

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Women's Herstory Project

Women and Work

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ANNA MAE TOMILLO

Interviewed

by

Arlene Grohl

on

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INTERVIEWEE: ANNA MAE TOMILLO

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DATE: October 23, 1987

G: This is an interview with Anna Mae Tomillo for the Women's Resource Center and the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, by Arlene Grohl, on October 23, 1987, at 4271 Wedgewood, in Youngstown, Ohio, at her residence.

Anna Mae, will you tell us where you were born and a little about your childhood?

T: I was born in Hubbard, well, really outside of Hubbard in Coalburg, July 27, 1922. I was the youngest of ten children. Two of them died before I was born, so I had one brother and six sisters at home besides myself. My brother was married and had three children living at home with us, so it was a large family, a large home; we lived out in the country. We learned to entertain ourselves, little things like my father used to keep hotbeds and huge plants. We used to play in the yard; we would pick up weeds and pretend we were selling the plants until we got old enough when we were allowed to do this. Customers would come and we could sell the plants and make a little money for ourselves.

G: At what age do you remember earning your first . . .

T: Oh, I suppose twelve or thereabouts.

G: And it was selling these hotbed plants?

T: Yes, selling those hotbed plants.

G: You felt you did it just because it was considered

the thing to do when you were young?

- T: Yes, everybody did it and everybody worked in the yard and in the garden. I can remember that we had to get up in the morning before the sun was up because then it wasn't too hot. My father would plant acres of peppers and tomatoes. We would have to go out and weed and hoe them and he would take them to the market and sell them.
- G: How did you spend this money?
- T: I could remember one time at Christmas, my mom would give us money. I was making a Christmas list as to what to buy for each of my sisters and my brother and the nieces and nephews and how I was going to spend ten cents here and ten cents there. All I could think of for my sisters were necklaces. I was so surprised when I went out to shop the things that I could buy. I did not end up buying all necklaces.
- G: What did your father do for a living?
- T: He worked on the railroad.
- G: So this was just a secondary job that the whole family pitched in?
- T: Yes, the whole family pitched in.
- G: And did your mother ever work outside the home?
- T: No, never outside the home.
- G: At what age do you remember finding a direction toward your career?
- T: Well, when I was in high school, being the youngest, my sisters told me I got whatever I wanted because I was the youngest, which was probably true. When I got through high school, the last Summer I decided I wasn't going to go to college; I was just going to take the Summer off and go to work in the Fall. My mother had a sister living in Chicago, so we went to Chicago to visit. Over Labor Day, we went to Buffalo, where she had an aunt and we went to the lake where they had a cottage. When I came home, I had a sister who wanted me to go to school; there were seven sisters and the two oldest had not gone to college, but the third one went to college and she was helping the rest of us through college. She asked me what I was going to do now. I said, "Get a job." She said I was going to go to college because all the rest of them had gone to college and I was going to go to college too. Well, I had taken all the business courses in high school and that was what I was interested in. My

sister Judy, who was next to me in age, was in college and was a senior at YSU. She was taking business education and I thought I wanted business. I was taking business education too because my sister insisted that I go to college. Of course, I'm glad today that I did. So I went to YSU and took business.

G: It seems it was something that you were trained most for even though it was an inerrant sort of training.

T: Yes, that's right.

G: Do you remember any particular teacher from grade school through high school that had an influence on you that directed you into your career?

T: Well, in high school I had a teacher, but she was ancient. She probably wasn't, but at that time I thought she was ancient. She was sort of odd, but I always liked her. Miss Lyons was her name. She was the shorthand and typing teacher. I was very active in the department, working on the school newspaper doing the typing. I enjoyed that.

G: What was your first job other than selling for the family from the hotbeds?

T: The first job I had was during my last semester in my senior year in college. My sister had been helping me through school, paying my tuition, and so on. She was going to get married, so I got a job at a college library to help pay my tuition.

G: What were your duties?

T: I can't remember that.

G: When did you get the job? Do you remember interviewing for it?

T: Yes, the gentleman who was in charge of that at the time may have been the bursar of the college. I think his name was Mr. Pritchard. I went to see him and explained the situation that my sister had been helping, and I probably exaggerated the situation a little bit; she was getting married and so he got me that job to pay for my tuition.

G: How many hours a week did you work and how did you fit this in the last semester of college?

T: I wish I could tell you; I can't remember. I worked just one semester. Then when I got out of college I had to get a teaching job. I filled out applications and I went around. There were two areas where I applied: Poland--I

thought I would like to teach there, and the other was in Chagrin Falls. Both of them told me that everything was good, but I had two strikes against me; I was Italian and I was Catholic.

G: What year was this?

T: This was 1943.

G: Why do you think this was important at the time?

T: This was very important in these areas because these were close-knit communities. Even in Hubbard, there were a lot of Catholics and a lot of Italians. If you were Italian, you had a harder time getting a job. After awhile it changed. When I got out of college they came right out and told me this. In both cases, because I was Catholic and Italian they couldn't hire me.

G: How did that sit with you? What did you do about it?

T: Well, you accepted it because this was the way it was in many places. When I applied elsewhere, you had to live in the community where you would teach. So then I got a job in Newton Falls, Ohio. I had to live there. It turned out to be very nice. It was a nice school and a nice place. I enjoyed it because there were six single women on the faculty. Two of them lived in town and the other four came from out of town. We each roomed in town. We rented a room individually in different homes. Although, the first year I was there, during the second semester, one of the other teachers and I rented a small apartment together. But she got married and didn't come back. So I just had to rent a room each year.

G: Could you have kept the apartment at that time by yourself?

T: Probably not; I probably couldn't have afforded it. The first year my salary was \$1,150 a year divided by twelve months; I cleared \$86 a month. I think this is interesting. I cleared \$86 a month. I had to have a car to go back and forth. I had no money.

G: From Newton Falls to Hubbard did you have to go?

T: Yes, from Hubbard to Newton Falls I had to get a car to go back and forth. I had no money. When my sister got married, she had given me her car. I had an accident and it was demolished. So I had to find a car and I had no money. The only way I could get this car was through the finance company. My brother who was married had a family and his oldest boy was just nine months younger than I was, and he told me I couldn't go to a finance company.

Well, I didn't have money and my father didn't have money, so my brother said he would pay for it and I would pay him back. I paid him \$35 a month. The car must have cost around \$400 or something like that. It was a Dodge car. I paid him back \$35 a month. I paid \$5 a week for my room, which came to \$20. That was \$35. We used to live on a dollar a day. We would buy food and my landlady would give me breakfast every morning, coffee and toast and whatever. We had no cafeteria at school. Someone would run out and buy us a sandwich. For lunch and dinner, we spent a dollar a day to eat. This brought me to \$85 a month and I cleared \$86. I would go home most weekends. My mother, who was used to cooking for a very large family, would give me food, especially when we had the apartment. I would take food back. My brother would ask if I had enough gas and he would fill my car up with gas. My dad asked if I had enough money and he might give me ten dollars now and then. My mother might give me a little bit of money. I got through the first year that way. That first summer after I taught school I got a job at Ambriola's Italian Food Market downtown, working in the office.

