

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Women in Labor Unions

Personal Experience

O H 1874

LINDA MARCHESE

Interviewed

by

Erin Holmes

on

June 1, 1997

LINDA MARCHESE

Linda Marchese grew up in Niles, Ohio and graduated from Niles McKinley High School in 1970. She went onto college at Youngstown State University, but she only completed two years. She dropped out of college and began working at Delphi Packard Electric. Linda has been very active in the union for many years, and she says that she was raised on unions and that is all that she has ever known. Linda has worked as a Union trustee and she is currently a member of the Women's Committee, the Political Action Committee, and the Education Committee. She is also very involved in her community, church, with CLUW, and as a Union counselor. Linda does not have any children of her own, but she has two step-children. She has been working at Packard for 24 years.

-- Erin Holmes

H This is an interview with Linda Marchese for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on Women in Labor Unions, by Erin Holmes, at Linda's house, on June 1, 1997, at 7 20 pm

We will start out the interview maybe with you telling about how you grew up, where you grew up, and things like that

M I grew up in Niles, Ohio I was a daughter of a middle class family My mother did not work, my father did [It was] Very unionized, his construction company, Pete Marchese & Sons Grew up very hard working back in those days My dad is now 77 years old He believed in unions way back then. You fought for what you got and you did not cross the picket line. He believed more in what he instilled [I] Went to Our Lady of Mount Carmel up until eighth grade and then transferred to Washington School We only had to go ninth and then down to high school at Niles McKinley for tenth through twelfth Then I worked minimum wage jobs for like \$1 an hour I am not that old It was like \$1 or \$1 05 I was working at Thrift Drug Store until I got hired at Packard Electric in 1973 When I got hired there, I think I was hired at \$4 75 an hour Very minimal benefits I just got my 90 days in and I got laid off for almost two years I was going to Youngstown State in between that Then I got called back and worked another six months, and was laid off another year I have been working great every since, almost 24 years on September 4.

H. That is a long time Tell me about going to college for two years

M At Youngstown State? Believe it or not when I started at Youngstown State I went into Criminal Justice because I was working at Packard and I thought security would really be neat I thought that would be a great job, doing security, so I started at Youngstown State in Criminal Justice Like many courses down there, you have to wait and get all your basics out Then when you get into what you want it is a whole other ball game During that time frame, I also thought about being a preschool teacher Then the money kept growing at Packard Electric and that is where I stayed

H. Do you ever regret not finishing college?

M Yes, I do. Sometimes I really do I wondered what else the future would have held. What would have happened had I kept going to college? Sometimes you put different things first. I do not really have regrets, but I have a lot of wonderments

H Do you have any children?

M No, no children Lot of nieces and nephews and two step-children Ray has two kids from a previous marriage I have two children come to think

of it

H Did your family life have any influence on you getting involved with the union at Packard?

M. Yes, I would say some what A lot of it was Ray He was very, very actively involved I would start out going to meetings and office meetings and different stuff like that Then it kind of brought back a lot of what my father did and stuff like that Yes, the more I got involved, the more I liked it It kind of gets in your blood

H How long were you working there before you got active in the union?

M Probably about two or three years until I got really active. Then I decided to run for Alternate Committee Woman I decided, gave it a shot and won I was the Alternate Committee Woman. In fact, that was when they had the First Low Wage program and it was called Progressive Hiring Plans back in 1985 I will take that back. Before, then I was a trustee of the union, too. It has been so long I got involved with CLUW, Women's Committee, Education Committee I was on Political Action Committee Just different committees and gradually got involved

H At first you were a trustee? That was your first position?

M Yes

H. Can you talk about what it was like to be a trustee?

M Trustee was a whole eye opener. I mean, you just see things and you wonder how some things were legal You see the bills and the money they are using out of people's dues You saw some that were excellent business decisions and some that are questioned Some people, it gave them a sense of power, and the trustee, more or less, got control Once we got in office, we started questioning the books better and saying, "Hey, you do not need to spend \$90 on getting all these pictures taken." Or, "This phone bill is a little outrageous " It was like an open check book for anybody It was different. It was real different I love retirees dearly The strength of our union they helped to build it, but some of it got way out of hand. Some of it really did

H Is trustee an elected position?

M Yes, you are elected as an officer for three years

H Did you have any trouble getting into that position because you are a woman?

M No Believe it our not, I was the highest vote getter that time, or the next to the highest My favorite part of it was campaigning I did. I loved it. After a while, your adrenalin got going You campaigned and you talked to people one on one and it was really great hearing different people's ideas of their expectations of the union You met people that had 28 years and have never been to one union meeting at our local -- had no idea whatsoever. They were just there They were there for the money and as much overtime as they could make That was their attitude. And they talked about different things that only affect them on their job and that was it

H How did the other trustees treat you, as a woman?

M Really good There were two women and one guy -- Anna Placek and Terry Almburg -- at the time the first time around And that is right. Terry had the highest votes because Terry was the head trustee Whoever gets the most votes becomes the head trustee The second time, three years after that, the three of us won again, come to think of it And then the third year we lost Terry I held that for about nine years and we lost Terry He chose not to run again It was different We got along real well

H After you were a trustee for nine years, what committees did you go on to after that?

M I was involved with the committees at the same time.

H Were you?

