Interview of Evelyn Jordan

----------Start of part 1 1:02:29----------

CO: It is March 8th, Thursday. I'm in the home of Dr. Evelyn Jordan. She's told me a little bit so far but will tell me again about her life. That includes some tragic details, but we're gonna start at the beginning. So you can tell as it seems appropriate your stories of loss. I have a whole category of loss actually, and you could write a book on that. So that might be the most important part for you. But I will start the way I always start, which is to ask you about your first memory. What's the first thing you recall from your childhood?

EJ: Being with my parents. Cause my Daddy would take me anywhere with him. And my mother and I were always close.

CO: And as you told me you were an only child, so you got a lot of attention from those two parents.

EJ: Yes, that's right. They were older parents – they were 33 I think when I was born.

CO: So your first memory is just being with them, and going places with them.

EJ: Mmhm. Listening to the radio, sitting in my Daddy's lap.

CO: Can you describe yourself as a child?

EJ: I was a shy child. I grew up with lots of cousins, small town in south central Georgia named Finleyson. It has shrunk considerably; it never was very big. But in a community that small, there were 5 girls that were about the same age. So we were close friends, and as a matter of fact, one that I was in first grade is a retired Professor at Georgia Southern, Statesboro [GA]. One is an M.D. in Texas, one is a retired teacher friend Hampton, and the other one has been a wife and mother. So there were the 5 of us. And then in a small high school – I graduated in a class of 17. I guess I shouldn't use the term shy – I think I was voted most popular girl in the

senior class (laughs). But you know, there weren't many of us there. But anyway, as I said,.

CO: Well can you describe your parents? Your father and your mother?

EJ: They were hard working, they married during the depression.

CO: You were born during the depression, in '35.

EJ: Uh huh, in '35. And my mother was a marvelous cook, she was 1 of 10 children. Two of them had died – two I never knew. She had four brothers – 4 boys and 4 girls, and they were close family. And I had at one time 21 first cousins. And so my Daddy worked hard, but everybody knew and I knew – I was the apple of his eye. So you know there was all that close relationship. I remember when I graduated from high school, and throughout I have achieved lots of honors, but you don't want to hear all that.

CO: Well, no I do, when we get to work.

EJ: But anyway, he was talking about how I was going to college, and the men wanted to know why in the world are you sending her to college? All she's going to do is get married. He said, "Well, she might have to support a husband." And let it go at that, because they were determined that I would go to college. There was never any question about further education – it was a very important thing. And my mother liked to read, and as you can tell I'm an avid reader. (laughs)

CO: So they were quite alright with the fact that you might use that education to support yourself and be independent?

EJ: Oh yes, oh yes. They were. They just wanted to be sure that I was adequately prepared for whatever life tossed my way, and thank goodness for that.

CO: So your father doted on you, and your mother was an avid reader. Anything else about her?

EJ: Oh she was a wonderful seamstress, and as the 5 of us often say now, we probably weren't very rich, but we didn't know it.

CO: Now you said, the 5 of us, who is that?

EJ: The 5 girls. That grew up together, you know. And spent so much time and of course, now Beth and I, the one that's retired in Statesboro, traveled a lot together. And will be traveling later this year together. But anyway, and my mother – I was always well-dressed because, you know, we'd see something we'd like and we'd get the fabric and she made it. So it was just – there were always ups and downs, you know in any family, but they were very supportive as long – my parents supported everything in Small School, where I went. You know. They were always there. My mother baked more cakes for different things (laughs). So I grew up in a family that supported the community.

CO: So your mother was involved in community affairs and –

EJ: To a certain extent. She was more of a home body, but you know, there weren't a lot of community affairs other than church and school. And that was it.

CO: So what influence would you say your parents – it sounds like because education was so highly valued, what influence would you say your parents had on you? Your mother and your father.

EJ: I'm not sure I know what you're asking.

CO: Well, some people say that their parents were responsible for the careers they chose. And some people their parents didn't have a good influence on them at all. It sounds like you had your parents—

EJ: It was a very positive influence in whatever I wanted to do. And of course there were not that many choices – I graduated from the University of Georgia in 1957, and you know, you either taught or nursed or secretary. Well I knew I wasn't gonna be a nurse, because I could faint without any problem in the hospital. Secretary didn't sound that interesting, so I taught.

