

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Women in Labor Unions

Personal Experience

O H 1866

LISA FELLOUZIS

Interviewed

by

Holly Hanni

on

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H This is an interview with Lisa Fellouzis for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Women in Labor Unions, by Holly Hanni, on May 5, 1997 at the UAW Local 1112 Union Hall in Lordstown, Ohio

Looking over your history sheet, I see that you were born in East Liverpool, Ohio. Do you want to tell me what it was like growing up in East Liverpool?

F East Liverpool is a pretty recessed area, initially, throughout even my younger years, with the Crucible Steel Mill. Then Crucible folded and eventually, another steel company -- I do not even recall who it was now -- took it over. They cut back a lot of the work force and left the biggest majority of the town out of work. The pottery industry, which is poverty-level income. A lot of the couples had to have both husband and wife working to make ends meet.

H Did your parents work in the industries?

F My step-father was a steel worker. He retired from Crucible right before they shut down.

H You went to East Liverpool High School?

F No, I went to Beaver Local.

H. What was your experience in high school like?

F [Laughter] I was an ornery rascal. I was a cheerleader. I was the mischievous one of the bunch.

H You left high school and you got your GED. And then you went on to Kent State and YSU?

F Right.

H Okay, you went to Kent State right after?

F Yeah, I went to Kent State right after getting my GED. I was a single parent at the time. I had my son when I was 17.

H Were you working, too?

F I was working three part-time jobs at that time, and going to school full-time.

H Wow. Who helped you out?

F Whoever I could find. I had a boyfriend, who I eventually married, he baby-sat.

my son while I was in school My step-dad and my mom helped a lot

H What were your jobs? What were you doing?

F My father had an importing and auction business He imported fine arts and jewelry He had auctions all over the northeastern United States I would work those auctions from the time I was ten years old up until a few years after I started with GM [General Motors] Then, I was a demonstration girl for Krogers I am trying to think of what my third part-time job was back then Oh, geez I do not remember which one it was I had so many rinky-dink jobs in the meantime I had waitressing somewhere

H You came to Lordstown in 1979, right?

F Right, in September, 1979

H How did you get hired at Lordstown?

F Well, to be perfectly frank with you, I went out with my two white brothers and my white husband and, me being the only one that had never worked in a factory, I was the only one that was ever called for an interview I believe they were looking at quotas at the time They did not start hiring women at all until 1970, and they were still very far behind The day I was hired, there were somewhere around 200 people hired that same day And of the 200 people there were two white men and five or six black men, and all the rest were women, the majority being black women So they were definitely looking for quotas during that hiring spree

H What kind of job were you hired to do?

F Assembly line.

H Has your job stayed the same, or has it changed over the years?

F Oh, I have had various assembly line jobs Literally, hundreds of different assembly line jobs And I stayed on the assembly line until I became elected as a union rep And even then, periodically, being an alternate committee person, periodically I have gone back to the line [Tape stops to answer knock on door]

H So you worked the line until you were elected to the committee? .

F Right

H When were you elected to the alternate?

- F Geez, I think that was in 1992 September of 1992
- H You told me over the phone you were the fourth woman that has ever been elected
- F Right, right
- H What was that like? Was it hard?
- F. Well, I was the first woman ever elected to my department, any of the departments I represent None of them have ever had a woman elected I was also elected to a knew shift, the C crew shift It is the weekend shift And it had its own unique problem in itself, being a weekend shift There is no way to balance out our overtime hours between the other two shifts because we are only on a six-day week schedule, as opposed to the other shifts having seven normal calender days because we work two days of day turn and two days of night turn We actually lose a premium day there so we have a lot of anamosity between shifts trying to balance that out some way
- H Because the other shifts are making more money than the crew?
- F Well, under the national agreement, the management is responsible to try to show some semblance of balance And it is very difficult to do when you have a shift that does not have a seventh day that could be available for double time The other shifts do have that
- H So, your position as the alternate committee representative, was it lobby?
- F No, that was a minimal part of it. An alternate committee person's job is to function as a regular committeeman when the committeeman is absente But with all the different training, courses and off-site negotiating, on-site negotiating on day-turn that they have to do, a lot of man-power moves they would free us up for Typically, of the five years that I served, I would say I actually worked my job five percent of the time on the line, and the other 95 percent I was functioning as committeeman They would use me as a man-power resource to do job placement
- H What would you do there?
- F Post jobs, compare seniority for who would be entitled to the job, confer with management on who goes where, make sure all the moves were above board and contractual
- H So most of your time was spent dealing with management, correct?

F Along with other union officials, yeah. And another big part of the job, when we would have the committeemen on our own shift, they would also utilize the alternates a lot to help work out vacation schedules. For deer season, we had literally hundreds of guys that wanted off for deer season. They always relied on the alternates to get coverage for that.

H You have to work all that out?

F Right.

H Going back to your home life, how has your spouse or significant other supported you as a working woman?

F We have been together for just over a year, and now we are engaged. He is a medical professional and he has got one year left of his residency to graduate himself. He has always told me that, because of the politics and the stress involved in the job that, "You do not have to work if you do not want to, honey. But if you want to, that is your own choice." He is very supportive of me. He knows the political arena gets raunchy sometimes. [Tape stops because of an interruption.]

H So you choose to work?

F Yes.

H Not a necessity?

F Well, I like to depend on myself. I choose to depend on myself. I would not have to work when we get married. I would never expect a man to support me that I am engaged to. Even if I was married, I have always worked, since I was ten years old. That is my way of staying me.

H Independent.

F Yeah, maintaining my own self, you know?

H I see that you have a son, 20, and a daughter, 14. What has it been like as a single parent working?

F [Laughter] It has been interesting. My children do not always agree with my aggressiveness. Unfortunately my daughter has picked up a lot of that, and she has become quite assertive herself at 14 years old. I tried to explain to her that assertion is good for a female not to ever allow people to tread on you, but a lot of that is out of necessity, being a single parent and having to fend for ourselves. She does not have to necessarily be quite so difficult and hard at 14 years old.

- You know, the need is just not there. That is Mom's job. Let me do that and when you need to be tough then you can be tough. You just do not always have to be such a bully.
- H Like mother, like daughter, huh?
- F Too much, though. I love her.
- H Have they been supportive of your working?
- F Yeah, they really have. I have always taught them an appreciation for General Motors and their products. My son, in particular, was born prior to me getting this job out here. My first five years were very sporadic with GM. Up until April of 1984, I was laid off the majority of the first five years. My son was just in his infant years, his first two years. He was born in 1976. So he knew how difficult life was from when he was a baby. He remembered times when Mom did not eat so that he could. He learned an appreciation of what the job enabled us because he was there during the poor years, so to speak.
- H With raising him and you working different shifts, how did you manage child care while they were growing up?
- F It is not so much a problem now. Up until 1990 I worked steady afternoon shift because my seniority would not afford me the first shift and there was no C crew available at the time. That was real difficult. That was real difficult. I had to pay his baby-sitters, you know, teenage and early twenties baby-sitters, and none were not real reliable, until I moved to the house I am at now. My neighbor woman, she lives three doors down from me, she is an older woman, she is in her 50's, and she took over the baby-sitting job. And that was real good because she was some stability. She was there to see my kids off, to the point that they were able to watch themselves. And then, eventually, my son started -- when he was 15 years old -- he started watching my daughter. At that point, by then, I was able to go on day turn. So he would get Amanda and himself off to school and be there with her when she got out of school, until I got home. So by the time he was 15 years old, with me getting day turn hours, it was a lot easier for him to go ahead and take over that job. And I was home free from then on.
- H How has the union helped you as a single parent?
- F They really have not. There was a point, a few years back, when they did a survey on on-site child-care to see if there was a need for it. They said from the results of the survey that there really was not enough of a need for them to pursue it. However, this has been -- with us being in an election week -- this past week there have been flyers out by both presidents [candidates] referring to the problems of single parenthood and the possibility of looking into on-site child care again. Hopefully something will come of that. With a lot of our new-hires

being younger, the need is probably getting greater for that, now than it was at the time

H What are the problems you have encountered as a working single parent?

