

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO
INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Frances Grahamjones

INTERVIEWER: Hermann Trojanowski

DATE: December 2, 2011

[Begin CD 1]

HT: Well, today is Friday, December 2, 2011. My name is Hermann Trojanowski and I'm with Frances Grahamjones.

FG: Grahamjones.

HT: Class of 1971 at UNCG and we're in Greensboro, North Carolina conducting an oral history interview for the African-American Institutional Memory Project, which is part of the UNCG Institutional Memory Collection. Frances, thank you so much for coming all the way from California to talk with me today about the—about your experiences at UNCG during the 1960s and early '70s. If we can get started by you telling me something about your background: where you were born and that sort of thing; your family life.

FG: Okay. I was born here in Greensboro in 1949 and I'm an only child. I lived out in a section on Retreat Street—which is a section that came under redevelopment in—I think they finished the demolition of that area in around 1964-65. And I grew—During my time of growing up everything was segregated. Black people lived in one community and generally on the southeast section of town, but all over the city there were pockets of neighborhoods that were isolated black communities. There's one over by UNCG on—

HT: I think it's near Warren Street, isn't it?

FG: Well, that's another one but there's one right—that runs into Tate Street. I think it's McGee Street.

HT: Okay.

FG: And I remember my school bus used to—There was a school bus that started out in what was then called Sugartown out off of Pisgah Church Road and that bus would start out there in the country and it would come through down Battleground—Lawndale and Battleground—and pick up black students all the way to Price School (I went to J.C.

Price School) going past several white schools in that process because this was, of course, pre-integration. And one of our stops, the last stop that we made, was over by UNCG—between UNCG and Guilford College, I mean Greensboro College—to pick up students. So I don't know—what kind of information are you looking for about my growing up in Greensboro?

HT: Well, what was Greensboro like in the late fifties and early sixties when you were growing up here, for you as a black child and that sort of thing?

FG: You know, I didn't feel—Even though everything was very segregated, that was just the way things were and I think—I know that I understood what my place was; that I didn't drink from that water fountain—from the water fountain that had cold water; I drank from one that had all of the stains. And that there were separate bathrooms; that you sat at the back of the bus and so the laws or the roles that we assumed under segregation were very clear and that it was something I didn't think about challenging. And it wasn't comfortable to challenge it and life was much smoother if you stayed in your place. But then there were also just a lot of very comfortable interactions; like in my community there was a little grocery store that was just a couple of blocks away and Mr. Case ran the grocery store. And everybody had credit in that grocery store and the credit was that he wrote how much you owed on the legal pad; on his little yellow legal pad, with a dull pencil and on the weekends when my parents got paid, then they would pay that bill off, all of the time. And so there were those kinds of relationships that were very respectful and very comfortable and, in fact, in general I felt that. I didn't feel like there was so much animosity between the races.

My parents—My mother was a domestic and so she cared for a woman who had had a stroke and she could take me to work whenever I was out of school. I would go in the summer, which was great because then I was able to spend my day watching TV on one of two or three channels at the time and I would help out, doing little things: polishing silver, folding napkins, whatever and I didn't have a sense that those were—I knew that those roles were jobs that were always held by black people. I had never seen white people doing those jobs, so I knew that race was very, very defined but at the same time, it felt comfortable enough. That was just the way it was.

And I think my first real awareness—in fact, I know that my first real awareness of segregation as an institution came in the early '60s when the students started demonstrating at the lunch counter at Woolworth's and Kress stores and when the larger demonstrations started. Then I remember the name "Jesse Jackson" and I wanted to participate in the demonstrations. And so I was allowed to go on the condition that I was at the back of the line so that I didn't get arrested. And my mother said if I ever got arrested, then I wasn't going to demonstrate anymore, so I made a point of not being one of the ones who got arrested. But I remember when the mass arrests started and the students who were incarcerated were held out at the old polio hospital, which was no longer a functional hospital, but that they packed students into rooms. And on Sundays after church we would go out and there would be a demonstration of support so the families would go after church on Sundays and we would take clothing and food and whatever and just—

HT: Was this during the [1960 Greensboro] Sit-ins?

FG: This was during the Sit-ins, yes. And I remember pictures in the paper of a bus that was destroyed that had transported students from downtown—from the demonstrations downtown to I don't know—to the jail or to the hospital. And the bus was completely trashed and the message was "Look at these—" The message was not written but the unwritten subtext was "Look at how destructive these students are. This is our bus and this is what they did to our bus." But, you know, in hindsight, it was "Look at the institution that they were protesting against and that bus was made possible by the work of the people who you were imprisoning for asking for equal rights." So, yes, I remember a lot as I'm talking about it; I'm remembering more and more things about the demonstrations and the whole Civil Rights Movement and that there were very few places downtown where you could actually go in and sit down and eat. There were probably—there were none. If you wanted to sit down and eat you had to walk four blocks east down Market Street into the black neighborhood. But you could certainly purchase food and walk around and eat it. So you could purchase food from the counters of all the stores. You could not go into the two cafeterias: Mayfair and S&W. [pause] I remember the first time I went into the Center Theater, which is no longer there. That was the theater that only had white patrons. The other theaters had segregated seating but the Center Theater did not have seating for black people at all. And I couldn't see *Cinderella*; I didn't see—I've never seen *To Kill a Mockingbird* because it showed at the Center Theater. And the first time I went, and I ordered popcorn and I stood in line for about ten minutes. I was completely ignored. And I think I eventually asked for help and I was served, but I had to stand and wait for a long time.

HT: So did you actually go into the lunch counter and sit at [both talking, unclear].

FG: I did not, no. The demonstrations that I participated in were evening marches and so we met down Market Street at—I believe it was Institutional Church and there would always be almost a church-service kind of rally where we sang a few songs and then there was a talk about decorum and everybody was advised to be really respectful; that this was a peaceful demonstration and the role of being peaceful was completely placed on black people. I'm sure that—I kind of doubt that those talks were being made to the whites and I remember in one march as we walked along the streets, the sidewalks were occupied by whites who were observing the demonstrations, because all blacks were in it, and the whites were observing and I remember seeing one man with a gun visibly held during that march—during one of the marches.

HT: I've talked to other Woman's College graduates who participated in the Greensboro Sit-ins and there were white students and there were three of them—Ann Dearsley [Class of 1960], Betsy Toth [Class of 1962], and Marilyn Lott [Class of 1962]. And Betsy Toth said that when she went down, that I think there was a woman behind her, a white woman who had a like a two by four and was threatening her. And—but she was told by the black students on either side of her: "Do not engage her at all. Just sit there peacefully" because it would have just made things worse. And so that's what she did. I think you mentioned that there were certain decorums that you followed when you sat at the lunch

counters; that you did your homework; you left to go back to school so you wouldn't miss your classes; and that sort of thing. Apparently it was all very well planned out.

FG: And thank goodness for students because I think that the bulk of that was students.

HT: It was.

FG: Carrying those kinds of demonstrations—

HT: And it was really kids when you think about it. Your age and even the four freshmen from A&T were like seventeen and eighteen at the most. I mean, it was just amazing.

FG: Yes. And then—But then the community did come out in mass once the demonstrations—I think once people felt more comfortable and just the participation spread. I remember my mother going to register to vote for the first time. I don't think she had ever voted and that must have been—It was for [John F.] Kennedy so that would have been 1960 that she registered to vote. Yes.

HT: So if we can backtrack just a bit about your upbringing: you had no brothers or sisters so you were an only child. Where did you go to high school?