M Yes, those were appointed by the president of our Local Your Women's Committee is an appointed committee You Education and your PAC's are appointed All of the committees are appointed by the president of the Local All volunteer No lost time You do not get paid for it Just like in a plant I volunteer for the Community Charities Program and our Union Council Whatever you volunteer for, it is no pay. You do it from your heart Do not count on any money because you will never get rich

H So how long were you involved with the Women's Committee?

M I have been on that since 1976, maybe, or 1977

H Wow, that is a long time

M Yes

H What kind of changes have you seen over the years in the power of the Women's Committee?

M Well, I will tell you honestly All Women's Committees could have more power than what they should have A lot of the men would still like to keep them as the coffee and donut women We will call you when we need you, that type of deal The saddest part about it is if the women would support each other, they would rule this union. But some of these women are the worst ones. They will slit your throat in a minute It is sad to say that, but it is the truth It is vicious. They are real jealous Instead of being happy for someone who gets in, they are not It is bad enough that you have to cope with the men because they try to destroy your reputation. They do what it takes to destroy your character because they are afraid of you passing them up and taking something that they have, sort of macho The union people should be coming together, but they are not

H: That is very sad

M It is sad It really is sad It is pathetic That is the worst part, that it is totally pathetic.

H What kind of things is the Women's Committee involved in in the union?

M: Well, we have our Spring Flings [We do] Anything financial to help support the local We do a lot of education I mean, this one with Sue, I have got to give her a lot of credit because she is really into the education part of it They want to send them to school and know what unionism is about Studying and getting more people involved, male as well as female, it is just great. We have a lot of fund raisers And we have social events to keep the unity of the membership together, which I think is great It really is. We are going to do our Spring Fling for the membership. They go to Geuaga Lake, so it is a lot of fun It just depends on what pops up Like today, we were up at Tod's Children

H So you are also involved with the Education Committee then, too?

M Yes, it is chaired by Mary Lou Dever.

H What kinds of things does the Education Committee do?

M Well, the Education Committee also sets up different schools They are there, more or less, to educate the members on unionism What we have done that we have not done in a long time is get t-shirts out there, t-shirts and union jackets We have not had any of those in the plants since I can remember when It was always a chosen few that had them, but never the membership as a whole They went out there and you could not even keep up with the sales, that is how they have been selling overwhelmingly, which is great

H So your union has a lot of support from its members?

M Yes, as soon as we came close to the strike they all wanted t-shirts, they wanted to wear them They wanted to say they were union proud, which is just great

H I am going to come back to the strike later And you are also with CLUW?

M Coalition of Labor Union Women. Not as much as I used to be. Years ago it was real active in our local. I do not know why It was made up of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties I think it would be great if they started something right inside of our own local, but that has not been done yet I would like to see that done, but it has not been done, not at all.

H: Is there any kind of coordination between the Women's Committee and CLUW, or are they separate entities?

M No, they are separate entities Sue just put out some cards trying to get some more people involved in the Coalition of Labor Union Women. I do not know what happened or why, but [there were] a lot of hard feelings and ego trips A lot of people have been on an ego trip, and that is exactly what happens It kind of just bloomed with Lordstown and GE [General Electric] and everything It just kind of faded apart. I would like to see it happen again, I really would

H It sounds like a good program

M: Yes, it really was.

H You talked about loving the campaigning part of the unions What goes on with campaigns?

M It depends I just came out of an election recently that I lost It was a vicious election I was the only woman with four men You could understand how that would go I will have to let you read some of our leaflets. You would not believe the leaflets I have and how vicious they get They attack character They attack anything that they can find, and if it is not the truth, they will make it up They do not care. They are out to destroy They will go back 25 years if they can find something on you. It is awful They are out to destroy This election was the worst I have been in because instead of putting it in writing, what they ended up doing this time is they did it sneakily, like telling people that you did not like blacks, we had a lot of blacks in our area which I bend over backwards for of them I have heard that Let me think what else the guys used this time. Being involved in other committees and charities because I am also involved in the community charities, and if you are going to help charities, how could you be there for the people on the floor? Well, I am still in the plant all the time I have heard a lot of back-stabbing viciousness. There was a whole lot that went on, a whole lot

H What office were you running for?

M Alternate Committee Woman again

H And you held that position once before?

M Yes.

H. What kind of duties does that entail?

M. What you do, you are there to interpret the local and the national contracts. You are there to stop any conflict between the management and the union. You get some management that comes in there gun ho and they think they can treat a dues-paying member like a piece of garbage. You are there to straighten that out and to make sure there are no violations that take place. When a committee person is not there or is in meetings, the alternate fills in. They step up into their shoes. In fact, if the committeeman should be appointed into a zone for couple days, the alternate moves up to that committee person. I had a lot of ideas because I thought that even though you are an alternate, you should not be on the sidelines. That is what I wrote in my leaflet. I think during that time period, I felt that our options were relaxed, that they should be more gun ho and they should get more involved and do stuff. You have to stay on your job at all times, but you can still work there and you can still help a committeeman out. And our past committee person and alternate did not get along at all with the zone and it was a nightmare. It was just terrible. All of us paid the price for it, we really did. It was awful. That is why I chose to run.

Like I told them, I lost now, but I will be back next May. You are not getting rid of me. I am like a boomerang. That is what bothers them. I ran last year, again with men. It is hard to beat a man, it really is. You could have 30 women in an area and 40 men, and nine times out of ten, the 40 men will still support a man because it is hard for them to get a grip that a woman may represent them better than a man, unless they really have something against that guy. Then you have a lot of women that know that another woman would be the best thing, but if the man sweet talks them, it is good fish bait. They told me, "I do not know why I did that. He told me to." And you have people who do not go to meetings and that is their answer for it.