F Appropriate child care would have to be number one I take that back, it was number two My biggest problem was my lack of seniority the first decade of employment with GM And being stuck on afternoon shift, I literally had to miss my children's up-bringing That is something I will never be able to get back I do not know that it was worth the trade-off I do not expect it was, now looking back on it, because those are years lost With a job paying this good, with the benefits involved and being without a college degree, it was definitely the best financial avenue I could take But that is not always the most important But it is hard to see that when you are hungary

H How has the union helped you as a working woman?

F Oh, in so many ways It has helped to develop my self-esteem and my self-worth It has given me a purpose, a mission, so to speak It has given me an avenue to help people that I represent. I initially went into the job thinking that it was going to be thankless, expecting it to be thankless, and to my amazement, the people responded I always felt that the people who elected me are my boss and that is what I am here for I was on their side and they knew I was on their side And if they were out of line, I would tell them they were out of line because I am a responsible representative, but I did so in private quarters, not in front of management. It has been just so rewarding, it really has It has been an educational experience that I would not trade for the world

H They have been very receptive to you, too?

F The people I represent?

H Right

F Initially, with me being the first woman ever elected to that district or department, I represent a variety of departments They have a handful of people from final paint, final processes or repair department, and they have people from bodyshop, paint, trim and chassis, all four departments, that are repaired in final process And so we had to do negotiating with all the base departments, and then we also represent chassis

H What is chassis?

F That is where the guts go into the car the engine, we have the motor line, the struts, the steering column, the steering wheels, the spare tires are in our area,

the gas tanks.

H Do women and men work in those departments or are some sexually segregated?

F No There are none sexually segregated, except for final processing. Final processing has two women working there because it is a very high seniority department You have to have a lot of seniority to get into final process And I believe they have one woman on the first shift. I am not even sure she is still in final process And then we have another driver on B crew There are no women on C crew, the shift that I represent, except for myself, and one management Again, that is because of the seniority issue It has nothing to do with gender segregation There is only one area of the plant specifically that women do not work, and that is only women of child-bearing age, because of something to do with the environment that could cause birth defects if a woman became pregnant, during the first trimester where she might not know she is pregnant But if a woman is beyond her child-bearing years or has had surgery to stop it, they can still put a woman in that category

H What department is that?

F It has got to be in body shop, because I remember them asking me one time over when I was in the van plant, when the van plant was still there, if I was able to have children I initially took offense at that, not knowing where they were going or why they were asking the question And then they explained why, and they ended up pulling me out of the area because I was still of child-bearing age, even though I was using protection at the time

H They did not want it to come back on them?

F Right, right

H What organizations have you been active in outside of work? I know that you said PTA, Boosters Club, United Way Do you want to tell me about some of those activities?

F The United Way more so is a financial contribution that I do every week out of my pay check I have done work with the Special Olympics and I have always been real active with the school and the Little League My son played baseball from the time he was seven, on up, through class B and in the college level, and I was real active in that He played high school football and I worked the concession stands -- at both Little League and high school games Both kids took karate for years and my daughter took gymnastics for a while, and I was one of the traveling parents that would take them to all these tournaments and stuff

H How were you able to balance work and doing all of that?

F I do not know. [Laughter] I do not know I have always been on the go, though. I have never had just a 40 hour a week job It is just not my lifestyle I would twiddle my thumbs and go crazy with a 40 hour a week job I would just have too much free time and be in all kinds of trouble

H You were on the alternate committee, up until this year, correct?

F I still am This election that we are in the midst of, even as we speak, will be the first time in five years that I have not run I did not resign, I am just simply not running again for another term I am quite confident I could have won, had I chosen to But with my daughter just turning 14, I need to go on first shift It is a three year term, and I could not commit myself to the weekend shift for the next three years without being able to give everything I have I did not think it was fair to the people who elect me

H. With weekend shift, how does your schedule go?

F We work Friday and Saturday day turn and Sunday and Monday night turn. And, typically, it is anywhere from a 10 to 13 hour shift

H Straight?

F Yeah They are long shifts

H You want to be home more?

F I need to be on day turn where I can monitor. [Laughter]

H Are you on the Women's Committee?

F Yes

H What are the activities in the Women's Committee? What have you done over the years?

F We have an annual luncheon in the Spring that is real nice They have a Christmas party, usually at Alberini's Restaurant, that is very nice They have an annual project this year We all went through our homes and gathered up all of our supplies that we can donate like furniture, linens, clothing, any kitchen accessories that we could donate to a new half way house It is being put together in the Warren area for homeless women and children specifically that have an addiction that are in a recovery program It is a halfway house for them Last years project was Todd's Children Hospital We did 50-50 raffles to help

- H So would you say that the Women's Committee is more like a community liaison? A community that you do things more for public relations with the community?
- F It is that, but it also oversees fair treatment of women in the work place. If there is a problem with that, then it can be brought to the attention of the women's committee That would probably fall more under the line of the civil rights representatives or the FEPC reps We have one on each shift
- H FAPC?
- F FEPC Federal Employee Practices Commission It is basically your civil rights representatives.
- H. What types of women's issues in the union does the women's committee handle?
- F It is more a political forefront for women who want to become actively involved in the union Now at the election times we have a lot of the candidates come and speak at the women's committee and basically put their resumes to us and allow us to, as a group, make decisions on who we would want to support
- H So you can act within the union in the best interest of women which candidate to choose
- F Right, right
- H We were talking about the Women's Committee You said that the FEPC would handle issues and grievances.
- F The grievances all go through the bargaining unit It is not going through any civil rights organization. Any grievance has to go through either the committee man, alternate committee man, zone man, or shop chairman That is our entire bargaining unit, and all grievances put in procedure are put through them The FEPC rep can intervene if there is a person being discriminated against They can intervene on their behalf They can recommend a grievance be written They can address management on it But if in fact there is any grievances put in procedure, it is through the bargain representatives
- H Has their been a lot of cases of discrimination would you say?
- F I would say any time you have a work force as large as ours, you are going to get some very serious cases I think we have been lucky in that our management has been somewhat responsible in dealing with it Neither management nor the union condone that obviously We have a lot of people I have found through my

five years, especially bargaining. We have a lot of people that use that to their advantage and try to claim discrimination or sexual harassment when, in fact, it is more on a personal issue. And they are trying to use that to their advantage when that is not the case at all.

H. It is not legitimate.

F. It is not, and it is very frustrating. Me being a woman on the committee, I am probably the first one that will tell them because you do not make light of such stuff. These are very serious issues, and by people making light of those then when there is a serious case of sexual harassment or discrimination, it minimizes the severity of that. We can not afford that. We just can not afford to make jokes about it.

