

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Women's Herstory Project

Personal Experiences

O. H. 769

ANNE BYRD

Interviewed

by

Arlene Grohl

on

October 20, 1987

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: ANNE BYRD

INTERVIEWER: Arlene Grohl

SUBJECT: single parenting, welfare, religion, goals,
childhood, sex discrimination

DATE: October 20, 1987

G: This is an interview with Anne Byrd for the Women's Resource Center in conjunction with Youngstown State University Oral History Program, by Arlene Grohl, at South High School, her current place of employment, on October 20, 1987.

Anne, tell us where you were born and your early memories of your childhood.

B: I was born in Montgomery, Alabama, and I was raised by my grandmother. I stayed with her until I was at the age of twelve. She passed away and then I went to live with my mother.

G: Do you recall if your grandmother worked, or what her employment was?

B: Well, really, I don't know, but I don't think my grandmother worked because she was always at home. I'm sure my uncles and my mom took care of her.

G: When you were twelve then you moved home with your mother?

B: I came home to live with my mother because my grandmother had passed away.

G: What do you recall about her place in the work force and your stepfather's?

B: My mom did day work and my father worked in the mill. They were gone all the time. They worked during the day when I was in school. My mom did. She worked some weekends and I always went with her. It was really good.

- G: Some of the early attitudes we have about work come from the impressions that our parents give about their jobs. Do you remember any impression that your mother gave about how she felt about working and also your stepfather?
- B: I'll tell you about my stepfather first. He was a provider. We had everything; I was taken care of by my father. He worked overtime for the extra things we wanted. And basically you did what needed to be done. We had the necessities and some luxuries. My mom worked because she liked to have money in her pocket. That was her money to do what she pleased. That was the way it was.
- G: Your father worked for which steel mill in the valley?
- B: Sheet & Tube.
- G: Do you remember how long he worked for them, until what year?
- B: My father passed away in 1967 and he worked at Sheet & Tube until that time. He was sixty-one at that time and he started Sheet & Tube at the age of eighteen.
- G: Did he feel that this was a job that provided well for his needs and for his family?
- B: I think he would because we got a new car every year. We had a beautiful home and things that were needed.
- G: He was working then during the big steel strike of 1957. Could you tell us what effect that had on your family?
- B: I came to live with my mother in 1956. I can still remember, I think it was in the late 1950's or early 1960's, that my mom had to start working. My dad didn't want her to start working because I was here. I took up a lot of time because I was new to the school system and I had a lot of problems getting adjusted to being there. So she had to be home. When the strike came, my dad and my brother--who was here at the time--got all the money together. They sent me and mother to Connecticut to live with my aunt where my mother got a job working in a plant that made raincoats, leather coats and raincoats. Where she was working at, she sent her paychecks home to my father to pay the bills and my aunt took care of us so that everything would continue to go on.
- G: You realized that the time you moved to Connecticut was in order to continue financial support for the family. How did you feel about that? Do you have any memories of how you felt about having to be averted?
- B: Well, I loved my aunt. My aunt was like my second mom. So things didn't bother me too much because things didn't change.

I was the baby of the family, so I got more; I was fine. The only thing was I wanted to live with my aunt, but my mother wouldn't allow it.

G: So you came back after how long?

B: After two years.

G: How did your mother feel about leaving that job in the coat factory?

B: My mom didn't mind. My dad didn't want her to stay there. He didn't ever want to move there, so she didn't have too much of a choice.

G: Are you saying then that your mother's work was more or less commanded by what your father's wishes were?

B: My mom worked because it was something she wanted to do. My mother was basically a home person. She wasn't the type to want to go out and do things. She was just there. The meals were on the table when we came. She was up to cook breakfast and to see us off to school and work. That's what my father wanted. He didn't want her to work. He allowed her to work because he said it would only make her happy. He said when she stayed home too long she made life miserable for everybody.

G: Do you remember that being true?

B: Very, very much. My mom, she likes to sew and she was a homemaker. She took care of the house very well, the curtains, the drapes, and everything for the house. But after so long, she would get bored. She couldn't find anything to do. So she would go back to work. The people that she worked for were beautiful because they always wanted her back. So if she called them, they would make sure she would have two or three days to work whenever.

G: You recall specifically that your mother needed to get out once in awhile to get into the work force. Do you remember being anxious to work also and have your own money?

B: No, because you have to consider that I'm the baby of the family. When I grew up, I was everyone's daughter, granddaughter, and niece. So everybody took care of me. They gave me what I wanted. I never had to work for anything.

G: What was your very first job and how old were you?

B: My very first job was baby-sitting. I think I was about sixteen. I got the job because it was a challenge. My mom and dad said I couldn't hold a job in a pie factory. So I got the baby-sitting job. It turned out she was right because I worked two

- days and then I quit.
- G: What happened?
- B: The kids got on my nerves.
- G: So your first taste of employment wasn't a very good one?
- B: No.
- G: How soon after that did you get another job?
- B: It was quite some time. I'm trying to think; I had had a child. It was up until 1969.
- G: You had your first child at what age?
- B: Eighteen.
- G: And at what age did you reenter the work force?
- B: It was in 1968. I started to work. The reason I started to work there was because I wanted a house. I was living in Westlake Terrace and I was on welfare. I came to realize that I wasn't brought up that somebody was giving me a handout. I had to give an account of everything somebody would give me. I never liked anybody telling me when and where to spend my money. So then I decided I wanted a home and I wanted to have more than what my parents had.
- G: Even more than that, though, you felt you were very well-provided for when you were living with them?
- B: I had no complaints. At the time we had a shoe store here called Robert Stevens. It was a very expensive shoe store. That is where my shoes came from. So I had no complaint about that; it's just that the point is I wanted more than what my parents had, but I didn't want to work hard at it.
- G: Oh, I see. You were on welfare for how long?
- B: I think I was still on it off and on . . . I was totally off of it in 1987.
- G: How do you feel about that experience, that phase of your life? Did it provide for you to make you feel that it was enough to get along? Did it support you and encourage you or discourage you?
- B: It was fine for awhile, but at the time I had six children. The money was fine, but I got to the point where I wanted more. People give you things, that's fine. I was used to having new things. I was used to saying I wanted twenty dollars and