H So how is the solidarity among women at Packard?

M It depends on what the issue is. If it is the strike, the women work great together, during our strike period. We all came together. If it is something major, we come together. Sometimes for an election or an office, for a woman to hold an office, it is like all of a sudden the darts come out and the horns. I do not know if I want her to have that. It gets vicious, it does. A lot of jealousy.

- H You just had elections on Friday, correct? Last Friday?
- M Yes, ours were two weeks ago They just had some other elections, for day turn and afternoon turn
- H So you have different elections for each shift?
- M Afternoon turn's were first, that was last week This past week, the past couple days, they had the midnight turn's zone committee men elections and the day turn elections So now they are all done And before that we had to vote on the contract That was so bad, where my election fell We had the local contract and I think a couple of the candidates went and got copies of the agreement before they were out, and they passed them out and people thought the guy that won was a lifesaver because he got control of that contract, which was all politics, it was just a game plan. But you have to expect that, you do
- H So with the recent strike, was there any great turnover with the elections? Did you get all new officers coming or more of the same old?
- M No, you got some replaced, it was not an officers election it was a committee person Our office elections are held every three years And I think the next one will be in 1999 or 1998 Next year come to think of it, 1998, because they elect our officers for three years. That is the president, shop chairman, financial officers, trustee and executive board They are elected once every three years
- H. You said you are involved in the community outside the union What kind of things do you do?
- M I like helping with the Red Cross and I like the union councilors I mean, they help Carol Catlin heads the community services for union members I am not as involved as I would like to be I mean, union councilors are the most charitable, fantastic group Carol and Chuck Amburt, Carol Amburt is from our local She is fantastic She is such a giving-hearted person, you would never believe She really is, and I feel real bad because she ran for committee person and she just lost her election I felt real bad about that Real bad. But it is a good organization It is a helpful organization It helps like when Warren Consolidated was on strike It will help their family members. If they are having trouble paying a gas bill or an electric, or food, it helps them out a lot It is really good that way
- H. So that community service-type thing helps all the unions in the area?
- M. Right
- H Have you ever become involved in the strikes our problems other unions have had in the community?

M Yes, my brother-in-law, before he died a couple years ago, when Warren Consolidated was on, he was real gun ho and we were over there helping them We were involved with the rally. My favorite one was Trumbull Memorial Hospital That was my very first strike, back in the 1970's some time, I do not even remember In fact, a good friend of ours, Bill Malone, was pulled away by police and handcuffed We walked around the street We were with the steel workers and the United Auto Workers The guys bodily picked up and threw cars around, flipped them over, smashed out windows We were walking down the street and one of the first guys is singing our union songs -- solidarity, everything -- until we look ahead and we see in full riot gear the police department, and they were down there blocking the street, full guns aimed right at us

We had Mike Bindas, I will never forget that he was District President International level, and he jumps in front of the line of them. I give this guy credit because he was trying to stop everybody because they were headed downtown. The one man had a business down there in downtown Warren, and they were out to destroy his business because he was doing what he could to bust the union They went to the houses and everything It was a vicious strike Needless to say after that, they settled real quick. To come that close, to think somebody just does not be rational, one little gun can come off and a lot of people could have been wounded or killed. I was in the front line and I thought, "Holy moly!" I was young You have all kinds of guts and then you think, exit, stage left Move to the rear When the bullet hits, I do not want to be in the front line I will take the one from the back All the guys jumped right up there I was thinking, "Oh my God " You just freeze and think, what do I do now?

It was all new It really was It was exciting but it was real scary It was real scary because it was down to the nitty gritty This is what you read about This is what you heard your forefathers did and your grandfathers This is how they fought to kill You think, this is happening right here in Warren, Ohio. The one and only time I have ever been involved with something like that and it was scary It was really scary to see them in full riot gear and their guns pointing right at you and if you took another step they were going to shoot you That is what it came down to at the Trumbull Memorial strike A lot of people lost jobs and they had tons of scabs in there A lot of union busting It was different. I do not think I will ever forget that They dragged them on the floor, they did not care Police handcuffed them and carried them off Ed Mann was there I have a picture of Ed Mann. In fact, my neighbors were very avid supports, Stoddant and Alice Lynd, union leaders They just retired recently

H You just recently had a strike at Packard What caused that strike?

M The membership and past bargaining committee got our membership cranked up Luckily, for now, good came out of it We do not know what management is going to retaliate in a month or so, though Back then, it brought the membership on the picket lines together, which was great The unity and the strength and the power was dynamite The community coming in to support us,

it was just overwhelming. I went on two days harmoniously. We started that night at like 11:00, by the time we got all the coffee and people were bringing food in, and I went home at 6:00. I thought I was going to get a couple more hours sleep. I got called back down that the hall at 10:00. I thought I would come down and help out for a while and get everything going again, then I will go home. I went from 10:00 that morning, until they settled at 4:30 the next morning, getting up signs and cleaning up a lot of the mess and stuff like that. But it was great. To be on the picket line, to hear people talking, and they were not going to let anybody cross those lines, and the membership came together. As much as they fight and bicker in the plant, they really came together. It was really great.