H. Have you seen an increase in those claims or a decrease or about the same? It seems that sexual discrimination has become a forefront in the past, probably since you have been a representative.

F. I think probably a decrease. Overall I would have to say in the genuine sincere cases it has been more on the decrease. People are learning to work together. They are getting to the point that they are fed up. And they are telling them. The people are speaking out about it and telling them that "I am not a racist or a sexist. I just do not like you." They will come right out and tell them that. It has nothing to do with your color or your gender.

H. What other committee activities have you been on?

F. I was on the recreation committee for five years or six years. That was a real fun committee. We put on the summer picnic up at Geauga Lake. They get discount tickets for them. They were not even discount tickets. They were free tickets for free tickets for Conneaut Lake for a week in the summer. They put on a children's party and for kids from newborn to age twelve. They had Santa Claus come in and clowns and what not. It is a real fun time. They put on a sweetheart dance every February.

H. Is it mostly women on that committee?

F. No, actually the majority of that committee was men.

H. Wow. Would you say that women participate in mostly all the committees in your union? Are there some that tend to be mostly male?

F. The Women's Committee is all women run except for our president, Tony Zone, was a member. You have to have one member of the executive board on every standing committee. Tony was our executive board member. That is virtually all.

women except for the one e-board member. The veterans' committee is virtually all men. I think they may have one or two women on the veterans' committee, not really that many of them. For the mere reason of their existence, it is a majority of men. Other than that, I would say the committees are pretty much split. Not fifty-fifty but in as much that if there is fifteen percent of women work force in the plant, then there would typically be fifteen percent of women on the committee. It is equal representation. It is pretty balanced out.

H Proportionate to the work force. I noticed on your paper that you were involved in a lawsuit with the Ohio civil rights commission. Would you tell me about it?

F. That was years ago. I had a job tending bar. I became pregnant with my daughter who, again, is fourteen years old. So this dates back fifteen years now. It was a hotel with a club and a restaurant and the whole thing. He was known for being sexist and discriminatory. When he heard that I got pregnant, he called me into his office. I had the foresight to take a girlfriend of mine who was not a coworker, who did not work there with me. He asked her to stay out in the lobby while he talked to me. I told him no, that I wanted her in there with me. He came right out point blank and told me that he had to let me go because of my condition. I said, "You mean because I am pregnant?" He said, "Yeah." The truth of the matter is I did not want to work, you know tend bar, while I am pregnant anyways. It is just not appropriate. I wanted to know that I had that job after I had the baby. I asked him during this appointment, "Am I going to be able to come back to work after I have the baby? Am I going to have my job waiting for me?" He said no, that he could not make any guarantees.

Because he said that, I went to the Ohio civil rights commission, and they explained to me that that was flat out discrimination because of my being pregnant. The fact that I had a witness with me made it a wonderful case. In my case, I was the sixth person to ever sue this man for discrimination, and I was the first person to ever win. He had to guarantee me my job after I had the baby. It was a new hotel opening, and they had not actually opened yet. They were due to open the following week after he found out I was pregnant. They had been training us all on the computer system for ordering and stuff like that. It turned out I was the only one who got paid for any training. The other employees that got hired were never paid for their training time. There was like a month of training involved here that they were not paid for. He did have to pay me for the training, and he had to guarantee me the first job opening after I had my daughter.

H Did you go back to work?

F Yeah, as a matter of fact I did. What happened was after I had my daughter I saw an ad in the paper for a bartender job for there. I called the civil rights commission and said, "This guy is advertising for work. He had to legally guarantee me a job." They said, "You just go down and interview. If he hires

somebody else, then you have got him again." So, I went down and interviewed, and there was people there with credentials a mile long. He did. He hired me. After working for him for a couple years, he finally fessed up and told me that it would have been his loss, that I made him more money than any other employee in the lounge. When I gave him my notice that I was getting recalled back here, it was during one of my layoffs. I got recalled back here to General Motors. It ended up working out once I had the opportunity to prove myself.

H How many times were you laid off?

F From 1979 to 1984. I have not had any indefinite or extensive layoffs since 1984. But, I think it was three times.

H What was it like when you were laid off?

F I am a survivor. I just went and got two other jobs somewhere else. You know, I was married at that time. So, I had my ex-husband's job to fall back on, his income to fall back on. At the time, he had benefits. So, it was not as drastic. He worked in a pottery supply company. So, the income was not good by any means. But, it got us through.

H. What have your job duties been here? I know we touched on that a little bit. Like now that you will not be alternate committee, you will go back to days.

F First off, I am going to be on day shift. There is a possibility, and I am not real sure whether this is going to pan out or not. But, there is a possibility of getting a union-appointed job. I really do not want to speculate on that too much because of the political ramifications of it. I spoke to the shop chairman about it. He knows why I am getting out. He knows my child has to come first. But, he also knows that I was in this job for the right reasons. My heart was in this job. He knows how I thrive on serving the membership and helping the membership. Something to know about our shop chairman, the man knows character when he sees it. He appoints people in there, not because of who their friends are, but because he believes their heart is in the right place and that they genuinely do want to serve the membership. I do not know whether I will be getting that appointment because I have some opponents. They have spoken against me getting the appointment because I only have 1984 seniority.

H. Do they have to go by seniority with the union?

F No, not at all. There are deeper rooted reasons for the one in particular opposing me, the one who is strongly opposing me getting the appointment. But, I really can not go into that.

H He can override it all, right?

F. Yeah

H Yeah, I thought Politics are going on

F He knows exactly why the guy is opposing me getting the appointment

H What are the appointments if they appoint you?

F Right now, what it looks like I may be going to would be plan maintenance. Which, I would be the production liaison between production and maintenance getting wire phones fixed, light fixtures changed, new matting put down I would be working with maintenance to tell them from my production person standpoint what is needed first, whether a wire should be fixed first They have a whole list of things on their agenda, and it would be my to prioritize which is the most important to the production market which is, in fact, the maintenance department's customer

H Are women equally appointed, do you think, in the union positions, or is it predominantly male?

F. No, in a sense because there have not been that many women actively involved in the union on a percentage basis A lot of women are not as assertive as myself You really have to be bold and have a way of dealing in a man's world It is a man's world

H Right Does the union encourage woman activism within the union? Do you think?

F Yes, very much so

H It does

F The union encourages it But there, it is still good old boys' network There are still just a few that make it very difficult for them I would say that is minimal to be honest with you. In the work center which is my office, there is probably somewhere in the neighborhood of one-hundred and fifty elected and appointed jobs I am the only female in any of them So, my office has approximately one-hundred and fifty men in and out of it Out of all of them over the five years, I have always tried to allow them space to be a man and at the same time earn their respect There is really only one person that just would not let go of the fact that I was a woman

H How did you deal with that?

F I am still dealing with it

H That is the current problem that you are having right now?

F Yes

H Your shirt I see Is that a woman you are supporting or a man, Steiner

F No, that is a man

H A man

F He is my current committeeman He is running for reelection in his same position, and I feel very confident that he will win He is a good committeeman He had a rough time with a woman initially not so much because I was a woman, but more so because I did not support him my first time coming on board I supported his opposition, and we worked through that Then, there was the trust factor Can he trust me? There was the factor that I was very well respected throughout our district that we represent There is always the threat of the alternate running for the committeeman's job It took a few years for us to get through all that and to really trust each other Once we got through all the initial opposing side stuff and we learned to trust each other, he really brought me through the ropes and taught me the ropes and educated me I think I even helped him in some ways

H To understand a woman's perspective?

