Marillyn Tallman Transcript

Rosalind Hinton: Today is Wednesday, February 2, 2005, and I'm in the home of Marillyn Tallman. We are going to do an interview for Women Who Dared. And Marillyn, would you spell your last name and spell also your family name?

Marillyn Tallman: Marillyn too?

RH: No. I think we can –

MT: –because it has two L's.

RH: Oh it does? Spell it then.

MT: M-A-R-I-L-L-Y-N Tallman – T-A-L-L-M-A-N. And my family name is Appelbaum - A-P-P-E-L-B-A-U-M.

RH: Excellent. Now we're ready to start. So would you tell me where you were born and a little about your family background? And your family – where did they come from?

MT: Yes, I was born in Decatur, Illinois – Macon County – very close to Springfield. And my mother was buried in the Lincoln Cemetery. And I grew up there. Do you want to know about my parents?

RH: Please, please.

MT: My mother was Sylvia Cohn Appelbaum from Springfield. And my father was Harry Appelbaum – a businessman in Decatur. My mother's family was from Germany. Her mother's family and father are from Lithuania. My father was from a small shtetl outside of Kiev. My mother died when I was ten. And my father in 1945 in an automobile accident. So I was raised by my half-brother – my father's son who was very close and

still is – and my father, and a bunch of hovering aunts, and a housekeeper. And grew – kept growing.

RH: So if you could tell me maybe the marker of what your life was like before the loss of your mother and then after, what was significant to those – obviously are significant events.

MT: Yes, it was a good life in a small town. Synagogue. My father would daven in the basement, and my mother and I would go upstairs to a more – excuse me – more Reform service. I never quite understood – I understand today more who my father was, that I've dealt with Jews in the former Soviet Union. I understand shtetl life. Of course he came here when he was very young. I was close to my brother who was nine years older. We lived in a lovely house in the neighborhood, and it was just growing up. I had many friends. I was thinking the other day – Jewish – but they were divided. The Jewish kids were active in the Illinois Federation of Temple Youth as I got older, in my teenage years. And the non-Jewish kids were in the – going on to school in the high school. And I remember there was a dance at the high school, like a little high school sorority, and all my friends went to it – my non-Jewish friends went too. And I got a telegram from them which I saved for years, and it said, “Having a great time. Only wish you were here.” And of course no Jews were invited in and allowed, permitted. Outside of that, the great event in my life was my mother's death. And she died in childbirth and the baby died too. And you carry that with you all your life. And it's interesting, Rosalind. Last night, my husband and I were sitting and reading, and we turned on the television news and something in it triggered a memory of a moment my mother and I had that I haven't thought of – well I'm eighty-two – in seventy-two years. So it never ends. The good memories and that one huge, searing event.

RH: Would you mind sharing the memory with me?

MT: I'll share another one. [laughter] I must have been eight or nine. I know exactly – it was 1931. I'll tell you – excuse me for clearing my throat. I'll tell you – oh, I know it. I remember one sunny afternoon we went to the movies. I was telling my younger son about this, who's in the – he's a music editor in Hollywood, so he's in the movie business. I don't know what triggered it. And I said, I remember that afternoon – and I remember the movie that we saw. "And what was it, Mom?" I said, "*Cimarron* – a Western." And we wore white gloves. And the two of us went. And it's one of the sweetest memories I have. About three months later, he was working on a movie and he promised he'd send us a poster of the movie. So I opened up a box – a poster box, and I said to my husband, "Ah, Philip sent us the poster of his movie – oh wonderful, with his name on it." And as I took it out slowly, it was a poster of *Cimarron*. It's right in there.

RH: Oh, my gosh.

MT: It's in the kitchen. I'll show it to you. So there are very few – by ten, you're a busy little kid and you just remember family events. But many – not many. I don't mean that. Not many memories. But it's just of course, of course with you all your life. My mother was a public speaker. She reviewed books. She was really very beautiful. Everybody thinks a mother beautiful. She really was. I remember her as young. But she was very active and did synagogue work and just regular community work.

RH: Can you tell me about the year this was?

MT: That she died?

RH: Yes.

MT: It was 1932. I was ten. I was born in 1922.

RH: Okay. Thank you. So she was very active – and an educated woman herself? It sounds like –

MT: We all had – yes, yes, yes. I can't say she went to college. I don't know a lot about her. She was eighteen when she married my father, and he had a boy five years old – eighteen.

RH: Interesting.

MT: Oh yes, oh yes.

RH: My mother was about seventeen when she married my father and wow – ran away with him.

MT: Very young. Liz had a five-year-old boy.

RH: Yeah. He had two [overlapping dialogue; inaudible].

MT: Oh, did he really?

RH: Yes, that weren't much older than her. Were younger than her.

MT: Imagine, imagine. Women who dared, huh?

RH: So it's an interesting kind of – I shouldn't be saying this on here.

MT: Parallel – why not? We're talking. We're having a conversation.

RH: But she was Jewish. And it was in around in the 30's, because she – they were in New York and lived a very beautiful lifestyle and lost everything, and so had to go back to Birmingham, Alabama. I think it was so redneck to her that it was devastating. So the first chance – one of the first chances I think she could get out – she met this handsome traveling salesman.

MT: Everybody has an interesting story.

RH: Don't they?

MT: And when I interviewed Holocaust survivors – well, I did some – in '45 – audio tapes as early as then. Of course it's silly to say it, because it's so well known, but each one has such an individual story. And such a stunning, stunning story. If they were in the Warsaw ghetto, they had different ones; if they were in Buchenwald, they had different stories. Of course, everybody has – there was not one huge mass of Jews. That's with life, you know.

RH: So what type of businessman was your father?

MT: Clothing. Men's clothing business. On the levee near the Wabash Railroad. Very personable. We all think our fathers were handsome – he was. I got the pictures to show it, Rosalind. And very beloved in the community. Very respectful of his customers. I remember that.

RH: Did he have his own haberdashery?

MT: His own store, his own store. Yes, yes. It was on El Dorado Street, which they called the levee, because by the – not by the river, but by the Wabash Railroad. The Wabash workers would come in and he knew them all. And when they had their confirmations and their parties, he was there. They just loved him. Very personable.

RH: And tell me about, a little if you don't mind, about your relationship. Because you said you came to understand him better as you were an adult.

MT: Well, I remember my father had a little accent. And when I transferred from my first college to the University of Illinois, we had – I was active at Hillel right away, and so he came to visit me, and we had the – we had the rabbi of Hillel, who was a very austere, tall, rigid – you know, American. And here was my father who was short and handsome, with an accent. And I remember thinking – I'm embarrassed to say this – but I remember

thinking, “Oh, daddy.” You know, something about his accent. And you know what, Rosalind? It left me as fast as it came, as fast as it came. There was something so personable and charming and wonderful about him. But I thought, “What am I doing?” You know? So when I say I had gotten to understand him, it's because I've worked so many years with Jews who still live in shtetls – little towns where cows cross the dirt road. And I know the location – not the exact name of his town. I keep forget – I mean, I don't think I know it. But I know the map better around Kiev, and I know some of the small towns. My mother sort of overshadowed him, only intellectually. But he held his own. He was beloved. And it's hard to explain why – I think that's why. His devotion. And he had been married before. Lost his wife in the flu epidemic, and then he lost my mother.

RH: So you had a sense of his own – what he was carrying.

MT: Yes, yes.

RH: Did your family come in – where did they come in to?

MT: What do you mean?

RH: To the United States.

MT: Well, my father came to Decatur. They came from Russia – a number of them to Decatur, because there was one – well, you know how it worked – one relative, and he gave them all work, and my father immediately started his – no, he was a teenager when he came.

RH: So he came from Russia?

MT: Yes, yes. And I think my brother found the manifest – the boat manifest or something. I don't really know that much.

RH: So did he go into New York and come across –?

MT: Maybe – yes. Oh yes. I think through Ellis Island, through the whole thing. We never talked about it. And talk about regretting, you know. Of course he died in 1945. I mean, I could have taped him. I just didn't think of it. I was young. I was young.

RH: So he died –

MT: In an automobile accident. He was with a young friend who came as a salesman – linoleum salesman – through Decatur. Met my father and my brother, and just claimed us as his family. He was from Pennsylvania. He was with us every vacation and everything. And he was in the car, and he was saved but badly injured. And they were going to the setting up of an uncle's [inaudible] in Danfield, and they – I have relatives – I had relatives in Champagne and Danfield in Illinois – an Illinois family. And that was it. Some ore workers, drinking, and they came across the road.

RH: So that changed your life.

MT: I was so angry. I was just so angry, I didn’t know what to do with my grief. And I was just angry. And my brother was a great comfort.

RH: Really?

MT: Oh yes, yes. And all these hovering aunts – my mother's sisters.

RH: How many aunts?

MT: Oh, lots of them.

RH: You sure?

MT: I never counted them up. And she had two brothers and three sisters and so on. So they were around. Everybody was trying to raise this kid. I didn't quite know what to

do. But I just kept steady on.

RH: So you didn't go to the regular high school?

MT: Yes, I did – Decatur High School.

RH: You did?

MT: Oh, yes. .

RH: OK. But the town was – there were areas where Jews weren't allowed.

MT: Well, I don't – probably, probably.

RH: I mean, you talked about the party.

MT: Well, yes, they had high school sororities and fraternities, and they just didn't – just assumed. I thought years later, “Why didn't Harriet and Juanita – why didn't their parents tell them, ‘What do you mean you don't let Jews in?’” This was in the late 30's – later I thought.

RH: So you're talking to me in the late 30's or – you’ve lived through the Depression, but you're not couching that as an event in your life.

MT: No, no. We had a country woman who was our cook and a very kind woman. And my father would come home from the store at lunch. And in a way, those years are getting a little misty. I just remember certain – going out with the major basketball player at the high school. And one day he came over to my house – we were having a Coke, and he said, “Marillyn, I have something to tell you. I can't go out with you anymore.” I said, “Oh. Why?” He said, “Because you're Jewish.”

RH: Oh, God.

MT: And I didn't cry or anything. There was nobody to – I think I probably said to him, “That's a silly reason,” or something. Knowing me, I would have probably – really, I probably would have said something. I remember my father was kept out of the Masons, which was very important – nine times. He was what they called blackballed – in Decatur. This beloved, well-known businessman. He found out who blackballed him, and he went to the man's house. As I recall, went up to him and said, “Now you listen” – and then said to him, “If you are doing it because I'm a Jew” – it reminded me of Shylock's speech; there's no connection but – “and I won't have that. I won't have it.” It's something like that – and he got in.

RH: Really?

MT: Yes.

RH: That's amazing. It's like talking down a bully.

MT: Right, exactly. Exactly. I'm very proud of him for that. You know, it was important to him. And I don't blame him. And he stood – and he was not – he was about 5'7". I mean he just – “Listen.” Maybe I learned something from him.

RH: Some ways from ten until your father died, you were a latchkey child? You kind of raised yourself?

MT: No, Mrs. Hammer was always there. And as I say, my aunts. I was with them, and my father came home and my brother came home. And if I went to a dance, to a prom or something, my brother would come home. He worked with my father in the store, because he had tuberculosis. He never went to college, so he worked in the store. He was in a sanitarium for two years, and then he went to work for my father. And he would come home before the dance. And he knew who my friends were and [would] be there when I left. He was a young guy, himself.