G: Where is that?

T: In downtown Youngstown working for that summer.

G: How old were you when you got your first teaching job?

T: I was twenty-one.

G: Do you remember all of what you just described as being a hardship? Were you worried about anything?

T: No, we were having a good time.

G: Oh, you were having fun?

T: Yes, because two of the girls that were in Newton Falls were sisters and they were living in their family home. We spent a lot of time there. The rest of us each rented a room. The first year I couldn't save anything, but the second year I saved money.

G: How did you manage to do that?

T: We got one hundred dollars a year raise which was ten dollars a month more. So we saved ten dollars a month, or whatever the case may have been. We took a trip next Summer.

G: At that point did you view teaching as your life-long

career or how did you view this work at that time in your life?

T: I enjoyed it. The reason I quit was because I was disgusted with the administration. I was there four years.

G: In what regard?

T: Teachers weren't being treated fairly.

G: The female teachers?

T: No, everybody in general. One of my friends who was teaching was a foreign language teacher and I thought she was doing a good job. The superintendent had said something to her--I don't want to mention his name--that he thought she ought to resign because the school board wasn't going to rehire her next year. Of course, she was all upset. She didn't want to have this on her record, so she resigned. After this was all over with, we found out this was not true.

G: What course did she have?

T: She was so angry she decided to go back to college and work on her Master's degree and she didn't want to teach.

G: This situation has obviously a lesson in it that you still carry with you. How do you view that now?

T: If it were to happen to me today, I wouldn't resign. I don't know what I would have done at that time if it were me. I would have followed it through and found out what I had done wrong. I would want to know. Now tell me. You don't teach the whole year long and at the end of the teacher's first year, never have anyone tell you something is wrong, then tell you that you will not be rehired. I would follow through and want to know why. Then we were young in spirit, I suppose, and she just went along with it.

G: Was she able to find other work?

T: She went back to Ohio State and got her Master's degree. She's teaching at a college in California. So then I decided since she was going back to college, I would go back to college too.

G: So you quit because you felt that strongly about the injustice that was given to her?

T: Yes.

G: Did anybody care that you quit for that reason?

- T: I don't know. I felt there was no point to this. We could go back to college together as we were good friends. If I decided I didn't want to teach I could get a job in accounting. I turned in my resignation. I waited until school was out in June. I turned in my resignation without any reason at all. I got a job here in accounting.
- G: At that point you probably had enough money to be considered independent.
- T: We saved money, but we traveled. One year, we went to California. We drove through the southern states and returned through the northern states. These single teachers, two sisters and another teacher from Salem, and I would travel together. Except for holidays, I wasn't allowed to go, even though I was over twenty-one. Everybody came home for holidays in my family and you had to be there.
- G: Did you prefer being there?
- T: Well, I wanted to travel too. One year, I can't remember how my father allowed me to go during Easter vacation. We had Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday off. We had to be back in school by Tuesday. Thursday night I drove to Pittsburgh and parked my car there. We flew to Miami and came back Monday evening to go back to school Tuesday.
- G: Do you remember what year this was?
- T: This was probably in 1946.
- G: You were talking about having saved money and worked during the summer.
- T: I had worked the summer job the first summer. I did accounting for a wholesale grocery store. I got a summer job there.
- G: So you became used to your life style? It was enough money to live off of and you traveled where you wanted to.
- T: One year we went to the New England states.
- G: It was adventurous at that time.
- T: Yes, it was.
- G: This was not typical.
- T: People didn't do this. Other teachers that I knew weren't doing this.



G: Did any of your sisters or brother disapprove of this?

T: No. By this time my sisters were married. When I was in college one sister got married. Judy, who was next to my age, was working and she joined the Navy. So she was away from home. Then there was Mayme and Marguerite. They were living in California. Marguerite had gone out during the Depression. She met somebody there and got married and she has been living there all the time. Mayme was living here in town and her husband was out of work as a welder, so they went to California. Adeline, who helped put all of us through college, got married in November before I graduated from college. I was alone, although my brother and his wife and children lived at home. They never moved out.

G: So you were allowed to not have to come home, except during the holidays?

T: Yes, just that one time I was allowed to go.

G: Did you recognize that for these sort of leeways that was being given to you?

T: Yes, because before this time I couldn't go anywhere. They, the teachers, went to New York and I wanted to go, but I wasn't allowed because everybody came home for the holidays. I had friends from high school that were the same way. That was the way it was. I didn't get to New York until I was married. I did finally get there.

G: What kind of things did you do on this trip, the typical things or was it restrained because you were a teacher?

T: Yes, you never told anybody you were a teacher. I can remember coming home from the weekend with one friend of mine who was a teacher. She was from Puerto Rico and she and I had the apartment together. She came home with me for the weekend. Mill Creek Park was just wonderful. We would drive through the park and picnic there. This was during the war when they had soldiers in town. We met a couple of young men in the park and we didn't dare tell them we were teachers.

G: Why was that?

T: Well, because you thought of teachers as being bold and old school marms. They didn't do anything, but stay home and grade papers. Teachers didn't do a lot.

G: What did you do when you traveled?

- T: When we traveled it was summer time and nobody really cared, but if it was around here we had to be very careful. We would save money too. We would stay at a hotel. We never went to a Holiday Inn or anything like that. I could remember we had a toaster with us. We would make instant coffee and toast. We would eat our big meal at noon because it was always less expensive. At night we would just have sandwiches or sometimes we would go to a delicatessen and buy something for a picnic lunch and eat in the park. We were twenty-one or twenty-two and having fun. We would stop wherever we wanted, Yellow Stone National Park, the petrified forest, on to California.
- G: Were you the first in your family to travel and to keep coming home? I know the others moved away, but did they share these adventures?
- T: No, my dad worked on the railroad. My dad got railroad passes. I had been to California once before. I was a junior in high school. My mother and I went by train to California because my sister lived there. She had not been home for a few years, so my dad got us a pass and we went out. We spent three weeks there. During my junior year in high school shorthand class, there was one boy in the class who lived near me. I was never very fond of the boy. Miss Lyons was showing us how to write the names of cities in shorthand. "Now who has been to the city of Los Angeles?" I was the only one in the class. I raised my hand and said, "I've been to Los Angeles." This kid turned around and said, "Who has been to Los Angeles?" One of the girls behind me said, "I've been to Los Angeles and what are you going to do about it?" I was heartbroken because no one had been to Los Angeles and now he thought this girl had gone instead of me.
- G: Yet it was an ordinary occurrence in your family to travel.
- T: I had gone to Chicago, I don't know how many times, with my mother. My brother was very active in the union and they had their office there. I went to Chicago with him for a couple of days and helped him with his office work. We went there because my mom had a sister in Chicago, and before that she was in Pittsburgh, so we went to Pittsburgh often. We went to California because my sister was there. In Buffalo and Rochester my mom had relatives and we would visit them also.
- G: This large family has been able so far to travel almost as far as you wanted to go at the time and their support helped put everyone through school, including you. At the end of four years of teaching, I suppose that points later to a discussion we are going to have to have about

unions because it has come into play several times during the interview. You quit. You knew for awhile you could go out and support yourself with another type of job. What type of job did you get?