F Yeah, very much so I am trying to think

H Okay

F There has been times where he has had to come to my defense for the mere fact that I have been a woman The example, last summer I had breast implants put in It was something I had thought about a long time before I did it, and I just decided I do not care [about] the political ramifications This is what I want My fiancé was happy with them, and we were the two that counted Poor Larry, my committeeman who I have come to dearly love, he used to take shots every day all day for having to deal with my surgery All the shots that the guys in the office wanted to give to me they knew they could not because it might anger me, and then I might have a sexual harassment suit against them So, they would give them to Larry Poor Larry There are so many times that he has had to come to my defense when he knew The guys in the office, they jaw with each other It is a way of life up there We jaw with each other It helps us keep sharp for dealing with management and for dealing with the people we represent You have to be sharp and on your toes Sometimes, they take it to the extreme upstairs in an office But, Larry has really had to suffer an ordeal for having a woman on the committee None of the shots they have ever jabbed at him or me

have ever had anything to do with my job duties. That is one thing. All but this one fellow up in the office, I truly believe they do respect what I have done. They respect that I have been able to accomplish the same thing as them.

H Do you think that you, as a woman, have to have a certain perspective or attitude? Like you said, jobs where you see that other women might not be able to be so receptive. Do you know what I am saying? Like I know when you said a bartender, I was a bartender. You have like a certain conditioning that you tolerate.

F It definitely takes a unique kind of woman to be able to work in a man's world whether it be within the union or in any man's field. If you walk into an environment where you are the only one whether it be your race, your religion, you whatever, you have to allow room for the other people in that environment to be themselves, too, and to be comfortable. I mean yeah, that office was my office. But, it is also one-hundred and forty-nine other people's offices or one-hundred and fifty other people's offices too. It just would not have been fair for me to expect to walk into that office and never hear a cuss word and never hear someone complaining about their ex-wife. That is their personal life. That is their life, and that is also their office. I had to allow room for that. I have handled them in unique ways. There was one time. I will give you an example, and the guys still laugh about it. I was sitting in a chair, and he did not intentionally do this. He is just sometimes ignorant. He let a fart. He was standing behind me, and he let a fart right on my head. I do not think he even realized he did it. He let out this big rip, and all the other guys are like, "Oh, man!" And my head is right there in its aim.

H He did not do it intentionally?

F No, there was not anything intentional or derogatory directed at me. He was just being himself, and that is the rope that I gave him to hang himself. So, my way of reacting was not to turn around and cuss him out or get angry. I simply stood up, walked over, got in my file cabinet, pulled out a bottle of perfume, and went over and threw the bottle of perfume on him. I said, "Now, explain that to your wife." I have got to explain this fart to my fiancé. You explain that to your wife. [Laughter]

H So, you had to have a sense of humor.

F That guy has never farted on my head since. [Laughter]

H You have to have a sense of humor.

F You have to have a sense of humor. It is my way of being a woman at the same time. On my shift, it is nothing for me to pull out a bottle of fingernail polish and

touch up my nails or even my toenails for the matter. If I have got all my work done and I come up at the end of the shift and I need a break and I want to pull out my toes and fingernails and give them a clear coat of polish, the guys on my shift have accepted that and are used to that now. They might give me a little jab or two. They will call in the health and safety rep and say, "Is this fumes? Do we have to tolerate these fumes in this work environment?" But, that is the extent of it. They have given me my space, too. For me allowing them to have their space, they have given me my space, too.

H. Right. It is a two-way street.

F. They would never admit they have any respect for me. But, they would never admit they have any respect for each other either. So, I have now become one of them.

H. You do not feel like you are outcasted by them.

F. No, not at all.

H. Was it an uphill battle or did you feel that from the beginning?

F. It was an uphill battle. It took some time, some give and take on both sides.

H. How did you come about? Do you just think time worked itself out or was there certain things that you had to do?

F. I think a lot of it was the way I handled things, the fact that I did not call the civil rights reps. I tolerated a lot, and I just gave my little jabs back here and there to show them that I am a big girl. I can handle this. You bring it on and expect it back. That is all.

H. Yeah, you can take it.

F. Right. But, I will dish it, too.

H. Are their women currently running in this general election?

F. Yes, there is two I think running for bargaining positions. I think there is two running for e-board at large.

H. That is executive?

F. Executive board.

H. Is that usual?

F Usually there is more women running for bargaining positions

H Do they get it do you think?

F No Like I said, I am only the fourth in history of the plant since 1966 So, that has got to tell you something

H I know at Packard, the way the election goes they have it alphabetized How are the elections run here?

F Packard is really different from what I understand They have elections every year where you can get contested every year, and Packard has a lot more female employees than we do here at GM They have a lot more female representatives than we have at GM The entire five years of my two terms in office I have been the only female elected on either of the executive end or the bargaining end

H Wow

F Right now the way it looks we may end up with one woman on the executive board We may end up with one woman on the executive board, and this is mere speculation from the campaign that has been going on. The two women running in bargaining, I have talked to the incumbent zonemen in their districts, and they do not seem to think either of the women really have a very good shot at winning I have told them if either one of them win, I want their first order of business to be to come and see me because I think I can help you in helping women and having to deal and cope with the environment But, it does not look like there is going to be any women in bargaining once I leave

H When you said zone, what did you mean?

F The zone committeeman is right below the shop chairman level There is one shop chairman There is seven zone committeemen Now, there is twenty-four committeemen and twenty-four alternates

H Okay And so there is like three or four women running

F There is two women running for alternate positions

H Okay When you first ran, what was that like? Do you remember what the election was?

F Yeah They had just put on the C crew, and they had to hold elections within forty-five days of the new shift starting They had appointed alternates and committeemen in each district during the interim of the campaign process prior to

this forty-five days to the election. They had appointed a guy as an alternate. I had a lot of people tell me. I had been through a sexual harassment and a stalking case with my ex-boyfriend that I worked with out there.

H At work? So, he worked there too?

F Yeah. He still does. This man had done jail time and had a restraining order. I had dated him for like four years, and he beat me up and put me in the hospital. And I was off work several months, and I followed through both the legal procedure outside and through the union procedure. And management ultimately intervened. The labor relations department and security and the civil rights department all got involved with it internally. The people on the line that I worked with knew about that, and he would harass me on the job and in the parking lot. He literally stalked me for two years.

H How are you supposed to work, you know?

F It was very difficult. But, the people saw how I fought for my own defense because it just was not right. When I get an issue and I know I am right on an issue, I do not back down ever. I will not back down until the bitter end, until I have utilized every possible resource if I feel strongly about an issue and I know I am right. They saw how I fought then, and I had a lot of people come and encourage me. "Why do you not run? You know. You have been involved with the union. You have been on this committee and the cap council, and you go to the membership meetings. Why do you not run? You would be good at this."