But, like I said, our younger seniority members, the Chips, that was rough. They got hired in at \$10 an hour and they were promised a lot that they did not get. And they got real disillusioned. You had a lot of politicians that campaigned and told them anything to get elected, and they believed him. We get our PHP's the second year. They were told there were not going to be PHP's in the move up. They told all the Chips they were going to move up and start making more money and have benefits. We have got these kids trying to buy a car. They want to live. You cannot blame them. You cannot blame them at all. That is what led to them voting now, and they were real upset.

Skill trades were really upset on kind of an IMM Program they started in B E C. They want them to do two and three, which activate a lot of safety problems. Guys were getting hurt. One guy lost his fingers because he was not trained in what he was supposed to do. It is set over a lot of issues. I think it is going to straighten out a lot of safety up there. So, that part of it was good. I still wait for the repercussion. Management was not happy about the strike. They are going to let things go for a while and they will start disciplining members and nit picking on little things. That is usually their way of staying back. We are all waiting. It is the calm before the storm. You know how that goes.

H: What kind of relationship is there between management and employees?

M: Well, it depends. We have a lot of management, "Union Management Programs." Some of them I think are a big joke. They really are a joke. As long as it is management's way. Let me put it to you this way. I work in self-management department. We are not supposed to have any supervisors, just one general foreman. We make up our rules, we do the overtime, we do all of the dealings with the customers. Well, that is great as long as it is all management's way. The minute management is to change something, they want to come in and it is no longer your job anymore. We have like 19 classifications into one, which really put 18 other people out of the job. But again, it was voted by the membership as a self managed group. It has got its pros and cons. I think some of it is a union busting group. You have got to stay on them all the time. We just had an episode and had to get the subchairman in there, Kenny Niles. He is our subchairman and he had to get contractual items

straightened out

H What happened?

M Well contractual, we have shift preferences. If you are on an afternoon and you had the seniority and you want to bump to the shift of your choice, you have that right. That is contractual language. A couple people did, which would bump the other two youngest people holding that shift to another shift. The general foreman decided that he was going to hold them and keep more people on day turn for training. Well, that is great, but it left the other shift short. Especially ours on afternoon turn, we had three people to run eight jobs, different machineries and classifications that are in there. A new day turn subchairman, Tony Budak, made some real big mistakes. Not knowing and afraid to ask for any help, he made some wrong judgement calls. So we had to get our afternoon turn subchairman, Kenny Nile, in there to straighten it all out. Even though you have a contract, that is your basic guideline. But in that department, when you are self-management, those rules stick. And you will have to get everybody together, all 15 people, to change anything. Everybody has to vote 100% for anything to pass.

H. What exactly do you do on your job?

M I have 19 classifications on my job. We have six Batenfeld molding machines, we have aim's lines, we have four turn tables, we have two mold machines that are stationary. We are building to, believe it or not, the Japanese and Germans. Even though now we have switched to Delphi Packard, I bill for overseas. We are a sensor business component, it has a small sensor. It is going to control the engines in the model cars in Japanese Toyotas, Celicas, and I forget what the other couple are. But it is a heat sensor. It will cool your engine down, start it up, whatever it may be. It is a nice job. It is a real nice job. You get a lot of over time in there. It is a good place.

H What is the relationship between men and women in the union?

M. Men think they are powerful. They think women are stupid. They should be home cooking, cleaning, and being pregnant. That is the whole clique. As sad as it is, that is their old clique. I think if some of the men at our local had their way, they would probably be like the Japanese men and you walk 20 feet behind them. There are a lot of them like that. If you are coming from somewhere and they are afraid you are going to take their job when you are moving up in the ladder and your name is becoming too strong, they will do whatever they can to destroy you by saying that you are sleeping with everybody or their typical women, "She is getting elected because she gives a good blow job." You hear that constantly. I always said if I did what they accused me of, I would have wrinkles all over my face. You make a joke.

At first, I would be crushed I would be so upset about that I am thinking, how could they lie and say that stuff, but they do It is hard for them to vote for you as a woman That is why, basically, I was glad Ray and I were always together, because I kind of stayed away from all of that The representatives in office do not dare train you on how to write a grievance You better have some books and you better know what you are talking about and you have better gone to some schools because if you ask for the guys that have been in office for 10, 15, and 20 years, they would love to see you sink in cement and swallow you deep so you are out of the picture

Well, let me put it to you this way The majority of our upper officers are all men We have never had a woman for president. We have never had a woman for shop chairman We have never had a female for zone, nor have we ever had a female for subchairman, always men As much as I hate to say it, sometimes that is the mentality of our membership Our executive board, if you ever come down to our home look at the board, our membership voted the executive board in alphabetical order That is how they voted Every three years you could bank on it, it would be in alphabetical order The same people get elected. If you have an "A," you are in I you have a "Z," you are out, unless a lot of people just went from here to here Do not ask me why I think they just got to that point and said, "Heck on it " It is different.

It is vicious at Local 717, it really is You have got to have some tough skin, and if you go in soft, you are going to go out faster than you came in You could go home and cry, but you do not ever want to give them that satisfaction If they know they can upset you and then they have found your weak spot as a woman. You are done. You learn quick on how to come up with a fast come back because if not, they will destroy you and they enjoy putting that last pack of dirt on you

H Do you think women are gaining any strength as a unit in the union?