T: I got a job doing accounting.

G: How did you get that job?

T: I got that job through the employment office. This friend of mine at Ohio State thought I should go there. I thought that sounded like a good idea. I would go to Ohio State and work for my Master's degree.

G: Was it that easy? You make it sound easy.

T: Yes, I decided I would go. I got this job at Ohio State through her help working for the Dean of the College of Business. I was to start the first week in December. I would start going to school in January. The day I quit my job, my father died very unexpectedly that night. Naturally, I could not leave. I called her and told her what had happened. I said, "As soon as everything is done here, I'll see what I can do." When this was all done, there was no job for me. The dean needed somebody immediately.

G: How much time had passed?

T: Not very long, maybe a week or so. In the meantime one of my sisters said to me, "Now you are going to go and mom is going to be here all alone." My brother, his wife, and children were living there. My sister didn't think I should leave and she convinced me to stay home. I found another job through the employment office. It was accounting again.

G: Was the employment office a typical easy route to find a job at this time?

T: Yes, and through the newspaper. I got both jobs through the employment office. In fact, the summer job I had at Ambriola's, I got that through the employment agency too and had to pay a fee for the job.

G: What was this accounting job? What were some of your responsibilities? For what company and how long did you stay with them?

T: This second job I had was with the Frank Sherman Company. This was probably the best job I ever had. They were super nice people to work for. They had two companies under one roof. So we had two complete sets of books to keep, one

for each company. I did all the accounting including all the financial statements. I did everything except the tax reports at the end of the year.

G: Do you mean you just stepped into that . . .

T: Yes. There was a woman who had worked for their father and I never met him. I was hired on Friday to start Monday because she was leaving on Monday. She came in on Monday morning and worked with me for an hour. I had been teaching accounting. I felt pretty secure and felt I knew what I was doing. If I would have taken it right out of college, I'm not sure I would have been able to do it. Since I taught it, I felt I really knew it. I went in and stepped right into the job with two hours training. I called her once for some information. The accountant used to come in every month to do the financial statements. As I was capable of doing financial statements, the accountant came once a year thereafter. The employers told them I could do this. I got a nice raise for it because they saved money by not having the accountants come in every month. They were super nice people to work for.

G: You call it one of the best jobs you have ever had. Why is that?

T: First of all, there were two brothers and they both were very good to me. I started there in February and I got married in September. I got two weeks salary and a \$50 wedding gift, which was quite a lot at that time. I did a lot of extra things too. I used to have to make the bank deposits every day. I would take extra time to do this. I would go to the bank downtown.

G: Were you carrying the money with you?

T: Yes. The first day on the job, one of the brothers asked me to bring him a lunch back. I asked him what he wanted. He said, "I don't know, bring me a sandwich, it doesn't matter." I was not thinking and brought a ham and cheese; the man was Jewish. I was so embarrassed about this. He said, "Don't worry about it; that's all right."

G: Why did you say it was one of the biggest mistakes you've ever made?

T: It wasn't my biggest mistake, but the most embarrassing.

G: When did it dawn on you?

T: Not until I got back. He looked at it. He said, "That's all right." He ate half of it. Both brothers lived on

the north side and they would take turns driving to work. The day that one of them didn't drive, sure enough his wife had to go somewhere. I would pick her up, take her to the beauty shop, take her out to the country club, and run errands for them. When Christmas came I always got a bonus check. I was always doing little favors for them too. There was no pressure. You had a job and you had to do it and you could go ahead and do it.

G: It may have been your attitude from the very beginning?

T: If there was something like I needed time off . . . We got married in September and on November 1, my husband's uncle died in New York. My husband couldn't get off, but his brother did. My father-in-law, Pat's brother, his wife, my sister-in-law, and I went up to New York. My employer said, "Don't worry about it Anne, go right ahead." They always called me Anne, never Anna Mae, just Anne. I could see not only the way they treated me, but men who worked there. I was the only woman in the place. These were men who worked out in the scrap yard. A lot of them were homeless. Of course, there were family men there and it didn't make any difference. If they needed something all they did was ask. If they needed five dollars, I would give them five dollars. I would mark it on his card and take it out of his pay. They were good to so many people like that.

G: Did you say those two brothers still run the company?

T: No, both are retired. Their sons-in-law run it.

G: Did those characteristics that you described about that company ever change during the time that you were there?

T: No, not at the time I was there.

G: How long were you there?

T: I worked for them eight years.

G: Did you quit at the time . . .

T: I quit after I was married. I wanted to stay home for awhile.

G: At that time you had already worked twelve years after high school.

T: Yes, sure. No, it couldn't have been twelve years; I got married at twenty-five. It was probably ten years or close to it. After Patty was born, until she was two years old, I stayed home. She was sick a lot. Then the doctor told me, "You better go to work because taking care of this

child is too much." The doctor said I should get away in order to help my physical and emotional state. As it happened, my husband was laid off from his job.

G: Was he the one who took care of the child?

T: Yes, he was the one who took care of the child. He stayed home with her and I went to work for a company that was appliance wholesalers. The woman I replaced had taken a six month's leave of absence. She didn't know whether she wanted to quit or go to another job. I can't remember how I found out about this, probably through the employment office. They told me from day one, this is six months; if she doesn't come back, fine, you have a job.

G: Did you have any quarrels about that?

T: No. I thought it was six months and things would be better and he would be back to work. She came back in six months. I stayed home for a couple of months or so. Then I went back to work for Sherman's again. They called and wanted to know if I was interested. I went back to work for them again.

G: How long did you stay with them?

T: Four more years.

G: Four more years. Did you have the same position and the same responsibilities?

T: Yes.

G: Did it feel the same?

T: Yes. I stayed there until I went back into teaching when Patty was in first grade.

G: So you made that transition into the first move of your teaching career?

T: Yes.

G: Why?

T: Patty and I would go to school together. We were living on the north side. In the meantime, we bought a house on the south side. When Patty was three and a half or four years old, in the apartment we lived in my landlady would take care of her. She had three small children. She would take care of her when I had to go to work in the morning. When we moved to the south side, her

father took care of her because he was home. When September came and he was going back to work, a nursery school had been opened up on Midlothian Boulevard. This was Mother Goose Nursery. Patty was their first little girl to enroll there.

G: This must have been 1953 . . .

T: Yes, late 1953. Patty went there for three years.

G: So you got up and you got her dressed and you took her . . .

T: Yes, I took her there in the morning and picked her up on my way home at night.

G: Where were you teaching?