RH: So you're telling me you went to high school and you were talking about a different college first before you –

MT: Yes, yes. I have to go to college. So the time came, so we got a bunch of catalogs, and I picked one. It just looked beautiful to me. I liked the columns on the buildings. This is silly. It was a women's college in Lindenwood – in St. Charles, Missouri. And I think my family thought it would be good. They never told me that, but we also had relatives in St. Louis. So I went there a year and a half. It was a very good experience. And then I went to the University of Illinois for a weekend to visit, I think, a girl from Decatur who was in a sorority. She said, “Why don't you come here?” And my father and everybody around me said that it would be good – meet Jewish boys – there are boys there. So I did transfer. Moved into the sorority house. Couldn't understand the whole thing, how they wake you up in the middle of the night and take you for this secret ceremony. I was sort of – and so I ran to Hillel. I became very close to Dr. Abram Sachar. And that really determined my life.

RH: But you lived in the sorority house?

MT: I did, I did.

RH: But you weren't in the sorority.

MT: Yes, oh I was.

RH: Oh you were in the sorority, too.

MT: Oh, yeah, I went through the whole thing – the whole thing. But I spent my –

RH: What sorority was it?

MT: [SDT?].

RH: But Hillel was definitely more formative.

MT: That was my home for me. And as a matter of fact, I think the really – to me, what happened in Decatur when I was – the last year – couple years in high school, I think – I'm a little vague about this, but I think I was teaching little kids in Sunday School because I liked it. And then a young rabbi came to Decatur, and I just loved him and his wife. So he said, “You're so interested. Would you like to come and study with me? I only live a few blocks from you.” So I said yes. And it was like – I'm going to talk a little bit about rescue on the ninth. I think I've been interested in rescue because I was rescued. I was rescued. And I fell in love with Jewish history. He started with history. I couldn't wait – I couldn't wait to be there. I found my home, I found my people. I mean, that sounds a little pretentious. I don't mean it to – but that's what happened. And they're all there for me.

RH: And what was the rabbi's name?

MT: Albert Goldman. He married us many years later.

RH: Oh, really? Oh, wow.

MT: And his wife was wonderful – Sylvia. I've been in touch with them for years. But he changed my life.

RH: So you went once a week, or –?

MT: Yes, once a week after school – maybe twice a week. And we would just talk. We would just talk. And he just introduced me to the Jewish people. And the great adventure of the Jewish people. And I think I'm being self-analytic. I must have felt this was a home. I know I did. I got so involved, and so comfortable. That's the word I want. So comfortable picturing this whole history. First of all, it's interesting to me – it's fascinating. And secondly I belonged. I belonged. Maybe it was a substitute for my

mother, I don't know. I belonged. That's the [inaudible] of warmth I felt about it. That's it. It's true.

RH: Tell me about Hillel in college. Do you have any –? What did you do and how did [inaudible] work?

MT: Well, Dr. Sachar was – are you familiar with Abe Sachar? You're too young. He was eventually President of Brandeis – the first president of Brandeis. And a great historian and author.

RH: Now I understand your Brandeis connection.

MT: Well, yes. He was a personality just second to none. And I used to babysit with their children – he had three sons. I became involved with him, with his family, with his wife. And he was national director of Hillel, but his base was Champagne. We liked each other very much. Again, it was a feeling of comfort and home. So, I eventually became president of Hillel, and we had programs and Shabbat and classes. And then he would have guest speakers, and I would go with him to meet them. Maurice Samuel, the great writer, Eleanor Roosevelt.

RH: Oh, my God.

MT: Yeah, it was quite a story. Many years later, he said to us – now when I was much older – he said, “Now, don't invite Mrs. Roosevelt, because she'll come.” And I know she spoke for a little synagogue on the West Side. She was just available. She taught for Brandeis. She taught for Brandeis. Wonderful story. I'm getting off track from it, but wonderful story. He brought her in – just not as a – she said, “Well, don't list me as professor,” she said to him. And he would tell me all these stories. “Don't list me as professor, because I'm not the professor. I didn't have that much education.” I'm just – to tell the story – and Dr. Sachar told me that one day he was walking by her classroom, jammed, jammed – and he heard her say – she had a very peculiar voice. He heard her

say, [impersonates Roosevelt with a somewhat British accent], “As Winston said to Franklin” – and the kids were in awe. Isn't that wonderful?

RH: Yes.

MT: And she came. We met her at the train. And this tall, lanky woman with a little tricorn hat and teeth – I remember teeth – and gracious. And we took her to the auditorium. And I know that so many people wanted to come that I think we had to go to a mortuary to get extra – talk about trivia – to get extra chairs. And she came and she spoke. I don't remember the year, but it was – I graduated in '44, so it was sometime between '42 and – tough time, and she came. Then I remember we took her to lunch. It came time – the mortuary guy was there, and Dr. Sachar was there, and the local rabbi was there and student leaders were there – no, no, I don't think many students were there. The time came, and the guy brought the bill, and he didn't know who to give it to. And the mortuary owner wanted to pay, and Dr. Sachar said – it was just a funny scene. She said, [makes accent] “Gentlemen, gentlemen, can't we make this Dutch treat?” It was wonderful. And many Jewish authors and speakers – and he invited them, and I would have the privilege of meeting them at the train with him and having dinner.

RH: Did any others stand out in your mind?

MT: I suppose those two.

RH: That's good.

MT: They were good enough for me, I'll tell you that.

RH: Yeah, for sure.

MT: But that just deepened and deepened my connection, my connection.

RH: So then after Hillel –

MT: Well, I graduated, and Dr. Sachar asked me to stay on as a public relations director for Hillel. I wasn't too good. I mean I didn't know how to write a press release, and he was very patient with me. I got an apartment there. And finally, in 1945, before the war – he was so brilliant, Roz, he was so brilliant. He said, “We have to save some children.” So he started a program called the Foreign Student Program – Hillel Foreign Student Program. He managed to bring a few and save their lives. And Ruth Herzog in Island Park is one of them. And this was now after the war. And he said, “We have to revise – we have to renew the program and bring those kids – bring as many as we can out of DP camps.” So he asked me if I would work with him and handle it. Well, talk about an event, a time in your life. What we did was we sent word to the DP camps through Maurice Zerkin, who was a famous author, and went over to visit them – that Hillel was offering scholarships. Actually, one of my jobs was to call universities – start with A. I don't know the first one. Alabama? I don't know the first one. And go through the major state institutions and call them – sometimes speaking to the president of the universities, of the university, and say we've got… And this is the time of the GI bill, when GIs were coming back and flooding the universities – and I would just say, “Kids who have been through concentration camps lost everything. They're displaced persons.” And we asked for tuition and admission. It was almost impossible to get documents. A couple of the kids walked back to their school – Peter Pazmany University in Hungary – to try to get any documents. They had nothing. Well, it was successful. And we were flooded with applications. The story of the Holocaust is in those applications. The whole story from every country, from – and I would sit in my apartment. I was in Chicago then. He moved me to Chicago – until three in the morning with two piles. Now we had a set of criteria, of course. If I just didn't know what to do in choosing a student, I would call him. And I'd sit there, accept/reject, and then I'd – no, no, no – not reject. Back to accept. It was a horrible, horrible time. And the criteria were if they had any relatives anyplace, then there was a possibility of making a connection there. We managed to bring a hundred. And then I would take the kid and place him – Alabama. There was no particular connection.

And wherever it – Tom Lantos, the Congressman, is one of them. Maybe it's mentioned in my bio. And he once said to me, “How did I end up at the University of Washington?” I said, “Because your name came up across Washington.” He said, “Really? How could you judge any other way?” There was no way to do it. It was incredible. So it's like a matchmaker, but I didn't know them. And there's some in the Chicago area – John [Maxie?], the architect, and George Kennedy. The first young man we brought over came through Chicago – I'd meet him at the train – and he looked a little like Kafka. He was maybe taller than Kafka – thin, big black eyes, his ears stuck out a little bit. He came in a long army overcoat. And we sent him to Texas A&M. Now why he was down in Texas, I don't know why. Shifting around, but – why his name came up across from T when he was the first one, I don't know. Maybe I couldn't get him in anyplace else. Or maybe he sent in his application. He was interested in engineering. They were not applications. We didn't have formal – they just wrote the story of their lives. And a few years later, he killed himself. He put some poison on a cookie or on a cracker. First, I want to back up. When he got to school, he adapted in two weeks. He was drinking Cokes and wearing argyle socks – which they wore in those days – and sweaters. He adapted so quickly that the newspaper, the student newspaper, wrote a beautiful, beautiful obituary saying that he was a delayed victim of Hitler, which was true. And there are many stories about many of them, many of them. And then we brought a hundred and twenty-five, placed them all. Then, of course, we would call local sororities and fraternities – Jewish sororities and fraternities – and say, “Will you give him free room and board?” And the Jewish community – “Will you give him a per diem to live on?” We had no money. We had no money. Hillel had no money. I mean, I remember John Maxie – there were ten Hungarians. I picked ten Hungarians. They must have known each other and they all applied together. And John (Maxie?), who's just wonderful – he said, “You know what we did was, we got to Le Havre” – wherever they would take their boat, I don’t know, take it somewhere. And he said, “We had no money. We didn't have anything. We had to get on the boat.” I said, “What did you do?” He said, “We sat

on the pier and got people to gamble with us." I said, "Well, what if you lost?" He said, "Ten Hungarians in the drink." But he came. Been here fifty years. Oh many of them were outstanding, outstanding. And then the American consulate at Stuttgart who gave the visas – and everybody had to bring a birth certificate. Well, where were they going to get birth certificates? They were stuck in DP camps. Everything was in shambles. So a Jewish organization manufactured them. It's incredible when I think about it. One day, this American Consul sent for some kind of a thing that measures the age of the ink on a document. And they found out that they were just made, so he stopped the program forever.

RH: That's too bad.

MT: Many of them are successful. If they are or if they're not, they're precious souls. Wonderful. They had a certain something to survive. They were young people. And you see it today in a way. Well, Tom Lantos is a Congressman.

RH: That's an incredible experience for someone as young as you were.

MT: Yes, yes.

RH: So that was the beginning of your rescue.

MT: Yes, yes. That's right.

RH: And do you want to go on from there and tell me your activism path at that point?

MT: I'm trying to think.

RH: Or we can switch gears a little too, because we haven't talked about your husband and how you met him and [overlapping dialogue; inaudible].

MT: Oh, well, he doesn't remember that we met – but the University of Illinois, and he was a lieutenant at Chanute Field during the war. He was stationed there. And he used to go out with another girl in my sorority. He was a cousin of a friend of mine. He doesn't remember that we met in the sorority house, but that's okay. I moved to Chicago to work for Sachar. And then, I don't know what happened next. Then I was on the beach, and he came, and we started to go out. Such trivial things that you remember. I remember the first time we went out we went to the Mayfair Room. A dancer, he's not. A wonder, he is. And on the way there, I was fiddling in my purse. And he said, "What are you looking for?" I said, "Well, I forgot my lipstick." And he said, "Well, that wouldn't be a problem." Took my hand, marched me into the drugstore at the Blackstone Hotel and said, "My friend needs a lipstick. Show her a lipstick." Bought me one. So silly and it's so trivial. But trivial things say a lot. He's been wonderful and kind. Perfect.

RH: So how long did you –?

MT: I don't even remember.

RH: – date?

MT: Married in 1948. That was a momentous year. Brandeis opened, State of Israel, and we got married. No, I want to exchange the order. His father died in April, so it was very small. And then he went to work in his father's insurance business. We called a friend – he called a friend of his in Chicago and said Marillyn wants to become active in the Jewish community. His name is Hamilton Loeb – Hammy Loeb – he's a well-known, darling man. So, he introduced me to the young people's division of the Federation, and I became active and became president.

RH: How many years did that take?

MT: Oh, I don't know. I just don't know. I don't know. And then I was active with them for a while and went on the Board of the Jewish Family and Communities Service. And

served nine years, and then my husband came up and served another nine years, we were so enthusiastic about their work.