- the twenty dollars was there. I never had to wait to have money. So eventually it got to the point where I got disgusted with myself. I went into withdrawal a couple of times about it. I got to the point that I saw that I had to do something for myself. So I went to Victor Business School in 1971 and got a degree in keypunching and typing. But it wasn't enough because I needed a high school diploma. At the time I had gone back to school about three or four times. Each time I would end up being pregnant and I just didn't want to go. So it took a lot of initiative for myself. It's something that I had to set a goal for myself. I finally looked around me and I saw that my life was not as good as my parents. In fact, I was living in poverty.
- G: Then you had a realization that the only way to improve your life was for you to do something about it.
- B: Right.
- G: And the Victor George Business School was not enough. How old were you when you got your G.E.D.?
- B: I was thirty-eight.
- G: Since then, your career has shot like lightning towards some really important goals for you.
- B: Well, I wouldn't say it changed that much. I did it on my own and I didn't tell anybody what I was doing.
- G: Why do you do things like that?
- B: Because if I fail, I don't feel like I let anybody down but myself. I decided to go back to get it and each time it was very hard because the study time I had to put into it made it very hard. I hadn't picked up a book in ten or twelve years. So the time made it very rough. I had small children. But I looked around and the job I hold I got hired in 1981. I said I didn't want to push a broom all of my life. I don't like to clean house and I don't like to get really dirty. So the only way you are going to accomplish things, you have to push yourself and set goals for yourself. I haven't reached my goal.
- G: What other goals do you have, careerwise?
- B: Careerwise I want to finish; I am going to get my operator license by the first of December this year. And then I'll go on to be night custodian and then head custodian. Then I am going to go back to school. That's my life. I want a degree in engineering, a total degree.
- G: That will mean night school. That will mean doing two things at once, working and going to night school. Or do you plan

not to work during that time?

- B: I will have to work, but I will be into day school. I hope to get . . . depending on how I go. I will have to work afternoons now, so I will most likely go at that time. But I will go this quarter and I will . . .
- G: After then the things that you have already mentioned, about just wanting a better life style, wanting things to be a physically easier job, what other motivations do you feel have encouraged you toward your college degree in engineering?
- B: I don't like people to say that I can't have and what I can. And in our society, people label you; either you can or you can't. I do not like those labels. I know that I can. And if I can't, I will. But sometimes you look at things and you say, "It's too hard." But those that challenge you in life make you go on to do what you want to.
- G: Who has told you you can't?
- B: I have had some people tell me what I can and can't do in my employment. So it makes it to the point that it pushes me to do just what they say I can't. I do not like people to tell me I can't do it.
- G: This takes us back to when your mother took and challenged you into your first job and you realized, well, yes you can do it, but no you didn't want to do it; the baby-sitting job that you felt that way about.
- B: Yes, I took the job because she said I couldn't. She said all I did was sleep all the time. I was a very lazy, little lady. Washing dishes was a punishment. So to work at that time considering I didn't have to . . . My father was deceased and I got quite a bit of money from social security, the railroad, and from the service from my father because I was the only child. My grandparents supported me. My aunt and uncles supported me. I didn't see any reason to work. My mom and dad gave me what I asked for so there was no reason to work.
- G: Well, besides money and the challenge that your present situation has given you toward working for your goals, your license and your degree in engineering, is there anything inside of you that says, "I want this. It's going to prove something"?
- B: I'm hoping to set an example to be a challenge to the children. I push them. I wish my mother would have pushed me because if she had, maybe I wouldn't be right here. I would be on to other goals. If she had let me go where I wanted to go I would have went into a different expected life. I want them to realize it's hard, but you can make it. It's hard, but if you keep working at it, you'll succeed.

- G: For the record you should tell us about your children. What age ranges are they in? How many do you have? Tell us then how many of your children have followed that aspiration that you have just described.
- B: I have eight children. I have six girls and two boys. I have four that have completed high school. I have one that just got his G.E.D. in the past two months. They all know what they want to do, but they just don't know how. I've learned lately; I'll watch them; if I do something, the figure they can do better than I did. They have that initiative to have more than I do, but I have to first take that step to show them. I have a daughter, Anjanette. She just came home from the army on leave right now. She wants more. I push it into her. She appreciates me pushing this into her to have more, which is why considerably she learned that it's nothing that I didn't want, that if you don't get out there and get the very best . . .
- G: But Anjanette is your fourth child . . .
- B: She is my fifth.
- G: We should also say that she graduated with honors. She has been in the honors program here at South High School. Well, tell us about the career she has in mind and how she decided on this tactic for achieving that.
- B: Well, she has a baby. She had a baby at the age of fourteen. She had just turned fifteen. Angie loves her baby and she wanted to provide a living for her child and go to college at the same time. She didn't see any other way. We talked about it. I encouraged her to go into the army. This way she could provide for her child and get the education she deserves. I think she is doing a beautiful job.
- G: Is she the only child who has been in the armed services?
- B: No, I have a son, my oldest child. He was in the air force. He just got out there. He wasn't, he was a little boy and he didn't listen. He didn't accomplish the things he set out to do.
- G: I wanted to know how you found out or why you believe that the armed services is an end to the goal of education?
- B: Because it gives you a chance to earn a living. They take care of you. You can take care of your family. You can't do that and go to school out here in say Youngstown or any place and take your family and work too because something is going to go lagging unless your parents are there to help you. Anjanette-- I'm going to use her--she has this goal she has set for herself that she wants to be the perfect parent and she wants her daughter to have more than what she had. I've seen that if she had stayed out here to go to school and tried to work, if she

got the job, she was going to give up school. She couldn't do both at the rate she wanted to. So I know for her that was the way it was.

G: How do you feel that your son, the one that was in the air force . . . What's his name?

B: James.

G: How do you feel that he could have better capitalized on offerings that were available to him through the armed services?

B: James, I guess being that there wasn't a man in the house he had his initiative to take care of his mother. But he also had not grown up and he thought he was grown so he hopped up and got married. He realized after he got married, it wasn't what he wanted. He just gave up on everything.

G: You talked about how you wished your mother had been more severe in her encouragement towards your getting a job or finishing school or whatever. How do you feel that you have measured up to your own standards of encouraging your kids? You said all of them so far have graduated from high school and I'm sure the rest will too.

B: I push; I listen, and I say what I have to say, but I also let my children make their own mistakes. I'll be there to pick them up. I tell them to want more, to have more than what they have now, to want more than what I have given them and to go on.

G: Do you think they are as hungry for success as you want them to be?

B: Yes.

G: You've been able to not only encourage them, but provide direction. You seem to find out or to know what the best way is to improve their life. You knew about the armed services and you knew James could have used the air force, and I suppose that you have privately a plan for each of them to get as far as you want them to.

B: It's not a plan. I sit down and I listen to them. They say they want to do this. I say go ahead and do it. You learn by your mistakes. If you don't make a mistake, you never learn. So when they make a mistake, I tell them, "You learn; you grow with that mistake, and you don't make it again. That way, you look at it and see what you did wrong, go over it, and make it better." And I do this with all of them. I said, "You know what you want; I don't know what you want to be; I can't set your goals, and I can't make them for you, but I can be here to help." I try to be there in every way I can to help them.

G: It hasn't been all that easy, has it?

B: No, it's very hard.