M Yes, that part I do We have had a lot more female women winning lately, and I was real glad to hear that Charlotte has won as recording secretary and Elsie is treasurer, as a female We lost the spot, we used to have Barbara Gleason as our vice-president She left the union and went to a company job That is a switch after all those years She got un-elected and then just left the union completely for a company job We have a man there We are getting more and more females winning offices It is real hard for a woman to win, it really is. It is real hard for a woman to win

H Do you see a sexual harassment as a major problem in your work place?

M It is coming up more and more Yes, it is nothing for a women to walk into a meeting with management as well, and f this and f that comes out of their mouths And they have no respect sometimes You have to correct them like their mother and remind them And then sometimes they think it is a joke But

what is so sad about that, we have men that are zones, committee men that have no respect. I had insurance women who say, "Would you talk that way to your wife or mother? Then do not do it around me " It solved that problem real big in a hurry But like I said, you have some women that go in there and have the worst truck drivers mouth on them. If women would stand together for their own self respect they would win But you have some of them that have garbage mouths, they do. They are worse than some of the guys. So why should any man respect them When they do not have respect for themselves, it is sad It is really sad.

H How do you see the younger women in your union responding and getting involved?

M I do not feel that they are Some, a very small amount The younger guys, the Chips, I see them getting more and more active But a lot of our women, you have some but not as many as there should be. For as many that got hired in, I would like to see more involved I really would But you just do not see that I do not know why, but you just do not

H Do you have any suggestions to get them to become more involved?

M You have got to give credit to one Mary Lou has tried She has tried with the younger membership, to get them involved on a lot of aspects She could have gone a lot further had she handled herself a little bit differently I do have to give her credit for that She did what she could, trying to educate and trying to get them involved

H How many years have you been working there?

M 24 years, September 4

H Over the 24 years, how have you seen at all changes in how women are accepted in the union?

M Well, when I first started to get involved, [I] went to caucus meetings At the time the caucus was the train, they were the power train. During that time period, men sat in the front of the room and women sat in the back You did not voice your opinion as a woman, they really did not want to hear it They may have let you, once in a blue moon, give an input and then totally treat you like you never gave anything into it either If it came to supporting a candidate and the candidate would be a woman, the caucus would go nuts It would have to be a man And that woman, if she chose to go off on her own and still run for that office, was more like black balled because she did not listen and pay attention You would lose That was the name of the game It was a man's world and it still is

Women are coming up faster than I think our men in our local can handle it. What is so sad is that our younger members should start coming up quicker. We took our turns through the ranks and you had respect for the older ones and you learned from them. Our younger membership want to come in and, not knowing anything about unionism or anything like that, want to jump gun ho right into being the president of the union. They want zone committeeman. The company is chewing them up and spitting them out again because they think it is great. This way they could just come and do what they want and the young person does not know anything. And what is sad is that we do not have classes at our union hall to train and to teach these younger people, whereas if they did, I think they would be a lot better off, I really do. But they never do that. And we are trained, and we need more in-house training at 717 union hall.

H To go along with that question, how have women's jobs on the floor changed?

M. Let me think. Like our service general, the women took care of the lines and you had a man service you. Over the years, they more or less fought for women's rights. At first that was kind of hard because men felt, if you wanted those rights, you move that heavy cell by yourself, I am not helping you. So they did. Women helped each other that way, way back when. And gradually, they now hold those same classifications. There is no such thing as that is a man's job or that is a woman's job. That is both jobs and you better know how to do it. Unless it is a skilled job, then you better be skill trade and know how to do it. And there are tons of women anymore involved in skilled trades that are electricians and pipe fitters. I think it is great. I really do. Especially the woman that I just met that has been an electrician. I give her a lot of credit. I told her I would be scared to death to deal with electricity. I give Cindy a lot of credit.

H Did you ever step into one those "men's jobs?"

M Yes, I am into them now. And yes, they are hard. But I have to honestly say in my area, the guys are great. If there is something we cannot lift or we cannot do, they will come over and help us. And with two people you get further. We have a good area. 4630 is a real good helping area and I am glad. There is still a lot of the guys that are real gentlemen, too, and they help.

H I do not know if we talked about this, how does the management in the shop treat women?

M Yes, we did talk about that. Remember, I said 50/50. You have your pros and cons. Sometimes they, remember I told you, they sit in a meeting and they treat you like a piece of scum. Sometimes it is totally gentleman.

H: How is your union addressing family issues?

M Well, recently when the Family Leave Act was passed, it helped out a lot. There are a lot of people that have some sick relatives or problems in their family, whether it is for children or what. What I would like to see done, especially with our young membership, they are just starting their families. I would love to see in-plant nursery schools and daycares. Some of the people you talk to are upset because they do not get to see their children because they are at work. They do not get to do homework. This way, if there is some sort of in-plant, they could go up there on their break or they could go have lunch with their children and still come back and do their jobs. The kids would get used to it. They will be paying into something instead of paying a babysitter and it would be so much better. I know with our younger membership, that has been a great concern right now. I would like to see more in-house things like that. Whether we will ever see that, I do not know with childcare. But I know that is a big part of it.

H Does the Women's Committee ever take any special interest in the family issues?

M Yes, they do. We have done that recently. We have had actual women on the Women's Committee with a family leave absence and different issues, trying to educate more getting more roles, bring problems to the bargaining committee and the shop chairman, letting them know, "This is the problem we are hearing from our membership and this is a problem that I have encountered," and stuff like that. It can be awhile.