RH: Tell me about their work. What were you doing?

MT: Well, I was on the Board. And so the Board hears problems and there is a director – you know how boards work – and you hear out, and agree or disagree and discuss the problems, the locations, the staff, finances. And what every board is – run well, run efficiently – this agency. So my life is really tied up with the Federation. Hammy introduced me to it. And it was very satisfying. And then our children came.

RH: How many children do you –?

MT: We have three sons. One is fifty-one, and he works in – he was always our conscience. He was always our social conscience, and he works in Legal Aid for the elderly in San Francisco.

RH: Tell me his name.

MT: Tom. Tommy. I remember once when he was about fifteen. He came home from school and said mom, would you take me to the Jewel on Green Bay Road? I said, “Sure, honey.” So we got in the car. I thought it was a new kind of ice cream. I didn't know what it was. He said, “Okay, pull up. Open the trunk.” Say open the trunk. And he took out two picket signs. Because the Jewel had promised to hire, I'm going to say two thousand – maybe it was two hundred, I don't remember – minority members, and they didn't do it. So the two of us marched in front of the Jewel, back and forth, back and forth, winking as we passed each other, and made that statement. I assume they did not because of the two of us. So he's a great guy – just a great guy. And the next one is one year younger, Marty. He is a physician at Northwestern. He is a leukemia specialist – bone marrow transplant specialist on the faculty. And I hear [he’s] very respected in his field and travels a lot and speaks a lot. And my youngest – he's five years younger –

Philip. And he is a music editor. Well, first of all, he taught himself guitar brilliantly. We sent him to guitar school too, but he's wonderful. And then he wanted to make his way as a composer. And I have some tapes in places. Really quite an interesting composer. So he went to Hollywood with five names. One I got him, two my sister-in-law got him. Whatever it was – he didn't know anybody. To make a long story short, a son of friends here – our friends here – hired him as a "gopher." He was a music editor. And he learned from him and became a music editor. That's in post-production. After the film is done. And he has really done well. Really done well. Now if you saw the movie *The Notebook*, he did the – his name is there – he did the music editing.

RH: I'm going to start looking for his name.

MT: Yeah, well yes. He did some television. He did two crazy shows, *Hercules* and *Xena*. They were on television. He did all the music editing.

RH: I'm a big fan of *Xena: Warrior Princess*.

MT: Yes, well Phil left home, and he did it. So he's working in films now, and he has two children. Marty has four – my middle one has four, and Tommy is not married. And that's our life. That's our life.

RH: Well, that's beautiful. Did your family, growing up, keep a kosher home?

MT: No, no. I made my home kosher and Pam did. When we were speaking to Refuseniks on the telephone, which is a whole story in itself, they would have to go to public telephone – to post offices. Imagine, imagine, during the dark days. And we would make an appointment to call him there, either sent by a tourist or by code on the phone for the next appointment. And one of our very – one outstanding man – his name was Volvovsky, Ari Volvovsky – like Volvo – Volvovsky. And we talked to him. He was a religious young man and eventually got out. And after Pam and I talked to him, we made our homes kosher.

RH: [inaudible].

MT: Something about him and his wife touched us deeply. And Pam, you'll find, is quite a religious young woman. Much more observant than I am

RH: So this is later in life that you've done this?

MT: Did what?

RH: Make your home kosher.

MT: Oh yes, but before that – oh, yeah, but before that – I skipped a big step. I'm sorry.

RH: That's okay. Need some water?

MT: No, thank you, thank you. So I decided I wanted to teach. Brandeis said – Brandeis Women's Group has small study groups, and I decided I wanted to teach foreign policy. I was interested in international affairs, and I did using a text. And we had about twenty-five or thirty young women. And we met once every two weeks. I don't remember. And it was wonderful. It was absolutely –

RH: When was this?

MT: Oh, the 60's.

RH: In the 60's?

MT: And I don't know how long. It was just so interesting. And one day I went in, and I said we'd meet at homes – different homes. I said to them, “I don't want to do this anymore. Why am I doing this? I want to teach Jewish history.” They said, “Okay. We'll stay together, but we'll do that.” So I started with Dr. Sachar's book, the *History of the Jews*. And we started. I fell in love all over again. And we had a lot of discussions and questions – and these were very live. But it came from way over there. And suddenly,

we're sitting in somebody's sunny living room, thrown back into history. There's some things left out in his book, but anyway – and then I began to bring in other books. I was teaching about two years. Meantime, I made my first trip to Russia in 1968, so I came back and talked to them about that. And a very bright young woman walked into the class. Her name was Dawn Schuman. And she was just so wonderful. And we just hit it off. And she just made the class even more alive. So I called her and asked if she'd like to teach with me. And that began a very important phase of my life. We devised a seven-year Jewish history curriculum – interdisciplinary. And we had huge classes, men and women. And then we made it like a little business where they would pay. A Brandeis thing, nobody pays. We just go in and do it. And paid a little, and we had our little income. But we would read sixty books in the summer and prepare. We began with the modern – not modern, but the emancipation in Germany from 1700 to 1900. We taught three units a year. And then the second unit was Eastern Europe, 1700 to 1900, and the third unit was immigration to this country. And the second one was Europe between the wars. We read a little Kafka, a little Hermann Cohen, Freud – but about their lives. It was almost – as I say, like a helicopter hovering over the march of the Jews through history. Never really setting down. But just a sweep of Jewish history. And in the meantime I began to speak for the UJA during this time. I don't know how that started. I just don't know. But I was on their National Speaker's Bureau, and I would talk about – do a sweep of Jewish history. Carry a microphone around and begin with a question: “When did Jewish history begin?” “Well, Adam.” “Was Adam a Jew?” “Well, no, Abraham.” “Well, why was Abraham the first Jew?” And somebody over here would say, “Because of the Covenant.” “Well, what was the Covenant?” It was the most fun I ever had in my life. And we just swept through Jewish history like that. And then Dawn joined –

RH: [beeps in background] That's going to stop in a minute. I apologize, I thought it was off.

MT: And then she joined me, and we went as a team. I remember being in Palm Springs by myself. I think I did it more. No, she didn't do it nationally, I don't think. Maybe around here. And I did that for many years.

RH: So on the Speaker's Bureau you would go in and give to different cities and give –

MT: Yes, yes. Once I did a whole tour. I went to San Francisco, on up to Canada – different towns. I went around here too. But mostly – oh, two talks in San Francisco, I remember, and Palm Springs Women's Division.

RH: And so it'd be an hour and a half talk?

MT: It wasn't a talk. It was a wandering Jew [laughter] going among the people. “But I don't understand.” “Your name?” “Gladys.” “Yeah, but Sara said that the Covenant was this.” “And you're saying something different? Is that what you meant, Sara?” It was that kind of give and take. It was fun. It was fun.

RH: Well, it sounds marvelous. What do you think you gave people, and what did it give you?

MT: It gave me the privilege – that sounds so corny – but the privilege of introducing them to their history. I mean, people know this, they know Pesach, they know Moses, they know the Red – I mean they do know much more than that. But a kind of fun continuity. I mean, we went all the way through into Napoleon and we went all the way through. Zionism and – I can't tell you how I did it, but I gave you examples. It was teaching through questions. Through questions.

RH: You're a natural adult educator.

MT: I don't know if I could do that again.

RH: They can train you now to do that.

MT: Stand on my feet, going around with a microphone – and I hope funny, Rosalind, I hope funny too. And then, after a while, I just couldn't do it anymore, because we really taught so many classes here. And then after we taught for many years, we separated. And very good friends. Very, very good friends. We spent so much together preparing. And I remember Dawn would call me at 6:30, having dinner – she'd say, "Remember question seven? I think we ought to make that two." I mean it was such a preoccupation. In the meantime, running a house and kids. This was all a pleasure. My connection with Jewish history is just a pleasure. I don't know how else to say it. I don't know how else to say it. It's all rescue, and it's all Jewish history, and it's all Jews.

RH: So you had this curriculum here and then people would come for years.

MT: Yes. They came to classes. Years. Sometimes seven years. And we ended with the Jews in the ghettos. We went through medieval history. Spain and Europe and – Europe between the wars and I'm trying to think about the third year. Oh, I know – Holocaust. The third year was all Holocaust. And we used texts and we used poetry and we used – and then the fourth year, where do you go from that? You go back to Abraham. And so we would do a sweep through – from Abraham to, I don't know – three units – and the fifth year was medieval. So we're marching with the Jews. [Makes marching sounds] Fifth and sixth years were medieval. And the seventh year brought them back to the ghettos where we started. And you know something? People read. They read. I mean, once I needed a book, and I called up one of my students – said, "Do you have that on your bookshelf?" Remember we studied that *They Thought They Were Free*, by Milton Mayer – about a little town, and he interviewed them, and why they became Nazis. "Oh yeah," she said, "I've got that book. I'll drop it off for you." I just couldn't find my copy later because we gave our Holocaust books to the library, the Holocaust library in Washington. They were some of the – they accepted. And when my grandchildren went there they'd say, they'd pull a couple off the shelf – years ago when it started, off the shelf -– "Grandma, there's your name! Grandma, there's your name!"

And we were so lucky that the librarian accepted them.

RH: Oh, my gosh. I'm glad they're there.

MT: Oh, I am too, I am too. Some well-known, some unusual, some out of print. But it was a very large library. Well, not very large – I don't know how many.

RH: Is your curriculum there too?

MT: No. No. I have that someplace on a piece of paper. All of our papers that we wrote and put together using other sources are all at the – when Dawn died – she died, oh about twenty years ago. Young, vibrant, gorgeous, beautiful, brilliant, most unusual woman. And when she did, they started the Dawn Schuman Institute, which is a well-known educational – adult education here. I taught for them for a while. And then everything was too much, because I became interested in the Soviet Jewry Movement. I made my first trip in '68. Am I all over the park here?

RH: No.

MT: And the second trip in '78, and the third trip in '88. And after the first – '68, '78 – and after I came back in '78, that was what I was interested in, and I've been active ever since.

RH: So, this is perfect. Tell me a little about this – how you got involved, who got you involved, and then what do you do?

MT: Oh, I got myself involved, because in '68 –

RH: That doesn't surprise me, somehow.

MT: In '68, my husband and I went. I don't know why, we just went. And it was right before the Jews behind the Iron Curtain began peeking out and sending letters to the UN

and letting people know they were there. Nobody knew anything. Who knew if they had relatives? How many Jews survived the war? Nobody knew anything. There was this absolute iron curtain. And we'd go down the streets and neither of us, unfortunately, speak Yiddish. And my husband studied a little German at the University of Chicago. And we would see, I remember, gray men in gray hats and gray coats, walking down the street and we'd say, "*Du bist a Yid?*" And I remember too – and they both said, "Da," looking around. And, well, then we spoke a little English, which Jews pretty much understand a little. And we'd say, "How are things for Jews? *How can ze be?"* Is there antisemitism? We're not. We'd say thank you. We found Jews in kiosks, selling on the street. We just knew them. And I said to Teddy, "I'm going back. I'm going back [pounds table] and I'm going to find Jews." There was nobody to call for a Jewish name here. No organization, nobody. When I came back, I found out there was. There were two organizations. One was the establishment – the Federation UJA. And then there was a very unusual organization called the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews. It was started at the time the people woke up and realized there were Jews there who had to be rescued. And this was kind of a loose union of individual councils – Detroit, Chicago, Miami, Boston. When I was in charge for their board of recruit – getting new councils, we had forty-three. I mean all over, all over. And we had connections in Brussels, in Norway. So I joined. And she briefed – I went with a friend in '78. And then we had names. And the woman who was the president, who is no longer active – but she was the past chairman as Pam was. And then Pam and I became co-chairmen, and then Pam went on to other things, study and on to other – Pam was my student. She was my – she doesn't believe me, but my best student. She said, "I always thought that girl in the corner was your – thought was your best student." I love her so much. And what was I telling you? Oh, about the Soviet Jewry. So we went and we found, and we had –

RH: So this organization –

MT: Yeah, my organization. I chose to join that one. And there was a council in Chicago. And the young woman who was chairman of it – her office was at Spurtis, and she briefed the two of us – my friend Gail and I went. I asked Gail to go because she spoke Hebrew. And I knew they were secretly studying Hebrew.