FG: I went to high school in Asheville, [North Carolina] at Allen High School, which was a Methodist boarding school—all-girls boarding school. And I told my parents the reason I wanted to go was so that I could take Latin and they didn't have Latin at Dudley High School, which is where I would have gone. So they allowed me to go to Allen and I didn't take Latin; I took French. [laughter] I just wanted to go to boarding school.

HT: Why did you want to go to boarding school?

FG: Well, school—It sounded romantic. I had a friend, I met a friend—Well, to give you a view—Do you want the whole story of how I ended up in boarding school? I'll give you the whole story. It's almost impossible to talk about one thing without framing it in a lot of pieces but I had a friend who went to Palmer [Memorial] Institute [Sedalia, North Carolina] and she spent Easter vacation with us one year and she just regaled me with stories of dorm life. And I thought, "I want to do that. That sounds so wonderful." At the time, Palmer was very expensive; it was a thousand dollars a year tuition, which was a huge amount. And it was prohibitive for us but then somehow—and I don't remember how—I found out about Allen, which was a much less expensive school. Tuition was \$538.00 because—and it's odd that I remember that specific—and then next year it went up to \$564.00 but it was supported by the Methodist church. And so I was able to go to Allen. But at the—I guess when I was in junior high school I think I started looking towards boarding school around seventh grade—seventh or eighth grade, eighth grade—and that was around the same time that the schools were being desegregated and I remember some students from Kiser, which was the white junior high school close to my community, and they came and they were soliciting African-American students to go and I decided I didn't want to be in on the early, early phases of demonstrations because

Josephine Boyd, who integrated at [Greensboro] Senior High School, which is now Grimsley High school, was the first black student there and she caught hell. And it just took, I think, every bit of her strength and resources to be there and to put up with the racism that was just routinely directed at her. And I didn't want to do that. It wasn't that important to me. I didn't feel the need to be that kind of pioneer. I wanted a much more typical experience and I felt like I was going to get a better education at Allen. I don't know that I did but that was what was—what I was perceiving. I think that kind of awareness of my education has guided me through some decisions, even early on and I kind of marvel that I was—What was I thinking?

When I was eleven, my father died. It was in a truck accident. He delivered—I talked about my mother—my father delivered coal and oil for Parker Oil Company and he was delivering probably a load of coal in Caswell County in July of 1960 and the truck went out of control and he died in that accident. My mother died a year later from a stroke, hypertension. She had shingles; she had a really rough year. She died not quite thirteen months after my father died, which is when I came to live with Louise Crump who is my godmother. And so I've been with Louise as my mother since I was twelve. Oh, where was I going with that one; that one had a point. Senior moment here, it'll come back. [pause]

Oh, so how did I get to boarding school. So I think this is where I was going with that story, which is that my adoptive father, Arthur Crump, helped a young woman who was a student at A&T [North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University] back in the—probably in the—my guess would be in the '30s that she went to school for a week with seventeen cents. This was one of his life-transforming stories. She went to the butcher—or to the grocer—and she bought some beans and some bread and he gave her a little piece of meat and then he told Arthur Crump about this woman and Arthur and his wife got in touch with her; helped her through college and they became lifelong friends. So this young woman, Carol, who introduced me to the whole concept of boarding school was the daughter of this woman that my father had helped.

HT: What is Carol's last name, do you recall?

FG: Carol Hart.

HT: H-A-R-T?

FG: H-A-R-T. And we're all still connected. And so when—Oh, okay. This is where I was going—So then when my parents died, I knew that I—Somebody just said to me, "Well, you could have gone into foster care." And I thought, "No, foster care never crossed my mind." Foster care in an orphanage was not even a remote possibility for my life because I had lots of aunts and uncles. But I also had my godmother who lived across the street and had no children and she immediately offered for me to come and live with them. And I had a choice: my primary choices were to live with her and her husband or to live with my aunt who lived out in Oak Ridge [North Carolina], which was, at that time, in the county school system. And several times over the course of my education, I had gone to school with my cousins. I'd take a day off or, if my schools were closed, I would go out to my cousins and I would go to school with them. And I could look around those

classrooms and see that what they had—that they had much less in those classrooms than what I had in my classroom and that their opportunities—and just everything looked inferior to my own school, which was David D. Jones Elementary School. And my school had a library and I would love to see that library today because my memory of the library was that it was a large room and it was filled with books and that we had—It was one of those separate and almost equal situations and my cousins had very little at their school and so when I thought, “If I live with my aunt, that’s the school I’ll go to and that’s an inferior place. I’m not going out there. So I’m going to stay in town with Louise and I can continue to go to decent schools.”

HT: That’s amazing. So when did you graduate from Allen?

FG: I graduated from Allen in 1967 and I had applied to—I applied to UNCG and to High Point College. And I applied to East Carolina University [Greenville, North Carolina]; however, my counselor never bothered to send off the school’s records for me so I really didn’t apply because of the counselor at my boarding school. And I think she felt that—Maybe she felt that I didn’t need to apply to three schools. But I remember when my SAT scores came back, she said to me, “Miss Webber,” said, “I’m surprised that you did so well in math.” That’s not exactly a compliment. You could say, “You did really well in math and that’s great.” but “I’m surprised”—I mean her expectations were very—I thought they were low. I was a strong student and so for her to say that—I interpreted that as the insult that it probably was.

HT: So what were your favorite subjects in high school?

FG: Home ec [economics]. I liked to sew. Math, I was pretty good at math. My least favorite subject was history. I decided I didn’t like history: I didn’t like it in high school; I didn’t like it in college. I never liked history. You know, I don’t even know that I had a favorite subject. I don’t remember having a passion for anything about school. I loved to sew and do crafts and do things with my hands and I liked to read and—but when it came to writing—like to writing essays—it was a skill that I missed and writing is something that I struggle with it, and I can do it well, but I struggle.

HT: You say you had applied to three schools: one was High Point—I guess it was “College” in those days.

FG: High Point College.

HT: And UNCG. What made you decide to pick those particular schools? Were you familiar with them? Had you been on campus?

FG: I had been on campus—I had never been on campus at High Point College. I don’t remember what made me apply there. I was—One of the things I was thinking was that I was tired of dorm life by the time I got to my senior year in high school. The food was pretty poor and it got progressively worse at Allen. They probably had budgetary constraints that I was not aware of. So I was just really fed up with dorm life. I loved my

sisters at school. I liked that communal living situation, but the food just so turned me off that I was sick of institutional food and I wanted to live at home. So that was part of the reason for applying to UNCG that I had intended to be a day student. I had been on campus my—I guess it would have been in the ninth grade. My ninth grade counselor took a group of us over to UNCG on a Saturday for an Allied Health Fair and I remember that there were tables set up and they were for different professions. The one I remember was physical therapy and I decided at that point that I wanted to be a physical therapist [PT]. I knew nothing about PT but because of that health fair, I was going to be a PT. And I held on to that plan almost all the way through high school but when I was a senior in high school, I worked as a volunteer at a VA [Veterans Affairs] hospital outside of Asheville (which is now Asheville proper) at Oteen Hospital. And there was an African American physician there and we kind of locked eyes and he, we developed a mentor relationship and he did a lot of mentoring with me and he—I remember one time he said, “You don’t want to be a physical therapist. You always have to work with the doctor’s prescription.” Okay, so I tossed out the idea of being a physical therapist and I was thinking, “Now what am I going to do?” and I had this memory—and I know memory can be fickle—but of—I have this memory of listening to the radio and I heard an ad for a speech therapist and I thought, “I could do that because I want to help people.” And so it switched from being physical therapist to speech therapist and I entered college at UNCG as a speech therapy major and that is what I do to this day.

HT: It’s amazing how things turn out, isn’t it?

FG: I know with just—All I need is a seed and maybe I need a variety of seeds and I would have gone in a different direction but I at least there was some seed to grasp.

