

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Women in Labor Unions

Personal Experience

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MARYLOU DEVER

Interviewed

by

Nick Tefakis

on

May 6, 1997

MARYLOU DEVER

Marylou Dever was born August 31, 1949 in Youngstown, Ohio to Jack and Dorothy Twitchell. She attended the local public schools and graduated from Struthers High School in 1967. Since graduation, she has taken various labor-related classes at Youngstown State University and at the Trumbull branch of Kent State University. On April 22, 1983, Marylou was married to Ivan Dever, also of Youngstown. Marylou was hired at Packard Electric in 1969 and has been an active member of the International Union of Electrical Workers, Local 717, throughout her 28 years of employment. She held a post on the Executive Board as well as the chair of the Women's and Education Committees. Currently, she is a full-time Union representative.

T This is an interview with Marylou Dever for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Women in Labor Unions, by Nick Tefakis, Jr , on May 6, 1997 at the International Union of Electrical Workers Union Hall, Local 717, located in Warren, Ohio

When and where were you born?

D I was born in Youngstown, Ohio on August 31, 1949

T Where did you attend school?

D Struther's High School, St Nicholas school for grade school

T Have you ever been discriminated against because you are a woman prior to your employment?

D Not prior to my employment because I started at Packard when I was 18 years old

T. So there was nothing when you were a younger woman?

D Not that I could think of

T What were your first impressions of your job when you began?

D I was happy because I made a decent living I was a student at Youngstown State University at the time and gave up going to school because I was making enough money, I thought.

T. How do you feel your management acts towards women, specifically?

D In my position as a union rep, I have been fortunate, except in one instance I am treated with respect and I really do not have problems with the managers that I deal with on a daily basis, as far as my being a woman goes.

T What do you feel are the major problems your union is faced with right now in 1997? Not just for women, but as a whole?

D. The major issues in my union, I believe, are related to the fact that we have several different factions within our union right now, politically speaking -- also age-wise We have a three tier agreement that is divided into ranks We have some skilled-trades issues that are dividing the ranks We have a contract that was negotiated three years ago that specifically excluded some people from the rules that we have enjoyed as union people -- being time-and-a-half [when] over 40 hours and things of that nature We have continuous-run operations, where

the people do not enjoy the things that we have struggled for all these years. So, I think those are the major issues right now.

T: What do you feel are the different demands placed on women, as compared to men, in your union?

D: Traditionally, we are expected to be the ones that are out there doing things, getting the job done. The men, traditionally, have been looked upon as the people who would enforce the agreement, and the women are the ones who have been the so-called "worker bees," who are out there doing the social functions, keeping the committee's up and functioning, and taking care of the membership in general. That is changing in our location.

T: How do you feel that is changing right now?

D: It is changing because a lot more of us have been elected as union rep's to enforce the agreement. I still have to honestly say that there is quite a number of the men out there who do not enjoy us being part of that. But the really sad part, to me, is the fact that I have worked hard for this union for over 25 years, worked hard on committee's, done many, many things, and did not really get the respect because I was just one of those women out there until I got elected to the position of a union rep. And then, all of a sudden, the respect was automatic. And in my opinion, it is bull shit.

T: What do you feel are the major road blocks that women face first in the work place, and then in the union?

D: In the work place, in our location, the women can do any job that the men can do, basically, in our location. There are still some jobs that are primarily men's jobs that are real heavy or real dirty, or working around chemicals and things like that, that the women do not wish to be involved in. But they could if they wanted to. The barriers in the union are far greater. We have what is traditionally called "The Good Ole Boys Club." I am sure you are going to hear that throughout your interviews with the women. It is hard to break into the club, not that we want to belong. But we found that it is a lot easier to work from within the circle than from outside of it. Like I said, the issue of respect was one thing. I have worked hard and done many things for this membership but did not get the respect of my brothers until I became an elected representative. I was elected to the executive board, too, and the respect did not come automatically. I was elected by 300 or my peers to the position I hold now, and all of a sudden, you know, I was one of the guys. It is disgusting, because I am not any different now than I was before.

T: What do you feel are the specific issues affecting women right now in your union?