RH: So tell me Gail's last name.

MT: Gotskind, Gotskind – G-O-T-S-K-I-N-D. Gotskind. God's child. And we went. I mean each story, each person. And in those days, you – I'm going to speak about it a little bit on the ninth, if I ever get my notes together – and you couldn't knock on the door, you couldn't call, you just appeared at the door. You could ring a bell in their apartment. You just appeared. And everybody was gracious. And I think I may tell the story about one woman who was a tourist. We used to brief tourists here – hundreds of them – before they went. Brave people. And they'd say, “What if something happens” – the tourists, I'm interrupting myself. “What if something happens?” And I would say to them, “Well, the refuseniks know how to handle this.” “No. What if something happens to me?” I used to be writing. I'd say, “You know what, Shelley, don't worry, we can always get other tourists.” They didn’t think it was too funny. Anyway, we saw all of these magnificent people. I started to tell you, so this story was one woman was there during Pesach, and she showed up at an apartment, rang the bell, and a woman opened the door. And she had on an apron covered with flour. And she took a look at the tourist and said, “Come in, come in, you're late.”

RH: That's marvelous.

MT: And another tourist – I could take too much time with this – but in our brief – we would brief nine hours, Pam and I. The first three hours I would teach the history of Russia. The fact that – the czars – all how big – one-sixth of the world's landmass and just talk about Russia and the Baltics and all that stuff, Stalin and so on. The second three hours was Jewish history in Russia. It was the Jews in Russia from the beginning.

In between we sent them to Nancy Rosenfeld, who taught them the Cyrillic alphabet, so that they could read a sign. It was the street that they wanted to go to. And the third three hours were their assignments – how to code names in their book. Like for Ida Nudel, you'd just put “chicken soup” or something. You know, you had to code – you had to. What if customs – they stop you, and they look at this book and they see names of these people who were doing what they considered illegal things. So tourists were wonderful. I don't know if that's what you want me to go on talking about.

RH: No, I do. Actually, someone – one of my colleagues did this.

MT: Who?

RH: Frieda and Roy Furman.

MT: Oh, I think I – did I brief them, do you know? Or did you not ask them?

RH: I'm not sure. I haven't seen them this week to ask.

MT: It sounds kind of –

RH: They talked about creating a code and putting books –

MT: No, I think Israel – Israel had them hide. When Israel briefed people, they had them put stuff in – we told them don't hide anything. They open it up and see something hidden and that's it. But we would take tapes of Talmud and Torah. And we had a young man who would take the new tapes and – what do you call that wrapping in plastic? -– they’d just wrap them as if they're new. Hundreds and hundreds of those tapes. And then we would film documents here on their behalf, newspaper articles. And we would take a new box of film, carefully open it, take out the new film, insert the film of these documents, re-seal it, and throw them in. It looks like new film. And over there, there was – they had people who would develop them. Oh, one – this couple, very active

in the Federation and wonderful couple – and I warned everybody when you – they were really briefed. They had who to see, addresses, what to leave them, what to tell them. You must tell them that if they're gone, secret kindergarten moves, they must send word back. I mean, this is the kind of thing. So that was the last three hours. And how to code and what were they taking. And we would have to tell them in those days – everybody's sentimental. A Jew may not enter a synagogue here, but the minute you're traveling, you go to the synagogue. I love it. So everybody wanted to go to these Russian shuls. And we'd say, "Go, if you have time. I hope you won't have time because you'll be so busy visiting people. But don't put money in the pushke because the KGB comes and gets it." I mean, every Jew goes in – oh, you know, they want to give. They're generous; they want to give. There were so many things that happened. And we would tell them, "If they want your purse, give them your purse. If the KGB stops you" – they're all around in their black cars. They stop you, see you come out of – we taught them how. If you're going in an apartment, and you see a car, you go around the block several times. They know everything I think. We'd always say, "Give them whatever they want. If somebody stops you and says, 'Give me your this, give me your that.' Or somebody grabs it, it's not a hoodlum. They don't have a lot of hoodlums, but it's the KGB." So this one guy who went – one couple – fabulous guy, very tall. She was carrying her purse – the woman. Hehe had a little plastic bag of *tchotchkes* that they gave him to bring home – maybe a little doll – the Refuseniks that he visited – maybe a Russian spoon. You know, it's just stuff. Sure enough, somebody grabbed her purse and went to grab his bag, and this guy hit the KGB guy. Knocked him down. [Makes booming sounds] He said, "I wasn't going to let him take those gifts for my kids that those people gave me." That was Larry Cohn, Larry and Meryl Cohn. Larry Cohn.

RH: So it worked.

MT: It worked. But my heart was in my mouth.

RH: Again, staring down the bully.

MT: That's right. They were wonderful.

RH: That seems to keep working.

MT: It does. I think it does. That's life. So then I went to work – went to work briefing people, and I've been there ever since. And then as Pam – Pam was the president of the Union. I'll let her tell you the story, but she was magnificent. Magnificent. I mean she was innovative, creative, bold, political – very political. She was very political.

RH: Well tell me how – how does that translate?

MT: Well, it translates into protests, it translates into visits to embassies, it translates into going to – we went to Reykjavik – and stood outside with a group of people from the Union across from –

RH: When was this?

MT: The year that Gorbachev and Reagan met. And we stood across from the building – that was in '89, I believe – building with our signs. But that's nothing.

RH: But you had training with your son.

MT: I had training with Tommy. But she did much more. She knew how to raise funds. She was political in terms of, she would meet anybody. She would meet – wait a minute, I think she was once asked – I have to check this with her – to speak for the Duma for a committee in the Duma in Leningrad. I can't believe this. I think she was. And she did. I think she did. But it was a little – I don't know how it happened. I'm too vague on it. But that's what I mean about her. Unafraid. Nobody thought of that. I'll tell you, there was a characteristic of the people who worked for the Union; they were in Cleveland or Baltimore or – it doesn't matter. We always say you have to be *meshuggalah d'var*. You

got to be absolutely passionate. That's what I think Pam would tell you. That's what Sharansky called us in his book. That's what the KGB said to him when he was in prison. They said to him, “Who you got working for you? A bunch of students and housewives.” And we were the housewives. And I hope she mentions that in her remarks. We were the housewives. And you would stand – oh, it didn't matter. Maybe I'll tell this, I don't know, but we had a friend who was an alderman, and he had a good friend who was the corporation counsel for Harold Washington near Chicago. So we went down to see Harold Washington, and then we had a date to make a phone call. Two o'clock in the afternoon our time to Moscow or Saint Petersburg or Riga – where the person was waiting at a post office. So, we said to this guy, the corporation guy, our friend, “We have to make this phone call. We must make it.” He said, “Well, you know what? Use my office.” This big, lovely office in the city hall. So we got through. We called the international operator – don't ask – then gave her the number, and then she had an American operator. It was something. We got through. We had our notes prepared, and we talked, sort of shouting. I would say – I don't know if Pam remembers it – forty-five minutes or an hour. This young man who was a corporation councilor came in and said, “Hi, I'm sorry, the mayor needs the office for a meeting.” “I'm sorry,” we said, “but we're talking on the phone.” He said, “It's okay, it's okay. Tell them to hold on and quickly follow me.” So we followed him to a corridor, picked up the phone and continued our call.

RH: That's wonderful.

MT: I mean that's the spirit.

RH: So what would you talk to them about when you would make these dates? What are these conversations?

MT: “Well, did you get the books we sent you?” – which was money. “How are things? How's the family?” And then, we would speak quite openly. Quite openly. “So-and-so

was arrested," they would say – and all of this was transferred to the Congress, and to the State Department – all the information we had – and to the press. All the television stations used to come to our office. I'd see all these young men and women on television, and they all used to interview – that's where the information came from. Now the Federation had some – their main activity was large, public meetings downtown at the big – you know where the Picasso thing is and so on – because they had access to all these names. So they were able to run these – we did briefing and all the other – a lot of the other stuff. Oh, where was I?

RH: I was just asking about what happened on the telephone.

MT: Oh, about on the phone calls. Oh, they would say who was arrested. And one time John Porter, who was a former Congressman from our district, was very active. He was elected, and Pam and I went to see him in him in his Winnetka office. Tall, blonde, handsome. You would have thought [inaudible] last interest and conservative in the world would be this, and we went to see him. And we said, "Congressman, have we got an issue for you." And he took the Soviet Jewry thing, and he not only ran with it, but once a man was arrested in Riga, and we called his wife from his office. It was wonderful. Oh, and Paul, our senator –

RH: Oh, yeah. Simon.

MT: Paul Simon. Forgive me, Paul. I'm looking upward. Forgive me, Paul. Anyway, his office was always open. He would come to our meetings, he made trips, we briefed him. I mean all kinds. They were wonderful. So this one time we had an appointment to call. John said, "Come to my office in Washington." Pam went to his – he got up, said, "Come on." Pam sat down at the desk, and she called the man's wife who was arrested in Riga. His name was Zunshine, and Mrs. Zunshine. And she said, "Pam, I am being followed. They took Zachar away, and I am being followed." And Pam said, "You're being followed?" And John Porter took the phone and he said, "Mrs. Zunshine, this is

Congressman John Porter. Do you hear me?" – meaning KGB listening. "Yes, yes. Yes, yes." "This must stop. I am going from my office to the Congress of the United States, and I will say that I spoke to you, that you are being followed, and this will be followed up" – whatever he said. "And I want you not to worry. The Congress of the United States is on your side. Do you hear me Mrs. Zunshine?" She said, "Yes, you are heard." And he went down, and he talked about it. He went himself on many trips.

RH: Another bully story.

MT: That's right. It comes out like – well, isn't that it? Isn't that it? How can you stand it? How could you just stand it?

RH: Were there pretenses for these arrests?

MT: Yes. Volvovsky had a copy of *Exodus*. They were watching him. They were watching him. I mean, they knew who the Refuseniks were. And they knew they were Refuseniks because they applied to go to Israel years and years and years and years and years after year. And they were refused. So they were called Refuseniks. Of course, it's obvious. And then they were prisoners. We call them prisoners for Zion – [Ha'atz] Eretz Zion – prisoners of Zion. What else, Sharansky – many of them, their stories – they're just unbelievable.

RH: Tell me then about Volvovsky and after you talked with him – both you and Pam started to keep kosher home. Explain the connection for me.

MT: Well, we thought he kept kosher. [laughter] I don't know if it turned out he did or not, but he kept talking about kashrut, kashrut. And it was our homage to him – that's a silly way to put it. But it was, "My God, you're over there. You're going to be a prisoner." He was eventually arrested and exiled to Gorky to – and uh, terrible. Terrible stuff. And we thought, "He's over there in the middle of this talking about kashrut?" I mean, it's like in this work you sort of don't sit down and make big decisions. Now you agree you're going

to go Reykjavik, you agree you're going to have a protest, you agree you're going to go march in front of the Soviet embassy in Washington – and it's another story – shove petitions for Sharansky through their gate because the guy came out. He wouldn't accept them. All right. We'll go, we'll go, we'll go. But in terms of your goals and how to help, you just did it. You just did it.