G: Before we interviewed this, you talked about sometimes it even takes physical force to do that. That was a very insightful part of your life. As a single mother you talked, you learned, you have become educated, and you have shared everything you had with them to motivate them. But sometimes you just had to resort to being physical. I hope you feel like telling about one of those parts.

B: I will whip my kids. I'll take Anjanette and use her because it happened recently. Anjanette was in the eleventh grade, no, she was a senior. She walks in and she tells me, "I'm not going back to school." Now this kid has come--she is in the top ten of her class, all A's and B's--to tell me she's not going back to school. I'm scuffling and giving back all I have to give; well, then it's time to fight because nobody is going to tell me they are going to quit school again. Angie said something to me and I hit her. She drew back to hit me. I think that was when she realized I was mom. From that point on she has changed.

G: So you have that respect even though there has been physical confrontation and even violence in your house that you might want to tell us about. You have the respect of your kids.

B: I respect my children. I give them respect and I demand respect. I feel that is the only way that it goes on. My daughter said something to me Sunday. This is my oldest daughter. She made me feel really proud. We were talking about one of her friends. She said how he cursed and carried on in front of his mother. She said, "Mom, he has no respect at all. I don't know what is wrong with him. We weren't raised that way. We were raised to respect and to respect people." I figured, well, she let me know; she did know what I have been teaching her all this time.

G: This brings us to another aspect of your life and that is that you have talked about before how important the church and your minister is in your life. Can you tell us what you do, how much time you spend with your church, and what kinds of activities that you have? To what church do you belong first?

B: I belong to Christ is the Answer located in North Jackson. My pastor is Pearl Margiotta. And to me, her and her husband are my spiritual parents. They are my friends. If things are really bad, I can talk to them. My pastor is not a criticizing pastor. She is a pastor that listens. If you made a mistake, she doesn't say, "You live bad." She would say, "You will be all right." She would pray for you. That

is my pastor that has been there for twelve years now. She has always been there. Sometimes I don't know how I would go without talking to her. I talk to her every day or her husband. They are an example of life that I like. They set a pattern for your lives, to follow and I would like to not be a pastor, but follow as far as every footstep she's . . . It's just beautiful. As far as I'm concerned, I head the . . . Right now I'm in Outreach and that's where we distribute food to the needy. I head the devotional prayer in our church. I'm a board member. I'm in the recreation committee of our church. I'm assistant superintendent of the church.

G: And sometimes you help out with weddings you told me, on the weekend.

B: I coordinated a wedding in July. I knew just how to do it. I had planned a wedding for myself. I knew exactly how to do it, so I pitched in to do it with the very close friends of the church.

G: How important is this time spent with the people of your congregation in doing things for your church?

B: To me, it's very important because that's a part of my life. I have no other part. The people that I spend time with are the people that I'm very close to. I don't socialize; I don't drink; I don't smoke, and I don't go out except to dinner. So these are the only people that I have to be with.

G: They have basically been your support system, the church, for the last twelve years?

B: Yes, they are my support. When things are wrong, I have somebody I can call and they pray with me. They have supported me through anything that I don't want to do. If I am in the right, they back me one hundred percent.

G: You told me about how your pastor probably saved your life when you were very sick this summer.

B: My pastor was there every day. I have been sick three times in my life that I have known, but twice in the past three years. The one time I was near death. She stood there with me all the way. Then in July I was sick. We thought it was a heart attack, but I had a stress attack. I had mental and physical stress exhaustion.

G: What role did your minister play in your recuperation?

B: She became my pastor and she became my very best friend. My doctor told me I needed to talk to someone because there were things bothering me that I would not have talked to anyone about. She came in; she sat down, and she told me, "We are going to talk," When I got through telling her the things on

my mind she cried with me. She didn't criticize. She knew that they were very important. I was really carrying a lot and nobody knew that it had reached that point.

G: What you just described as being her role seems to me it has been the way you have been to your children and to your family in supporting them, and listening, and being there to pick up the pieces, or some of the things you said you have done for them. Have they been supportive with you?

B: Oh yes.

G: What have they done to be supportive from the very time you decided to go back to school?

B: My children are supportive. They push me as hard as I push them. They encourage me as much as I encourage them. They say they know I can do it. They have worried about me a lot lately because I had never been sick. Each time I have gotten sick my oldest daughter would be worried. The last time I got sick, I thought she was going to end up in the hospital with me because she was really worried about me. She tells me constantly all the time, "Mom, take it easy; you are killing us, not yourself." I have to settle down a lot more than I used to.

G: You said you were near death this summer when you were in the hospital. Did it change at all your perspective of priorities?

B: I was sick three years ago. I was very sick. That changed my life considerably.

G: How?

B: The doctor gave me forty-eight hours to live. I didn't know it at the time, but I knew I wasn't ready to die. When I got better I started looking at life a lot differently. I started enjoying my life to the fullest. I did the things that I thought and desired to do. I reached the goals that I have set for myself.

G: What are you doing now to slow down and enjoy more . . . It takes a certain amount of self-discipline.

B: It takes a lot of discipline. I go out and sit down. I go out to eat. I'll just roll up and sleep. Lately, I've been into books. I'm getting ready to take my test. My activities are kind of stressful. My kids are watching me again because I'm making some drapes. I'm studying for my test. Also, I have to study because I have to teach Sunday school on Sundays. I have to always be prepared to teach. It's a full activity.

G: Do you feel or is your conscience bothering you yet? Do you feel you are doing too much? Your children feel that way.

B: No. I don't feel I'm doing enough.

G: What do you mean?

B: I work at the school. I see kids that need help. You don't know how to help them. I see kids that need someone to talk to. They are afraid of talking to adults because they think they will criticize or they will put them down. I want to reach out to them and say, "Hey, I'll listen. If you need a push, I'll push you." I just want to be able to say, "I want to be your friend. I want you to go on. If you don't make anybody else proud make yourself proud of what you are."

G: What particular thing about you do you think influences people to make the best of themselves?

B: I stay there with them. I push them on. I have a girlfriend; her husband left her. The condition they were living in wasn't a good condition. They were living. To me, it was existing. Her husband left her. She didn't have anything else to do. I told her to go down and get on welfare. It got her started on her feet. There were days that she used to go around to people's houses trying to get food for her and the children. We talked. We became really good friends by accident. I pushed her. I told her, "Why don't you do something with your life? Go back to school." She got a job. Now she is getting ready; she went yesterday; she's going to go to YSU. She has three children. She told me Sunday, "If it had not been for you, I don't know where I would be. Nobody understood what was inside of me." She kept pushing and pushing. She said, "It makes me feel good that I could walk to the store and I could buy for myself. I know it didn't come from anybody. I earned it. Nobody gave it to me." That made me feel good even though to me I didn't do anything. It was just that somebody helped me. I just wanted to be there to help someone else.