HT: So were you a town student or—

FG: I was not. So then what happened was after I was accepted at UNCG, I received a letter inviting me to participate in a community that was formed by Wesley Foundation in which eight students lived communally in a house just off campus on Highland Avenue. I don’t think that is still there; I think that might now be a parking lot. It is just—Highland is going to be just west of Tate Street.

HT: Right. There is only one house left on Highland. All the other lots have been turned into—Let’s see, there is the Maude Gatewood Studio Arts Building there, parking lots, and that sort of thing.

FG: I think it was 526 Highland Avenue and that year—That was an interesting experience. In hindsight, I wish I had lived in a dorm because as a freshman in a freshman dorm you develop your community. And you could develop that community and go through your life with that. Not being in that freshman dorm, I missed that opportunity. And that’s one of my regrets about college. There were eight of us in that community; I was the only African American student and that was in a time when race still played big. Shortly before we were to check in in August, I received a call from the Methodist chaplain

asking me to come over and talk with him. And I went—They were at the church that's on the corner of College—on the corner of Spring Garden and Tate [Street]. And—

HT: I think it's Church of the Covenant. Does that sound right?

FG: No, that doesn't sound right.

HT: I know the church you're talking about.

FG: I want to say "College Park" but I don't think that's right either. But it's right there on the—right across from what used to be a jewelry store; same block as the old post office was on. And he explained to me that all of the students in the house were coming from pretty much small towns in North Carolina and that their parents were probably going to be racists, as were the students, and that if their parents saw me in that house, they were going to pull their students from that house and put them into a dormitory. In order to prevent that from happening, he asked me to wait until all of the girls had checked in and then to arrive at the dorm for check-in. So once the parents were gone, then I could come because he figured that once the parents were gone, then we were safe. The community was safe but that my—the life of the community really depended upon my willingness to do that. And so I agreed to do it and my mother said, "You are nuts! Just tell them to—that you don't need to do that and you can live in a dorm or you can stay here."—because the tuition was the same as living in a dorm. And I said, "No, no, it's okay, it's okay. I understand." So I went along with it and I remember they were gathered at the window as I arrived. "Oh, she's colored!" And I moved my things in and we were three girls in probably what was the master bedroom of the house that really was a relatively small room and there were—one closet in the bedroom. They shared the closet; I had a wardrobe in the hallway at the top of the stairs and that was my closet. And we got along okay but we literally came to blows when Martin Luther King was assassinated and one of my roommates said "Well, he got what he deserved," and at that point we came to blows. And we sat down as a community and attempted to repair—I don't remember what the discussions were but—

HT: Was there a housemother?

FG: There was a minister and his wife.

HT: Who lived in the same house?

FG: Who lived in the same house. And we had weekly meetings. Every Monday night we prepared a meal communally and we had a service project and I think we did some Bible study and—So it was supposed to be a very cordial and supportive religious-based living situation.

HT: And were all the girls Methodist?

FG: I think they were. You know, I can't remember. I think they probably were all Methodists. But it was, you know—It was a somewhat stressful situation and there was one girl that I kept in touch with. We actually roomed together the next year and now, at this point, I have no communication with that community whatsoever. And I also—I did a bad thing that got us off to a rocky start. We had a retreat out at—I don't know, some retreat center—We had a retreat so that we could all get to know each other and set our goals for the year and we came back to campus and attended freshman convocation and after freshman convocation, we were all back at our house Sunday evening and I was trying to talk them into going to a movie. I said, "Let's go to the movies; let's go see what's playing down at The Corner." Nobody wanted to go to the movie. And as we were having this discussion—there were probably three or four of us in the room—two men, one of whom had been in the summer community, came by to retrieve the rest of his possessions and they said, "So what are you girls up to?" And I remember one girl saying, "Nothing." And I said, "Well, that's not true. I'm trying to get them to go to a movie but nobody will go with me." And these guys said, "Oh, you want to go to a movie?" and I said, "Yeah. Well, come on. We'll go to the movie together." And so I think we ended up going out for a ride, or just for a drink. I don't even remember if we went to the movie and if it were a drink, it certainly wasn't alcohol. But we just ended up hanging out and I became friends with one of the guys and we were friends all through college.

But when I came—The next morning when we went to breakfast, nobody was speaking to me. And there was, like, a death pall over the house. Everybody was very quiet and it was all directed at me. And Fred—whose last name I have tried for years to remember—who was the chaplain. I can see his face, but I cannot see—I remember his last name. But I again went to his office and he told me that that was a very unwise decision that I had made, knowing where these girls were from and what their upbringing was. For me to go out with these white men so early in the life of the community really threatened the health of the community and that that was irresponsible behavior on my part. And I have to acknowledge, I did not think. I wasn't thinking of what was going to impact the community. It wasn't an issue; it was just—that was something I wanted to do and this seemed like a—You know, this was just something to do. And then he said, "You know, you're not quite like them. Your speech is much more articulate. You don't have the Southern accent and you're just not what they expect and, in fact, you're pretty arrogant." And I didn't know what "arrogant" meant so I just—I didn't ask him what it meant. I went back to my room and I immediately pulled out the dictionary and I looked up "arrogant" and I said "Yes, I'm arrogant. That's good; it's a good thing."

And we had our religious discussions; we had our—I don't think we had so many social discussions and I would not call that a successful year of community. However, I continued in that same community in the summer with a completely different group of people and it was a wonderful experience. They were much more mature. I think that the women—By and large, the women in that household were looking for a more protective environment in which to be and so they were not ready for the dorm as a mainstream life. I, on the other hand, having lived three years in a community of women and in a Methodist high school, was looking to replicate that dormitory situation and the closeness that I felt with my high school sisters. And I would probably have come closer to getting that in a dormitory than I did in that off-campus setting.

HT: So, you switched to dorm life?

FG: I switched to dorm life and lived in the dorm for the next three years.

HT: Do you recall which dorm?

FG: I lived my sophomore year in Weil, Weil or Winfield, one of them. The one that was closer to the golf course; I think it was Weil. And then my junior year, I lived in Hinshaw and I was the dorm assistant—well, they were, I guess, assistant class counselors. So I was a dorm counselor because there were juniors on each floor.

HT: What did the dorm counselor do?

FG: Well, there was like a dorm—I guess she would be considered a dorm president and she really oversaw the operation of the dorm. Because there was a dorm mother who was an elder generally—she looked old; she was probably our age but she looked quite old.
[laughter]

HT: Or even younger than we are today.

FG: Or even younger. And then there—But then there was the dorm president and her assistant and they managed the students in the dorm. I don't know what-all they did but they held weekly dorm meetings and whatever else the dorm president did.

HT: I'm assuming it was an unpaid situation.

FG: Unpaid; completely unpaid. And then on each floor there were two upper classmen students, and so you were there to support the freshman so that you helped them navigate the system and just, you know, checked in and made sure everybody was in. I don't remember what the responsibilities were. But it was fun. It didn't seem like it took a lot of work.

HT: [laughs] Oh, gosh. Well, I think you mentioned earlier about your first day on campus, which was at this house on Highland Street. I'm sure your experiences probably would have been a little bit different if you had gone to regular-type dorm. Going back, what made you choose that route? Do you recall exactly why you chose to live in a smaller community?

FG: Well, as I said, when I received that invitation, the way that it was worded it sounded sort of like my dorm life in high school, which I really—I liked. I thought well this—It just sounded like it was going to be a much more intimate living situation where people have a similar focus.

HT: So there was no scholarship or anything like that?

FG: No.

HT: No reduction in—in pay for tuition and room and board?