- D. Recognition is a big one. Acceptance, and the fact that, I feel that the women work just as hard, if not harder, than the men do, for various reasons. The men just try to hold us back. Except for a Treasurer, who is a woman, and a Recording Secretary, who they have traditionally allowed to be women, we do not hold high-ranking offices. We do not have a woman that is on the bargaining committee. We had a woman that was Vice President for a few years. We just traditionally do not hold the high offices in our local and the women still outnumber the men here.
- T. I was not aware of that. So there are more female members than there are male members?
- D. Yes.
- T. That is very enlightening. I was not aware of that. Could you explain the bargaining committee, please?
- D. The bargaining committee are the people who negotiate our agreements. They negotiate the contracts.
- T. How did you become involved in the union?
- D. Several years ago, when I was still a young girl [laughter] and we experienced a down-turn, we started a CLUW chapter here at our location -- Coalition of Labor Union Women. It just progressed from there.
- T. What did CLUW do?
- D. To educate women, basically, in the labor movement -- that was the primary focus at that time. For various reasons, most of us are not included in CLUW anymore. We do not belong. We just had a drive not too long ago, tried to get some people to sign up again. The interest just is not there, for some reason. But that was the primary focus at that time, to educate women about the labor movement and about unions and to bring them in.
- T. What is the chair of Women's Committee?
- D. I am no longer the chair of the Women's Committee. I was for the previous three years. The chair of the Women's Committee, basically, is just like the chair of any other committee. You schedule the meeting dates and bring activities forth to the members of the committee and you preside over the meeting. Plus a lot of work. There is a lot of time spent pulling things together. The Women's Committee is like the social arm of the union. Like I said before, the women traditionally are the one's who go out and get the job done, who work hard. We sponsor the Spring Picnic and we sell raffle tickets, give away beautiful gifts and

go out shopping for all the gifts. We sponsor bus trips, things that involve families and children. That is the primary focus of the Women's Committee, plus to educate the women. Maybe that is why we are not so active in CLUW anymore, because the Women's Committee has basically taken over that function.

T. When did the Women's Committee become more popular, as compared to CLUW?

D. The Women's Committee was always real popular, but it was always, traditionally, before Nick Border became president, it was a group of hand-selected women who were traditionally supporters of the particular president that was in office at that time. Since Nick Border has taken over, he has allowed people that did not even support him, not only to chair committee's, but to be active in the union. He encourages participation and everything seems to run a little better with him at the helm, in my opinion. And he is real open. If there is somebody that we know that is a hard worker, that is his basic criteria for putting somebody on a committee. If he knows they are out there and they are going to get the job done, then, you know, he gives them the appointment.

T. You said you served as chair for three years?

D. Yes.

T. When were you first elected?

D. The first elected position I held in the union was as an executive board member, and it was two and a half years ago.

T. Being on the executive board, what were your responsibilities?

D. The responsibilities are, we set guidelines or recommendations for the membership, and at every month's union meeting, we meet before the union meeting. At every month's union meeting, they bring the recommendations of the executive board to the membership, and the membership votes on it. So, that is our primary focus: to conduct business and make recommendations to the membership.

T. I understand that you held the chair to the Education Committee?

D. That is the chair I have now.

T. So you are currently holding that. When were you elected, and what are the responsibilities of the Education Committee, and you in particular, as chair?

D It is an appointed position. The president appoints the position, he appoints all the chairs of all the committee's. And when he took office, he appointed me as chair of the Education Committee and the Social Action Committee. My primary duties, as chair of the Education Committee, have been to try to bring educational opportunities here to this membership, to involve the membership in other educational opportunities that are available to them out there, through colleges and universities and labor-study groups. And we have been very, very active. Probably for the first time in 20 years, our education committee has brought a couple different educational programs here to the union hall, and we have been going to a lot of different schools.

One of the things that I did, this was when I was chair of the Women's Committee, was the University of Michigan Labor Studies Department, they have a really good Labor Studies Department. They have some really great schools that we like to attend, and they were not on our approved list for tuition assistance, so we were instrumental in getting that added to the list. So that when we go there, basically we lose our time off work and we pay our own expenses, but at least the tuition portion of it is covered now. So, those are the things we do.

T So there are funds available for members to attend classes and workshops?