G: You feel that by being a sincere friend to people that is what you can give. Who is giving it to you, your pastor, your mother?

B: My mother gave it. My pastor gave it. I have learned to read my bible. God said you are supposed to give. You are not supposed to take. We are supposed to learn from the things that we will go through. We are supposed to help somebody else who is going through the same thing. We are not supposed to be selfish and say, "Well, that is their fault or that is their business." But we are supposed to help one another. I believe if people reach out and help one another, things would go a lot smoother and we would be a lot better.

G: I think people have sensed this from you, perhaps some of the kids in the school that come and talk to you. Do you feel that they know that is true about you, that you are eager to help and you believe in the healing ability of friendship?

B: I try with the kids in school. I get basically the ones who are skipping classes and . . .

G: What do you say to them, Anne?

B: When they ask me to get them in class, I make them make me a promise. They won't do this again. I feel that they are making me lie. If I have to say you were with me then you prove to me it was worth me doing this. I have gotten a number of kids back into class. These kids have watched their lives over the years and they went on and they finished school. That's what they need, somebody to care.

G: They don't get it at home you don't think? Or do they need so much that they can't get it all at home? What do you think?

B: It's not that I don't think they care. I think all parents care. But if a lot of parents only talked. With me, every day I tell my children to have a good day and I love them. They know that we love them because we provide for them. But we have to teach our kids to say, "I love you." Those three words, I have known a lot of people who don't know how to say them. They are afraid to say them because they figure if they say, "I love you," they are going to get hurt. I was the same way, but I learned. My mother used to tell me every time she saw me, "Annie, I love you." I used to think she was full of bull. I've grown to realize it was enough to push me on to somebody that really loved me, love me enough to see the good in me. So that is what we have to show these kids. They have good in them. It just has to be brought out.

G: And it encourages self-love too. You feel that having this love come from your pastor has made you accept yourself, care more about yourself; it sounds like it.

B: Yes, it did. I had a low esteem about myself. I felt people used to always say, "You have eight kids. Nobody wants you." I really got to the point I had . . .

G: Who would say those things?

B: That was mostly my friends.

G: People, not you.

B: People, not me. I thought I was doing great. I had eight kids and the most I have ever weighed was one hundred and forty pounds. Everybody used to say, "Oh, you have all those kids." I used to think maybe because I never really bought for myself. I bought for my children because I wanted them to look good. I never wanted the kids to look down on my children because there were so many of them. It wasn't until two years ago, and really up until last year, that I realized that God created

man. He didn't create something ugly. God didn't create anything ugly. Everything is beautiful, whether it is on the inside or on the outside. It's pretty. It's fully used. If our heart is beautiful, it will make this person a beautiful person.

G: You have been able to accept this about yourself and teach your children this too and the kids in school. I think that is what drives them to you.

B: I get along beautifully with all the kids, but sometimes they drive me crazy.

G: What role in your life do you feel is the most satisfying?

B: When I can help somebody. When you say you can make it. You can be there for them to lean on. You can be their ear and let them talk to you.

G: The role of friendship. What role would come second, motherhood, your work, your personal relationships, your responsibilities within the church?

B: I set a goal and I set my family about this. My goal says, "I love God first, then my family, and then my friends." I put myself last. They say, "If you put yourself last, you can take care of everything because you will be blessed in the face of God."

G: What role do you see work playing in your life? If it is not one of the priorities, does it have any personal satisfaction or is it a good way to make money, or do you have other needs to succeed that work can satisfy?

B: No, I don't have any of the needs. I just want to be able to provide for my family. I saw us a lot of times. I see people needing things. I believe if I had the money, I would give it.

G: Do you have a pleasure from giving?

B: I do. I enjoy it. I like to make people happy. I want them to be happy. My basic goal is I would love to see our teenagers to just grow up and thrive, to want more out of life than just standing around and having nothing.

G: It's got to be a tough thing being a teenager now. I work with them too. I think perhaps that's a tough thing to raise kids through this period. Have you found that to be true? That it is a very demanding and difficult role to raise teenagers.

B: Very, very hard.

G: What is the tough part? How do we succeed in it?

- B: They have so much peer pressure. The kids think they have to prove something to someone. With their kids they have this thing that they have to prove something to their kids. "If I can do it, you can do it." I teach my kids--don't worry about what they are doing, if you take care of yourself, you won't get into that problem. You know right from wrong. If you see a person out there breaking a window, are you going to break that window? Well if that person doesn't get caught, you are going to get caught. My kids have found out that generally when I tell them something on that order, they always get in trouble. They are always in trouble. So they are kind of like . . . If I say I don't like a person or if I don't like such and such a thing, they say, "Oh here she goes again." But they listen.
- G: To prove the point that you were just saying, Anjanette had been away for more than three months. She came home and had a reencounter with some of her old friends. How have you seen her change?
- B: Angie has been home a week now. She hadn't stayed at home until Sunday night. She came in Sunday morning. She had been with her friends, her girlfriends, and everything. She came in and she was kind of upset for a Sunday afternoon. I said, "What's wrong with you?" She said, "I told my friend not to call me, not to come over; I don't want to be bothered with them." I said, "Well, what's the matter?" She said, "Mom, they are dirty. They are dirty. They don't want anything. They aren't headed anywhere. They aren't going anywhere. They are just dirty kids."
- G: That's precisely what you were talking about. Did you swear it with pride?
- B: Yes. I let her go. She has been home. I wanted to tell Anjanette a couple of times, "You need to stop and stay at home." She realized it and she hasn't been anywhere since. She said she didn't want to be around them. She told me, "Mom, it's not that we didn't go out. We went out. We got a hotel room, two adjacent rooms, and we had a clean party. They don't know how to have clean fun. They always want to smoke and do this and that. I get sick and tired of it. I'm ready to go back now. I've seen what I can see."
- G: She wants to put her life back on track.
- B: Yes.
- G: We were talking about the difficulty in raising teenagers. Can you see yourself at nineteen having that kind of an insight that Anjanette just revealed to you?
- B: Well, at the age of nineteen, I never went out. I was always . . .