FG: No. No. I didn't apply for scholarships. I was not very—I was not very smart in not applying for scholarships because at the time, since both my parents were deceased, I had Social Security income, which extended until I was, I think, age twenty-one and it was enough money to live on and I reasoned that since there was enough money for me to go to school with, that I should leave scholarships for students who really needed them and I self-assessed that I didn't need that money so I didn't apply for it.

HT: So you paid your own way?

FG: Yes.

HT: Well, what was your favorite subject at UNCG—or subjects?

FG: My favorite subjects: I didn't have any favorite subjects. [laughs] The first class that I really enjoyed was—I think it was—What was it called? It was taught by Murray Arndt and it was African American writers. And I remember being introduced to the works of African American writers and it was thoroughly exciting. Although I had had Mr. Arndt—Mr. Arndt? I think it was Mr. Arndt—my sophomore year, I don't remember what the English course was but I remember he taught Faulkner [William Faulkner was an American writer and Nobel Prize laureate from Oxford, Mississippi]. And of all people to fall in love with, I fell in love with Faulkner because this man was such an amazing professor who really engaged his students and made everything accessible. He didn't teach it; he just sort of—seemed like he lived it and he shared it with you. And so that was one of the first classes that I really enjoyed and looked forward to.

HT: What about physical education; did you have to take the swimming test?

FG: I didn't have to take the swimming test because I didn't learn to swim until after I graduated from college. You couldn't make black students have to take the swimming test because we all had straight hair and so dealing with—The reason I think most black people don't swim, particularly women, is because every time your hair got wet, you had to do something to it, which generally involved a hot comb and money. So if you did it yourself, you were at risk of damaging your hair. Hair—black hair—is a big deal. I don't have much—I'm not typical—but it was a big deal. Every time your hair got wet you had to straighten it. And that took an hour or so and you couldn't do that every day. You did it every week or every two weeks. And so I didn't learn to swim because my hair would get nappy after I swam and you could not walk around, at that point, with a nappy head. So—no. So—and the swim test was not required of everyone.

HT: Okay. Because I've talked to other people who said that they remember not so fondly of taking that swimming test and having to swim.

FG: Yes. I don't know how I—I graduated. I don't know how that happened because I definitely did not learn to swim until—

HT: But you did take phys ed [physical education] courses?

FG: Oh, yes. I took phys ed in those lovely dresses.

HT: They were the little white dresses?

FG: Yes. The white dresses with the bloomers, the matching bloomers. I still have my sweatshirt and I'm hoping that when I go upstairs to that attic that there's a white dress there. I kind of doubt it.

HT: Well, we'd love to have your sweatshirt.

FG: Oh, you can have my sweatshirt.

HT: It says UNCG on it?

FG: Oh, yes. I think it says University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

HT: Because we don't have one of those for our textile collections.

FG: Oh, you don't.

HT: No.

FG: Oh, okay.

HT: We have several gym suits. We have a 1913 that's all black serge wool, which must have been very uncomfortable.

FG: Wow, in the summer.

HT: And a 1930s gym suit that's made of cotton—sort of blue cotton so it is a bit lighter. And then we have the 1950s and 1970s gym suit, which is very much what you had.

FG: Yes. It was one of those things that I just kept and I still have it. I just hadn't been able to part with it. I tried it on and it's a little bit uncomfortable; doesn't quite stretch as much as I need it to. I thought I was—I didn't realize how small I was. So shall I send it? Will you give me your address so I can direct it to you?

HT: That would be great. [both talking, unclear] Well, it sounds like you enjoyed school.

FG: I did.

HT: In spite of certain things happening.

FG: Yes, I did.

HT: That's great. So what did you do for fun?

FG: Let's see; what did I do for fun? [pause] Well, you know, there was dating. I never had a steady boyfriend through college so there was not—So it was always a lot of dating different guys. So there was that. And concerts; I remember, particularly from my junior year on when I was very involved with the Neo-Black Society and the Neo-Black Society was responsible for directing some of who came to campus. I remember seeing Alvin Ailey [African American choreographer and activist who founded the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in New York City]; that was my introduction to Alvin Ailey, and there was a reception afterwards and Judith Jamison [African American dancer, choreographer, and artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater] was there and all of the dancers. And, you know, that would be a huge deal now and it wasn't quite such a big deal then because I was young and didn't appreciate the magnitude of it because it was a very informal gathering and opportunity to talk with the dancers. So I did—I regularly attended a lot of concerts on campus. And—I'm trying to think what other organizations—I was not in a lot of organizations. I was admitted to Golden Chain but that was my senior year by the time I was tapped for Golden Chain so I don't even recall that I went to a meeting. And since I'm from Greensboro, I had a lot of community away from Greensboro. But what did I do for fun? We played bid whist.

HT: How do you spell that?

FG: W-H-I-S-T. [laughs]

HT: Is that a card game?

FG: Yes, it's a card game. It's black people's bridge.

HT: Oh, okay.

FG: White people play bridge; black people play bid whist. And it's very similar to bridge but you don't have the—What do you have in bridge, you have the dummy hand. You don't have the dummy hand and you don't have successive bidding. Everybody has one chance to bid. It's a cut-throat kind of game and it's a whole culture. It's interesting how that experience has carried over. One of my friends who went to UNCG, when her daughter was preparing to go to UNC-Charlotte, she said, "I've got to teach Allison how to play bid whist because I cannot send my child off to college without her knowing how to play bid whist." So we got together a couple of times to try to teach her, but for us that was like—It was an entry into that black community, was being able to play bid whist because there was—That was just a whole informal gathering and way of relating to people.

HT: Well, has that game sort of fallen out of favor, much like bridge has fallen out of favor?

FG: Among young people; maybe, probably. But among people of my generation now, we don't do it often but we have a few people that we play bid whist with and—Oh, my God—it is the most fun that I ever have. If I were ever to be depressed and we played bid

whist, I would be happy after playing bid whist because there is laughter where you just—you can't get your breath. You could die playing bid whist between just the memories—We play with a couple that we played with for almost thirty years and so, at some point, every little piece of your history comes up and the main thing, about bid—two main things: one is skill but the other is being able to talk “smack” or to talk “shit” when you're playing. So you have to trash-talk people and that's pretty much required. And you can say anything in the context of a game and it's okay. I've never seen anybody get mad at a bid whist game and whether losing, winning—and I'm sure some people do, but I have never seen anyone get mad. So—

[End CD 1—Begin CD 2]

HT: Well, you had mentioned earlier that the dining hall food was not very good at Allen. How about UNCG? How did that compare?

FG: UNCG, the first couple of years, I remember it was wonderful because there was so much choice. At Allen there was no choice. They served food; that was it. You didn't want that food; too bad. On nights that they served liver and spinach, I was just out of luck unless I could get a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. But at UNCG there were—there seemed like there were a lot of choices and there was always a big bowl of salad and a couple of meats and several vegetables so I was really happy with the food there. By my senior year, I was again tired of the food and I don't know if the food had changed or if I was just tired of it. I'm not sure which.

HT: Because I'm sure that the menu did not change that often so it was the same type of food appeared week after week. Was that true?

FG: Probably. I don't remember. But I remember—

HT: Probably chicken, beef and a couple of vegetables and that sort of thing.

FG: Yes, but you had a choice of different meats every night. And so it was never—You were never limited to just one thing. But I remember we used to have these bowls of—I thought they were cherries—and it was somewhere well into my college experience that somebody pointed out to me that those were dyed grapes. And it was during Cesar Chavez's [American farm worker, labor leader, and civil rights activist] boycott of grapes and so we were getting surplus grapes dyed red to look like cherries. [laughter] I thought they were cherries. “Wow, we have a lot of cherries.” I hadn't had fresh cherries; what did I know?