My first race was the appointed incumbent alternate and myself and a black fellow that I did not know. Well, I knew him vaguely. I had just been working with him, down the line from him, for about a month. It was the three of us. I decided yeah, this is something I want to do. I want to give this a try, and I dove right in. I campaigned hard, and the people saw how hard I was campaigning. "You must really want the job." And I was never afraid to work. I have been on some really nasty jobs in the plant. The people had seen that. So, they knew I was not doing it just to get off the line or for my own self-gain. I do not know what the exact vote count was. But, I probably beat him by a good fifteen to twenty percent. The black fellow came in third. Over the years, me and the black fellow have become friends, and he is now actually quite angry that I decided not to run and put my child first and go first shift because he felt that he finally had the representation and was mad at me for bailing out. [Laughter] It ended up the other fellow that was the incumbent that I beat had some chest pains immediately after that and ended up in the hospital. When he came back from sick leave, he came back on afternoon shift. Then the following, like a year and a half to two years later, they had general elections, and he ran on B crew and won that spot. So, him and I have been working together. The three shifts have to work together a lot in the union for job setups. He turned out to be a really nice guy.

H You just did not know him well.

F No, not at all. We have become pretty good friends over it. He still gets ribbed about getting beat by a woman. You know. He still gets it.

H Going back to your sexual harassment, was the union supportive of you and the management? How did they handle it?

F I would not take it to management until I had gone through all levels of the union first. Say what you will. I have always been a strong unionist. My union reps put in a hardship. It is called a hardship. It is to go to a different shift for a thirty day period of time without actually changing shifts. I did not have the seniority to go day turn. But because of the problems that I was having on afternoon shift, the union went to management on my behalf and said, "She is having some personal problems. She needs to go first shift without giving any detail." Management knew that it was over a boyfriend that was bothering me. They knew who he was, and the union told them that much only out of protection for me so that they were aware of this situation and keep him away from me. Well when I went day turn, then he put in a shift preference, and he came day turn. So then, I came back afternoon shift. It just went back and forth. It ended up that both shifts, it is now A crew and B crew. Both first shift and afternoon shift committeemen had pulled him off the line and talked to him and told him, "She is not bothering you. Just leave her alone. Find another woman or something. She is not all that." I encouraged them to talk like that. Whatever you have to say about me to get this guy off my back, say it because I can not deal with this anymore. It was a very serious case. He had broken my kneecap, broken my nose. I had a severe concussion, and I was six hours in the emergency room getting put back together from this guy. I was off work, like I said, for three months over it. He had been charged with felonious assault and telephone harassment. He ended up doing some jail time.

But at the same time, he had more seniority than me. So if I had put in to transfer to another department, when it came time to accept the transfer, they said, "No Lisa, you are only going to run from it, and he is going to follow you. His seniority will take him there, too." And I said, "You are right. At least here in my department, the people know me and know what is going on, and they know if he comes into the area that I need a witness." I have friends that would come on over and be witnesses for me. Well, he admitted to the one zoneman that he spit on me in the parking lot, and he had several witnesses that heard him call me names throw my purse on the floor. Like I said, it ended up both shift committeemen pulled him off the line. Both shift zonemen pulled him off the line and talked to him. Ultimately the shop chairman called him in over here to the union hall and had a talk with him, and he still kept going at work.

So, at the point the shop chairman did not have any effect on him, then at that point I had a meeting with the shop chairman and the civil rights reps and the zonemen and committeemen involved. During this meeting, one of the civil

rights reps spoke up and said, "You know it is a very difficult situation because of his seniority. We have also fought for his union rights as well as yours, and he is a dues paying member also. We have to try to find a way to protect you without violating his dues paying rights." At the point where he said that, I got angry, and I stood up. I pointed to all of them, and I said, "Let me tell you something. You are on my time now." I said, "That jerk did not give a darn about my rights when he threatened to put my mom in the hospital with another heart attack. He did not give a darn about my rights, although many times he has assaulted and threatened to kill me. He certainly did not give a darn about my rights when he threatened to kill my children. I will be darned if I am going to sit here and listen to his rights on my time." I said, "Now, I am going to tell you what my rights are. My rights in this court order says he is not allowed anywhere near me, my children, or my property." I said, "That court order does not stop at the doors of General Motors. It comes right inside these doors with me." And I said, "I am making all parties, both union and management, aware of the fact that my life is in danger and threatened." And I said, "If so much as one scratch comes on me from this point on, he is not the only one that can file a law suit."

At that point, the shop chairman intervened, and he turned to the labor rep and said, "What can be done here? What can we do here? This is serious. We have got to do something." We agreed that for the next two months, I was allowed to park right out front in the two hour parking. At the end of each shift, I had a security guard walk me to my car, check my car for any explosives, any damage done to my car, any flat tires, broken windows, whatever because there was a lot of incidents of that that had happened. The next day, he transferred over to van plant thinking that I was going to be recalled. The next day, his committeeman and labor relations pulled him up to labor, and they interviewed him. And they told him, "This is your warning. There is not going to be a deal on this. There is not going to be any more warnings. If you go near her or her property on company property, you will be fired." From that point, he never bothered me at work again. It was just on the outside. Like I said, I dealt with that through the legal channels on the outside.

H Have you encountered him since?

F Actually several times. Once I became elected, the union went to management and said, "You know his seniority only pulls so much weight, and we are not going to have him transferring to this shift where she has got to represent him and put her in that kind of environment." Labor relations agreed. But, there has been times where he has worked what they call cross crew onto our shift just for a day here or a day there. What ultimately stopped him on the outside was that during this time that there was a restraining order, he started some stuff with my ex-husband who I was dating at the time. My ex-husband just pounded him, and I mean he brutally beat this man and put him in the hospital and put him sick leave for a while. That is finally what woke him up. Even after jail time and the restraining order and the court appearances and the attorney fees and all that,

ultimately what got him stopped on the outside was speaking his own language Then after that was all done and over with about six months after my ex-husband beat him up, they ran into each other at some stag party He went up and apologized to my ex-husband and told him, "I have just been absolutely nutso, and I was totally out of line " That kind of put things to rest there, and he eventually got a new girlfriend and got married

Then once I got elected and he would come and work on our shift a day here or a day there, sheerly out of professionalism and knowing he did apologize to my ex-husband, he would say hello to me as I was walking down the aisle, and I would respond back with a hello and leave it at that Then eventually after a few hello's, it was "How are you doing? I hear you are getting married, congratulations " It turned out that there was a time when the union was requesting that hourly people do nothing at all for management because we were in this war with management last year He had come in to work cross crew, and I told him, "The union would really prefer you work your normally scheduled shift " His buddies that he came in to work cross crew with, he told them all, "Come on, let us go have a beer I will buy " And they turned around and left

H So, they supported you

F Yeah He supported me. You know I told his buddies, "You guys know the background here " I said, "You son of a gun, you owe me this," and I laughed [Laughter] And he said, "Come on guys. I am buying." They all turned around and walked out, and management chased them out the door and said, "Guys, guys, do not leave We need you Can I talk to you up in labor What did she say to you?" They all just turned around, looked at him, laughed, and walked out So even that kind of adversity I have been through

H I was going to say the stress When you said that the union was at war with management, what was that over?

F Initially, it was over some new hires, which is temporary jobs They had all these temporary workers They hired permanent, and they had had them there for quite some time They did not want to lock themselves into the liability of putting on permanent people with the layoff status and all that if they would have to cut back That is what it initially started at It got to the point where they were just refusing everyone's vacations, and they were openly violating contractual issues Just everywhere you looked they were harassing people Then ultimately, it got to the point where the shop chairman had to take them on, and he started fighting back He got us all kicked into action, and we all started fighting back Next thing you know, shop chairman is fired, and all Hell broke loose [Laughter]

H How long was he gone for?