T: That was when I was working at Sherman's, before I went to school. The parish priest said to me, "Patty will be coming to school here and you'll be with her." This was St. Nicholas in Struthers. We lived on Brownlie Woods. I thought, well, I'll go with her; I'll be with her, and I don't have to worry about a babysitter. We would be together; when she's home, I'll be home. I thought that was a good idea. I decided I would do this. I cut my salary from \$85 a week that I was making at that time in accounting, which was not too bad, to \$260 a month.

G: Were you conscious at first with the loss of wages?

T: Oh, sure.

G: But you felt this was more attractive?

T: Yes, this was more important.

G: You said you just decided to take this job. Did you ever talk to your husband about this?

T: We would discuss it.

G: I mean not to probe your relationship, but probe your sense of independence about the kind of work you would like to do.

T: He said whatever I wanted to do, I should do it. He said it's up to me what I want to do and this is still true. His brother said something to him about my retiring. He said, "No." His brother asked why. He said, "When she is ready to she will; she isn't, so she won't."

G: When you changed jobs to work as a teacher, where did

you start?

- T: I started at St. Nicholas in Struthers. I started teaching in Struthers because that is where Patty was going to go to school.
- G: That was on the elementary level, which was a new experience for you.
- T: Yes, although I already had a number of elementary courses. I started teaching seventh grade, which was not too bad. I taught for the first year. Then I asked if I could transfer to the high school because I didn't like it. I thought she could go in the morning and we would still be together somewhat. At that time there was a shortage of teachers. The principal, who was the assistant pastor, was in charge of the school. I didn't know that. If he wouldn't release me, I couldn't go to another school within the diocese. If I were in a public school, there was nothing he could have done about it. He wouldn't transfer me. I went over to Mooney to see the principal there. He needed a business teacher. He talked to me and hired me on the spot. He told me what I would teach and that he would send me a contract. I never got the contract and I was never able to contact him again.
- G: He had given you the job not knowing that you were tied to St. Nicholas.
- T: Well, he knew I was coming from St. Nicholas, but he just thought the priest would release me. I didn't know the priest had to do this. I found out later that the priest, the principal, and Superintendent Malone, the present bishop, kept blaming each other why I didn't get transferred to the high school.
- G: Who did you have to question? What did you do while you were waiting for this contract?
- T: We tried to get ahold of Monsignor Hughes, Mooney principal, at that time. I couldn't get ahold of him and finally this job was given to somebody else.
- G: Who finally gave you this information?
- T: Somebody in the office. The job was given to somebody else. This is how I found out that the priest would not release me, the pastor at St. Nicholas.
- G: Why was he so possessful?
- T: Because he couldn't get teachers.



G: And apparently he had no sympathy for the other school because they were in the same situation.

T: Yes, because they had to find their own teachers. It was funny when I went back, when I signed my contract, I wanted eighth grade, the bigger the students, the better. There was a nun there who taught eighth grade, so I had to take seventh. The first day of school I was mad at the principal, the pastor, because he wouldn't release me. I walked in. He was standing at the top of the stairs and said, "Good morning, Anna Mae." I said, "Good morning, Father." He said, "Gee, I have some bad news for you. We would like to get men in the elementary school, but we haven't been able to. This year I was able to get a man, but he wouldn't come unless he taught seventh grade, so I put you in fifth grade." I said, "Thank you, Father," and I walked out. I went back to my car and went home.

G: The kids were in school . . .

T: Yes, this was the first day of school.

G: And you just went off. How did you feel? Did you feel angry or . . .

T: I was angry because he wouldn't release me, and to do this without my knowing.

G: Talk about being manipulated.

T: He followed me.

G: He got his car and followed you? This is getting good.

T: Yes, he came to my home and talked to me. You have to remember at this time too that we were taught that you didn't question the priest. He said it, you did it. That was it.

G: Going back to the moment before you walked out, did you decide to walk out or did . . .

T: I was surprised at myself.

G: Were you?

T: Yes, because you didn't question the priest. Now, I would, but then you just didn't. Then I went home. I was home by myself. I had a cup of coffee. He said he was sorry. I said, "Father, you wouldn't release me from my job and you know that's not what I really want to do." We had to understand their position. This was a big school. They

had 1,600 or 1,700 kids in eight grades there. He was sorry and he was apologizing. Of course, I went back. At the end of the school year, I went directly to the superintendent. I said, "If I'm not transferred to the high school, I'm going to the public schools (which was a dirty word)." He said, "I have an opening at Ursuline, would you consider that?" I said sure because it didn't make any difference to me. He set up an appointment and sent me to see the principal. He hired me on the spot. I signed a contract before I left his office.

G: What year was that?

T: That was in the Spring of 1958. I started in September of 1958 at Ursuline.

G: Was this your thirtieth year there? Did it seem that long?

T: No, not really. I've enjoyed it; it's a nice school. I like it.

G: Have you always taught the same thing?

T: I've always taught business, although I'm certified in English and social studies.

G: Are you? You don't tell anyone that.

T: No.

G: So you just got that position because you almost insisted . . .

T: Yes, either go there or to a public school.

G: Did you realize you had that much leverage?

T: No, not really. I thought maybe because if they didn't have an opening in business, what are they going to do; they can't create one for me. But, if there's an opening, I wouldn't have any trouble getting a job there, or in the public schools. Everybody could get a job if they could teach.

G: So you felt you sort of had a right to insist that they recognize your preferences?

T: Sure. I didn't want to teach grade school. I didn't like grade school. In fact, I didn't even like teaching eighth grade.

G: But on the other hand, Anna Mae, you were taking a risk?

T: Oh, sure. If they hadn't had a job, I would have applied

at the public schools. I probably would have gotten a job. If I hadn't, I knew I could stay right where I was. They would have been happy to keep me there.

G: Why do you feel that is has been to your personal advantage to stay in the parochial schools rather than the public schools?

T: Well, first of all, I enjoy it. I like the school. I like the kids. I don't care what school you go to, you're going to have good and bad kids. I enjoyed what I was doing. I was working like everybody else because we needed the money. As long as my husband was working, I wasn't looking to become wealthy. That wasn't my main purpose. I wanted to work and make enough money to have the things that we wanted. I wanted to save this money for Patty to go to college. That was what I was really working for. I didn't have to be a millionaire. I was willing to work for less money. I liked the people I was working with. I was happy there, so I thought--why change?

G: What role does the church play in your life outside of work and what do you do that you participate in the church?

T: We are not gung ho with the church. We attend church. We participate in all the church holidays, but I'm not really active in the church. I belong to the Ladies' Guild, but I don't go to the meetings. I give financial support.

G: That's the question because I thought that you indicated that you knew pretty well the hierarchy and administrators kind of on a personal level in a way that you . . .

T: If the bishop walked in, he could call me by name, only because of my association with the school. Over thirty years, I've met a lot of people and worked with them over a long period of time. But a number of priests in the diocese and the nuns in the diocese I know because I've worked with them and I've been active there. I haven't been a real active member of our parish church though.