D: Training funds. We have what is called tuition assistance. It is a negotiated benefit. There are several schools that are on the list. You can go as a regular student or as a certificate student. As long as they are on the approved list, your tuition will be paid for. You have to either get the certificate or maintain a C average.

T What is the curriculum? What are the topics of the classes or programs?

D This summer I am going to be conference coordinator for what they call the Midwest School for Women Workers. There are going to be 14 different subjects. If women want to come to this school -- and it is open to men, too -- they can bring their children and it gives their children a basis in the union. Everything from youth in unions to cultural diversity in the work place, parliamentary procedure and basic union principles, organizing -- all kinds of different subjects. What happens is, the group meets and decides what the subjects should be for that year.

T How is the participation divided among your members, as far as gender goes, male and female? Do you feel there are more women or more men who participate in these programs?

D As far as the educational opportunities?

T Yes

- D: At this point, there have been more women. But because we have a new third tier with a much younger workforce here, that are like our kids' age, your age, we have been trying to bring them on and because of that, a lot of the young men are becoming interested. So, now when we go out of town, it is probably 50/50. Half women, half men. So, we are starting to really try to educate them and bring them on.
- T: These courses that you were talking about, through the University of Michigan, were you obligated to have to go to Michigan or one of their branch campuses to study these courses?
- D: For these particular schools, they are held either in Ann Arbor, or, we are going to East Lansing this time. Yeah, they are on sight, and the next one is coming up July 30 through August 3. So it is going to be four nights, five days, and it is very intense. They keep you going all day long. Your evenings are free. It is kind of regimented, but when you come out of there, you feel like you have been to a retreat. Solidarity and sisterhood and brotherhood and all that stuff.
- T: How long do they usually last for?
- D: Usually, it is a three or four day class and most of the time it will be on a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, so that you are not impacted, as far as missing money from work goes. But this time, because it is going to a midwest school and it is going to be a lot larger -- it is going to be at Michigan State University at the Kellogg Center -- it is going to be four days.
- T: You mentioned earlier the three tiers within the union. Could you please explain that?
- D: I would love to explain it, if I knew how. In 1985, we gained what was known as the second tier, and they were called PHP's, Progressive Hiring Plan, to stimulate some hiring at Packard. We had not had hiring for years and years and years and we thought we were never going to hire there again. So we took what is conceived of as a concession, and we hired people on the second tier, which brought them in at a percentage of the wages that the traditional people were making and brought them up to parity in ten years. In 1993, they negotiated what is called the Chip's agreement, and that was, 55 percent of traditional employee's wages with no light at the end of the tunnel, as far as parity goes. Very basic benefits. It was called the Competitive Hiring Plan. That is what it is.
- T: Now, through competitive, I am assuming they were trying to initiate more quality among the newer workers, being that it was competitive?
- D: Quality does not really have anything to do with it. With General Motors

Corporation, everything is based on the dollar and because they brought them in at 55 percent of our wages, with no agreement for wage increases or parity, they told us that there were jobs in Warren, Ohio that could be competitive at that wage rate, even though that we know that we cannot compete against Mexico or China, or any of these other places they have gone to that make like a buck an hour

T How are the PHP and the CHP viewed by fellow workers? Are they members of the union?

D Oh, yeah. They are members of the union the day they start. We want them to be traditional employees. We want them to be educated, we want them to be good union members. But it is very difficult when you work elbow to elbow with somebody who is making 20 bucks an hour and you are making ten bucks an hour. The attitudes seem to develop. Especially with the CHP's. They are young people, they have young families. Even though \$10.50 an hour is good wages for the general community, they still work for General Motors Corporation and they know that they should be paid more. They are given the same work as somebody who is making twice as much money as they are.

T You are a full time union representative. Is this an elected office?

D Yes

T How long is the term for?

D It is a one year term, which will be up on the fifteenth of this month, because I choose not to run for re-election. So that is when the term ends.

T What motivated you to run for the position?

D Because the guy that I beat had the job for 25 years and I felt that he was not doing the job. I felt that our union members deserved better representation, and I knew I could provide it, which I did. I worked hard, just as I do in all my other capacities. I am really proud of the fact that he had several elections over the years and nobody else could beat him. I do not think it was my charm and my personality that did it. I think it was the fact that the membership knew that I was very determined and that I would work hard on their behalf.