- I've never been a party person. So to me, Angie just . . . Everybody says she is just like me so I just see myself all over.
- G: But at nineteen you weren't that worldly-wise as Angie now is. Is that what you are saying?
- B: No, I just didn't know.
- G: Why do they have so much more savvy?
- B: Because you let them live and you let them see what life is and you are there to tell them what is right and wrong. Then you let them see it. If they are where they are at, then they are going to come back home.
- G: Was your mother living when you were nineteen?
- B: Yes.
- G: How many children did you have by that age?
- B: One.
- G: Did she ever support and say the things to you that you say to Anjanette?
- B: My mom always told me, "A lady is a lady, and be a lady wherever you are." I didn't understand that.
- G: What did she meant?
- B: I had a wild streak going. I used to stay out all night, like Anjanette did. I came home one morning around five o'clock and the boy I was with brought me home. She said, "If he had any respect for you, he would not have brought you home at this time." My mother never whipped me. She could say words that could make you crawl under the table and hide. From that point on I thought about the respect that I had to have from someone.
- G: When Anjanette didn't . . . You felt that she didn't respect herself because of the guy that she was hanging around with. What actually did you tell? You didn't cut her down with words or apparently they had not worked by that point.
- B: By that point, they had not worked. She got to the point where she started going through some changes. The one thing about my children, they feel like they could do anything to me, but they don't want anybody else to do anything to me. This kid went to picking at me. He rubbed Anjanette the wrong way. She started growing up at that point in life. She saw things in a different way. As she started growing up, she started pulling

away from those kids, which ended up into a tragedy. I ended up in jail. She said from that point in her life, she would never let me go through anything else because of that tragedy. She started changing. I'm very proud of her now.

- G: Do you think that incident affected the other children in your family too? Do they understand what Anjanette did?
- B: Yes. My daughter just moved to a situation Sunday with her boyfriend. She said, "Mom, I can't let you go through that again because I know you were in deep . . . "
- G: You mentioned that you didn't feel that Anjanette could raise a child and get her education, but you did.
- B: It was very hard. My children supported me. They pushed me to the point that I pushed them.
- G: Do you feel that Anjanette is going to raise her daughter as well as you raised your's?
- B: I believe she is going to do better than I did.
- G: Because you have inspired them to use their talents, to have patience and wait to develop themselves fully so that they can get a full return on their abilities and their career choice. Do you think that she is going to raise her daughter to have a willingness to be independent and to sacrifice now for the future?
- B: I see her with her daughter. I watch her. She gives but still she makes her do things like . . . She makes her sit and do pictures and teaches her how to write. I remember when she, Charisma, was born and came home. Angie used to sit and read to her for hours. When she did her homework she would explain it to her. We have a joke. We say, "If Charisma could talk when she was a baby, she would tell us a lot of secrets because Angie and I both used to talk to her."
- G: I bet she's pretty precocious now.
- B: She is a very smart little girl. We watch her. She catches on to everything very fast. I told Anjanette, "She is just like you. You are going to have to watch her. She is unreal and it won't be like you were with me."
- G: Do you get a different pleasure out of raising a grandchild than your own child because you are responsible for nine children that you by yourself raised and have been primarily responsible for financially?
- B: Financially, I'm responsible for two of them. I have my son's

oldest daughter and I have Charisma. Charisma is closer to me. I love all my children and grandchildren, but Charisma has been in the house since she came into the world more or less. When she came out of the hospital, she was afraid. She had been home and we almost lost her. To all of us she is very dear. She gets whatever she wants. Regardless from who it comes from, she is going to get it.

G: This brings to my mind a picture of three generations of women who are independent, intelligent, and want very much to be and they have been self-reliant. What difference do you see in the generations that we have been talking about as far as what they will be able to accomplish from work and career?

B: Do you want me to start with my mother?

G: If you want. As far as related to what you feel you have accomplished through your own job translated into work and financial support?

B: I wanted more than what my mom had. I looked at my mom. My mother was a seamstress. She didn't do anything worthy. She had the ability to look at a pattern and go home and draw that pattern and cut it out of newspaper. She did nothing with this.

G: You mentioned that she had never worked.

B: She did housework. She worked for . . . I know these people well. I can't think of their name. She worked for them for years. She only worked one job until my dad was on strike. My dad sent me and mom to New York to live with my aunt. He felt that he could not take care of the house and take care of everything. My mom went up and got a job. She sent back money to take care of my dad and my brother here in the house while my aunt managed to build it up, which was real good.

G: What do you think there was about her life that she didn't try?

B: My mom was what you would say one of the good people. People mistreated her who she would do anything for. To me, she was a super mom. I could tell my mother anything. She didn't look down on me about it. I felt like she wasted her real reason for living. My mom died when she was forty-eight. She didn't have a chance to live her life.

G: Was it because of the circumstances of the stock market or her husband being on strike?

B: My mother was very good. At the time, people didn't make the money that my mother made in a week.

G: Should she have wanted more? Do you think she should have wanted to be a seamstress?

- B: Let me explain first how I felt about my mother. My mother and I left here. When we lived in Richfield, Connecticut, my mother got a job making leather coats. She ran so fast on the machine that I felt that she wasted her talent. As soon as the strike was over, she came back home.
- G: She didn't work?
- B: She did not work anywhere. My dad did not allow her to work.
- G: Do you remember her talking about whether she enjoyed this job?
- B: She loved it. My mother enjoyed being a seamstress. She was satisfied. My mother had a new car every year. She got whatever she wanted because he took care of her. My father, he was my stepfather, was a good dad. He was a good provider. I feel my mother didn't get what she deserved.
- G: Anne, you were telling me about the lawsuit that you have against the board.
- B: It started out as a game. I did it. I did it on the nineteenth of March. Nobody came to see me until April 8. When they came, he said, "There is no such thing as 'cross-over bidding.'" I have a concept that when I don't understand something I ask why. He said, "It can't be done." I said, "Why?"
- G: What is "cross-over bidding?"
- B: We were considered cleaning matrons. They had the cleaning matron locked into a non-movable position. We couldn't move back. We couldn't move anywhere. Just their cleaning matron, a six hour cleaning matron. We couldn't advance ourselves. We couldn't earn more money. At the point, we were earning \$9,482 a year. I wanted to know why and they gave me all this bull. I showed him in the union book that I was not a new employee. I had been with the board. I spoke of the advancements with my employer. He said, "It was an agreement between the union and board." This made me angry.
- G: A non-written agreement.
- B: I don't know if it was an agreement . . .
- G: It wasn't in the contract.
- B: It wasn't in our book.
- G: So you got angry.
- B: I got furious. I can't mention the names, but I talked to a few people. When I told them what had happened, they gave me a university teacher's name. When I called her she was not in.

The girl asked me what it pertained to. I told her what had happened. She said, "Oh, she will be in tomorrow." She hung up. Five minutes after I hung up, my phone rang. It was the professor. When I told her what had happened, she said, "I will call you back in twenty minutes." In twenty minutes she said, "Don't get on the phone a lawyer is going to call you." He called me. His name is Straton Lynn. He gave me an appointment for the very next day. When I went to see Straton, I told him everything that had happened. He did not understand what was going on. He told me he didn't see what I was saying because he said I was talking so fast. He had not had a chance to read our unit book. I was still furious. At the time I was getting more and more angry.

G: Was it frustrating because of the lack of opportunity?