F He was out for eight months I am going to tell you what

H How did you guys get him back?

F I wish I could take credit for that I really do I wish I could take credit for that. I did what I could as a union rep. There are legal ramifications to what I can and can not say I enforced the grievance procedure I strongly enforced the grievance procedure

H Did everybody file grievances on the issue? Did you encourage people?

F There was grievances issued by the international union on behalf of the shop chairman for his discharge. But, the grievances that I wrote did not pertain to that The grievances that the committeemen wrote did not pertain to that That was all being handled at the international/corporate level way out of our hands. What I did in defense of our shop chairman is I tried to keep the people informed on factual issues The fact is not that the shop chairman has been creating any kind of fraud The fact is that management's tactics are to attack the leader so as to divide the troops I tried to keep the people informed

H Did it divide the union?

F You know I would have to say at the expense of the shop chairman, it actually helped to strengthen the union because management took it to the extreme. When they started denying people's contractual rate to vacation time off, and people had plane tickets bought and reservations made, and it was affecting their personal lives because of this little war, management caught on the hourly people They started seeing "Well if they are being this unfair with me, maybe there is some truth in how they have picked on the shop chairman " If management had just picked on the shop chairman and the bargaining unit who is in charge of all the grievance procedure, they might have gotten away with that But, they took it a step beyond and took it into every hourly person on the chain who is building that car They took it to their level and started affecting their personal lives to where the people on the line that elect us By us keeping them informed on why management is pulling these tactics, they were able to see that

H Experience it first hand

F Exactly

H I know you might not want to answer this But like we were talking in class, have you ever like during times like that like how workers have a way of rebelling against management on the assembly line

F For sabotage? Sure, sure

H Yeah How does the union handle that?

F I will tell you. There was more than one day where I had to go man to man over three-hundred people that I represent and tell them we absolutely do not encourage it. You would be fired immediately, and I could not get your job back There is no level of this union that can get your job back when management can prove sabotage We do not need that The customer is the one who suffers from that, not the company That was a big part of my responsibility during that time It was to keep the people in line It was my job to keep the people informed that we do not want to give management anything to put us on the defense Right now, management was on the defense, and that was the best perspective to pursue it through When you say that repetitively three-hundred and fifty times a day, day after day after day, then finally the people start saying, "You know she is right " And I told them, "As far as your vacation time, if you have applied during the vacation application period and they are denying you contractual time off, take it off When you come back, you are going to get a reprimand for it If your record deems it, you may even get thrown out for it We will automatically grieve that, and we will get you paid for it later "

H Was there a lot of problems at that time that that was going on

F We had hundreds of grievances in procedure on vacations denied and people taking vacations, getting reprimands for it, and us grieving the reprimand, the discipline

H And were you winning?

F After this last year of negotiations, I know in our district we won every one, every single one of them That is Larry, not we, Larry I sat in on his negotiations on many of his negotiating sessions But, he ultimately was the one to win every one of those discipline cases, every single one of them Which, management knew when they were doing it that they were going to

H Why would they do that?

F Because they knew we were entering a strike mode Management wanted to be the aggressor here

H They did Did they not?

F Right To try to divide the union I think what ultimately won the battle for us was that they had pushed it to the extreme of the line worker and affecting their personal lives and thus further uniting the union

H How were women when things like that happened? Did you see a united front, or did men handle it different to women?

F I see no variation there at all There are strong women who handled it a lot better, and there are weaker women And there are stronger men and weaker men I found that throughout it all whether they have strong or weak personalities, the more informed I was able to keep them or the more informed Larry and the rest of his bargaining representatives were able to keep them, the stronger they were overall

H But with the sabotage, were you near sabotage going on?

F I was aware of accusations of sabotage But to be perfectly frank with you, I think that certainly nobody ever admitted any sabotage to me But, I had my doubts as to which side was even doing the sabotaging I know for a fact that there was sabotage because I represented people in the repair department, the final process department, and they were documenting labor relations They were down there taking pictures, and they were documenting cases of cut wiring and stuff But, I personally believe that that was as much management's end if anything

H That they were sabotaging themselves?

F Trying to set up hourly people and blame it on the hourly people I really do with all my heart because I know the mode of doing business, the mentality that we were dealing with at the time

H What made them break do you think? What came about?

F In getting negotiations back on track?

H Right

F The rehiring of the shop chairman, the admission of guilt

H That came from the top, right?

F That came from the corporate office

H Okay I am going to get back to the questions.

F When Al got back to work, he had the integrity to walk man to man on all three shifts and thank the people for showing the support that they did during his discharge He really sat down with the bargaining reps and just told them, "You know we have over nine-thousand open grievances, and this is not for the

betterment of the people. This is not serving the people, and we need to start looking at settling some of these grievances and getting serious about negotiating with management and getting these problems worked out.”

Shortly after that, Herman Moss, our new plant manager, was hired. He was brought in from a different plant. He had worked here before with Al and the majority of the bargaining unit. He took management by the reins too. All during all this prior to Herman Moss getting transferred back here to Lordstown, labor relations was running the shop. The labor department had no idea how to build a car. They had no idea how to run the show. They only knew how to generate further animosity. When Herman came aboard on management's end, he was boss over everyone in that plant including labor relations, and he told labor relations, “Get your nose out of production's business. Let the department managers run their departments. If they see fit to discipline somebody, they will do it on their own. They do not need you telling them and being actively involved with every decision they make.” It got to the point where every member of management on the floor was intimidated by labor relations. So, they had their own political arena to deal with, and Herman really helped to take the reins and tell the department heads “You will start sitting down and settling some of these grievances. And if we are wrong and they are payable issues, by God we are going to pay them.”

H So, do you think it was the plant manager before him that was really responsible?

F The plant manager before him had transferred over to Saab in Germany, and there was a period of a few months there during the shop chairman's discharge that there was no plant manager. Labor relations went nuts during this time. Prior to Mike Cubbins going to Saab, he was not as active. He did not really take the bull by the horns the way it needed to be done in our times of stress.

H Okay. You were discussing the time of the grievances, right? How are things right now?

F They are getting back on track. It is coming along much better than I would have ever expected. We got a shop chairman. That was a biggie for us. We needed that. Things are pretty much the normal order of business other than the elections now coming up. Thank God we got everything back in order before the elections came up. That would have really been caotic. Al has got some opposition this time but none to speak of. He is a good, solid shop chairman. He really is.

H He probably is stronger now. They probably made him with support for him.