T What are the responsibilities of being a full time union representative?

D My responsibilities are to represent about 300 members in my district. It is district 20 or afternoon turn. Basically, what I do, is enforce the agreement. When someone has a problem with supervision, [for] the first line of defense they call me, and I go in. If it is a contractual violation, then I file a grievance --

first I go to management and try to iron out the problem, which I have been pretty good at [I] have not really had to resort a lot of our problems to writing, because in most cases I have had a good rapport with management and have been able to resolve the issues before I had to reduce them to writing. But then, if I cannot do that, then we reduce it to writing and we file a grievance, at which point I have two discussions with management -- one with their direct supervisor, and if he denies the grievance, then I move on to his general supervisor, which is a step above, his foreman, and try to resolve it at that step. And if I still cannot resolve it, then I pass the issue on to my zone committeeman, who is like my boss. Then he takes it from there.

- T. Being a full time union representative, how are you received by male and female union members?
- D. The people that I represent, they receive me very well. They were hopeful, when I took office, that there was going to be some changes made, and so was I. In the most part, there were a lot of changes made. They got a representative that was on the floor all the time, that ate lunch with them, that clocked out with them, that was around in the area to talk to them, to try to resolve the problems as they occurred. And so, I think, basically, I was received well by the people that I represented.
- T. Was there any difference between male and female in reception, or was that across the board?
- D. No, actually I think that a couple of the guys had a little bit of reservation. But I know a lot of them voted for me and a lot of them supported me, because they were tired of the complacent attitude that the other representative had taken, the guy that I beat. I think that they were all hopeful.
- T. Your responsibilities were to resolve differences?
- D. Yes.
- T. Were they strictly between labor and management, or were you involved with things within the union itself?
- D. No. The job that I am elected to do is not to get involved in problems between one union member and another. Basically, labor relations comes in on issues like that. We did have some, at which point one person or the other may request my presence, and I would go there.
- T. Is that through the local?
- D. That is through the company. And we also have a human resource person who

comes in and discusses conflicts concerning discrimination and things of that nature. The traditional union rep does not get involved in those issues either. I go in on the initial call, and the minute they say discrimination, then I call the human resource person who is schooled in that and that is their job.

T: And the human resource person is what?

D: That is a union rep.

T: What other non-work or -union activities are you involved in?

D: I am involved in almost everything having to do with our union. I have been elected several times as a delegate to District 7, which is comprised of six states where the delegates go and report on activities that are going on in their locals, good things and bad things, contract negotiations and things of that sort. Difficulties with management. I was also elected to go to the convention this year where Ed Fryer, who used to be the president of our local, was just elected as our international president. [I] was real, real involved in his election campaign. I do organizing on the side. I work as a part-time union organizer, organizing plants that do not have unions in them. I am busy all the time. [Laughter]

T: I understand that you are currently attending Kent State?

D: No, I am not attending Kent State. We were at Kent State for the Education Committee, going through history, going through the archives up there to get the history together on our local because we felt that it would be necessary for our 2,000 new members who maybe have not been brought into the union properly, that they should know where we have been and what the struggles have been and that they did not just walk in here and get handed all this good stuff. So, we thought it was real important, and that is an ongoing process.

T: What type of success have you had educating the new members?

D: Like I said before, we are starting to bring them on. We had record numbers that attended the Winter Leadership School in Michigan this year. We took 34 people with us, which was traditionally something that maybe five or six people went to. So I think we have had good success.

T: With the newer members, the younger generation of workers coming in, do you feel that they are more or less active?

D: It is really hard to judge because when we were at that age and we were doing it, you know, I cannot really say. But I know that they are very active, we have got them running for elected offices. As a matter of fact, some of the older guys are real ticked off at us because we brought these kids on, so to speak, and they are

out there running against them. And I told them from the beginning, when I got elected to my job, I said, "I am just teaching you so there is somebody to take over when I decide to leave. Now come on." A lot of the guys out there think we are taking shots at them by doing that because, traditionally, our guys that are union reps think that they own that job and if you challenge them, they get a real attitude about it. So, it is kind of interesting to sit back and watch it happen.

T: By taking on different chairs within the union, are you stipend? Do you get any incentives in pay?