RH: Did the next thing in front of you.

MT: [Someone enters the room.] Hello. Come and meet Rosalind. Anyway, I'm sorry.

RH: No, this is perfect. We're going to stop this.

[END OF FILE 1]

MT: I started to tell you the great heroes are really the husbands of women who – I mean the great support. One day, I came home to Teddy. I said in '63 – I said to him, “You know, I think I'm going to Mississippi.” And he said, “Why?” That was the Civil Rights Movement. I said, “Well, Buddy Mayer has a friend who has a daughter there. And we think we'll take a – I don't know, a few supplies, and then come see what’s needed, come back – I'll come back to my synagogue – and sent truckloads of things that they need.” He said, “Well, will you be safe?” I said, “Well, yeah, I think so.” And he said, “Well, okay.” I remember going to dinner with friends, and they said, “Are you crazy? Are you crazy? You're letting her go?” And I remember he just made a gesture. Anyway.

RH: Shrugged his shoulders. What can he do?

MT: He shrugged his shoulders. My children were not neglected. They were well taken care of, and it wasn't long. So we went down to Memphis, I think. I don't remember. And we rented a car – the three of us. An unmarked car – unmarked. And we drove to Ruleville, Mississippi in the heart of the Mississippi Delta.

RH: [overlapping dialogue; inaudible].

MT: Yes. This other friend's daughter was working there. And we stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson – Black family, modest. They were very welcoming and very sweet. Gave us their bed. Buddy Mayer and I stayed there. The friend stayed with their daughter. We spent the afternoon, evening with them. And Mr. Johnson – they had other cots someplace where they slept. They were very kind and gave us their bed. And he said, “Well, I won't be coming.” He sat in the living room in a rocking chair with a rifle over his – all night long with a rifle. And sure enough, the police came in the morning with the dogs. “Who's here? What are you doing there, Johnson?” This and that, this and that. And we went to the school and saw what was happening, and then we came back. But I'm telling you this story. And then I went to Solel – and as a [inaudible] congregation where we belonged at the time, we don't know. And he had a trucking company. So we collected all kinds of things. All kinds of things. From toasters to – and big truck – clothes – and big truckloads went down. But I'm telling you that because of Teddy. Full support. I was not going to be gone that long.

RH: Well, you've just stepped out of the page of Fannie Lou Hamer's biography, because they talk about the women who came down with truckloads of clothes. And here you were one of them.

MT: Well, we sent them, but it was the same thing. It’s like being a part of history. It's not only teaching it but feeling a part of it. You’re here once. God gives you one life. And you have to be passionate about it. Now you don't have to be. People have different nature, but that's been my life. And Pam's and Jill's – Pam especially. I mean, she has such passion. Her people, her people, her people. And she's such a leader. She's such a leader. And oh, wait until you hear her speak. Wait until you hear her speak. She's just wonderful.

RH: Oh, I look forward to it.

MT: Oh, she was wonderful. As Jill is. Jill is younger, and I don't work as closely with her, but I adore her.

RH: Tell me a little about your Jewish life, your synagogues.

MT: Here, now you mean?

RH: Yes. Over the years even. As a child.

MT: Oh, well, it was a little town. B'nai Abraham. I told you we went upstairs for services. My father down. And I'd peek at him. And then when we came here we joined Solel, which was a branch. It's in Highland Park, and it was a branch of a famous synagogue in Hyde Park. I lived in Hyde Park around the University of Chicago. And then we joined it. It was a group of intellectuals. It was a breakaway. They were psychiatrists, physicians, lawyers. And in the beginning, the school board decided they would not teach the Akeyda because psychologically what it would do to children. Well, that's how they thought. And I'm very Freud-minded. Do you want to hear the story about Freud – Freud's house?

RH: Oh, please. Yes.

MT: My husband and I were in England, and I said, “You know, I think Freud had a house when we came from Germany.” He escaped – Mary Bonaparte made it possible for him to come. And it was not a museum yet. So Anna Freud, his daughter, had been here at the Institute for Psychoanalysis, and she was familiar with the staff here. I was on the women's board of the Institute for Psychoanalysis, because our dearest friend was one of the great psychoanalysts in Chicago. So I called up the house, and I said, “My name is Marillyn Tallman. I'm here from Chicago and I would like to come and see Miss Freud – come and see the house and see Miss Freud.” So this was her – they used to call them amanuensis – this was her secretary. She said – British accent – she said, “Just a moment please. She said she will be here at two o'clock.” I jumped in the shower

again, changed my clothes, we got in the cab, gave him the address, went up this lovely, lovely red brick house, and rang the bell – Teddy and I – and Miss Freud answered the door. She was a great analyst in her own right. And she had a print dress, heavy shoes, jet beads, and was the most gorgeous thing ever. “Hello,” she said. And she had a German accent, I can't do it – Viennese. “Please come in.” So we came in and she said, “Won't you sit down?” And we turn to the right, and that was the living room. Big bust of Freud. And then she said, “Come sit here. Perhaps you'd like to see the” – oh, she said, “I'd see patients here. I used to see patients in this living room.” So we go into the next room, and there is Freud's couch. And his books and his ancient artifacts. I said to Teddy, “I'll look at the books, you look at the artifacts” – you know like this. And she was very gracious and she said, “Tell me what you do.” And I said, “Well, I teach Jewish history. My husband is in business.” And she said, [still making accent] “Well, what do you teach?” I'm talking like Eleanor Roosevelt. I always talk about – everything I say is like Eleanor Roosevelt. If it's Austrian or German, Italian, Greek, anything. So I said, “Well” – I said, “Well” – I said, “We've been traveling in Europe – Jewish history.” “Where have you been?” I said, “We've just come from Auschwitz.” Now, I think two of her sisters died there. Two of Freud's sisters were killed there. I'm sorry that's (where we came from?) – “No, no, no, no. You must go and you must see and you must teach.” Oh, but what I have to tell you is that the head of the institute here was a doctor by the name of George Pollack whom I'd never met. Well, I'm not beyond – she knew him. So when I called up I said, “Dr. George Pollack” – I just mentioned his name. I never said I knew him. So she showed us around. It was unspeakable. I mean, it was just so wonderful to be there. “Oh, yes, my father saw patients here and he's here – and this is his desk, and we keep a rose in this little glass vase every day because he loved it.” I can't tell you. So we were there a respectable amount of time. Not very long. And I said, “I wanted to thank you very much. It's such an honor to meet you.” And the usual thing that anybody would say. She said, “Well, thank you very much for coming.” And as I went out the door and turned around to wave goodbye, she said, “And say hello to Dr.

Pollack." I saw him at a party a couple of weeks later and told him about it.

RH: Oh, my gosh, how wonderful.

MT: That was one of the great thrills of my life. So we were all in the Freud period. We joined Solel, and it was made up of intellectuals. They didn't have a Brotherhood – didn't have a Sisterhood. Arnold Wolf was their rabbi and intellectual. And then when my children came here – my daughter-in-law is Conservative. And so they bought a house near a Conservative synagogue in Deerfield, and we immediately joined where they joined. I go on Shabbat often with them – with my grandchildren. So that's where we belong – Moriah.

RH: Moriah.

MT: Moriah. Yup. And that's the story of – and I was chairman of their school board for a while.

RH: Made sure that they taught history.

MT: Oh, yes, oh, yes. And I taught ninth and tenth grade.

RH: Oh, you did?

MT: Yes. And my youngest son, Philip – they called him Skip in those days – Skippy. He was in my ninth-grade class. And the first day, I was a nervous wreck. He sat – it was U-shape – and he sat right here. It was an introductory class. And then I got in the car to drive home. And I turned on the radio, casually. [Hums] He turned it off. He said, "Mom, aren't you going to ask me how I like the class?" "You know, honey, if you want to tell me, it's okay." He said, "Well, I'll tell you, Mom, you really are a good teacher. There's only one thing. You know when you were talking about the difference between food planting and food gathering? Mom, did you have to get down on the floor and show

how it was done?" [Laughter] But it was wonderful. He said, "Mom, if you knew the answer" – and you know the kids adored him, because he used to teach the little ones.

RH: So you taught for how long?

MT: Oh, years. Ninth grade – years in a confirmation class, I think. And some of them – I can't believe it – after they were confirmed. Because Solel was Reform – after they were confirmed, I said to them, "How would you like to come back and just for fun, one afternoon a week, and let's do some Jewish stories?" And they came back. And Wednesday afternoons they would sit around, and we studied Jewish short stories together and talked about them in that sort of Socratic way. And I remember in the library – oh, Mary (Minnow?) was one. I remember these kids. We studied Kafka. We studied Kafka.

RH: So you created some lifelong learners here it sounds like.

MT: I hope so. I hope so.

RH: I can't believe – I mean kids that age, that they would [overlapping dialogue; inaudible] to do that.

MT: Unbelievable, unbelievable.

RH: And now I'm a little confused. What synagogue was this at?

MT: Solel.

RH: Solel. [overlapping dialogue; inaudible]

MT: Solel. It started in '63, and we were members, and my children were brought up there. And then only when my middle son was married and my daughter-in-law was Conservative that we – we wanted to be with him. And I prefer Conservative. My

husband does not. So I go.

RH: So let me just look over. So you're telling me some of their questions here. You do celebrate Shabbat and holidays. You go to synagogue [overlapping dialogue; inaudible].

MT: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. As many Shabbats as I can. Oh, yes.

RH: Some of my friends celebrated at home on Friday. You'll do that.

MT: I light candles sometimes. You know, I light candles. And we have a –

RH: So your children were confirmed?

MT: They were.

RH: Did they get bar mitzvahed?

MT: Well, that's a very sore point, because there was a period when my children – and my older boys are exactly one year to the age – to the week apart. So, what was I telling? Eighty-two-year-old mind. Oh, about bar mitzvah, about bar mitzvah. It's just an extra few seconds when you're that old. It was during that period they decided not to have bar mitzvahs. The rabbi thought it was just for parents and grandparents and parties. I didn't know – we didn't know – go to another place. We were so involved at Solel. It was such a part of our life. Teddy was adult education chairman. We used to have huge classes, and it was the place to be for services. It was the place we wanted to be. It never occurred to me, and nobody around me said. And the two boys married girls from Conservative homes. So it's a very hurtful thing.

RH: How was the confirmation process? How is it different?

MT: Well they go – well, not much Hebrew. Everybody gives a speech. The service first. It’s very nice, but it's not bar mitzvah. But now they have them at Solel. Oh, now

they have them. Absolutely. My period was the dark period. The drought, the drought.

RH: You had one little [overlapping dialogue; inaudible] of experimentation.

MT: Yes, it was the drought.

RH: So, I feel certain you've been to Israel.

MT: I have. Quite a few – we went in '62 for the first time. And then went back in '67 right after the war. And then we had – we used to have meetings – the unit councils used to have meetings there. My children have been there. As a matter of fact, Marty and his wife and four children just got back [from] Israel. The kids' first trip.

RH: And did your children go on the trips to Israel?

MT: Oh, yes. Yes, they did. Of course they did, because I remember six months after the '67 war, and we were at the Golan, and one of the kids said to the other – Tommy said, “Marty, look at this.” He picked up a pair of Syrian army pants that were there. And you know there were "Do not go here" orange signs. "Do not go on this path – it could be mined or dangerous,” or something like that. And yes, they did go with us. Oh, I sent it to Philip – a picture of him on an army tank with an army beret. Yes, they did.

RH: Why did you choose to go then? Is there something ??