HT: [laughs] Oh, my goodness. Well, you mentioned earlier that you were a member of the Neo-Black Society. Tell me about that experience because you were there when it was formed in '68.

FG: I guess I was there. You know, this reminds me of when I would ask my mother things and she'd say "I don't remember. That wasn't yesterday." And I am having a "I don't remember. That wasn't yesterday" experience. I can't remember how I got involved in the Neo-Black Society other than that [clock starts chiming]—We'd better wait for the clock. It's eleven o'clock; the clock has to talk for about a minute here. [clock continues to chime] Everybody talked about my mother's clock. It was kind of a joke. This is turned at about half-volume and she used to say it was company for her. It's interesting being in this house after her death in that I have a different sense of what it was like for her in this house alone; that clock and its sound mark the passage of time for her and otherwise there wasn't a way to really differentiate what time it was at various times in the day other than looking at the clock. And that was something else in the house making noise besides her.

HT: We were talking about the Neo-Black Society—

FG: Yes, the Neo-Black Society.

HT: Well, do you recall Yvonne [Cheek, Class of 1967] or Betty Cheek [Class of 1968]? I think they were sort of the co-founders.

FG: Now, Betty—I think Betty was the older. Was Betty the older? I remember Yvonne Check because I think she was a music major and went on to study at Zoltan Kodaly [Editor's note: the Zoltan Kodaly method of music education was taught at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest] in Hungary or somewhere.

HT: I cannot remember which one but one of them was a music major.

FG: Yes. I think that was—So I do remember them. I remember Linda Kelly [Class of 1971] and Linda was the president of Neo-Black Society my senior year. And I think—I know she lives in Hartford and I think might be—Maybe it was her husband who was mayor or was she deputy mayor? I don't remember.

HT: Hartford, Connecticut?

FG: Harford, Connecticut.

HT: How about Ada Fisher [Class of 1970]?

FG: I remember Ada Fisher.

HT: I interviewed her—It's been almost two years ago. She lives in Salisbury [North Carolina] now. She retired from—

FG: She was a physician, right?

HT: Right, she was a doctor, a medical doctor, and retired from—I can't remember—AMOCO, I think it was, and moved to Salisbury.

FG: I remember Ada as just—She was one of those people who at that time knew what she wanted to do. She was going to med school. And not many of us really knew what we were going to do so she was really looking beyond the job to the career. And I really—I remember admiring her and in college because she was just so self-directed.

HT: What about your involvement in other parts of the campus? You mentioned earlier about dating on the campus and playing card games and that sort of thing. Theater? Music? Anything like that?

FG: No. No, I was an active supporter in—Okay, that was in my sophomore year so '70, 69-70 probably. No, not '70. '69. During—there was a strike on campus of the cafeteria workers—

HT: In '69.

FG: '69. And I was very involved in that, not in a leadership role but in supporting and I missed a lot of class. That was my worst semester of college. But—and I don't clearly remember what we did but I think there were some demonstrations. I can't remember if there were boycotts of the cafeteria—not that anybody would have noticed the one hundred of us, probably more than a hundred of us by that time. But I was very involved in that demonstration.

HT: Do you recall how long it lasted?

FG: No. [laughter]

HT: I know the strike was held not only at UNCG but also, I think, at Chapel Hill as well. It was against, I think, ARA.

FG: ARA Slater.

HT: ARA Slater, right. And I should know but I don't know the cause. Was it—

FG: I'm sure it was economic.

HT: Economic, yes. Because of low wages and that sort of thing; probably long hours and that sort of thing. Let's see; I was going to ask you about political protests, and of course you were involved in that a little bit. What about—this was the height of the Vietnam War. Did you have any feelings about that?

FG: I was very much against the war in Vietnam [United States was involved in conflicts in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia from 1956-1975] and participated in demonstrations. I remember one downtown, it was—where we were chanting “All we are saying is give

peace a chance.” It was interesting being in that kind of demonstration because my previous demonstration experience was civil rights so those demonstrations sort of bookended that decade for me. But I remember just going to demonstrations and there were demonstrations on campus and I did attend most of those—many, I can’t say most. I don’t know how many there were but I attended different rallies.

HT: Well, did you ever feel discriminated against while you were at UNCG? It seems like your freshman year—

FG: My freshman year, yes. I, you know, I won’t say—I didn’t feel discriminated against as in I was judged more harshly. What I felt was that I was always visible. That if I didn’t go to class the professor didn’t have to take roll to know if I was there; so I was just—I was always visible in every class and in everything I did.

HT: I would imagine you were probably one or two only blacks in a particular class.

FG: In almost every class. If there were ever four of us in a class, it was like “Wow.” And if there were two of us, we would typically—I would typically sit with—We would typically sit together. I remember in an English class with eighty people—which was more people than in my entire high school—but in that class of eighty people there were two of us: Raynette Greene [Class of 1971] and I, and we would sit right in front together. And sometimes it felt like the professor would get us mixed up because—in fairness to them, because they always saw us together. For me, once I see two people together, it’s kind of hard sometimes to separate the names. It becomes one big name; one of those two.

HT: Have you kept in touch with her?

FG: No. No, I have not. But we have a mutual friend here in Greensboro with whom I do keep in touch.

HT: Well, I’m going to move on to administration and professors. Did you—James Ferguson was the chancellor at the time. Did you ever have any dealings with him?

FG: No. You know, I tried to stay under the radar. I was not an outspoken really outgoing kind of student. I remember his daughter Lynn [Ferguson] was in one of my classes and one time I said something about the chancellor—I don’t remember what it was—and somebody pulled me aside and she said, “You know that’s his daughter.” “No, I don’t know it’s his daughter.” But she lived—I think she lived—she must have lived—she lived in one of the dorms on the Quad.

HT: Did she?

FG: Yes.

HT: It would have been very easy for her to live in the chancellor's residence, just a walk across campus. I guess she wanted that college experience, which is very nice. What about Vice Chancellor Mereb Mossman? Did you ever run across her?

FG: No.

HT: Dean of Students Katherine Taylor?

FG: No.

HT: Alumni Secretary Barbara Parrish?

FG: No.

HT: Well, I think you mentioned Professor Arndt earlier and—did anyone else make an impression—any of the professors make an impression on you?

FG: Gene Sarver was a poly sci [political science] probably teaching assistant—I think he was working on his doctorate—and that was another class that I really loved because it was just—It seemed like a more honest view of history and politics that I had not gotten anywhere else and I really—I learned a lot and it sort of shaped my left political leanings and gave me some real meat and texture for that which, I don't remember specifics, but I just—I remember Gene Sarver and we kept in touch for a couple of years after I graduated; just periodic notes.

HT: And what did he teach again?

FG: Political science.

HT: Political science, okay. Do you recall how to spell his name?

FG: S-A-R-V-E-R.

HT: Okay. You graduated in 1971. Can you tell me your memories of graduation and what you did and that sort of thing?

FG: I went to graduation and then it was over. Let's see. No, I have looked at pictures from graduation and I don't even remember taking those pictures. So it's like it's just gone. I remember—who was the speaker, I want to say Birch Bayh [United States Senator from Indiana, 1963-1981] but I don't think that's right. But I just remember there were a lot of us at graduation. I think there were probably eleven hundred people in my graduating class. And I don't remember; I just remember that my whole family came because I was the second person in my family to graduate from college so it was a big deal and everybody came. I don't remember if there were a dinner or gathering afterwards or anything. I just remember that at some point we moved my stuff out of the dorm and that was it.

HT: They had a tradition in those days; something called the Daisy Chain.