B: I don't know. I think I was angry because they wouldn't give me the job that I knew I was entitled to.

G: Seniority-wise you were not entitled to it?

B: No, that wasn't the point. Seniority-wise I was entitled to it. The point is that there was an agreement. This is all I kept getting between the board and the union, "There is no such thing as a 'cross-over bidding.'" They said I was crossing over, but they still had me classified in the custodial department. So if you are not in the department, you are not crossing over, you are moving up. I was still angry. It went on. I talked to the lawyer and he didn't understand what I was saying. He told me, "You need somebody to break this down to English for me. You know what you are talking about, except you really can't show me what you are talking about." He introduced me to a guy named Mr. Willie Akins. Mr. Akins knew exactly what I was saying. He saw it immediately.

G: He deals with this kind of situation.

B: He had dealt with it when he was in the mill when they were hiring guys in the mill. At that time, they wouldn't let the blacks advance. They were putting them in a position where they could move up. He got involved in it. He filed a suit against the mill. This is when we got black guys advancing farther . . .

G: Is this bringing in any legal aid or NAACP?

B: I could have went all channels, but I had help and I went through all the channels in one bid. I had remarkable help. I never can repay the people that helped me. They saw where I wanted to go and they reached out there to help me.

G: What happened? How has it developed?

B: It has been a year and a half now. We are on our way to court.

G: When will this be?

B: Hopefully very soon.

G: Have they filled the position in the meantime?

B: They did in the beginning. They filed it with this guy. They were still telling me, "It could not be." I told my immediate supervisor, not my supervisor, my immediate supervisor, Bill Young, "I'm going to roll over the union. No one tells me that I can't better myself." He looked at me like--I believe it. He didn't say anything. His hands were tied and I knew they were tied. It wasn't him that I had to get to. I had to get to my union. In the meantime, my union had flatly refused to represent me because they said they couldn't.

G: How do you feel about that? You paid union dues.

B: I still pay union dues.

G: How do you feel about that?

B: I will deal with the union when I get my job. I know that the union is crooked. I know what they are doing to stop women. I'm not saying the board is doing this. I'm saying the union. I'm talking about my union.

G: The union is predominantly male?

B: Yes. Women were not in the union in the beginning. This is something they allowed. Now they have made it mandatory that you be in the union. I feel that if it is mandatory then you are going to do what you say you do. You are going to be for me, as well as for the men. My dad was a millwright. He said the union was crooked. If my dad said it was crooked, they were crooked. I have learned that they are crooked. Maybe not all, but they are crooked.

G: How serving or how selective are they about who they help and support?

B: Right.

G: The entry level job then for women in this custodial situation is cleaning matron and they can't move out of this. They are locked into it. But the entry level for men . . . They never are called cleaning matrons. What is the entry level job for men?

B: They are called custodian helpers. They can go anywhere, from

down to the shop . . . There they have carpenters. They have one woman in the labor department in trucking down in the warehouse. But there is no other woman in the custodial staff that we would consider now. What I'm saying is that since I started the suit against the board, they have opened up a lot of opportunities to us. They opened up. We have eight hour days. As of February, I start making \$13,000 a year, but I work eight hours.

G: That was your seventh year?

B: Yes. This year they opened up an opportunity for us to go to school to get a license.

G: They are providing that schooling for you free?

B: Yes. The only thing we had to do was buy books. The schooling is free. We went all summer long. The only time we could take our vacation was during the summer. We didn't have a vacation. We had been in school all summer. I took the advantage. They said, "It was a one time shot, so you go for it." I still don't see any advancement. Right now I can't tell you about it. It's a whole new thing.

G: That's right. I'll wait until you are ready. I want to know ahead of time when you are going so I can pray for you. So this boiler training doesn't hold with it any promises for advancement either?

B: No.

G: Why isn't it considered a cross-over?

B: They reclassified after EEOC got into it. We had a couple of meetings with the board. My lawyers met with the board. They kept telling them. We found an agreement with EEOC against basically my job action. When EEOC got through with my case . . . After six months you were allowed to take your case and file for court. My case was so good, EEOC would not turn it loose. EEOC has become my attorney.

G: Who put you in contact with them? Was it Mr. Akins that did that?

B: With EEOC my lawyer did. The way I see it I can say this much about it, the way they are doing this now, they are making it as though I am going to get the job. I have no doubts or any fears about it. They are going to make it impossible for another woman to really jump out there at this. They are going to look at what a fight I took. I saw the winners as we went to class. They offered us a one time shot. You have to realize working for the board they are only going to give you something once. If you don't take it then, you lost it. They didn't jump at the opportunity. I found out that a lot of them were afraid

to jump out there. They feel that nobody is out there with them. I told them, "I went out there by myself. The only people that I had with me were a few very close friends. They stuck by me. They couldn't do it openly, but they were there to support me." When things became really rough and I went to throw up, they said, "Don't you dare give it up. Don't you throw your hands up at all. Go on. You can do it." My kids were there. They said, "Mom, do that, don't back down now." I just hung in there. It has not been an easy year. I have been looked at. I have been called a troublemaker.

G: Do these things discourage or inspire you?

B: They made me angry. They made me fight harder. They thought they were discouraging me, but they made me fight harder. I was looking at the point where they were trying to make me stop. They had it so bad in the building where I was at that we were not even allowed to sit together and talk in this building.

G: Who prevented you from doing this?

B: The rules came down. It was mandatory that we stayed on our floors. We could eat lunch together. If I decided that I wanted to walk down and talk to another girl for a few minutes, my boss would have something to say about it. There was a lot of dirt done. They did it through action to protect the building. They did it where there was not an action. I had a legal right to fight it. I didn't do anything. I said what I had to say to that person. They knew how I felt about it. I will do it again.

G: I'm glad to hear that. You can't expect to accomplish anything with that big of a change without making some waves. No other woman has complained to you, have they?

B: When I jumped back there a lot of them told me, "You are crazy."

G: They didn't fear for themselves, they feared for you.

B: They didn't fear. They didn't even support me. I didn't have anybody there.

G: Did you bring any over to your side, in the work force, your friends, people that you work with?

B: I didn't know until I started this school how many women were there then. They had not went through it. They supported me because as we walked to class somebody made a comment about the class. They said, "If she didn't go out there and fight, we would not be here now." A lot of them complain about the eight hour job. They said, "We didn't have this until she went out there. She has accomplished a lot." I don't feel like I have accomplished anything. There are still barriers. When

those barriers are gone, I will feel like I have accomplished something. One is working for the board. They can advance themselves. They can better themselves. I feel that there is no male or female because God did not create them that way. He created everybody equal.