MT: I don't know. I don't know why we choose to go on trips. I'm so bad with dates. It’s such a lack that I used to keep journals. You're not going to believe this, and I'm terribly embarrassed to tell you; I used to keep journals of our trips. And when I go back to look at them – except the trips to Russia – there's no date. It's just like a seamless part of life. We'll go to France and take the trip – the Crusader's route this year, and then we'll go here that year.

RH: What does Israel mean to you?

MT: Well, you know when you study and teach the struggle and the Biluim – the first immigration and the late 19th century – and who went. And then each of the five aliyot. What was happening there and the sacrifices. I always say to Pam, to my family, I couldn't have made it. I couldn't have made it. Those swampy mosquitoes and all that sacrifice – I couldn't have made it. Not just I – but it's unbelievable. What Israel means to me is everything – is everything. It's the heart of Judaism. If I could just close my eyes and have every Jew in the world there. It's a funny statement.

RH: It is.

MT: Of course we're needed here. Of course the Diaspora is here. We'll stay, and we're needed. But I remember when we went to see – we went on one trip, and we went to meet Ben Gurion and in Sde Boker, which was his kibbutz. And he said, "How many in the room" – there was a group of us – "How many in the room are Zionists?" He said, "Put your hands down. None of you are Zionists. If you were a Zionist you would be here." And I always say my three sons were in the Army, my daughters-in-law were – I mean, I am American. I've lived an American life. We've made no sacrifices. Although I remember raising was not a sacrifice but going – raising money for the Irgun in fancy apartments [not Jewish?] on Lakeshore Drive, and they would draw the draperies at night, and I would speak about it and raise money and send it to an intermediary, a rabbi in Boston, and he would send it on.

RH: Tell me what the Irgun is.

MT: The Irgun was the – they were the freedom fighters. The Haganah was the regular army, and they were the freedom fighters – we call them the freedom fighters. I mean they blew up British – during the British mandates – railroad lines and – it's hard to explain. That was big, and Menachem Begin and some great heroes. It's such a complicated place. I mean, the story of Herzl is so complicated, and the story of – I mean his whole personality – and the bravery to get on shaky boots after the war out of

Italian ports. I'm not saying what it means. It's hard to explain what it – it is the heart of Judaism and Jewish peoplehood to me and Jewish life. When I say everybody could go there, it's unrealistic and probably – it's a far-out statement. But Pam would agree. I know Pam would agree with me. Ask her that question and you will get an answer. Mine is feeble. It's feeble.

RH: How did you feel when Ben Gurion said you're not a Zionist Jew?

MT: I learned something. I really learned.

RH: Tell me what you learned.

MT: I learned what is real. I mean what – I don't mean that as a pun, but what – I didn't know anything. I didn't know anything. I knew the history from an academic point of view. And a feeling here. Your heart beats fast when you read about this, faster. But I thought, “Well, he's here. With all the mistakes he's made. He knows what it is to be a true Zionist.” It's like Sylvia Rothschild, the writer, once was writing about the Holocaust and she said, “The survivors have the wounds. We have the scars.” And I thought that was such an apt phrase. They suffered the wounds. They suffered losing children – every family knows someone in Israel. They went through the sacrifice for that land. We have the scars because we're here and we're safe, but we still have such feelings about them. I thought that was a – quite a good statement.

RH: So would you claim that moniker of the Zionist now?

MT: You know, that's a good question. Probably. I don't know how to answer it. I really don't know how to answer it. I thought that Ben Gurion was right. But they're labels. They're just labels, Rosalind. You know, a lover of Zion? Of course a lover of Zion. A believer that that is the, as I said, the heartbeat of our people, of our history, and where many more people should go? Would I go now? I don't know. I would probably retire there, but I don't speak Hebrew. And it would be such a new beginning at our age. I

mean it's just silly. And my children are here. But Pam has a good – she has an apartment there. So that's a wonderful – and Lenny's sister – her husband's sister and brother-in-law are there and their children. So they have such ties. But you think I'm at all passionate to go. It's late in life to do things but not to feel things, you know?

RH: That was well put.

MT: Was it?

RH: Yes.

MT: That's how it is.

RH: Do you feel in your work that there are any particular Jewish values from Jewish –

MT: Traditions?

RH: – traditions that you feel especially connected to or that you're passing along?

MT: Oh, I think *pidyon sh'vuyim*, rescuing the captives. Yes, I do. But I mean there are different kinds of rescue. You know if somebody doesn't know anything about Judaism and they get good Jewish books in Russian, in a way that's rescuing their minds. It's their mitzvot. It's their mitzvot. And also it's a uniting thing. It says to them, "You're sitting over there in Kishinev" – really, literally, Kishinev. "You're sitting over there in Cherkassy. I mean, you're sitting in Siberia. You're sitting there. I know about you. Not just Marillyn. We know about you. What do you need? What do you want?" We have a philosophy, this organization of ours. We never tell. We're really partners. I never can remember the word. It's not 'patronizing,' it's not 'patriarchal.' I never can remember it. It's an attitude of, "We know better and we will tell you what's best for you." And I block that word – it's very similar. I'm almost there. I mean if they say, "OKay, money has been sent, what should we use it for?" We say, "You know best. You know best." I

mean, if you feel that your community wants to go to visit the Warsaw ghetto, that's not feeding anybody; it's not visiting the poor, the sick. It's not medicine, but it's a Jewish community thing. It relates you to history and so on.

RH: Paternalism.

MT: Thank you. Thank you. [laughter] I never – I block that word out. I get all around it. Thank you. And you know what? I'll forget it. I dislike it.

RH: Well, you dislike it. You don't need that, then.

MT: I dislike it. That's right.

RH: And you don't live out that word.

MT: That's right. We have a program they called Yad L'Yad which pairs synagogues with small Jewish communities. We have about forty-six in this area. Actually, it was Pam's idea at a board meeting. Because we have to reevaluate. When the Soviet Union fell, we had to reorganize and reevaluate our work, because we worked for Refuseniks, we worked to get them out, immigration, immigration, and the prisoners. And we reevaluated it, and we realized that it was protection now, sustenance still. But sustenance. The population was getting older; children needed Jewish things. So we reevaluated it, and actually I don't know if Pam came – she didn't come up with a name, a rabbi did. But the idea is how – it's just a wonderful idea – is asking synagogues to connect with a small community, with a school. Solel has the Gomel School in Gomel Belarus – the school. Sometimes the whole community. Chicago Action supports two little communities. Everything. But these synagogues – some are weaker, some are very strong, some are moderate. They send boxes of medicine and warm clothing and boots. They send Jewish books. They talk on the telephone. They sort of do what we do – monitor if, God forbid, there's been – and there have been a lot of antisemitic incidents, a lot. A lot. And some go there. Some rabbis take a delegation – visit their

town. Occasionally they'll bring some people here for Pesach. When it's good, it's good. And when it's week, it's sending several boxes, and maybe $2,500 a year, which is – isn't that good? I think that's really good. It's a terrific program. As I say, sometimes it fails. And it was all over the country, but actually Chicago Action is the center. It's a Union of Councils program. But the center of it is here in Chicago, because we have the most connections, we have the biggest volunteer staff. We have a young woman – and we always felt that – I'm older and my partner now is a woman who is a Dutch survivor. She was hidden by Christians during the war. Her parents turned their only child over to a woman in a railroad station who has an appointment to – I'm sorry, I'm just rambling on and on. But anyway, she's in her seventies. And so we have a wonderful young woman. She just turned fifty – compassionate, bright, and she will take over the leadership. I think it'll be a little while because I'm so grateful to have someplace to go. Oh, I am so grateful, I can't tell you. My kids used to say, "What does Mrs. So-and-so do all day?" You know, when I was teaching and busy with them, always with them. "But what does she do?" I remember exactly the woman they asked about. I said, "I don't know, honey."

RH: What was it like for them, do you think, to grow up and witness activist mothers?

MT: I think they got tired of it sometimes. They got used to it and tired of it. But I was there. I was certainly – I was there. But they'd hear me on the phone at night with Dawn, planning for the next day. And we were a family. I'll tell you a story about teaching children and making mistakes. One day the two older boys came home, and the mail was always on the dining room table. And they saw *Time* magazine with Albert Schweitzer's picture on the cover. And one of them said, "Ma, who's Albert Schweitzer?" I said, "Boys, come into the living room." So we sat down with a picture, and I explained to them, "This really saintly man who was a devout Christian, played the organ, and spent his life in Lambaréné and Africa, where people had leprosy, where they were the sickest and the poorest. And his respect for life, his love of life and his respect for life

was so enormous." And they're sitting there; they were so cute of course. "And it was so enormous that if a little fly, a little bug got on his arm, he would carefully let it go. He would never even kill a little bug. And if Daddy and I have taught you boys that kind of respect for life, we'll have really done a job." With that – it was in November – with that, a tiny little field mouse ran across the living room, and I yelled, "Kill it! Kill it! Get rid of it! I'm leaving! Call Daddy! When it's dead …" [Laughter] There's a lot in that. We have not mentioned mice or Albert Schweitzer since. Isn't that a funny story?

RH: That's a great story.

MT: And of course what did my children do?

RH: What?

MT: Caught the mouse, put it in a bag, and let it out in the backyard. Not because of Albert Schweitzer. I have laughed with Teddy over that story. I have told it so many times. Instinct against –

RH: Well, they learned their mother was human.

MT: Thank you. Thank you very much, Rosalind. Thank you. [Laughter]

RH: That's great. Here you are a woman doing all this work in a time where a lot of women – their expectations were to stay at home. And also where it was difficult for women. Talk about that a little bit.

MT: That's been a whole area of life that I just took for granted. But I guess I was so busy with what I was doing that I never – oh, maybe I'd join NOW or read a lot about it and believed in it and believed in the feminist movement. But I guess I don't know what it is. Maybe you can tell me. I felt free to do what I wanted within the confines of good mothering and wifing and that kind of thing. I mean, I believe in the feminist movement. I

believe it’s urgent, it's important, just like I believe in civil rights. I hated inequality. But I haven't been active in the feminist movement. I just haven't. I don't know what else you want me –

RH: I'm sure that you haven't.

MT: Well, maybe you've discovered that I – you know certain things you just sort of take – I just did it. But again, I never said my – well, the example of going to Mississippi was an example. Nobody ever said, “Did Teddy say you could go?” Or you know that to me was –

RH: Was there a group of people that –? I mean, why did you decide to go?

MT: I don't know. I think because I saw the terrible thing that was – terrible things that were happening. Being a part of history. See, that's what Pam and I talk about a lot.

RH: Marillyn talks about that too. I mean [overlapping dialogue; inaudible]

MT: No, no. Thank you. To be a part of history. I mean you either feel it or you don't. You've either got that feeling or you don't have it. I mean, it's almost impossible to sit and think – it's like giving a contribution to – I don't want to get into this – but to someplace and thinking everything is taken care of. And history is right there and we're part of history. I think I'm going to say that. We are part of history. We're the creators of history. We're not really the creatures, we're the creators of history. I mean, what I do and you do, that's all part of this – there's no other word, but the history and adventure of the Jewish people. And I hate to use the word ‘adventure,’ because there's so much tragedy. But that isn't what Judaism is, not the tragedy. It's Torah and mitzvot. But it sounds preachy. I don't mean to be. But that's what it is. So I'm in this area, I don't think I have a lot to say except that I believe in it.

RH: Have there been roadblocks because you're a woman? I mean it doesn't appear that there have been.

MT: No, no.

RH: Have you had just people dismiss you?

MT: No. I don't think so. Remember I worked in a Jewish – in the Jewish world. And because I –

RH: [overlapping dialogue; inaudible] been known to have a little sexism.