H You mentioned before that they make it difficult to file grievances. Have you ever filed a grievance yourself?

M. Yes, I have filed a couple. I called them and they got filed to the trash. [It] Depends on your zone, if they like you what they will do with them, if they feel it is a viable grievance. They tried to phase out with our last Bargaining Committee. Instead of filing a grievance, they file a concern. If you have a problem, let us sit down and see what your concern is with management. And then if the concern does not get solved, then we will file a grievance. Our local has, I think, over eight or nine thousand unsolved grievances that they have had for over 10 or 12 years. Mostly now, which are untimely. As a matter of fact, there are charges filed at the NLRB because management and unions never acted on these. At negotiations, they just throw them all out and slop them. Settle without prejudice. It is a big joke.

H What is the NLRB?

M. NLRB is out of Cleveland, Ohio. That is the National Labor Relations Board. That is the government. Any problems with labor and management, the higher up will say, "You, as a dues paying member, have a problem with that?" You file charges at the NLRB, they have to be investigated. They can be brought to

court and there could be some serious charges. Once they get to the NLRB, National Labor Relations Board, it is a very serious charge. It will be investigated. They have to get back to you with a reply. You may have a hearing set up on it. You get your chance. They get a chance to prove that the allegations are true, and something has to be settled in so much of a time.

H It is getting down to the wire there. They have to do something. Would you mind discussing what your grievances were?

M I would have to think, it has been so long. It has really been a long time since I have filed one. I think one time is because it was a holiday and I had taken off the day before when they scheduled people, and they just skipped over me instead of ever calling. So I filed on that. I think another time was a contractual one, but I cannot remember what it was about now, it has been so many years. I think the other one was maybe on an overtime, where they went out of equalization and seniority. They just decided to put on them self serve and putting another seniority person on the job instead of moving me to a higher paying job. We got that rectified. I have to give credit. I ran my mouth so much, I think they moved just to shut me up. That is my own personal opinion on the deal.

H Do you have women working as, I do not know what you call them there, shop stewards?

M Yes, the committee women are alternates.

H And there are women working there in this position?

M Yes, there are. We do not call them shop stewards in our local. They are either called committee person or alternate committee person. Yes, actually there are quite a few of those coming up. That is what I just ran for and lost.

H Do you think that the strength of your union has grown or declined over the last 10 years?

M Well, I think people honestly are disillusioned with our local and our union. They feel the union has betrayed them. They feel that management has the upper right, that they are losing. Believe it or not, a lot of people were very upset over the strike. They felt the strike should have gone on longer. And even though we came to a tentative agreement, people were mad because they felt that they should have never went back to the plant. They should have waited until the membership voted, if it had passed. Our Bargaining Committee is between a rock and a hard place. They are damned if they do and they are damned if they do not. So many changes are going on so fast, with global and imports and stuff, that it is hard for the membership and the out source that goes on in our

jobs leaving to stop this. And I think that is why the membership gets very disillusioned. I really do.

H: How do you personally battle injustices on the job site?

M: What do you mean?

H: If you feel management is doing something wrong.

M: I tell them. I have gotten in plenty of disagreements, hot and heavy, especially when they start doing my job. I actually yank things out of it and we have had some blowing matches. We have engineers and we are in an area where they all come in. Right now we have a subcontracting group that I have a real problem with called Rapid Designs. They are hiring these guys from Rapids, they are paying them, but no benefits or anything. They bring them into the plant to do the work. Well, they are supposed to be there for assistance if we need them. They think because they are there, they think they can go do whatever it is they choose to do. So that creates a rather big problem.

H: Is there any industrial sabotage that goes on in the factory?

M: Not as much now as maybe years ago. I think everybody is basically really concerned about their jobs. I know there is a problem sometimes. We get skids or cells coming from Mexico, and you find a dead mouse or bug that you have never seen before coming in, and I know that a lot of people get upset about that because they wonder what kinds of germs and stuff are coming in. You refuse to handle it. I know they are upset with a lot of the import laws and export laws. Actually, sabotage on the job, I do not think anyone sets out to do that, no. During the strike, they may sabotage their cars and smash up some windows, typically union tactics. No, not that I know of. I find it hard to believe that anybody would really want to do that.

H: To make you think back a little bit, what do you remember your expectations were when you began working in the factory?

M: Mine?

H: Yes.

M: We were just talking about this at work. One of the girls that just got hired in - when I got hired in at Packard I was 20 years old I think, going to school, partying, having a good time. My big expectations were what time was I going to get off so I could go out with my friends. We would drive back to Youngstown State. The first day I walked inside of Packard, I was like a little girl going to the amusement park. I just looked around and I thought this was all new to me.

Looking at the ceilings, looking all around, checking out all the different colored wiring, not knowing anything. Then after the first week, I had swollen fingers, feet hurting, aches and pains. It was the hardest I have ever worked in my whole life. Bodily injuries that made me think I would never be the same again. It was funny.

And then it kind of grew on you. It was fun, we would all work the line and afterwards we would all run to the bars. And you could not wait to come back to work because it was fun, you were at the fun stage. Then as it grew on and as you start getting older, you realize. I was only going to stay at Packard Electric for two years. That was it. I was going to finish school. Those big checks started coming in, we went for contracts and they got me more benefits and more money. I started looking around and thought that I would not make this stuff anywhere else.