- G: You have merged as a leader, Anne. You have lead them to different trains of thought thinking that opportunities that were before unopen to them might be open now. In fact the boiler school is a good example. How many other women are with that boiler school?
- B: There are only nine. They came and they dropped out. It wasn't easy. It was very hard. It was like going from the seventh grade to your second year at YSU all at once.
- G: How close are you to finishing?
- B: We have one week to go.
- G: There are no problems about becoming certified?
- B: We will get our certificate. Then we have to have two custodians sign and say that we know what we are doing. Then we can go get our license. Everybody is going to rush to take their test and get their license. I know better. I'm going to sit down through the whole month of September and relax, unwind, and get ready to go back to school. I haven't had a vacation. We have to come back into school and get ready to handle the kids. I do not want to come back tense because I will probably leave the school. It's horrible. We have to help teachers get things together. We have to help do this, get this for them, and run around here and there. I come in at lunch time. My schedule is rough at the beginning of the year until it is settled out. I am going to wait until October. I'm going to start cramming. I am not going to tell anybody. I am going to get my license. I am going to shock everybody.
- G: Do you think there is going to be any discrimination and sexism involved when you try to get two custodians to sign?
- B: I don't believe so. I know now that they see that they can't stop us. They are not going to stop me. It is not the point that I have to have a custodian sign it. It is an engineer that I need to find. There are many engineers. I know a lot of them. They don't work for the board of education.
- G: Do you feel that the rest of your working life is going to be with the Youngstown City Schools? Is this where you'll end you working career?
- B: I wouldn't say that. I'm going to stay and get my high pressure boiler license. I have a desire to get an engineer license.

You can only get third degree license for a boiler. I have to be on the job for two years to qualify to take the test. For a stationary engineer license, first year means I can work anywhere in the state of Ohio. That is my goal.

G: You want your mobility? You want better pay?

B: I want to be able to say, "I got the license. I know the job. I want to move and go. I don't feel that Youngstown unless it changes considerably . . . In three years I intend to be out of Youngstown.

G: You feel that the school district has served its purpose. You didn't come to make waves. It was just an opportunity that you felt was unfairly blocked and you had to do what you had to do.

B: If I don't leave Youngstown, I will never leave the board. Any job has its advantages and disadvantages. I would never leave. If I get a first degree engineer license, I cannot go any farther with the board. The board can't pay me any more money unless they give me a job like "Mr. Yoho" had. That would be a challenge. I know that that would be back in the whole system of the school. I wouldn't put myself through that unless I saw where they hired somebody off the street and was less qualified.

G: Even though it may be a person that should have the job.

B: I got saved three years ago. It started out as hard work. It was a challenge. It is so much different than being straight out in the world. I knew the people in the world. I could deal with them. Once I got saved I had to change. Then it became a challenge because things changed around me. I could just reach out and get what I wanted. I had to really start fasting and praying for it. It didn't come easy. It came hard. People would say, "Now this far haven't you reached your goal?" No. My goal is to be able to tell someone, "You can make it. Don't give up just because somebody said you can't do it. If you feel you can do it, you can do it. Sometimes you feel you can't do it, but you can do it." I never thought when I got out here that I would be this far into it. Mike said, "You tear up the union book. You tear up the contracts." I think that people are supposed to be treated fair. I think we live in a country where we are supposed to be free. We have an opportunity to reach goals and to go beyond. I don't feel that people should say, "You can't have this." They are reaching out to go beyond their goals. Why shouldn't we go that far?

G: It's just like saying, "You, you and you one step forward, the rest of you hang back."

B: What you are saying is with this person you can go here, but you being a female, you are limited. I have watched, some women can do what some men cannot do. I don't feel that they

should say what a man could do a woman can do. I feel that they should be able to try. I looked at the job that I bid on, it carries a thirty day probation period. Don't say I can't do the job. Put me on the job, show me the job, and then give me a chance to learn the job. After the thirty days, if you feel I didn't do the job, then say, "You can't do it." Then put me back where I came from. But at least let me know that I can't do it. Show me what I am doing wrong.

- G: That is what you have said to every perspective employer. I am smiling because I wonder what Irene Ward would think of this. I remember what you said about the interview with her. Tell me what you think she would say about this.
- B: When I told her, "I don't like welfare and I want to support my family," she said, "That is a good enough reason to hire you." I felt good with her. I felt very good. I felt confident because she made me feel that way. From day one when I watched the custodian sit on his bottom doing absolutely nothing I said, "I am not going to be pushing a broom all of my life." I never liked housework. I am not a housework person. I clean the house. I expect it to be clean. My kids will tell you, "She cleaned it, you better not mess it up." I don't like to do housework. I am not a domestic person. I tell my friend when talking about getting married, "I am not a housewife; I am going to be a working wife. You have to deal with that. I will be your wife. I will take care of the home, but don't expect me to sit and watch soaps. I don't care for soaps and stuff like that."
- G: Even when I asked you about the satisfactions of this particular type of work, you never mentioned the work itself, the cleaning up or making it look good when you were done. You mentioned seeing people, being with people, being able to reach out and be there for other people. You definitely were not one to be done with the blackboard and say, "That looks good. I am happy." You would rather be here for someone else to come to for support.
- B: When you work for the school system, everybody had bad days; everybody has something going on wrong. Sometimes they need someone to just say, "Hey, you can make it." Or they need somebody to say, "Do you want to talk about it? I will listen." Or they might need somebody to say, "You can make it; hang in there; it's going to be all right after awhile." They just need a kind word and the same with the students.
- G: Where do you feel that you got most of that encouragement?
- B: From my pastor. She has been very supportive, even when I want to quit. She tells me, "You can make it." She stuck by me. She can tell you. She would say, "That was a rough trip getting through that." I love her for that. She never criticized me. She never looked down on me. We need to love that person, not

look at the person, but look at the need that person has.

G: And encourage them and support them through that need.

B: We have lost a lot of beautiful teachers. We still have beautiful ones here. They are going to give their kids their support. They are going to give their kids, those children, the things they need. Even though we say they are young adults, they still need help.

G: Do you think it gets any easier to ask for support from friends or colleagues as they get older?

B: No.

G: Will we find it just as difficult to come and ask someone to care about and support us, as kids find it difficult to come to adults?

B: Yes. Kids expect us to know. Adults are expected to know that we are hurting. A lot of times they don't know that they are hurting. They don't know that we have problems. Kids with their parents are not supposed to have that many problems. We have to be able to tell them, "This is what is going on." If you don't tell kids, then they don't know. I felt the same way with teachers. Teachers have bad days. Teachers have families. They have to go home to about as much stuff as we go home to. They have to deal with their children in school. They have to deal with maybe one hundred and twenty students a day. They have all those problems and still have to go home. They have to leave home outside. Most of them take school and home and try and combine them.

G: A lot of giving. A lot of putting out to people to take care of their needs during the school day.