G: Within the school setting, have you noticed during the thirty years that you have been there, that there has been a more rewarding or less rewarding time within the social context that you were teaching or that you were involved in education?

T: I think when I first went there it was much more rewarding.

G: Why do you say that?

T: First of all, I think the school was growing. We had two

sections of buildings, the old building and the new building. The new building was built in 1956. At that time enrollment was going up and up. When Patty graduated we had the largest number of students in the building. This building was built for 1,200 kids and we had 2,000 of them.

G: Did you? What year was that?

T: In 1967 or 1968.

G: Maybe we should backtrack. Is Patty your only child?

T: Patty is the only child.

G: In 1966 when she graduated . . .

T: In 1968 she graduated.

G: They had peaked an enrollment to 2,000.

T: Yes, 1,900 or so kids.

G: These were also the end of the quite turbulent times,

T: Yes.

G: So we're talking about being an educator in kind of a social context.

T: Right, and our life revolved around the school. Everything we did was around the school.

G: Do you mean your family life?

T: Yes. I started there and I won't forget my first shorthand classes. Sometimes I had fifty kids in the classroom.

G: Did you have fifty typewriters?

T: Yes. In St. Nicholas and the grade school, I had sixty-one kids in a self-contained classroom. You would be surprised what you could do when you had to. With these kind of enrollments, your classes were large. It was an accomplishment to think--look what I've done. With my classes, most of them were shorthand classes. I could see what I accomplished. These kids could not do a bit of typing when they walked in and no shorthand at all. Now I had sixty kids that I had taught. They had learned something.

G: The school must have strongly supported your . . .

T: Oh, yes.

G: . . . curriculum, business curriculum, to supply you with many typewriters.

T: At one time we had seven business teachers. Now we don't. There was a sense of accomplishment. You attended everything that went on at school. I don't know whether I felt if they expected this. They had rules like, of course, women were second-class citizens.

G: These were unwritten rules . . .

T: Unwritten rules.

G: In the building?

T: Yes, in the building when I was teaching. They had rules like this for chaperones. There were dances going on. The single teachers were required to chaperone because the married teachers had a family. The single teachers didn't have families. The kids wanted me there. I could tell they wanted me there. They would ask, "Are you coming?" Even today, "Mrs. Tomillo, you haven't been to one soccer game this year, how come?" It is true. We had a Christmas party for the faculty. It was a fun thing. I'll never forget this; our principal, Monsignor Reagan, who had a doctorate in music, played the piano. One of the other priests was a drummer and one sang. We had contests at the party. The nuns had a group doing something. The teachers . . . This was fun. We had this big Christmas party. We always got a gift.

G: This was in the building, the auditorium?

T: In the cafeteria we did this.

G: What did you have to do to perform . . .

T: I can't remember. Every year it was something different. The cook, who cooked for the kids, did a beautiful job when she put on a party. I can always remember the big bowls of shrimp cocktail. We would have this before dinner. We would walk around eating shrimp cocktail or whatever we wanted. It was fantastic.

We all went to football games. I started taking Patty when she was in third grade. She went to every football game with me. I think I had been there twelve or fifteen years before I ever missed a football game. Patty went with me. She became a part of it.

The plays, the first play they did when I was there was

"Pygmalion". I'll never forget that. Everybody went. Nobody told you you had to do this.

G: It was a family situation.

T: It was carried over this way. Of course, each principal has been a little different. They make up for things. A group of teachers the other day were talking. We had two teachers in their second year. One said, "I have never been in a school like this. If you do something, you get a handwritten note from the principal that says thanks."

G: Is that tradition or is that a new situation?

T: At different times, we had different principals. This one is more so. At the first faculty meeting, Friday, the first week of school, we had a faculty meeting with beer, pizza, and pop. This was thanking the faculty for all their help to get things going. We have a faculty meeting once a month. We started that several years ago. When the public schools got out that Monday early we had to because of the bus situation. We always have a faculty meeting that day. There won't be beer, but there will be pop, potato chips, and pretzels.

G: Was it provided by the administration as sort of appreciation?

T: Yes, appreciation.

G: Is this Father Venclarik.

T: Yes. Everybody gets a bottle of wine on their birthday. It's almost unheard of. Little things like this . . . For years I did work down there and people are amazed that I never got paid for it, but everybody did work.

G: I noticed the schools I've been in, they do demand extras from the business teacher. Is that what you're referring to, extra typing?

T: I was teaching office procedures. I had the spirit duplicator or the mimeograph, and all these machines. I had a classroom and another connecting classroom. There was a glass wall between the two rooms. The teachers would use these machines too. They would come in and say, "Anna Mae, would you do this?" I was in the middle of a class. I was always stopping to show the teachers how to do this. I brought this on myself. I finally went to the principal one day and said, "Look, we can't go on like this. We can't take the machines out of here. I need them because I'm teaching them."

Secondly, these people are running in and out. We now have more repairs because you have so many people using the machines." I took girls from my office practice class and I trained them. There were one or two girls assigned to me every period. If you wanted typing done, we did the typing; we did the mimeographing, and we did everything. The first thing you know I was making a program for everything that went on around the school. I thought this was enough of this.

G: You were supervising several activities at the same time and you're saying without extra pay?

T: Yes, without extra pay. I really didn't mind it. Then it got out of hand. Right now I do a lot of work for the Alumni Association. I don't get one cent for it; I don't ask for one cent. I enjoy doing this. I have this typewriter, a compositor. The school bought it. I think it was \$8,500.

G: What does it do?

T: This is a small printer. They came out with it after the war. IBM has it for small printing companies. We bought this at school. We were using it for printing and programs. I was training girls to do this. I have several girls who are now working for some graphic printing companies. Now IBM's typewriter is becoming obsolete. They told us they didn't want to service it. So not this summer, but the summer before I brought it home. During the summer I did all the alumni newsletters. I did all this typing for them. The man who was in charge of the Alumni Association is retired from the newspaper, Catholic Exponent. It started out as a volunteer job and part-time job for him. He heads the Alumni Association. I came down to school one day. It's the only school building I know that I've ever gone into in the summer and you will always find at least one teacher or student in the school. Somebody was always down there doing something. I said to him, "I came down here to do this, but I have so many other jobs. I can't get this done. I would like to take this typewriter home." The principal wasn't there. He said, "Go ahead, I'll give you my permission." I brought it home. I told the principal, and I've kept it there ever since.

G: What does this typewriter do that others don't do? Does it print?

T: It looks like it has been printed. You can code the machine to center and do other things, make it type evenly.

- G: Maybe you're just preventing it from breaking down by keeping it at home?
- T: Well, that's just the thing. I don't teach the girls anymore because we don't get the business students that we used to and IBM doesn't want to repair it. It's expensive. I just keep it.
- G: Talking about business students and training them, do you have a favorite success story?