FG: I don't remember. I don't think I did Daisy—I don't remember the [unclear] I know I never made a daisy chain and I guess there was a daisy chain at commencement but I don't remember it.

HT: It was a part of a tradition of walking through these two chains of daisies.

FG: You know, I only went to one graduation and that was my own, so I think when the memories get repeated; when you anticipate that this is what's going to happen because you worked on that daisy chain you have a different—those memories become much more embedded but for me that was my first experience with college graduation and with UNCG's graduation so I just don't remember any of that stuff.

HT: Do you remember buying a class jacket? Getting it in your sophomore year?

FG: Oh, I [unclear] and I regret letting go of my class jacket. I could probably still wear it. I sold it in a yard sale. [unclear] I think it was probably in California; I sold my jacket. Yes, mine was red. It was burgundy.

HT: Well, I understand that the students wore those things everywhere.

FG: Yes. Oh, yes.

HT: Weather permitting, of course.

FG: Yes.

HT: Because it identified you as being a member of this large UNCG community. But do you recall any other traditions from that period of time? Because by the late sixties and early seventies many of the traditions of the Woman's College were disappearing because the men had been admitted and were coming along and that sort of thing.

FG: Yes. I remember—I think it was Rat Day.

HT: Yes.

FG: I remember Rat Day but because I was not in a freshman dorm, we didn't do that. I don't know why but we didn't do that but I remember seeing students in my math class with their clothes inside out and whiskers.

HT: And wearing rat ears and that kind of stuff, yes, right.

FG: But I remember I was always touched by the sister class song. It was—For years that song would just bring tears to my eyes. And we would sing it in the dorm at different dorms—at dorm meetings and at different gatherings.

HT: Was this a unique song that changed every year for each sister class?

FG: No. And I'm suddenly getting the sister class song mixed up with the Alma Mater. [sings] *We will raise our voices; let them swell*. That's the Alma Mater, isn't it. Or is it [unclear] *In a chorus loud and strong*; [humming, words unclear] *University to you*. So that's the Alma Mater and I can't remember the sister class song that used to invoke all the tears.

HT: [laughter] Oh, goodness. Well, I had mentioned a few seconds ago about the men coming in '64 which was a little bit before your time. So, what did you think of the men on campus because there couldn't have been that many?

FG: There were not many.

HT: Right [unclear].

FG: Okay, well, there were very few black men and they seemed to have been scooped up by other women so they were not in the public pool as far as I was concerned. [laughter] And I had come from a woman's high school into a woman's university so I didn't have a [clock chimes] lot of casual relationships with men so I, you know, you'd see guys on campus and you'd speak but I didn't have any friends, any male friends.

HT: I imagine—I'm not 100% sure but most of them were probably day students. But many of them were because—I guess by that time they had a men's dorm.

FG: They had a men's dorm, and that was one of the first dorms—if I'm remembering correctly—that went coed.

HT: Oh, okay.

FG: I think that dorm was coed by 1970. There were—Come to think of it, I believe there were other dorms. I remember when my—must have been my—I'm trying to think where I was in the dorms so it would have been like my senior year when men were actually allowed in the dorms at certain hours and that was a big deal. That required a lot of rules for, you know, calling out "men on the hall" and use of the restrooms.

HT: So men were allowed beyond the parlors?

FG: As visitors, beyond the parlors to visit during certain hours.

HT: I guess it was about the time that things were really changing because I think in "the good old days," men were not allowed beyond the parlor out of sight of the resident counselor or somebody and that sort of thing.

FG: Yes, and there was always somebody sitting at the desk, and answering the phone and signing visitors in. And you had to sign in and out of the dorm after a certain hour. Yes.

HT: Did they still lock the dorms at certain hours and that sort of thing?

FG: Yes. They always locked the dorms but, you know, somebody would be available to let you in after—Oh, I know what it was: once there was no curfew then, I think the campus police had to let you in after a certain hour.

HT: If you came in late from a date or something like that.

FG: If you came in late. Yes. Yes. I thought the curfews were very generous compared to what my mother allowed: the fact that I could date without having to say who I was going out with, was wonderful because my parents were very strict. So for me that was one of the attractions of staying on campus was that there was a lot more freedom. We had a midnight curfew on the weekends and then that went to one o'clock. That was tantamount to being able to stay out all night.

HT: Now, you stayed on campus during the regular school year; what about the summer time? Did you come home in the summer?

FG: I came home in the summer.

HT: Did you work or—?

FG: I did the—let's see. I didn't find a job the very first summer—Oh no, let me think. So my first summer I was in my religious community. That was my summer job, and I can't remember if that paid. That might have paid a little bit; I don't remember. And then the summer after that another student and I worked for intercity ministry, which had become involved with our community and she and I ran—the two of us, what did we do in the summer? We ran kind of play groups for kids and I think we might have done a preschool group and we had a group of girls from a housing project that we worked with in the summer.

HT: And this was all through the Methodist church?

FG: Yes. And then I got a job that was offered through campus one summer—the summer after my junior year—that paid two dollars and fourteen cents an hour; I was rich. And it was doing telephone surveys about traffic patterns around town and we had to randomly call people and interview them about their trips; like where did you go and how far was it and how long did it take you to go. And I would have hung up on somebody calling me and asking me that kind of information. But people very patiently did it, right down to, many of them, the last question was "What is your income?"

HT: This was for the city of Greensboro?

FG: I think it was—I don't know if it was for the city or the state. And that was the summer I learned to play bridge because we were—I think it was held—We were working in McIver [Building]. I may be wrong but I think it was McIver that we worked. And during

lunch—during lunch break, we would play bridge. And then my last summer jobs also came somehow through the university and it was working for Sears [Roebuck and Company] doing data entry. I had a headache all summer. Typing, entering data for computers for—what do you call it: those data entry cards; those punch-cards. Yes. Every time I see punch cards my head hurts, to this day. [laughter]

HT: Well, your overall feeling about UNCG; did you think you got a good education there and were you pleased with your time there?

FG: You know, no. I was—I don't think that I got a very good education in my field. I didn't know it at the time but in hindsight, I didn't get a very good education. I mean I took all the courses; I did well in all of my speech path courses but when I went to graduate school and saw the basic information that they were expecting me to know and my way of operating, I didn't have all of that information; I didn't have all of those skills and I had to kind of pull it together and I was able to do it, but I just—I think that what they were teaching in my department was outdated and it wasn't contemporary. Yes, because I remember going for a job interview in Watertown, Connecticut and they asked me about the Menyuk sentences and I had never heard of Paula Menyuk and I had no idea what the Menyuk sentences were. I didn't get that job so I left and I went and looked up the Menyuk sentences and I thought, "Oh, well, that looks interesting" but I don't remember being taught from original sources in college. Everything was pretty much textbooks. I remember in my department that when we talked about therapy, I don't remember learning how to read a research article to translate that information in a study into a practical application in a therapy setting. I didn't get that. I did not learn how to do language sampling in college and there was only three years between undergrad and grad school for me so I should have gotten that kind of information in college. I could go through a long list of information that I did not get as an undergrad that would have been really helpful in my work as a speech pathologist and how to really do a diagnosis beyond using a formal tool. And how to plan treatment. And—no, we didn't get that.

HT: Was speech pathology available at Chapel Hill or another school in North Carolina to your knowledge at that time?

FG: I'm certain that it was. I can't tell you which of the schools; probably not Chapel Hill because it's such a female profession, so I don't know what other program—what other schools offer that. But I wasn't searching for the best school. You'd have to think ahead and really plan to do that versus—I think that I would more accurately describe myself as a passive learner: like, this is what you need and somebody's giving it to me. And as I've gotten older, I've become—I'm more independent: an active learner rather than a passive learner.