I wonder 24 years later if I made the right decision. At the time it was great. Believe it or not, I love my job. I really do. I have one of the best jobs that I have ever had at Packard Electric. I love it. I love being involved in the union. I love being with people. I do not know what I will do when it comes time to retire. Even though I say in 30 years I am out of there, I wonder, because I will miss a lot of it. It is just a different higher up phase in your life that you move on to.

H You said you were talking to some of the younger hires. What were their expectations?

M Well, I feel sorry for a lot of them. I have two in my department, they were under the impression that they moved up right a way from CHP's into PHP's. They figured they would be making a lot of money. They were told even though they got hired in as a CHP at nine something an hour, within six months they would be a PHP, and they would have benefits and they would have this and that. Well, luckily, this Bargaining Committee got them a lot of that. The ones that are CHP's now, in our new contract, they got them 75 weeks of sub. Which means, should Delphi Packard decide right now that they are going to have a lay off and they are laid off, they will receive 98% of their pay. So 75 weeks of pay is a long time. They now have hospitalization that they never had before. They get prescriptions for five dollars, which they never had before. I tried to explain it because I know a lot of them got real mad. I said, "I am going to tell you something, when I got hired in 1973," I was telling them the money I made. I said, "Every three years our union fought and every three years you have got to give them a break. They come back with a contract. Each time you get a little more." I said, "You never get it all at once." They gave them such high expectations. And they had management, not just the politicians. They had management that promised them the world. They really did. They really did lie to them.

H. Can you define CHP's and PHP's?

M The Chips is the Progressive Hiring Plan. What that is, it takes them 10 years to come up parody. By parody, that is what we are, high wage. I am on an A Box job, so I make \$19.89 an hour, plus I get my cost of living raise, plus I get afternoon turn premium because I am an afternoon turn person. Now, our PHP's, which is the Progressive Hiring Plan, it takes them 10 years. Every year, like the first year, I think they get 40% and each year it goes up like 10% over 10 years. They may only get the first year where I get 200 hours vacation and they only get 40. The second year it goes up 4 hours more. Just like their benefits and everything, they get dental. And then they start getting legal services. They just gradually get something new each year added to their package plan. Once they get 10 years, they are at exactly what we had. Now the CHP's, which let me see what it stands for, I have to look that up. I forgot exactly what it stands for. I have called them CHP's for so long.

The PHP's, when that first came in in 1985, that is why I could remember so much about them, because I represented them. I was one of the first representatives for that program. So it was really a learning experience for me. I would start talking and I would remember, No, Linda we are talking a whole different program. And I had to go into a whole bunch of other books and I was writing everywhere, and getting all their stuff and all the information. Remember, when you are a representative for Progressive Hiring Plan, it was different from the traditional. So we had everything new and different that we had to go through. Now the Chips, they were just flat rate. They got hired in at, I think, \$9.67 an hour -- nothing to them. You were there for money and that was that. You had, I think, maybe 50/50 hospitalization plan. Now they have 80/20. They can either go to HMP or they can go to MPV, whichever they choose. And they have full benefits to them that they have. And I imagine three more years and the next contract, they will have a little more, too. It is just going to take time. My personal opinion, that Chip program should never have been voted in on. I voted no. I voted no on the PHP's, too, but the more I understand, maybe I was wrong. It was a step in the door. At the time, they were planning on taking over 5,000 to 6,000 jobs out of there unless they hired, and were able to compete. Whether it was right or wrong, I do not know. But that is what the company decided on and that is what the union agreed to.

H Is the company expanding now?

M Yeah. You know, they really are. Too far. We have got plants in Mississippi. What is so sad is Wetzel, they have so many scab shops -- non-union. Wetzel has opened up three shops that does all of Delphi Packard's work. They pay them like five dollars an hour, no benefits, nothing. Five and six dollars an hour. And they are taking our work off of us. They have Kensington, they have Design Rapid, and there are so many sub-contracted places now that just are so cheap, it is ridiculous. It really is, it is totally ridiculous. It is bad.

H: Does your union do any work to try to get unions organized in these other plants

that are sub-contracting?

M: We never did. We have now elected a new president to the international Ed Fire and Mike Bindas have combined and set their goals to start organizing. This is the first time that I could ever remember an organizing committee has been functionable, and they are trying to get off the ground at Local 717. This is the very first time. And I think, in the long run, if they keep up the good work and they do something better, it is great. You need to organize. Without organizing, international is not going to be out and you are not going to trigger union dues you have got to educate. You cannot just organize, you have to educate the people that are in the union. And that is what is so sad. People that are union members are not educated about unions. They do not know themselves. They just think, Hey, well I have it. Case closed.

H: What are some of the major problems that you see confronting your union in 1997?

M: Well, I was kind of hoping they would hire because a lot of membership, with this new retirement package plan. They are giving them a \$15,000 incentive to go. I am afraid of declining union membership. When you look around, locally, in the economy, membership has declined in unions. Unions are not as strong as they used to be. Maybe that goes back to the Ronald Reagan and the traffic controllers. When he started busting the unions, I think that is the worst thing that happened.

H: Now President Clinton is trying to do the same thing.

M: Yes, even though he says he is strong.

H: Yeah, he is a democrat.

M: Good politician.

H: What would you say has been your most positive experience as a woman?