T: I have two students that I met the other night at the Youngstown Area Business Teacher's Association. Both of them came up to talk to me. Both of them said to the others around, "I'm a business teacher because that is what Mrs. Tomillo is." I think the biggest satisfaction is when I have somebody come back to school to thank me for what I have done. I had one come in last week. Her father worked with my husband. They really didn't have the money. She wasn't sure if she wanted to go to college, but she was an excellent student. I sent her out on a job. We have a really good reputation in the city. We get calls all the time. I would send girls out on jobs. She came in and said, "I just want to thank you for every day I go to work. I want to thank you for this job." I asked her what she did. She was an excellent typist and now she is working on computers. She said, "Now they're going to send me to college."

I had a boy last year to stop in and see me. We lived on the south side. He lived near us. He was from a broken home. His mother had died when he was a year old. His father was living common-law. There were just a lot of problems. When I went to Ursuline, he was there. He had been expelled from Mooney and expelled from Wilson. I said to the principal, "What are we doing with this kid here?" He was in my class. One of the teachers, a choral director, was walking down the hall and from in my classroom he yelled at this teacher. This man came in and put his books down and slapped him right across the face and said, "Don't you ever call me by my first name again, and when you are in another class you don't call me at all." I talked to the principal about it. He said, "We have a Christian obligation to help anyone who needs help. This is what we're all about. If we can help one person, this is what we're supposed to do."

- G: Did the boy's behavior change after this?
- T: I don't know. He did graduate from Ursuline. He moved to California. He came back last year during the year. He knocked at my door. I went out. He said, "You probably don't remember me, do you?" I said, "No, I



don't." Twenty years is a big difference. He told me who he was. He said, "I know I gave you trouble in class, but I've learned more in that business law class than you will ever know." He showed me pictures of three of the most beautiful girls he had. He was president of a company in California. He was home for something or other and he came down to see me.

A couple of weeks ago, this man came to a football game. He was a black man with a beard and all. He came up and put his arm around me and said, "Mrs. Tomillo, how are you?" He kissed me. I thought--He called me by name so he knows me. He said, "You don't remember me?" I said, "Gee, no." He said, "I'm Bill Vaughn." He was such a nice kid. He is a doctor in Washington D.C. He looked like a bum that day. He was at a football game and just came up and talked to me. When they do it because they see you and they come up and talk to you, I think those are the rewards. You know you've done something. Someplace along the way I had something to do with that.

G: You made a difference there. You were telling me before we started the tape that you had your only daughter in class. Can we put some of that story on the record here?

T: Yes. Patty always tells me that if she had been anybody else but my daughter, she would have gotten an A in my class, but she got a B. She just doesn't think she deserved that.

G: She hasn't changed the record after all of these years . . .

T: She was a good student. Patty did not work to her best potential, but she was a good student.

G: But you weren't there to judge that. You still felt for her?

T: I knew it was hard for her. She had problems. She never knew what to call me. The kids called me mom. I still get that once in awhile; some kids call me mom. She had this one young man sitting in front of her. He would always yell, "Hey, mom she wants you." The kids would laugh and think this was funny. We got along very well.

G: Did you feel awkward having her in class?

T: No, I didn't. I've had nieces and nephews in class. I've been there a long time.

G: The kind of teaching you were talking about as far as being an inspiration or making a difference in someone's life,

you knew that you had done that all along, and this class wasn't going to make a difference to your relationship with your daughter?

T: Patty and I were very close. I still have this paper that she had written. I don't have it here. It's probably in my folder at school. I keep all these things. It was in the typing class that I gave them the topic--The most unforgettable character I've ever met. Patty wrote about me. It was very touching and I've kept it all these years.

G: Do you see yourself sharing any of these characteristics with Patty?

T: Yes, I think so. I think we think a lot alike sometimes. Of course, there are a lot of things we don't think alike on because of the generation gap. Sometimes there are more than others.

G: Was it difficult to raise a daughter?

T: Yes, but I think she is a sensible person. I don't worry too much about her. She likes to do a lot of the things I like to do.

G: Does she travel?

T: Yes. Her philosophy in life is you work, save money, and travel. You should take a trip once a month. I would like to do that. I used to spend a lot of time reading to her.

G: She talked about that. Tell me what your recollections are about that.

T: We would go to the library all the time. I would spend hours reading. I liked to read. I would get books for her and read to her. She always . . .

G: Just when she was a little preschooler?

T: Yes, we would go to the library, get books, and read. We would come home and I would read the books to her. Then she would read them back to me, if she could remember. She always said that I never allowed her to read to me. She said I never wanted her to read to me when she was able to read. I don't quite remember that. She may have asked me sometime and I might have said no, but we read together a lot. There were just the two of us when my husband was working afternoons and nights. We were together all the time. Naturally, we did a lot of things together. Especially if he was working nights, we would go out in the daytime so he could sleep. We were always doing little things. We

would take a vacation. I could remember taking her to North Pole, New York because it was Santa Claus Land. We went, my friend went, and Anthony, her son, who was a year and a half younger than Patty. We took them up there to Santa Claus Land. We took them to Ligonier, Pennsylvania which was another storybook land. All of these things were planned around what she wanted or what she would enjoy rather than what we would enjoy. We would go out to eat a lot. When she got a little bit older and was in high school, if her father was working, we would go out to eat. If he was home, the three of us would go out to eat. That was the big thing. We still do that.

G: Looking back now, do you recall when you saw her lean towards her present job as librarian?

T: She might have said something. When she got into college, she wasn't sure what she wanted to do. She thought she would go into teaching. Then she didn't really want to go into teaching. One thing I can remember, she wanted a car when she was a senior in college. Her father said, "When you graduate from college, I'll buy you a car." I said, "That's coming faster than you think." When she was a senior she wanted a car, but I just wasn't about to buy her one. She could ride the bus. Then she said something about student teaching. She didn't want to go into teaching and she was going to give up her teaching. She didn't want to do student teaching. I said, "If you have a car will you do student teaching?" She said, "No." She really wasn't sure what she wanted to do. Well, at least I didn't think she did. I thought that wasn't unusual when people graduate from college. I've learned over the years that looking at people in business that a lot of them were people that graduated with a liberal arts degree rather than a business degree, especially if they just had business administration with no real major. That's like taking a general course in high school. If they had liberal arts degree, I wasn't really too concerned. I thought--She will find what she wants. She had applied for that library job. They told her it wouldn't come up until July 1, but she was pretty sure of getting it. She just stayed in Cleveland to work awhile. She had a temporary job until the library job was opened.

G: Did you have any specific thoughts or feelings when Pat decided not to go into teaching?

T: No, I thought this is her life; I can't make her do what I want. She has to do what she wants.

G: I didn't necessarily mean any regrets. Sometimes you see in somebody that you're that close to that they're not suitable to it knowing the things that are demanded.