HT: Well, since you graduated in 1971, have you been involved with UNCG in any way?

FG: Not at all.

HT: You've come back for your reunions though?

FG: No.

HT: None.

FG: No, the first one was this fall. The university has been doing outreach and I think the first time was probably three years ago—that I'm aware of—that there was an event in California. And in San Francisco there was an informal gathering at the—one of the big hotels downtown and I went to that. And there were probably about twenty of us—twenty or twenty-five people. And then they had another one maybe two years ago at KQED, which is one of the largest public radio stations in the country, and so I went to that one and then there was a third one with Dr. [Linda] Brady [chancellor of UNCG] just in mid-November of this year.

HT: And where was that held?

FG: That one was at the Marriott Hotel in—

HT: In San Francisco?

FG: San Francisco. Yes. And so and then Judy came—Judy Piper came out in October or November of 2010 and that personal kind of outreach as well as just Judy's staying in touch with people and, you know, it's like she's planting these seeds one person at a time. Oh my God, she's got a lot of people to reach. But she has been so attentive and supportive and engaging in establishing and maintaining a connection with the university that I feel myself being pulled back in.

HT: Definitely come back for reunions from now on.

FG: Well, you know, I may not because—

HT: It's a long way to come.

FG: It's a long trek and I was already making—One of the reasons I never came to reunions was because I was already coming East to see my parents and reunions did not coordinate with the times that I was able to travel. I was always working so I couldn't travel to come for a reunion in May, I'd wait until the summer when I could come and stay for two or three weeks and so there was never anything happening as I got here. And then once my mother was on her own and her ability to live independently required support, then I started coming more often. And gradually I just changed—We all—Everything increased in response to her need so the frequency of my trips changed dramatically in response to her needs, too.

HT: And it sounds like coming from across North Carolina here—I mean that's an all-day trip, an exhausting all-day trip.

FG: It's an all-night trip

HT: All night. Well, yes, I've done that.

FG: It's all—I cannot afford to spend my precious time on a plane during the day so I would always take a red eye and sleep on the plane and get here in the morning and hit the ground running.

HT: And that's exhausting.

FG: It's exhausting, yes. I'm approaching the time when—Well, I don't have to do it anymore; I don't have to do it that way anymore. So I will—Once this house is settled and I will be making many fewer trips here and I can go other places and have real vacations.

HT: Well, how did you end up in California, just to change the subject a little bit.

FG: Work. I was at—I was in a doctoral program in speech pathology at Memphis State University, which is now the University of Memphis and I was in my third year—yes, third year—and I was at a convention, a speech convention in Chicago and someone approached me and asked me to come and interview for a job. And again, it's one of these communities where there are a handful of black people and a sea of white people; which is the story of my life still. And so I went in and I talked to this recruiter and at the time I was not looking for a job. But he said, “Well, just come in and talk and interview; keep your skills up.” So I did and he offered me a job and I went back to Memphis. I don't know why I was in a doctoral program. I am—was never interested in research. I really—I'm a clinician and I'm not a research-oriented clinician so I hated graduate school [laughs] but I didn't have enough money to leave. I had enough money to stay there because I had a traineeship and then I had an assistantship. I had a traineeship for my master's degree and I had an assistantship for my doctorate but I didn't have enough money to just pack up and leave so I stayed in school and just kept moving along. But once I had this job offer on the table and I came back and I started looking at my school stuff, I thought, “I don't have to do this anymore. I have an out.” And I called that recruiter and said, “I'm coming.” And I went out and I looked at where I'd be working and I thought, “Yes, I can live here.” And I went back and I withdrew from school and never looked back.

HT: So, how long ago was that?

FG: That was 1978.

HT: Oh, okay.

FG: January of 1978.

HT: So you've lived in California since then.

FG: I've lived in California since then. I moved to Riverside and I lived in Riverside and worked for the Riverside County Office of Education for two and a half years and then I moved up to northern California with my best friend who followed me. She and I went to UNCG together and [clock begins chiming] It's time. I didn't even hear the 11:15 one. I think we talked right through it. We—I talked right through it. So we—This woman who—We had a mutual friend—Patsy Hendrix [Class of 1971] was my friend—and we had a mutual friend, Nancy Burnette [Class of 1971] who introduced us at UNCG and I had decided that when I graduated I wanted to leave Greensboro. I reasoned that if I stayed here, I would be stuck here. That I'd meet somebody; I'd marry; I'd have kids. I'd do the normal thing and I would never see what it was to live anywhere else. So my solution to that was to leave as soon as I graduated.

And I had a former boyfriend who had done that and moved to Connecticut so I kind of culled the New England states in applying for jobs but I settled on Connecticut because that was where I had been before and managed to find a job with the help of another recruiter who had been at UNCG recruiting. And—but one day this friend and I were cutting a class, an education class, which was the low point in my academic education at UNCG. It was such a bad class that we would go to class—There was a policy that if you were absent three times in a row, your family would be contacted and—I can't remember but there were some punitive measures if you were—But you could miss two classes in a row and it didn't ding a bell so I would—we—Three of us worked out this schedule that we would each go every third class and—Because there were no notes, there was nothing to take; it was the worst of classes. So on this one day when Pat and I were cutting class, we went out to the Battleground [Guilford Courthouse National Military Park located in Greensboro, North Carolina, which commemorates the March 15, 1781 Battle of Guilford Courthouse during the Revolutionary War] and we were feeding the ducks and one of us—I remember it was me; she remembers that it was her—said, "I'm going to Connecticut when I graduate and I'm looking for somebody to go with me. Are you interested?" And she didn't miss a beat; she said, "Yep." And we moved to Connecticut together: we planned it; we traveled together; we lived together for two years; and she is my sister-friend to this day. I will call her as soon as we're off the phone, because she called this morning. She and I—she's my sister.

HT: And where does she live now?

FG: She's in Rockport, Massachusetts. But we were together when my mother passed. We had gone to convention—she's a speech pathologist—and took our husbands and we met in San Diego for a convention and we were hanging out together when I got the—when I tried to reach my mother and found out that she was not here anymore. But—so anyway, so I got to California and Pat was finishing up at Emerson College where I had gone and she followed me to Emerson and she moved out to California with me and we lived together for, I think, two years. And she got married and moved up north with her husband to Palo Alto. And when he proposed to her, he said, "You know, I know you're kind of hesitating about marrying me and maybe it's because you don't want to leave Frances because I know you guys are such good friends." He said, "You don't have to leave her; she can come and live with us." So I said, "Well, I want you guys to have some time to yourselves as a married couple." And so I finished out the school year, which

gave them about five months and then I moved up to Palo Alto with them and the three of us lived together for about two and a half years until I moved out to marry my husband.

HT: That's amazing.

FG: I consider it that—It's hard for me to talk about my relationship with her without getting emotional because it just figures so profoundly, positively and prominently in my life that I would say she taught me more—she and her husband taught me more about relationships, and particularly a marriage relationship than anyone and that was what prepared me for what I was looking for in a partner and I really—I know that without having had that time with them and really observing their relationship—and we didn't just have a relationship where I was a roomer, I was kind of a non-intimate partner in their marriage. We cooked together; we had all our meals together; we played together; we had projects together; we converted the master bedroom into our project room so that was where everybody—We did our sewing; Tom did his computing; and we made stained glass and we did road trips together. We did just about everything together. And then when I met my husband-to-be, he became a part of that relationship, too. And they'd say, "This is a good guy. Keep going with this one." [laughter] So it was their insight that helped me to appreciate this man that I was with and I'm so glad that they did.

HT: It sounds like it worked out very well for everybody.

FG: It worked out very well. Pat really taught me about friendship and what it means to be a good friend.