F Well certainly his opponents are highlighting

- H Trying to capitalize on what happened?
- F They are capitalizing on management's accusations that obviously are false or he would not have his job back
- H How do you think women are active? Do you think that there is a lot of active participation in the union?
- F I think in our particular plant, the lower percentage of employees being women in itself, there is not as many women active in the union as I would like to see. I think that is just because of the ratio of male female employees
- H Do you think that it has stayed the same, or do you see an increase or decrease in women's participation?
- F I would say it is definitely on the increase. But, so is the percentage of employment. For women it is on the increase too. Each time they do hiring, they hire a few more women to balance that out. We are trying to get the younger people more involved. As a matter of fact, just yesterday I had a woman coming in that approached me and asked me, "How can I get on the Women's Committee? How can I get actively involved in the union?" And I told her, "As soon as the elections are over, whoever wins the presidency, we will go talk to him." The president is the one that appoints the committee members.
- H Do you have to be appointed to the Women's Committee, or can anybody?
- F Yes, you go through the president, and whoever the incoming president is at the time can appoint anyone to any committee that he sees fit. Typically, you are expected to attend the membership meetings and be involved in the union. It only serves an elected official well to appoint someone that he knows is going to be there to do a job. A lot of the time, the majority of the appointments are on a voluntary basis. You are giving your time. You are not paid for your time. It is time given to the union in a volunteer capacity. So, that in itself says, "Yeah, I want to serve." It serves an elected officer's position well to be able to determine prior to making any appointment of that kind, to be able to determine if the person is asking for that appointment to a committee or to whatever position for his own self-serving purposes or because their heart is in it and they want to do something to become actively involved and to generate help. That speaks a lot come election time. If you put people in there who are self-serving, then that is going to have political ramifications around election time.
- H Right
- F Any politician would know that. So, you need to get people in there that are going to do the job and are going to do the job for the right reasons and not for

their own selves

H Right Okay How has being a woman affected your role in the workplace? Are there positive or negative issues?

F As a bargaining rep, I have found it was a little more difficult to gain respect overall from the hourly workforce. But, because I was a female at the same token, there was an automatic respect given to me by management because of fear

H Discrimination?

F Ramifications that I might find If they did not show me automatic respect, that I could cry wolf, so to speak They automatically, not every women is automatically respected, but those who did not automatically respect me just because of my elected position were dealt with by upper members of management immediately and effectively, swiftly

H How have women's acceptance in the union changed since you have joined?

F Again, I am the only woman in an elected position that has had any impact one way or the other I really believe it has had a positive impact I think I have made it a little more acceptable for the next women coming along, for the men to see that there might be some substance to this person. They may be able to do any effective job I really believe that because of my terms there, that I have served The men who have worked with me will be more ready and able to accept a woman

H How has your union's attitude towards women changed since you have joined?

F I think it has been in a positive way My whole experience with this union job has been very rewarding It really has There is always going to be, in any aspect of life, positives and negatives It is an experience that I would not have traded It has been a real education helping me grow up (tape stopped)

H Have you ever been discriminated against because you are a woman? If so, in what way? Have you ever encountered problems of equal work for equal pay?

F I have never encountered problems with equal work for equal pay That has just never been an issue I have been discriminated against just for being a woman, yes That goes back to the civil rights commission When I got pregnant with my daughter, that was pretty clear I have been There was one person that I had problems with in the union Because I have been here for a number of years and I earned the respect of so many of the other men that I work with, there has been a lot of them that have gone to this man and told him he was out of line

They have come to bat on my behalf to try to sooth those wounds I think Even he knows there are certain lines that you do not cross before you have legal issues involved Because of his involvement, he knows where to draw the line

H Do you think there is a problem with discrimination now overall in the plant?

F No, I really do not I really do not, and that is not rose colored glasses. That is a very realistic viewpoint I think any time you have that number of people working together in any environment you are going to have discrimination But, I think that it is dealt with in a responsible way It is not laughed at The real issues are not laughed at, serious issues

H Like with your case, the stalking case, are there other cases similar to yours that you are aware of?

F I am sure there are But to be perfectly honest with you, unless it involves somebody specifically that I represent, that is all confidential information I am not really privy to that That is kept within the internal organization of the civil rights committee If need be, they may involve that district's committeemen But, unless the absolute need is there, they will not

H Confidentiality

F Right And pious They have to enforce for the employees' protection, too

H Do you feel that any women are intimidated on the job?

F Sure In fact, some men are, too I think anyone, be it male or female, that allows themselves to be intimidated by anyone shame on you There are people that prey on that kind of person I think that a higher percentage of women allow themselves to be intimidated than men overall But then again, a larger percentage of women care more deeply for heartfelt issues than men too They are more emotional in genetic makeup I almost attribute some of it to that

H How is your union addressing family issues such as maternity leave and child care?

F Overall, the international union has addressed a lot of those during this last set of negotiations on family leave I think that is even full of law now But, our local union addresses those issues more on a personal level and an individual level As a member of the bargaining unit, I know many times I have had people coming in with different family issues, and we worked with them to try to help them with whatever their personal and individual needs are If they financially can not afford to take a leave of absence, we might try to put them on a different shift to allow them the hours during the day that they may need to work at their

family problems. If they can not possibly come to work at all because they have to help an elderly parent through a sick crisis until they can establish home nursing care for that parent, we will set up a leave of absence for them. Whatever their immediate needs are depend on their financial situation and all aspects involved. We look at it more on an individual basis. We really do not have that. Management is really good with working with the union on that too because they know to force somebody to come to work and leave a major family problem at home not knowing what is happening while they are at work. They know that person's mind is not going to be on their job. Therefore, it could possibly affect quality. They do not want that. They do not want it. They have got enough employees at work to compensate for absenteeism in family crisis.

H Okay. What problems do you face in your union as a woman that men do not experience?

F Flattery. There is a fine line there. Being an elected person, you have to be able to read the person's thoughts to tell if it is flattery in a complimentary way or a derogatory way. We have to be able to tell them if you are reading it the wrong way and if it is making you uncomfortable. You have to be able to stand up and hold your own there and tell them. Without losing that almighty vote, you have to find a way to tell them they have crossed the line. And I have to tell you my line is usually a lot further outstretched than somebody else's line might be. And I will tell the person, "If you have crossed my line, buddy."

This girl down the work station from me, this woman foreman, you would have crossed her line miles ago, and you could have been brought up on charges for that. You could have been taken to labor for that. If you cross my line, then you know you are out of line because I usually have an extended sense of humor. They know if I tell them they have crossed the line, they have really crossed the line. But, there are guys that

I do not think that many men have a woman, or even another man for that matter, looking at parts of their anatomy and staring directly at those parts of their anatomy while they are trying to attend to business at hand the way I have had to experience that. I will tell them, "Snap snap," up here in the eyes, "I have eyes. It is amazing that I have eyes, and my eyes are seeing where your eyes are."

H You have just got to bring them back.

F Right.

H Okay. What are the positive in-roads that your union has made for women workers?

F Establishing a fair work environment for starters.

H Do you see changes like since you have been [there]?

F I see our leadership in the union really promotes respect towards women. They really do overall. You know? I think we are starting to see. I know some of our top leadership sees that there are women's perspectives that are of value to the union. To the union and to the individual workers on a personal level too. They have a different perspective sometimes. (tape stopped)

H Okay. Let us see. What is the most positive experience as a woman with the union? What has been your most negative?

F Well certainly my most negative would be the one person that I continue to have problems with just for the mere fact that I am a woman, and he has a hard time accepting that. The most positive would have to be the reward that the job itself has been for me. It has really educated me as a person, not just on unionism and solidarity, but on dealing with so many personal problems that people face. It has helped me put things in perspective of just how important this union stuff is and just how important the job is and just how important the family is. To keep it all in perspective knowing full well and truly believing with all my heart, I would have had no problem winning my reelection. I have given up this job for one child that is fourteen years old. So, I can go day turn. That is keeping my priorities in order. You know?

H Do you think that next time, with all being well at home, you will seek reelection three years from now?