- T: It didn't bother me. Patty didn't have the patience I did. She just doesn't have the patience. For example, I meant to tell her I was reading this new book, Tip O'Neill's new book. She is very conscious of people's grammar. She would listen to somebody on television and she didn't like them anymore because they made a mistake. I said, "Patty, everybody makes mistakes, especially when you get to something like between you and I. That's hard to use." I could understand it. She couldn't put up with it. She wouldn't be happy. Every once in a while, if I make a mistake in grammar, she'll say, "You're not going back to that school anymore, you're talking like the kids."
- G: You mentioned a few times that things that should have been or are now issues of the union, of the collective bargaining agent, and your daughter has been in the union. Tell us what she is with the union.
- T: She is the president of the local union in the library.
- G: She was head of the negotiating team during their last negotiations. Yesterday they made great strides. How did you feel about her being on the picket line? Have you ever had any probable experiences yourself?
- T: I grew up in a family that was very union oriented. My brother was in the railroad union. My father belonged to the railroad union. My brother was president of his local. He worked his way up and he took a leave of absence from the railroad and worked just for the union. He was the union arbitrator. I remember I used to go to Chicago with him. He would have to do work. I would do typing and things for him. He would stay at night and work at the union office. He would travel for the railroad union. My sister was one of the first group of teachers in YFT [Youngstown Federation of Teachers]. She was in this first group.
- G: Do you remember what time period this was?
- T: She taught at Wilson. It seems we started when she went to Wilson and when I went to Ursuline in 1958. It was sometime after that.
- G: That was when the AFL-CIO affiliation with Youngstown . . .
- T: Yes.
- G: That is what YFT is, right?
- T: Yes.

G: Did you belong to a union?

T: Yes. We formed a union. At first it was just a local union for Catholic high school teachers.

G: Was this in the late 1950's or 1960's?

T: This was probably started in the late 1960's.

G: Until then there were no unions?

T: There were no unions at all. They told us this is what we are going to get and we did. We formed this union.

G: Every year anyone can join this?

T: Yes.

G: How does one do that without alienating . . .

T: We discussed it in our building. Then we approached the superintendent who was Monsignor William Hughes, who is no longer here. He is a bishop in Kentucky. We discussed it. He came to school. We had a meeting and discussed this.

G: What does one say when one discusses--we want an adversarial group here?

T: We wanted to form a union. We laid out our plans, why we wanted a union. We listed the advantages and disadvantages of having a union. This would not just be Ursuline; it would be all the Catholic high schools in the diocese. We would be pulled together and all work together. I don't know if they were really happy about it, but neither could they say no.

G: Why couldn't they?

T: First of all, they preach truth and justice. Now we're going back to the lettuce workers and grape pickers and their unions.

G: But not the teachers?

T: They wouldn't dare.

G: I understand that there is no union for the elementary parochial schoolteachers.

T: They could join if they wanted to. The thing about the elementary schoolteachers is they are a different breed of teachers. Now they are different. For years the Catholic grade schoolteachers were women with a second job who were

friends of the pastor and were doing this to help out. They didn't want to make Father mad.

G: It was volunteer work?

T: No. We thought we would get the high school teachers in the union here to begin with.

G: So you were a different breed and do remain so?

T: Well, we tried to get them in our union. We do have some of them in our union, but not all of them.

G: How did this go?

T: Monsignor Hughes was very open to this. Not only are we going to have the lay teachers, but what about the nuns? We can't decide salaries for nuns because it was up to their Mother Superior, the different orders. We said, "Fine." We will take the nuns and priests and they will have to abide by all the other rules. Everything we get they will get, except salary because that has to be done with each order of nuns. This was fine. They were glad to do this because we got class limits, they did too. If we got paid for extracurricular activities, they got it too. Of course, they were glad to come in on this. For the first three years we had nuns and priests and lay people.

G: Did you negotiate immediately as a union?

T: Yes.

G: What was your union called?

T: At that time, it was just the Confederation of Teachers. It doesn't matter what we were called at the beginning. We were not affiliated with any group. We really weren't a union; we were just an organization banded together.

G: Do you remember your first negotiation or when you knew you were effective as a group?

T: Yes. We really knew we were amounting to something and getting someplace. We took a professional day that they never thought we would do. We took the day and we went on South Avenue to Krakusy Hall.

G: The union hall there?

T: We went there. We met there all day. All the teachers were there from the six Catholic high schools. They were coming from Canton, Ashtabula, and Youngstown.

G: You spread the good word.

- T: Oh sure. People were all members of the same group. Even some of our nuns came. This is when they began to take us seriously. We would stand together and we would do things. I wasn't on the first negotiating team, but I was very active doing all of this in the beginning. After salaries, we got many things that we wanted. Not everything, but we were able to negotiate. It was something that we were never able to do before. Previously we were given a contract; this is the starting salary, take it or leave it. Now we were able to negotiate salaries.
- G: With whom did you negotiate?
- T: With the superintendent of the schools. At that time it was Monsignor Hughes.
- G: The schools you mentioned, were they all in the same diocese?
- T: Yes. Canton is in our diocese. We had two schools in Canton, one in Canton and one in Louisville, Warren, Ashtabula, and two in Youngstown. It was the entire diocese, six counties.
- G: How long were you formed as a group before you were able to negotiate anything, if you can remember?
- T: I think it took us a couple of years before we were able to. Then we would be able to negotiate right away at the beginning. Of course, we didn't get a lot of the things we wanted, but at least we were making some headway. We were not affiliated with anybody at all. Then we had a young teacher who became president. He was a very strong president. He did a lot for us. Through his working, we became affiliated with the AFT. Of course, now we paid union dues, local and national. We stayed with them for seven years. Now we got backing from the other unions when we had to negotiate; Mr. Smith, a union representative from AFL Steelworkers would come in and help us. These people would help us negotiate to get us started. The church said we couldn't do this. We had the backing of all these people, which really helped us. We got going.
- G: Did they pick you out as a fledgling union or did the union . . . you knew who to contact?
- T: As I recall, we contacted them and told them we were joining the AFT. I wasn't an officer at that time. I worked, but I didn't do as much. We became members of the AFT and we were there seven years. Later the AFT campaigned so that parents would not get credit for income tax because of tuition they paid to private schools.

G: That's right.

T: We are paying dues to them and they are using our money to fight us.

G: Exactly.

T: So we dropped out. Of course, there were a number of Catholic schools in the area. At that time the Philadelphia teachers, which was a big organization, decided to form a national union, The National Association of Catholic School-teachers. Philadelphia is where our main office is because they started it. We had teachers that were from the Pittsburgh diocese, the Youngstown diocese, New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and from all over the country.

G: Do you, to be specific, know anything about the goals and overall policies of this union of the National Association of Catholic Schools as being different from the National, NEA, for example?