D: No. None. Actually, you lose money because chairing the committee's is like a voluntary thing. If you schedule meetings and it is partially into your shift, you can be excused Union Activity for those hours, but you do not get paid. It may be reason for reluctance on some people's part, but there is a misconception out there in the plant that if you are involved in a union and you are doing these things, that somehow or another, you are being compensated for it. And as a matter of fact, when you run against some of these guys in the good ole boys club, they put this information out there to, more or less stigmatize you. So you do a lot of clean-up work, going around saying, "Hey, look. I do not get paid for this. I am volunteering." And nobody believes it, but it is the truth. They use it against you.

T: It sounds like they are trying to curb activity.

D: What they are trying to do is, maybe, put the brakes on someone who they see is gaining popularity or whatever. Being recognized for doing hard work, I believe that that has been the basis for my success, because the membership knows that I work hard for them and that shows through. If you love your members and you work hard for them, that shows through. So, basically, whatever the guys say about you, some people are going to believe it, but the people who really know you do not believe it, and they will defend you. So you build a broader base and broader base and broader base, and I do not know if it really works to your disadvantage or not, or if it makes them end up looking stupid.

T: Do you know how the polls turned out percentage-wise when you were elected union representative?

D: Percentage-wise? Yeah, I beat him, out of 300 votes, by 27. As far as the break down of men and women, no, I do not have that, but I have it by the plant. I beat him overwhelmingly in every plant, except for one, where I knew I had to win a third of the vote up there to win the election, and I did. I won a third of the vote. That was, primarily, a plant where his daughter worked and where some of his best supporters were and there were a lot of women who were my age working in that plant, too, and I knew if I could appeal to those women that I had the

election won, because I beat him everywhere else

T How would you appeal to the members that would fall within your age bracket?

D Basically, they know me because they know that I am involved in education and social action and everything I just let them know that I had the educational background My leaf-let never ever said the other guy was no good It just talked about my qualifications and my hard work and let them know that my children were raised now so that I had, really, nothing holding me down, that I could devote all my energy to this job, full time And I think that that, maybe, is a stigma that women have attached to them, because we do so many things besides our union activity, that people tend to think that maybe we do not really have enough time to devote to it So, I let them know that, you know, I was going to do it and I was going to do it full-time I was in it and I was not going to back off And that I had the fight and the initiative and the guts to do the job, and I think that was real important

He tried to use that against me He tried to say I was out there appealing to women, saying, "Oh, it is about time women started voting for women " And I never did that As a matter of fact, when I would approach women and they would say to me, "Oh, well we need a woman in there," I would tell them, "Do not vote for me because I am a woman Vote for me because you know I can do the job And so when he wrote about it in his leaf-let, he said I was out there doing that, they all knew it was a lie So he got branded a liar right off the bat, and they knew they could not trust him

T I take it that come election time, there is a lot of mud slinging?

D. Oh, absolutely

T Do you feel having children and family issues affect union participation?

D Well, it does It did not with me because, like I said, I have been involved, my kids are 25 and 28 They were brought up in a home where their mother was a union activist and, maybe, did not get dinner on the table at all the right times because of it But a lot of the young women that I speak to now in my effort to get them involved, tell me, "Well, I cannot really do that because I have a six year old and I cannot really spend that much time away from home " And so, basically, what we try to teach them is it is strictly voluntary and we know you cannot be there every week. Whatever amount of time that you can afford to volunteer, that is when we want you We want you involved in the projects you want to be involved in You do not have to be involved in every project And so, that gets them involved and gets them into it and gives them a little bit of a taste of it You just watch them grow from there. It is really cool

T What are the positive in-roads that your union has created for women since you

have been a member?