HT: Well, I don't have any more formal questions. Do you have anything you'd like to add to the interview? We've covered such a variety of things this morning.

FG: Well, I guess I kind of feel bad that I don't remember more about my time at UNCG. [laughter] That it's interesting to me that I remember—I think I remember more about high school, more about graduate school and very little about that period at UNCG. I think that for me I was—My first two years, I was really intimidated and not very comfortable speaking out, not confident about what kind of issues to take a stand on—did not see that there were places—I didn't know how to navigate the system. I was absolutely clueless about navigating that system and one of the worst experiences I remember was freshman—signing up for freshman classes at the beginning of freshman year. If I had been a lesser person, I would have dropped out of school at that very moment. It was in—what is it, McIver gym? I don't remember the name.

HT: Rosenthal Gym.

FG: Rosenthal Gym. And there were tables set up for each department and you had to take your schedule and you had to go around, physically go around, to each department, ask for a specific class at a specific time and if there were openings, you got that class. It was an archaic system.

HT: I remember that.

FG: And by the time I finished, by the time I got in—you had an assigned time to go—the classes were all gone so my freshman schedule was I had classes all day Monday, Wednesday and Friday and on Tuesday and Thursday I had a four o'clock PE class. So I had everything on one day and it was just like the worst. I didn't know how to budget my time on those other days and second semester was a little bit better but I think I had six eight o'clock classes, including a health class with Anne Shamburger [assistant professor in the Department of Health, Recreation, and Physical Education] in which I learned about marijuana. I'd never heard of marijuana. I went to college ignorant of marijuana. But I wasn't ignorant when I left. So in my—I was saying my grades in my freshman and sophomore years were terrible. They were kind of average and then they just went steadily downhill. And I got my grades the end of sophomore year and I was just horrified. I didn't even show them to my parents and they were so gracious they didn't ask but I thought, "I'm going to do better. I'm never doing this again." And I went back my junior year and I started going to the library every night. I'd get my little books and I would walk across campus to the library and I was in the library all the time. And my grades shot way up and from then on my grades were much, much, much better.

HT: You know, in those days we weren't taught so many things about how to budget your time, how to study and that sort of thing. I think the kids these days are taught, they are mentored a little bit more than we were, I think.

FG: Yes, and—well, I remember even in high school they would say "This is how you study" but it just didn't make sense to me. But I remember somewhere along the way, I remember reading that in order to understand technical material—They give you a strategy: Read it three times. The first time you've got to skim it and then the second time you're going to read it more carefully and the third time, you're going to read it to be able to remember it and talk about it. And it was like, Oh, just read it once and go. I didn't understand that but then you just keep going. And that served me well and I remember when I was in the doctoral program—I was in a psych class and there was one other African American student and we became friends the first night we saw each other in class and she was—and we were talking about what the challenges were in the doctoral program and she was saying, "Yes, this information is so hard to read." And I said, "Well, how many times do you read it?" And she said, "Once." I said, "No, no, no. You have to do it three times." And she said just that little piece of information was—just changed her level of success in school and accessing information.

So that was just one of the kinds of things that I was missing and I didn't know to go to professors and ask for help, or to ask for help and keep going back and keep going back. So, you know, I have to accept the responsibility for not doing that and not knowing that. So when I hear other students talk about how positive college was for them and how much they enjoyed it, I think they came with a different mindset and a different skill-set. By the time I got to graduate school, I was there. Those were classes I was interested in. So working on my master's where I had this incredible master's program—I was at Emerson College in Boston. I lucked into—and it was pure luck—I lucked into a prestigious traineeship where I was in the developmental evaluation clinic at Children's

Hospital, which is one of Harvard University's teaching hospitals. And I had my own personal mentor. There were two of us in the traineeship and she and I were partnered for everything that year. And we were only on campus a couple of days a week but we spent our lives in that speech clinic at Children's, functioning as supervised clinicians but really like full-time clinicians. And it was a great learning opportunity. But I felt valued as a student. I felt that they were looking at me as an intelligent person, which made me be intelligent; made me act intelligently and made me much more assertive and comfortable in my own professional skin. And that was such a gift and that was the reason I went on to a doctoral program. I was taking a course with—doing an independent study—with a professor, Jackie Liebergott who just stepped down as president of Emerson. And Jackie said, "You should get your doctorate." "Who, me?" I never, never considered. I was struggling to get out of undergrad and here was somebody telling me to go for a doctorate and I ended up getting into Memphis with financing—with funding, so I went for the doctorate. So let's see, what else? I don't know. [laughter]

HT: As I said earlier, we covered so much this morning.

FG: It's all over the map.

HT: All over the map. That's typical of an oral history interview because you think of things and it pops in your mind and out it comes and then you go on to something else.

FG: Well, I guess I should say, in retrospect, as I looked at my formal training at UNGC, it felt like it was technically inferior. It still gave me the beginning of my career that has been my life career and gradually over the years I have managed—I have managed to be directed in a professional direction that satisfies and not just satisfies, but that nourishes me and for that I am immensely grateful and I wasn't really seeking that out; I wasn't saying, "Oh, I really [unclear]" I was saying "I really hate, I hate working with high school students. I don't like this area of speech pathology," and I got laid off from a job because of your typical cutbacks in the schools and I ended up working in an early intervention setting and I started to work and the very first day I went in and I said, "Whoopee, this is my whoopee job. This is the job where I wake up and I go 'Wow, it's a workday, and I get to go to work.'" I love working with young children, with babies. And birth to three, I am just in heaven working with that population and that's pretty much what I do. I do a lot of early intervention. Sometimes if I start with those kids and they are not state-funded, I have a contract with a regional center which is a state agency in California and so if I start with private kids who are young, some of those stay with me for years. I have one kid on my case load with whom I've been working for ten years.

HT: Wow.

FG: And he's one of those kids who has multiple needs so it's not just speech; it's that he's got a cognitive delay and he's got some motor delays and I'm sure there's some neurological wiring that's not quite right, and so he is able—I took him from being a nonverbal child at age five to being a fairly fluent and mostly intelligible communicator at age fifteen and there are still things that we can just keep tweak—It's not even

tweaking; there are still things that he's learning; he's continuing to progress. And I have a couple of those kids who have been with me a long time—started as nonverbal infants and now we are refining their communication skills.

HT: Do you work with children with autism?

FG: Not if I can help it. [laughter] That's actually a very candid response. I have not worked—I have worked successfully with some children who have autism and I think it was more luck than my knowledge base. I have worked with some kids who I feel like were kind of on the track towards autism but they were—some of them were—one little boy in particular, I think—was at that kind of fragile point where he could have gone either way and that through intervention and particularly in getting the language going and helping to work on—address his play and his social skills, that it pulled him back from the brink. Now he's got a lot of language and he still is a little different but he's got a lot of language and he would not—I don't think he would be considered Asperger's but he's not autistic. But there was a time when I first looked at him, I thought, "This kid's on the spectrum. Oh no, what are we going to do?" So I feel like I have work that really, really makes a difference in people's lives. And I know that there are families who will never forget the work I've done with their children and I'm grateful to have that kind of work; that I don't ever have to question the value of what I do and what it means. Not too much to society; I'm like a Judy Piper; one person at a time. [laughter]

HT: You make it happen. That's wonderful; that's great. Well, thank you so much for talking to me this morning. It's been wonderful listening to your stories about UNCG and your private life and travelling all over the country. It's just been great.

FG: Well, thank you. Thank you for giving me this opportunity—

HT: Oh, you're so welcome.

FG: —to blather on. [laughter]

HT: And you were afraid you wouldn't have anything to say. [laughter] All right.

[End of Interview]