T: First of all, I became much more active in this group. I am secretary of this local. We have four officers. Every school has a building representative. We don't really have a president, but we have a building representative, who is on the executive board. The officers and the building representatives from each one of the schools, including our grade schools, are members on the executive board. I'm a member of the executive board. I've gone to almost all of the conventions. Last year we went to Boston, and other years to St. Louis, Pittsburgh, or Cleveland. I've become much more active and I know what is going on. We have a local newsletter that we put out four times a year and also one from the national organization, but we have the things that we are doing as a group. The different bishops around the country will help us. There are those who won't, like the bishop and cardinal of Los Angeles County. They are not recognizing teacher's unions.

G: I wonder how they are avoiding it or trying to avoid it.

T: I don't know, but he's trying. They preach that we have to help these, but not our own. Of course around here there is a very strong union. Our bishop and priests would not dare oppose us.

G: But you don't see yourself as a separate group of teachers so different from the OEA or the NEA?

T: No.

G: You have the same goals and views about education.



T: Yes, sure.

G: I don't even see any radical differences between the AFT or NEA necessarily?

T: I can see; I think the NEA has not done much until the AFT challenged them. Now they are doing a much better job and have become more active.

G: Better, but not very good.

T: The president of YFT is one of my former students.

G: Oh, I'm sorry. Do you feel that your activity in the union has provided Pat with any information or role modeling? Do you see any parallels in your life that you can . . .

T: Yes. I've been active in the union and have been very vocal about it. So she has heard all of this, and of course throughout the family. Over the years when I think back and I've said a lot of times, I'm sure she probably heard me say, "I think the unions have done an awful lot of good." Sometimes they've overstepped their bounds. Maybe we are getting to the point where some unions are too big. They're not as big as they used to be. But where would we be without them? I hate to think even in our own building where we would be without the union. The tremendous strides that we have made because we have a union. Before we just took what they gave us because that was all that we could do. I think she sees this in the library too, the strides they have made.

G: They certainly have with the last settlement in terms of money that nobody thought they would ever be able to make.

T: Sure and things that they have got that they didn't have before.

G: It seems a little ironic that she and you would be active in what is considered "pink collar" professional unions. How does that make you react?

T: We have several teachers in school. Teachers in the union? Professional people in the union? Why that is terrible, unheard of! I don't feel that way. What is the biggest union in the country, but the AMA.

G: For sure and the most powerful anyway.

T: They don't call themselves a union. Until people band together and work together for a common goal, they aren't going to get what they want or need. I could see that in our building before we had a union. This is the way it is.

If you want it fine; if you don't want it, you didn't have any say-so about what went on, about your classes, class sizes, how much extracurricular work you did without pay and what you should be paid for. We think we have a fairly decent paid staff. We have some of the things that other schools do not have. We have longevity pay. You reach your maximum at thirteen years or fifteen years; then at eighteen you get another raise; at twenty-one you get another raise, and at twenty-five you get another one even though you are at the top of the scale. We would never have gotten that.

G: I guess what I was getting at, and I have to ask the question bluntly, these professions for women, a librarianship and teacher, have been predominantly female career tracks. Do you feel that your activity in the union or your interest in it is particularized toward improving the lot of women in the labor force, or isn't that focus the thought to you?

T: I'm sure it is, but that's not really the main goal. When we talk about the union for teachers, we aren't talking about women. We're talking about teachers, men and women. For example, now if this man gets something, I get it too. It wasn't that way before. Maybe it was for women when I first went there. Women were paid less than men. Now it would never be. Of course, they did rectify that before the union ever came in to be at Ursuline. When Patty went to Ursuline I paid full tuition, every single penny, from the day she started until the day she graduated.

G: Not ever to be reimbursed . . .

T: No, never. If you were a head of a family . . . like we had one teacher who was a widow, so she was the head of the family, any man or head of the family got half tuition paid for their children.

G: It's not that way anymore, is it?

T: No, now everybody is the same way. This was done by the union. The women teachers getting the same pay as men was done before the union came into effect, but teachers getting the same tuition, the union got this for women as well as men.

G: But you had to fight for this.

T: We had to fight for it. When Patty was a senior, it went into effect the following year.

G: What is that term that is used to describe that free tuition for students whose parents are employed in the diocese?

T: Half-tuition reimbursement.

G: I guess I got off the subject because I'm both a teacher and a professional librarian. I know there are recent studies that say that librarians are one of the least well-paid professions because there are so many women. There were more than eighty percent at the time the first study was done that I'm referring to.

T: Sure. I've mentioned before when the priest wanted a man in grade school, men were unheard of in grade school. So when we got the men there, they would give him more money, more of everything, and whatever they wanted. In the high school we had, well it still stands in other schools and our schools too sometimes, a man was hired because he was a coach. We'll give him what he wants. It's little things like--this man didn't have to come to a faculty meeting because he had a team out on the field practicing. We recognized some of those things. What's good for you is good for me. If I have to go, you have to go. There are a lot of things that people don't do that they are supposed to, but basically we were fighting for women.

G: In a certain, but not conscious way.

T: Yes.

G: The tape is almost over, and I'd like to know if you ever aspired to another profession? I'm sorry to ask you this.

T: I had thought and only because Patty would put this in my mind all the time, she said to me, "Mom, why don't you start your own business?" I did a lot of work for a lot of people. I did accounting here at home. People would have small businesses and I would do their accounting. But then at school I had this employment service. I had people call me all the time. I had one doctor call me. He said to me, "I need a girl, send me one." I said, "I'll send you three." He said, "No, send me one. Whoever you send, she'll be good, because the last three girls I hired, one stayed eight years; one stayed for nine years, and one stayed for eleven. They all came from you."

G: You did job placement?

T: Yes, placement.

G: Well, you don't have to do job development anymore.

T: I had really thought about it. Then I thought, I'm doing this because I'm involved with these kids; we have a good reputation in this city. The one bank called one day and

I sent several girls down. She called and she said, "I have three applicants; one is from Ursuline; one is from Mooney, and one is from Boardman. I made up my mind which one I'm going to hire." I said, "Fine." She said, "I'm going to hire the one from Ursuline." I asked why and she said, "Because she came from Ursuline and I know what you do." It made me feel good and I thought, well, maybe I should. I had the product right here in front of me. People knew and if I went out in the business world to try and do it, it would be different. Besides, I was getting to the point that I enjoyed what I was doing. I liked it and I enjoyed my work.

G: One thing we haven't touched upon at all is that you sound like you sort of did all of this on your own. Can you point to any one person or group of people that supported you through the child-raising years, the career changes, the education, the deep involvement with your work?

T: My sister Adeline. She was the one who insisted I do this.

G: She's the one who paid for all of this?

T: Yes. We still do a lot of things together. Of course, my husband said, "What do you want? You do what you want." He never said I couldn't work.

G: It gave you the confidence . . .

T: If you want to work, fine, if you want to retire, go ahead and retire; if you you want to do this, you go ahead and do this.

G: Plus you mentioned that he stayed home with Pat too while you were at work.

T: When Patty was a baby, a very tiny baby, he was afraid of her, to take care of her. She was sick a lot. She never slept one night until a week past her second birthday. He took care of her when I worked and he was not working.

END OF INTERVIEW