- D: There are not any positive in-roads that anybody has created. My opinion is, the positive in-roads are there because we took them, we made them, and we paved them -- whatever you want to say. If you did not have gutsy women that have been involved, there would be no positive in-roads. It is not a society that people are willing to step aside and let you have something that they feel belongs to them. And by people, I mean the men. We have, more or less, had to make our own way and prove ourselves time and time again, where maybe the men get it just based on the fact that they are somebody's friend. So we work hard.
- T: Is there anything that your union is trying to do as far as outside events? You mentioned a picnic, things like that, to get a more family oriented involvement.
- D: Well, we have been doing some rallies. Two Sundays ago, one of our sisters -- General Electric Corporation is faced with a contract June 1. They are fellow IUE members. There are 26,000 of them in the IUE. If they go on strike, it is going to hurt all of us, so we have been doing rallies around the country to try to show the CEO of GE that we are behind them and we are going to do whatever it takes. But they are family-oriented rallies. We are starting to bring our children to things like that. When WCI was on strike, we brought our children down there. I think we are doing a lot of things that are involving our families that, maybe, traditionally, we did not use to do. We are trying to show the community, too, that this is a family thing and it is not like a bunch of violent, crazy people out here, you know, that are going to throw sticks and rocks and hurt each other. We are just, really, working-class men and women that have a place in this community, and that is basically it. Our families are involved just as much as we are.
- T: You just mentioned you are a hard-working working-class. Having your position to be in skilled-labor like you are, and to enjoy higher wages, as compared to other jobs, how would you consider yourself economically? Would you consider yourself to be working-class or in the middle class?
- D: We are definitely working-class people. Some of us may have enjoyed higher wages based on over-time or something like that. But none of us have gotten rich doing the jobs that we do. You have to bust your back to go out there and make a high wage and be compared to your white-collar workers, although, many of us have as much education as they do and some of us more. We are definitely working-class.
- T: Now I would like to discuss any involvement you have had in labor disputes.
- D: We have been fortunate at Packard. We were involved in a twelve-hour strike one time. I was involved in that, doing picket duty. But we have been there for

our community. When Trumbull Memorial Hospital was on strike -- you probably do not remember that -- but they busted the union over there and hired scab workers. We were over there for weeks. Ever Wednesday we went over and closed down Market Street and rallied and picketed and it really was not too much avail. Then AXME went on strike, which was the welfare department, and we went down there and assisted them.

More recently we were at WCI and we became involved in that through efforts of their Women's Committee who contacted -- I was chair of the Women's Committee at that time, so they contacted me here. They went out to Lordstown and got those women involved, and all the unions in the district. And we went down there and had what was called the Women's March to the Gate, which was real instrumental in letting WCI know that they meant business, that the union meant business, and that we were going to be there in their face. They also hired replacement scab workers and they housed them in motels up in Liberty. We went up there and staged protests and did little songs and dances for the guys and let them know, you know, what was their wife doing while they were here in town. You know, just acted crazy and did things like that. [Laughter]

And again, with the GE rallies that we are having right now, although they are not on strike, sometimes it is better to prevent a strike than it is to get involved after the fact, so we are starting to look at things, maybe, a little bit differently in the labor movement. Starting to band together before it happens to let them know we are going to be here. I see some progress here, so maybe a new way of thinking. I am kind of excited about it.

T I have seen one of the union publications. I saw in the back of it a list of products they have asked the members to boycott, from non-union service industries. Can you go into that?

D A lot of them are, like Bridgestone, Firestone, we were boycotting them, because of the fact that they were on strike, trying to break the union. That is primarily where that list comes from. People that are either unfair to the people that work for them, or there may be strikes going on. So that is where we get that boycott list from.

T Do you feel members comply with those boycotts?

D It just depends. Each one I would have to base on an individual basis. I do not think they could look at that list and remember everything that is on that list. I think when Firestone was busting that union, we did major promotions in the plant, told everybody, "Do not go to Sears, do not buy Firestone tires." Do not do this, do not do that. And they basically complied. Right now our big thing has been USA Today, because of the Detroit Free Press and the news being on strike, they hired replacement workers up there. The union members actually started their own paper. It actually publishes the USA Today, too, which a whole lot of us did not know until we went to Michigan to school, and they were

going on and on and on about it. We did some rallies up there, came back in the plant, put up posters all over all the union desks and everything saying, "Do not buy USA Today. It is a scab paper." So, we still see a USA Today every now and then in the plant, but basically we do not see too many of them. I have seen a lot of the boxes from the neighborhood being pulled out. The one guy that has the gas station across the street from our plant pulled his right out of there because we went over there and complained to him. So they can be effective, but you have to get the word out to the members, and it is difficult to do that with a list of 50 different things.

T Right. Now, is there a K-mart here locally that is non-union?