MT: Really? Really? I just never did. I mean, if I called these universities, they didn't say, “Have Dr. Sachar or have the director the thing call me.” I just called them. You know it's the expectation of you can do it, because it's right. I mean, naïve – naïve sometimes. My own life, that I can recall, I have not had roadblocks. There have been. Either I'm too dumb to recognize them or just rode over them, pushed my way through them.

RH: Is there anything that you feel about – you've talked a lot about role models in a sense. You've told me a number of them. Is there anyone else if we just say the word that comes to mind, that you would like to?

MT: There are many, but each one is compartmentalized. I can't say Golda Meir, because she sacrificed her marriage. Nobody is perfect. I can't say – I'll tell you, to me role models are the younger women. I mean, Pam – Pam is to me, a role model. She just is. She has this giant family, she's compassionate, she's religious, she's – I guess you would call her a Zionist. She is a role model for me too. I've learned a lot from Pam. I have learned a lot from her. I was her teacher. It's just the truth. It is the truth about life, about Jewish life, about sticking to your goal, about Israel. Tremendous amount. And I remember I called her because I've been a Democrat all my life – all my life. I

mean, I've been known just to vote straight tickets or whatever you do.

RH: In the South, we call that a yellow dog.

MT: Yeah, that's right, that's right. But I called her up one day. And of course she and much of the leadership were for Bush and feel they're best for Israel. Really read Charles Krauthammer and think he's – well, I mean I just can't stand the things he does domestically, and I just can't stand any of it. But I called her up one day and I thought a lot about it, a lot about it. This was several weeks ago. I said, “Pam, I want to tell you something.” I said, “I have been thinking a lot about Israel, and I'm not sure that Bush in the end may not be better for Israel.” She nearly dropped the phone. I said, “I'm not for him. I can't stand what your children are going to have to pay when I'm carrying on about all the domestic stuff and the healthcare and the stem-cells and all that stuff. And arrogance and haughtiness,” and this and that. And she said, “I don't know, Mar. I don't know anybody who can open up their minds and change it.” She wanted to say, “At your age,” but she didn't say it. But to me that's so natural – I mean, to be open to change. And I've learned from her, and I listen to her. And the woman I work with – oh, I mean, it's a haven in that little office. I mean, imagine growing up away from your parents. Her mother, it turned out, was in Auschwitz, and she lived with this gentile family who showed her to the world as gentile – and stayed close to them and calls them her sister. I mean, I've learned so much from her too. I'll tell you what I've learned – not because she's a Holocaust survivor. She's a role model as a wife. A little European. A little European attitude.

RH: Tell me what that means.

MT: Well, whatever he wants. Well, he's much more religious than she. But she became more religious and I don't want to talk about her. Except that she is – not in that sense a role model. Her compassion – her compassion. I'll say to her – and she handles the money in her office. And we don't have a lot. You're looking at the fundraiser, so you

can imagine. I send letters out. I say, “Heddie” – I make no decision without her. None. And she's always very careful. She's kept us in the black. She's put money away. I say to her, “Heddie, I heard about this guy. He's all alone.” Or “His synagogue needs protection from hooligans and from firebombs, and it's expensive to buy them cameras and maybe pay an armed guard,” and so on. And she's just telling me how we are down to nothing. We are down to nothing. And I don't know how we're going to have to close the doors. And I'll say, “Heddie, we heard from this synagogue.” She'll say, “What does it cost?” And I'll say, “It costs a few thousand dollars, and they need a fence.” She'll say, “Well, where should I send it?” It's hard to put it into words. And I don't know, just her attention to other people. Her thoughtfulness. And I learn a lot from – he's an old guy role model. But in terms of women as role models, I've had them.

RH: Well, tell me what you've learned from him – from your best one.

MT: Patience. Not panicking. Family. Family. I don't know. It's just hard to put it into words. It's just a tremendous caring for me and for his family. Not that he's not generous and doesn't contribute. My world has been out there, but my family here of course. His world is here. His world is here. The boys, the girls, me first. And he just stays calm. Like he was on the Board of Options the first week. I don't know. It's like the stock market with yelling and screaming. You've seen it, and you don't really – I remember I spoke to a couple of the young men. They said, “Mrs. Tallman, the only gentleman on that floor is your husband – just your Tallman.” There you have it. And I know what I want to tell you. Learning important from not important. Priorities. I mean if you have a doctor's appointment, you don't put it off because you have a conference at the office. I mean I've – thank God – been well all my life and I never worry. But now at this age, you must maintain what you've got. And I'll say, “Well, I'll put off – I'll go to the eye doctor … Marillyn, what is priority?” I'll say, “That's right. I'll make the conference another day.” I mean, this is very personal. But that's what I've learned. You've asked me what I've learned. Priorities. It's been a good life. It really has, Roz.

RH: If you were going to pass anything on to another generation, what do you want to tell them?

MT: Activism. Do not stand by. Do not stand by. Now if you ask me – if they ask me why, that's harder. Because when it comes natural and you just can't stand it, and you're passionate about something and you have that kind of a personality, it's hard to explain to somebody who isn't, who thinks, “Well, they'll do it. The Federation will do it.” And of course they do a tremendous amount. Or “Marillyn” – no, I shouldn't say that. Or “Lois will do it,” or “This one will do it.” Be a part of history. Be a part of history. But again, if they say, “But why?” I can't explain why except, “Look, it will enrich your life. It will help your people. It will continue the Jewish people.” I'm not doing this well.

RH: No, you're doing a great job.

MT: No, I really mean that. But it's not my nature. It's not my nature to – how many times have you heard people say some kind of antisemitic – they'll say, “I heard this!” And if you say, “Then, well, what did you say back?” “I didn't want to start anything. I don't want to start anything.” Answer back, I guess. I feel so sorry for kids in colleges. Jewish kids. Because the Palestinians are stronger and stronger. It used to be the Blacks, African American kids who are well-equipped for their SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] and all of their strong organizations. And our kids are not equipped – are not equipped to answer in the seminar or in an auditorium about Israel. They are not. And that's awful. It's just awful. I know at Columbia about – [inaudible] I think more and more maybe are now. But then somebody says to me, “But you have to know something.” I said, “You don't have to know something if somebody…”. Oh, I'll give you an example. You know how I feel? Do you want to know how I really feel at this moment? I feel as if I'm putting myself forth as knowing what to do and doing it. I can only give you examples, Roz, from my own life. I use this as a little tiny thing. There is a fruit market in Highland Park. A guy was there for years, and everybody knew him, and

he used to give to the synagogues for their sukkahs. He used to give all those things – gourds and all that kind of stuff. So one day I was buying some things – this was some years ago – because he had a cash register. And he was ringing it up – ping, bling, bling, bling – he says, “Ah, how do you like my Jewish music box?” And I said to him, “Pete, that was antisemitic. I know you don't think it was, but that was an antisemitic comment.” “Mrs. Tallman, I didn't mean anything. I give all those things to synagogues. All my customers, I like.” I said, “Pete, I want you to think about it. And you'll have a long time as far as I'm concerned, because I'm not coming back here.” “Mrs. Tallman, it was funny. I didn't mean anything.” I said, “It was antisemitic, and it wasn't funny. And stop saying it. And think about what you've said.” And that's the kind of thing. And believe me, I'm going to feel guilty that I used myself as an example of doing right after you leave.

RH: Don't be.

MT: I can only tell you out of my own life. There are many times when I didn't and wish I had – many times. But here's a local guy. You know, if somebody had said, “I heard that he's antisemitic, but did you hear it yourself?” Don't let people get away with it.

RH: Growing up in the South, the comment – I just told my class this yesterday. And again, I'm not supposed to speak.

MT: Oh, tell me.

RH: When I was growing up, it wasn't until I was in college really –

MT: Where did you go to college?

RH: Loyola, New Orleans and then got my doctorate here at Northwestern.

MT: Oh, you said that.

RH: But there was this remark people said about “Jewing someone down.” It was very common. I didn't even understand what it meant. I was probably in high school. And I went, “Hold it, this is not right. This is inappropriate.” But people get socialized into language, and they just say things. And it's so important to call their attention and do them a favor to make them think about what they're saying.

MT: Yeah, you're right. Think about it. And as you say, call attention to it. You know, it reminds me of – sometimes when we ask these – our contacts in Russia. “Well, how is the Jewish community?” If you say, “Is there antisemitism?” “We're fine! We're fine! We're fine! Don't worry, we're fine!” Oh no. You hear their synagogue is firebombed, and they're reluctant to – so the common thing is to say, “You know what? It's nothing. Yeah, there's graffiti – ‘kill the kikes’ – but we're used to that.” Or somebody will pass you on the street and say “Jew,” or “Yid.” I mean, it's just the usual.” Somehow that came to my mind. Because I think – it's like, “I didn't really – You know, well, he's a good guy. He didn't really mean it. It's an expression. It's just…” That's what I think I would tell young people. And I think he didn't need my business. He didn't need my business. But if you don't make a strong statement – and I never went back. I think I did, maybe two years ago. I don't even know if he's there – he wasn't there. I needed some grapefruit or something, and it was on my way home. But I just never did. And he doesn't need – didn't need me. Chances are if a Jew asking for – I don't know, I can't get into his mind. But I know he flipped that off like it was humor. And I guess you call attention to it. Doesn't mean he won't think it. [inaudible] he won't say it and stop.

RH: Sometimes that's got to be good enough.

MT: Yes.

RH: I'm interested in two things. Why do you think there is a rise in antisemitism?

MT: Oh, there are lots of reasons. It's complicated. I think it would be there without the Arabs. You know without the problems with them. Israel. I think the world can be compassionate to our people only so long. It's been sixty years since the liberation of Auschwitz as an example. And incidentally, which you probably know, in the Dark Ages, Jews and Christians lived sometimes together. And the Golden Age in Spain wasn't so golden. It's so complex. It's so complicated. But I think that the world can be compassionate only so long. And then it's like stretching, stretching, stretching. I sometimes do exercise with a band. I think, "How much can I do it?" Not that much. But you know, until it bursts, until it weakens. And I mean people have said, "It's enough with the Holocaust." I'm not just talking about Holocaust deniers. Who did I hear saying something was a holocaust –? And this was some well-known person, not Jesse Jackson. But "This is a holocaust." I just think that they can only stand it so long. And you know, Hannah Arendt said – I think it's Arendt, and I never pronounce it right – you know, the ancient antisemitism. Deicide. They think we killed. And modern. Very interesting her book on antisemitism, modern antisemitism. Where Jews themselves – when Jews were in the [salons?] – had emancipation and pushed rights about it. And Jews turn Judaism into Jewishness. And they wanted us to be Jews. We are what we were and not be fake. I once remember going to a meeting where a prominent woman and terrific woman had her hands behind her back. And she said, "When you think of your Jewish grandma" – she didn't say "bubbe," but she said, "When you think of your Jewish grandma, what do you think of?" And I'm thinking, "Mine was sort of a mean old German woman. But she's interesting and she made wonderful (*bugah*?). And she went to shul…" And she pulls out a can of chicken soup. "How did you think of your grandmother Jewishly?" That was it, she said. And that's what she gave as an example, a can of chicken – it's a silly little anecdote. And so Hannah Arendt said, "Jews themselves" – it's complex. Well, she also said, "We had wealth without power." And once we're advising the kings and the princes of all the duchies and all that stuff, we had power. We could say, "Look, our people are suffering in the ghetto. Can you help us

with this, this, this, this?" But once we had the wealth from trade and all of that, but we had no power anymore. That's one of her theories. We were wide open to antisemitism. And again, it's very complex – the reasons are very complex. And it just is inherent. Is it inside? I mean, there are reasons.