F I do not know. It depends on what happens in the next three years. Bargaining was a learning experience. It really was. But, I am a firm believer. I do not like to stop learning. I want to keep going, and it is not that there is not more to learn in bargaining. There is, certainly. It is continuous learning. But, there is so many other things out there to learn. I do not know. I just do not want to limit my ideas.

H How did you get involved in the union activities?

F My ex-husband was on strike at his plant, at his pottery plant down in East Liverpool. I had just been hired on coming out here, and it was in 1984, fall of 1983 when they went on strike. I came to our union and asked for some support for their union. I came to a couple membership meetings and saw how active. Our union sent down truckloads of wood and sent down extra pickets. They helped them out, and I kind of felt like, well, geez, I ought to go see what this stuff is all about. You know what I mean. They did not deny me when I asked for help. Maybe there is something I can do in return, and they have just sucked me in ever since. I have been more and more involved ever since.

- H Let us see How has the role of women changed where you work?
- F Initially when they hired in women, they treated them prim and proper and put them on the easier jobs Bottom line, at General Motors they have always made the same pay And to come in off the street as a new hire with no seniority and get the preferred jobs was unfair That has been phased out. Now, it is equal work for equal pay, and I am a firm believer in that
- I mean they have what we call physical limitations If you are too short for a job, then they can not contractually put you on that job If you are too tall for a job or too heavy for a job or not strong enough for a job, there are physical limitations But, I have always been of the mindset that any man that is 5'4" and 125 pounds, any job they put him on I will do Do not expect me to do a job that a weightlifter does that can bench press five-hundred pounds or whatever it is they bench press If I can not physically do it, I am not going to hurt myself physically to prove a point My body is more important
- H Right Are there certain jobs in the plant that men do because of, like you said, lifting?
- F Yeah But, a lot of those jobs they have women on too that are bigger women We have women bench pressers in there too When you have that many employees, you have all shapes and sizes of every sex and gender and race and the whole gammit You know?
- H How about when working? Is there mandatory overtime?
- F Yes.
- H And it is the same for both sexes?
- F Yes That is all contractual.
- H Okay How does management act towards women?
- F In the same way that any man acts towards women with respectable undertones
- H Are there women in management?
- F Sure There is more women in management than there are women union officials I can tell you that There is a whole lot more members of management that are women.
- H How are women receptive to the women in management?
- F It depends on the woman's personality There are some women in management

that have come from the old school. They have to prove themselves. Therefore, they are the almighty, and you are not going to take advantage of them. They are rejected as such. And there are women in management who are just there to do their job, and they are doing their job and letting you do your job. They are accepted much more readily.

H What is your definition of middle and working class, and where do you fall?

F Middle and working class, I would say, are one and the same, and I am right in that category. Right in the middle of the working class category. Are you looking for dollar figures here? I think anyone in the \$25-85,000 range would be middle class. I know that is a wide variety.

H Okay. Have you ever filed any grievances? If so, what for?

F Over the years, thousands.

H On your behalf or for everyone?

F Both, both. You name it. I have written grievances for it. God, where do you start? I mean literally hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds of grievances. I have written more so on others' behalf, certainly, than on my own behalf. When there is a problem that I am aware of that nobody has brought to my attention but because it is my district I am aware of it, it is written as a policy grievance which means that the union as a whole is contesting this issue. These are considered my grievances because I am the grievance writer. I have written hundreds of those. Grievances that actually pertain specifically to me, dozens. But overall, I have written hundreds and hundreds of grievances, and I just do not even know where to begin.

H Did they have anything to do with wages?

F. Work assignments, job assignments, harassment, vacation denial.

H Was there a lot of harassments?

F No, no. That is one of the fewer grievances that I write. Paragraph seventy-one which is overtime, not offering the right person the overtime that should have been offered. I do not even know where to start. You know? I do not even know where to start.

H Okay. What are the major problems confronting your union in 1997?

F Working with management, finding a way to work with management to better the product for a reduced price without jeopardizing job losses and family security.

- H Do you see a lot of that? How has Lordstown been affected by imports?
- F I will tell you For the effect that the industry has had overall, and I really believe a lot of this has to do with our union leadership here at Lordstown We have been able to hold our own pretty well We really have with the international's help, of course But, our local shop committee has been real effective there
- H Okay. What has been your role within the union during strikes?
- F [Laughter] Okay. Well, I have been actively participating in several various community strikes in the area Since I have been elected and since I have been actively involved with the union in any capacity, we have only had what they called a "one day wild cat strike," and I went to work that day I was a little bit late that day, and I did not stay very long But, I went into work for two hours, and I did what I was sent there to do which is my job And I let the people know where they stood and where I stood I let them know that I was leaving at a certain time From that point on, they would not have union representation in the plant We would certainly be available at home or at the union hall as I always am. We had an issue we had to contend with, and that is exactly what I did. That is just about as far as I can take it
- H They have only gone on strike once, then, out of your years?
- F There is a one day, what management has referred to as a "one day wild cat strike " That is when our shop chairman was fired.
- H Right How about other strikes? I know you mentioned about.
- F Yeah, I was real involved with [them] When the steel workers were on strike down at Campbell, I took down several hundred dollars worth of school supplies to them in the beginning of September because I knew their kids needed school supplies, and they could not afford something like that
- H That was something you did on your own, correct?
- F Yeah, yeah Anytime I see picketers, I will take them a dozen doughnuts or a dozen cups of coffee or something to just brighten their day and let them know their is support out there amongst the working people I have approached members of management at other picket cites and told them my desire to buy a new car But since you have picketers out front, I will take my business up the street to another dealership, and I have done so I have brought the signed paper work back and showed their management how they did at least lose one sale over it I have attended many rallies and picket cites and supported other unions

H Are the women in the UAW, do they participate like you do, do you know of, or are you unique?

F I would say I probably take it to the extreme

H That is okay

F There is a handful of other women, the Annie Biggins, the Bessie Spangles, the Kathy Vaskos in our plant and retirees from out local that are involved They are actively involved in the union and solid unionists to the heart. But, the majority of the women are there to build cars

H Okay What are the major roadblocks that women face in the union on the work force?

F The stereotype, the stereotype that they will break under pressure

H What are the different demands placed on women than on men in the unions?

F Finding a way to fit

H Where to you foresee the women's future in the union?

F Growing

H Do you think?

F Yeah, I really do I think it is great It is a good perspective. You need an overall perspective of all the people that you represent

H I notice you have a current problem with one of the union, right? I think on the phone you mentioned you went and saw an attorney, did you not?

F The person that I saw my attorney about is friends with the person I am actually having the problem with The person that I saw my attorney about is running against the incumbent committeeman that I am supporting, and he has openly put out fliers against me slandering me

H In the plant? I mean you have seen them

F Yes

H So, you filed a suit against him?

F I have another appointment next week

H How is the union responding to that?

F Well, I went to our president last week and asked that he be removed from the civil rights committee. He was a member of the civil rights committee, and the president immediately removed him. Yesterday, I brought him up on charges for conduct unbecoming a union member through the union hall, and that will go to a trial committee here through the membership.

H So, you are pursuing it both outside and inside the union.

F Right, right.

H Okay. Well, thank you very much.

F And I would certainly never take anything like this to management. It is an internal issue, and it will stay internal.

H Okay. The union has been responsive to you.

F Absolutely, absolutely. Very supportive.

H Okay. That is all for now. Thank you very much.

End of Interview