B: I just look at it like this. If you start it off saying, "We are going to be buddies; we are going to help each other. We are going to try and make this work. We are going to try and make it easier on all of us." We are going to have some that are going to buff up, but there is going to be a lot that support it and make it work.

G: I guess what you are saying then, as adults we don't have any better way of satisfying our needs or support or encouragement than kids do, but we have done it more often. We are the people who teach the younger ones to give out the same way we do when we give out.

B: What we basically do is make the kids think that we are the tough guys. We don't have any problems. When deep down inside you might be sitting in the classroom like I am. I've been working and I have music on. I am listening to that music, but

that music goes in one ear and I am thinking about what is going on at home with the other side of me. The things do not change. The point is that you can lay aside and say, "Can I help?" I feel that instead of backbiting each other, we should help one another. Instead of pushing one another down, we should reach down and pick one another up.

G: When you say "we," are you talking about we was human beings, we as women, or we as a group that work together?

B: We as the people that work together. We have to pick each other up. I am not talking about man, woman, kid, boy or girl, I am talking about the whole body. We are a body of people who work with each other one hundred eighty-three days a year. We are supposed to be able to help each other. In school and out of school, we are supposed to be there. We are supposed to be a friend, not a person that you tell me something and I will go tell the others and when you come back to school everyone in the school system knows. They are supposed to be a friend. We are supposed to help one another. Everybody has problems. Everybody needs somebody that they can lean on at a time. Everybody needs a friend. To me, a friend is a person that you can tell anything and they are going to help you. They are not going to look down on you. They are not going to criticize you. They are going to hold your hand. They are going to cry with you. They are going to laugh with you. They are going to be there.

G: And without them we probably would not have gotten as far as we have.

B: That's right. We wouldn't have. That is the way that I look at the system. We as people in the building should be close. I know we are not.

G: In getting back to the reaction of the union as to you applying for that job when they obligated you to stay on your floors and not get together except for lunch. Do you feel that it was a separate way, or a way of separating the colleagues and that feeling of commodity and support that you just talked about? Women tend to do much more sharing, supporting of each other than men. Do you feel that it is a deliberate effort on their part in preventing that sort of support?

B: A lot of rules change. We have a beautiful building here. We work together during the summer. We work together all year long. We get along tremendously. I think that shocks a lot of people. We don't argue and fight. If we have something to say to one another, we say it.

G: Are you talking about women or the whole custodial staff?

B: We have a male custodian cleaning aid. We say what we have

to say to each other and it is dropped right then. We don't continue it. It goes no farther. It's nobody's business. It's what we say and that is the end of it. We continue to be friends and we are still there to help each other. That is the way it is supposed to be. You are supposed to be there and to help one another. People tend to want to tell everything. If you want people to know what is going on there is a telegram, a telephone, and tell the board. It will be out all over the system and all over Youngstown. You can say, "What did I do?" It came from people you don't even know.

- G: Does it come back to you as the truth or distorted from what you first said?
- B: It never comes back the truth. It always comes back with a question mark, "Did this really happen?"
- G: You think people would busy themselves working instead of gossiping. Do you feel that this gossip and this keeping you apart is a way of underlining the energy that is needed to stay with the commitment that you have made?
- B: We as one should help one another. Instead of trying to pull one another down, we should support one another, we should help one another. Working for the board, I found out that it makes that very hard because when you jump out there and do something, you are labeled "the troublemaker." If you defend yourself in a way, you are labeled "the troublemaker." I'm not going to let anybody walk all over me. Not if I am in the right and very little if I am in the wrong. I might back away.
- G: Do you think that there will become a time when you will get tired?
- B: I am tired now. I am very tired.
- G: So tired that you would quit.
- B: I won't quit until everybody realizes that they are equal. They are not better. God created everybody equal. There are not any that are better.
- G: You told me the other day about how exhausted and ill you were. You were in the hospital. You won't have to recount that to us, but you can describe to us that you were severely ill. How many days were you in the hospital?
- B: I was in the hospital for seven and a half days.
- G: Do you feel that any of that energy drained was accountable to the work situation and the kind of stress?

B: I would say fifty percent of it was work stress.

G: Was it worth it?

B: To what I see and to where I am going yes.

G: If it ever severely affects your health, do you think you would ever say, "No, it is not worth it. This energy that I put into my work, I am going to save for my family."

B: I don't neglect my family. I try not to do it. When I started school, I did not understand that I could carry on my life and go to school. I cut my life out. I cut my children down. I took them shopping on Saturday. I started to take them out to dinner. Instead of spending time like I was doing before, I started giving them things trying to make up for the time that I did not spend with them. I found out that I could not do this. I had to let my life go on. I just added something to it. My children understood. My children were frantic because I was doing this. I realized since I was sick that my life goes on. It is just that I added something to it. I don't quit doing something. I just decrease a lot of the little extras and work it into that.

G: This is a way to conserve energy and keep up both extras.

B: That's right. I learned that when I am tired, I am tired. I put everything down.

G: Given a choice between your personal life and family and the other two are equally to your worth, what would you cut back first?

B: I would try and put more energy towards my children. I would keep my work life where it is at. I really don't have a social life, so there is not anything to cut back from.

G: Do you say that with relief or regret?

B: I know people are going to wonder why I never married.

G: Are you ever going to get married?

B: No. I had my girls. I didn't want them to be raised by a stepfather. I didn't want to bring them over. Men are in the streets and in the bars. You hear so much and see so much. If a man would seduce one of my kids and he was married to me, I would kill him. I would not think twice about it. So why put myself through that pressure.

G: You seem to know yourself extremely well. Where did all of this understanding come from? You have indicated that you have always understood yourself since the time you were a

teenager, when you were nineteen.

- B: My mom always had a saying. I would always say I wanted to play with people; I wanted a sister; I needed somebody to be with. My mom said, "God had not intended for you to be with somebody all the time or he would have given you a sister. He would have given you a twin." She would throw me a book. She didn't know what it was. I would start reading it. I learned to read considerably because she sat and read in the house. That was all my mom did. My dad would work. My mom would sit and curl up with her book. I started reading. I'm a loner. I don't need the full attention that everybody else needed. I didn't have it.
- G: You found that your personality is behind your growth, strength, and from your self-knowledge . . .
- B: I pretended to go home and go in my bedroom and curl up in the bed and watch television or read a book or whatever I wanted to do.
- G: Do you generally feel at the end of the day that you have accomplished something? Do you have a sense of fulfillment?
- B: I look at the things that have happened within a year and a half. With my children, I feel that I have accomplished a lot. With myself I have not accomplished what I wanted to.
- G: You are really driven, Anne.
- B: It's not that. I set a goal and until I reach that goal, I don't think that I will be satisfied.

END OF INTERVIEW