M: Probably getting elected. It is almost like a gambler. You know, a person who gambles, it is their adrenaline. It gets them going. When you see that you are helping somebody, and what you can accomplish with your ideas and your expectations and you are seeing them fulfilled, it is great. And as a woman, when you could move ahead in a man's world -- and it basically still is, even though they say women's rights is moving, it still is basically a man's world -- when you are moving ahead and you are kind of on the same line with them and you have gained their respect and vice versa, and you are working together, it is great. I would love to see, more than anything, the men helping the women, and vice versa, and helping to educate them. I have run into a lot of guys like that.

They are great. There is a lot of intelligent men in our local that have bent over backwards. I mean, we have John Santangelo. He is a day-turn zone; reaches out left and right to help a woman, and I give him a lot of credit for that, I really do. I give him a whole lot of credit for that.

H What is a zone?

M Okay, our zone is our second step grievance man. Your committee man meets that first step. That is with your foreman and the employee and your committee person. If it does not get settled, you process it up to a second step, which is your zone man. A zone man goes to meetings. They set up the rules and regulations for a department, anything contractual or non-contractual, the agreements, what is to be presented, what is not to be presented. If a grievance has not been settled on first step, it is processed up to the zone who, in turn, meets with the general foreman, and they will either settle it or stop it. Or if it is a grievance that they cannot get anywhere, they will settle it up to third step, which is your sub-chairman. And finally, it goes up to fourth step, which is your shop-chairman. Like a middle man, they have a lot of management - union meetings that they are involved in.

H. One the other side of the positive experience, what has been the most negative experience as a woman in union?

M Running into some vicious men and women. I am telling you, it bothers me a lot when you have to take on the man, but when you have to take on your female gender part, that is hard. When they are out to destroy you and put you down, it is hard for me to understand why that is done. Why do they have to destroy? Why not work together for a better union? You know what I am saying? And I do not know why that goes on or what it does.

H Okay, we can kind of wrap up here. I have asked most of these questions. What would you like to leave for people doing research for using this information? What would you like them to know about you, about your involvement in the unions, and about how you feel about the unions? Anything you would like to say.

M Mine, as my own personal opinion, I love the union. I hope the union is around for the next 200 years. I hope everybody has the chance to know, truly in their hearts, and to be a part of what a union is about. I hope with all the company programs trying to destroy unions, that there is more education going on, getting the word out about the union. It is almost like the gospel. It needs to be spread. And what is so sad is that it is not being spread the way that it should. I would really like to see that happen. It is great. And more women, I would love to see more and more women getting involved. Every time a woman wins, I am real excited for them. That is what I told Elsie. I am real happy for them, I am glad.

to see that. I would like to see more women supporting women. I wish they would put the jealousy and their claws aside and support each other. I know that it is human nature and it is hard, but I would love to see that, I really would.

Get educated. Take the courses as much as you can. Whether they are a week or a day class, learn about department procedures, learn to know, educate yourself. Education for unions is one of the greatest aspects. I wish with all the other stuff that companies would start union organizing in the plant, just educating people on unions. Hopefully, some day in the future, that will happen more and they will not decline the way that they are.

You do not know a lot of people out there that want to destroy. We have heard, "You people just go on strike because you want more money." Wrong. The farthest from the truth. It really is. You just believe in something. You believe in the benefits, you believe in what is happening. How do people live anymore? It is hard to live, it really is hard to survive, if you were to go out. Here you are, you told me you are making \$4.75 an hour. If you had to go look for a good apartment, even a two bedroom, we are talking \$500 a month, plus meeting a car payment, plus meeting utilities. How can you do that on \$4.75 on a 40 hour job with no benefits and no hospitalization. You could go in over night. You got sick. Who is to say, you are probably under your mom and dad. But, you know what? What would you have if there were not a union to have some benefits and being paid? You could have a 40,000 or 50,000 dollar bill in one day, maybe you have to have a surgery or anything. And that is one thing that the union fought for us. We are lucky enough to have that. I hope everybody else has that chance to, I really do. Just to understand to see what they have received. Only God will know that. Scary.

I was in college. When I think back how I used to make it on a dollar something an hour. I would fill up tank, it would cost me \$2 in my gas tank. And I just turned 45. I remember my mom and dad used to tell me that and I used to think that they were nuts. But I sit there and I say it. You think back, and you take it for granted. I am just as guilty. As the years go by, I take it for granted. Recently we were talking about a lot of stuff. You think back about what I used to make when I got hired at Packard. I was thinking, how did I make it? But I have more luxuries then I had then. When I was a college kid, it was nothing to eat a hamburger 40 times a day. Or for everybody to eat everybody else's food. Find some guys that would pay for a drink. You would pile as many as you could in a car and they would maybe pay you a quarter each for gas. You filled up the tank on \$3. That was the name of the game back then. Mom and Dad paid the insurance. They would foot the bill. They paid my college, they bought my clothes, and I had it made. I was too dumb to realize it, though. I could not even begin to imagine why my parents would have to struggle. They would do without so us kids could have. You learn all that stuff as you get older. If my dad was not active in the union, I would not have known that.

H Okay, anything else?

M No.

H Okay.

M I wish you good luck on yours

H Thank you.

M I really do, I wish you a lot of good luck I am glad to see you doing it, I really am I am glad to see that You must have good professors pushing you through

H Yes

M That is good I wish you all the luck in the world

End of Interview