D Yes. The deal with K-mart is, the Commercial Food Workers of America are trying to unionize the grocery in Super K-mart, and so they have informational pickets down there at all the gates. What we try to tell everybody to do is, you know, even though the store is not being picketed, the food section of the store is. I will not even drive down that road. That one store that is down there, Kohl's, I am dying to go in that store. I will not even drive down that road because I do not want those picketers to think I am going to K-mart. We are trying to tell everybody to stay away from there.

T What has been the most positive experience you have had, as a woman, in the union?

D Probably because I feed off of people, the most positive experience that I have had is being able to help other women come on and watching them, like I said. You get them a little bit involved and you just watch their involvement grow and you nurture them. It is like planting a seed and you watch to flower bloom. That has been my most positive experience. Not only what I get out of it personally, because I get a lot out of it, but to watch the other women come on and to watch their involvement grow. And, I guess, being a mentor, that is the most important thing to me now.

T What about the negative experiences you have had?

D You do not have enough tape. [Laughter]

T Sorry to hear that.

D The negative experiences, the things that bother me the most, are actually my union brothers, because they see you gaining momentum or gaining popularity or gaining power, the things that they will do to cut you short. Those are the most negative things.

T Could you be specific?

- D I could be, yeah. Some of the things that I have gone through in the past six months, since I have had this job, I have had the person that works directly above me go into the plant and tell people that I do not write good statements of facts, when he has never come to me and said, "Geez, there is something lacking in your statement facts. Maybe you could do this better or that better." Just doing things to undercut you. I do not know if that is the person who did this or not, [but] you know, starting some nasty, terrible, personal rumors about you. Things of that nature that you think might have went out 20 years ago, but they are still alive and well in the labor movement. So, those kind of things.
- T That is one of the purposes of this interview, to see if issues you have faced in the past when you first started have gotten any better.
- D. Right. They are still there. They have gotten worse because the more power that I have gained, personally, the worse the stories get, and although they are not true, it is hard to beat it down when it is being done undercover, so to speak.
- T Do you feel trying to influence women to become more active in the union has become more common? Are other members trying to help encourage other younger members.
- D Yes. For the most part, yes. And especially at this time. I have 400 more hours until I can retire. I will have my 30 years in. I probably am not going to go at that time. But I think most of us that recognize the need to leave something behind us, and we know that business will go on and life goes on, and all that stuff. But, you have to educate them and you have to teach them what it is all about, because things are different now than they were 20 years ago, and they are certainly different than they were when we started 30 years ago. And they have to know the basis, where we all came from. That is what we are trying to teach them, that we did not just walk in there and the company just gave us the standard of living that we have today. That we had to fight and struggle for it. And while we have been lucky -- like I said, not been on strike, which we may be faced with in a couple of days here -- our membership has enjoyed good wages, good benefits, good livings, and the people that are coming up behind us need to know that the company did not give that to us.
- T You mentioned current labor disputes right now. What are the main issues?
- D Our local agreement was shot down by a margin of about two to one about a month ago, and our main issues are some of those things that I already spoke about, with the third tier people, the continuous run people wanting premium time for premium hours worked. Some skilled-trade issues that we bargained in good faith for a combination of skilled-trades classifications, because we were promised 2,000 additional jobs, and the company has not come forth with those jobs, and so now we all feel like we have been dumped on. That we gave and

gave and gave, and they are not prepared to give back. So there are a lot of issues. It has pretty well got the membership divided. So, we will see

T Do you feel that management tries to divide the union along gender issues?

D Along gender issues? Management is very pro at dividing the members. I am not sure if they do it gender-wise or not. Like I said, in our facility any job is up for grabs, no matter what your gender is. I think they divide the membership on issues not necessarily gender related.

T You mentioned tier three. Could you explain that?

D That is the CHP's. Tier three is the CHP hiring plan, the Competitive Hiring Plan. Traditional being the first tier, PHP, Progressive Hiring Plan, being the second tier, and CHP, Competitive Hiring Plan, being the third tier.

T Where would you like to see your union ten or twenty years from now?

D I would like to see them be 20,000 members strong. I would like to see everybody at parity. I would like to see no division in our ranks. And I would like to see them be united. That is what I would like to see them be.

T Okay, great. Thank you.

D Thank you, Nick.

End of Interview