RH: It does seem inherent in humanity.

MT: It does. It really does. It really does.

RH: So tell me why you changed your mind about George Bush and decided he was – these are off the track.

MT: Well, I was thinking he's tough. He refused to see Arafat. He is not conciliatory and mushy.

RH: That's true.

MT: And negotiating. It doesn't relate to anything else. And I wondered if – and the whole idea of not seeing Arafat really struck me. And especially after his death. And holding out for these people to be – to try to change. And while I don't like him, I didn't vote for him, I wouldn't vote for him again. He scares the hell out of me in terms of what our life in this country will be and this enormous deficit and the mistakes he made in Iraq. At everything. In his own arrogance. All that stuff. The idea that everybody should be free is right. [Pounds table] I believe it is right. It depends upon how you – I'm a negotiator. So it depends upon how you do it. But the idea –

RH: I'm afraid he means free trade.

MT: I think so too. I think you're right. I think you're right. Oh, I agree with you.

RH: Yes, corporations have a right to be free to –

MT: Oh wait a minute, he expects my children to invest part of their – I mean, my husband's in the stock market. Why would you encourage people to invest in the stock market? Even if you limited with the social security. I mean, God forbid they did. One of my kids did, it was terrible. Finally his father's advice helped him. But you know – oh, oh. But I just had this feeling that that theory – and of course he – Sharansky is big now. You've read Sharansky's book. And he and Condoleezza Rice and – which is the same exact theory. And of course it's true. It's true. How do you go about it? I don't know. But anyway. I only did it in that regard.

RH: Those were not questions for this in any case. But since you brought it up originally, I decided –

MT: I don't care. I don't care. I did. I certainly did. It was to illustrate how you have to keep on learning and changing.

RH: So maybe just two more questions, and it's about your impact. What impact do you think you've had on your family? And what impact do you think you've had on the world?

MT: Your family sees you as mom. She was there – "Mom, remember the time we did this?" And there was a luncheon for me when I was seventy, and my son spoke and Philip said, "I don't know, Mom gave us a feeling we could do anything, be anything we wanted." You know, so it's just "Mom." "What do I have for lunch today, Ma, what are you packing for lunch?" And I think they're a little proud of me. But in the end, are you there for them? I think children want to see their parents well, the same, always there for them and their children. Fun, funny, good advice, not giving it when it's not asked for, and just be there. I don't think that if you get the Nobel Prize – that maybe there would be – as a matter of fact, I said to Marty, I said, "Wendy told me we're going to be honored at this luncheon." I said, "Well, do you have clinic that day or you want to run over the last hour?" He said, "Sure, I'd love it, Mom. Just tell me what time. You're not going to go there for the lunch and schmooze and everything, just tell me what time." "Are you

sure? Are you sure?" I don't think the awards or the – I don't know what impact – I think the impact was his mom. I do. Their father had a tremendous impact on them. He is their model. He is their model.

RH: For the same reasons he's your model?

MT: Yes. How he treats me. How he treats them. His calmness, his fairness in business, his emphasizing ethics. Not talking, not using the word. But seeing him, how he handles the building of a building and the sale of a building. Caring for the manager, that she should – they don't know all the details, but they love him very much, and he is really a model for them – they're boys. But I see how they treat their wives. I see how they treat their wives. I see the jewelry they buy for their wives. I mean for an anniversary or something. I'm not talking about fancy stuff. But the other things. He is their – oh, and that they come first. He is their model. You had another question?

RH: Oh, the impact of your work on the world. It's a big question.

MT: Yeah, I don't think it's been on the world. I think choosing to bring some kids from the DP camps – that changed their lives. I mean, I only chose it by their qualifications – chose their names. It was a terrible burden, but they talk about it, the few that I know. And it changed their lives. It gave them entrée to here – to freedom – out of those crummy DP camps. And I think some of my students I think learned – Pam would have been Pam without studying with me. She just would have. She just has a fire burning in her. A great passion for her people. But she reminds me of things we talked about in class. Maybe a few Hasidic stories I've told at the end of speeches, which I intend to do. I think that's about it. Pam said, "Now Marillyn, when you speak, do not be too self-effacing. You are what you are. You can't do or say what you're not." And sometimes what's very hard – you know, there's a line from – and I don't know much – Alexander Pope – from a poem, he says, "If I could sit myself down face-to-face with my better self." Well, except I suppose through psychoanalysis, it's very hard to sit there and look

at yourself. Isn't it? Don't you think? You can know yourself – you know more about yourself, and you know your feelings, but I don't know – I can't tell you what impact – I do think I've influenced some students – young people. And a friend of ours – we went to my grandson's science fair. And friends of ours were there, and their son was one of my students. I think he stayed on for literature and Kafka. And when I introduced him to my son and daughter-in-law and then my grandson, each of them said, “Your mother was my son's favorite teacher. Your mother was my son's favorite teacher.” The other thing that I didn't tell you is about the Brandeis book sale. Are you familiar with it?

RH: No, I'm not.

MT: Once the largest book sale in the world. Secondhand book sale. It's in the *Guinness Book of Records*.

RH: Really? So tell me you’re involved in it.

MT: I'm very proud of it. I said, “On my tombstone, it will say: ‘Raised three sons and thought of the Brandeis book sale.’” We were in Florida. And that was almost forty years ago – the kids – and it rained, and it rained, and it poured, and it rained, and Teddy kept going to the library and bringing the kids books, and then bringing magazines to me and all kinds of stuff. And he brought me – did you ever hear of *Redbook* – it was a magazine?

RH: Yes.

MT: It doesn't matter what it was. And I saw a line in there. Connecticut College for Women raised five hundred dollars for their library by selling used books. And I came back and I called the woman who was the president of the Brandeis Women's Group, and I said, “I've got an idea.” And she said, “Brandeis Women's Group doesn't have any fundraising.” So I called Dr. Sachar. And I said, “Dr. Sachar, it's Marillyn.” “Hi, honey.” “Listen, I have this idea. What would you think? I know we don't have any fundraising,

but what would you think if we had a used book sale and sent it to the new library?" He said, "I'll call you back." And he called me back and maybe it – I think it was me. Maybe it was Lois. I think it was me that – he said, "Go for it." And we began with three thousand books that we marked ourselves. But even three thousand in a little store in Winnetka, and it grew to almost 500,000 books under huge tents at Old Orchard. Tremendous tents. Every year they send I think about one hundred, $150,000. Well over a million dollars. And dealers come and – wonderful stories and women.

RH: I have seen it.

MT: Yeah, do you see that yellow and white tent?

RH: Yeah.

MT: It's absolutely a phenomenon. And they've built a Frankenstein. They can't stop it. And the women are getting older. And it's hard to get young people involved. But many, many, many, many stories. Many stories. And I used to work – I used to mark the religious and the history books – the rare books. And they have a store in Glenview. They collect all year. And they don't even keep the bad ones. You know, like the old, old medical books. They don't – it's a phenomenon. And they said, "People keep giving out of their homes." I mean, how many years can people give? They just pour out. They just pour out. Wonderful stories.

RH: I'm going to have to go visit the store.

MT: Oh, it's wonderful. Actually, go to the tent. It's just wonderful. Amazing place. But they stop – I finally – they put me at the table where you take the money. And I got so aggravated, because I'd see dealers and people come through. And they would mark a three-volume set of the *History of the Jews in Poland and Russia* a dollar and a half. So I would buy it from the dealer for what he would charge. I don't work there anymore. Because they were so low, and now they're smarter. Do you understand what I'm

saying? They're smarter about – but anyway, that's way off the track. But it is a huge, huge success.

RH: That's wonderful.

MT: Wonderful stories. Wonderful stories.

RH: I have a feeling that had a larger impact, because I'm involved with the Newcomb College Book Sale from the Newcomb College – their library. The women's library there. And so these are very popular now. All these book sales – used book sales.

MT: They started one in Boston at the same time. The Brandeis women, but it never grew as big as this one. The Chicago Action for Jews in the former Soviet Union has a staff – wonderful, passionate, intelligent, volunteer staff. We pay two people part-time. And the Brandeis women have the same kind of women, the same kind of women. Intelligent, passionate, doers. It's just interesting that those two groups – I'm drawn to them, you know. Active women.

RH: Have you ever thought about the activism in the Chicago area and how profound it is of the women activists?

MT: Are you talking about through the Federation? Are you talking about Jewish women?

RH: Well, it's through the Federation, but also there's this activist spirit in Chicago of women and it's *different* than other parts of the country.

MT: No, I don't know about it. I don't know about it. I'm glad to hear it. I really am.

RH: Well, I hope it's continued. It's certainly historical

MT: I hope so. I hope it grows, I hope it grows. I love the – Chicago has a historical museum. Talking about history, my friend is very active there. I just don't keep up. I'll tell you. I don't know why my thinking is international. I think it goes with history. And if I go to – we went to see Jane Byrne or Harold Washington, it had to do with Jews in Russia. I mean I never was involved. First of all, we moved out here. Tommy was a year, and Marty was just born – they're just a year apart. And my life – I went into the city and taught there. I taught in Homewood and Olympia Fields. It was a schlep out there in the winter and stuff – Dawn and I. I've gone out there to speak. As a matter of fact, I was telling somebody last night that I went out to speak, schlepped out. I mean it's a schlep, and that's not nice to say, we're out here, they're out there. And they invited me to synagogue to speak, and it was really crowded. It was jammed. And I got up on the *bimah*, opened my folder, and it was the wrong talk. [Laughter] I doubt they wanted me to speak about Soviet Jewry or Jewish women or I don't know what – one of the talks. So I thought now, “Think.” And I said to them, “You know what?” And they could clearly see I had a folder. I carried it up there – notes. I said, “Do you know what? I know some of you, and we talked beforehand. I don't need these notes to talk to you.” And I just winged it. I was telling somebody last night one of the horrible moments.

RH: That's the stuff of an anxiety dream.

MT: Yeah it is, it is. People are so kind, and they're sitting there.

RH: You feel naked without your notes.

MT: That's right. That's right. And I do depend on them, because they keep me from rambling.

RH: Well, I feel that you've given an enormous amount of yourself and your time, and you're so –

MT: Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you.

RH: Unless there's something you feel we've left out.

MT: The book sale.

RH: The book sale we got in at the last moment.

MT: I was going to make a joke and say, “This is really a lot of me, me, me,” but I guess that's what we're doing.

RH: That's what you're supposed to do. That is correct.

MT: All the questions covered.

RH: I feel like we've covered this. A lot of your work – for years she spoke to Federation dialogues.

MT: Yes, oh well, I didn't mention that.

RH: Teaching Jewish history.

MT: Do you know what they are?

RH: Not exactly.

MT: Well, you know, the Federation – especially in Chicago – is about the smartest and most innovative of any place I know. They organize young couples into what they call dialogues groups. And they would meet once a month and have a different speaker and a different subject. These couples would come together at each other’s homes. And they came. And then the first year culminated, I think, the second year at a retreat. So they asked me to come and speak about Jewish history. I would do this sweep of Jewish history. You know, month after month after month. And it was a pleasure to meet them all. And the second year, for another new dialogue group. And they just asked me to do it, and I did it. It was a pleasure. My life has been involved with the Federation. Not so

much now. But as a matter of fact, not at all now. But except as a minor contributor. But it has been. Because when you live in Chicago, your life has to – they're so strong, and so influential.

RH: Wonderful.

MT: They are wonderful. Thank you very much.

RH: Thank you.

MT: I appreciate your time. I had one little cup of coffee.

[END OF INTERVIEW]