years old. I wasn't exactly the same person and he just fit right in my life. He already knew the people that I knew and even the doctors.

LF: I can't imagine that this is interesting, a person sitting still like this.

BR: It is. It's interesting; it's research.

BR: You were saying that when you were 55 you didn't think about marriage.

LF: Right. Well, I didn't think about it until I was with him and then I wanted to get married right away. He didn't. I was much more of a person. When I met Irv and when we married, I was just a little kid really; I didn't know anything. By the time I met Gene, I had a lot of ideas and he was very, very different from Irv. Except for their core values and things that they'd accomplished in their lives, they weren't alike as far as personalities went at all. I don't know if people really think about what they want – what's marriage going to be like or something like that, but I certainly didn't think of it. I think I'd seen a life of family and children that I liked and I guess I just thought it was going to be like that. Now, there's so much else that's going on and the world is such a different place that in a lot of ways, my ideas, if I had any, were simple. I think my life was much more sort of putting one day in front of the next. I don't think I had a master plan. I don't think so. I'll have to think about it – maybe the next interview I will have thought that I had a master plan but…

BR: The idea that your family did a lot of talking – your children, you and Irv talked a lot to one another about things. Where did that evolve from, do you know?

LF: I think it may have been a lot about the times. My mother was a very silent woman. Everybody's mother, even in that generation, apparently wasn't, as I heard later. My mother really thought that you learned by example; I think you can use those kinds of

words. We never talked about anything psychological, which is a whole lot about what talking is. I think that the fact that I got into the kind of work I got into – even that first work down at the Department of Welfare and then my work at Hopkins – I found out about myself (thank goodness you haven't asked about my tennis game or golf game right, since I don't have one) but I am just a sort of limited person in that there's only one thing I care about and that's people and how they do and how they feel and how they are. If you have to have only one thing you're interested in, I guess it's about as interesting as anything can be. My kids are that way also. They have incorporated into their lives, into their work – that's what their work is, all of them. All that is just all about talking since it's not about doing much else.

BR: Is there anything that you haven't done that you now want to do?

LF: Well, I wouldn't mind seeing a great-grandchild, (laughter) but no, I think my life has been about as full as a life can be. I do. I think it's been very full for me. There are a lot broader horizons – the whole world of art and athletics but if you don't go there, you don't miss it. It scares me when I'm going to have to stop doing what I'm doing but it's too late to learn how to play golf and it's to late to learn how to play bridge so I have to just keep on doing what I'm doing until it's all over.

BR: Well, you're very interesting and vital and you've certainly been that your whole life. Is there anything you attribute the fact that you're still interested in everything, going everywhere, doing everything? Do you attribute that to anything besides genes?

LF: I am grateful that I have a lot of energy. That metabolism is something and I think that that's true. I don't know how I always was but when I went to camp – I didn't go till I was 16, my parents wouldn't let me go away because we had a place down the shore and my father said "What do you have to go away for? We have the water, we have the horses" – I went to camp and of course I could swim, my father had taught me to swim. I couldn't do anything else. I was always afraid of a ball coming toward my face so I never

played anything and all of a sudden, I was selected to be the captain of the team. There were two teams at the camp. The next year I was prize camper and the next year, I'd already fallen in love so I didn't want to go back to camp. On my honeymoon, I went up to camp with my husband because I had to show him this wonderful place. What I learned at camp was – just what I'm telling you – that I couldn't do anything; I was like the klutz of the world but I kind of got along with people. I could deal with them in some way, I don't know what it was but I learned that at camp. I learned that about myself at camp. You know, I had never been anyplace. Our family was very large and I had mostly just been with that group. How do you learn about yourself? That camp experience was a key experience for me. It certainly stood me in good stead because when I wanted to get a job, I knew "Well, you're not going to be a gym teacher, pal"; you'd better see if there's a job that's in the social services or something. I've been very, very one-sided. Now it's too late to change and it hasn't made me unhappy in any way but if I had it to do over again, would I broaden it? Maybe so, maybe so. Anyway, it's a little late to think about it.

BR: We're going to end, except that I want ask you – I know you didn't want to talk about that dinner party but I'd like you to tell me three people –

LF: Oh, you're going to ask anyway!

BR: Tell me three people tell that you really, really would love to be with at a dinner party, before, during after…

LF: Oh I don't know; I probably would just as soon be with this nice man and you. You're about as interesting, I'm sure, as anybody I'd want to have at a dinner party. I love everybody's story. I love everybody's life because everybody has a life. They're just as interesting as – who would I say – Winston Churchill, I don't know.

BR: Well, thank you, because I think what you said is a lot. I mean you're a very inclusive person. There's someone who said, "If I'm not near the gal I love, I love the gal

I'm near. You can always find someone to talk to about something. You're one of those people who can talk to somebody about anything.

LF: Well, I couldn't always.

BR: But you can now. Thank you very, very much. It's been very wonderful, very rich in content, very interesting. Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]