CO: And your father was a farmer and –

EJ: Highway grass contractor. But at the time they started paving roads and started putting grass in the sides, he did all of that. That's what it is. I don't know what else to call it.

CO: But he got those contracts because he was a farmer?

EJ: Not exactly. I guess he had some equipment, and they did the grass on the side of the roads. And they knew he was dependable, and I'm not sure exactly how all that came about you know.

CO: Now you were an only child, but you describe the extended family as having lots of children, cause your mother came from a large family.

EJ: Yes, my mother came from a large family.

CO: So did you all get together a lot? Was that a –

EJ: Yes, considering how rarely so many families get together now, it was a lot. And there's still a big family reunion as a matter of fact, I've had emails just this week about – it's at Indian Springs in July.

CO: And you'll go?

EJ: Oh, we'll see.

CO: Okay. Before I started this project, my research interest was in mother-daughter relationships in the early 20th century. So I had a lot of questions about mother-daughter relationships, and mothering, and that sort of thing. So I'm interested in your relationship with your mother, and her relationship with her mother, so if you can talk about that I would –

EJ: Well, my grandmother died when I was in the 2nd grade, but we were very close to her as I remember. I have very special memories of her, but my mother tells stories about how she had – she had frequent nose bleeds, and some allergy problems, which she passed along. (laughs) But anyway, she told me stories of when she first started making the biscuit that she had to stand in a chair at the table, so in their family, everybody contributed. And she didn't go out and do things in the field, you know. I have a good friend here in Lagrange, who talks about how much she worked in the field

and this sort of thing growing up in – I guess it would be north Alabama. But Mama didn't do that because of some of her health, you know. And so anyway.

CO: Well was her relationship with her mother harmonious, or did –

EJ: Oh yes, oh yes.

CO: Okay.

EJ: My grandmother was a special person.

CO: And your relationship with your mother, was there ever any conflict between the two of you?

EJ: No, I don't ever remember any.

CO: When you became a teenager, you don't remember having any kind of conflict over –

EJ: Well no, because you know, when you live in a small town like that, as we said, – if we did anything this morning, it beat us home. It was a small town, everybody knew everybody, and I was very active in lots of church work and of course things at school and all of that.

CO: Well I have a whole category on religion, so you can talk about that if that was important in your family.

EJ: Very much so.

CO: Okay. What was the most significant or memorable event of your childhood up to the age of 12?

EJ: I don't know that I can answer that.

CO: Okay. It might come to you at some other point.

EJ: I'll have to think about that.

CO: I will say that one thing that people who do life reviews look for is turning points in life. You know, what one woman has called a defining moment. Something that happens – and you've already told me of several in your life. So if something comes up as we're talking, you could just identify that as a defining moment or a turning point for you. And that's kind of what this question is about. And it sounds like – the next question is, what are some of the struggles that you had as a child? It sounds like you didn't have a lot of struggles as a child, even though you grew up in the depression. Did your parents talk much about that?

EJ: I knew things – I remember the rationing of things, and that sort of thing. It was never a secret, but no, I guess there wasn't a lot of money. But they – I pretty much had what I wanted, and – no.

CO: Alright. When you turned adolescent, do you recall that with any degree of difference? Was there a degree of difference between your adolescence and your childhood? Do you remember a sort of coming of age?

EJ: Not really.

CO: No?

EJ: Uh uh.

CO: Okay.

EJ: Cause as I said, my mother and I, we could always talk. And there was a lady – of course that will come in the religion part, cause there was Miss Burnesses. But you know, it was as my friend, who is the doctor in Texas – of course she's retired now. But she and I were talking, and said, "You know, growing up in Finleyson was good. Because we had the support of parents, we got the nearest movie was 12 miles away in Hawkinsville, Georgia, and if we wanted to see movies, they loaded us up in the car and took us to Hawkinsville to the movie. You know, they were very – well, some of the parents – well one set of parents couldn't be too supportive cause they had 9 children. But –

CO: And what happened to that daughter?

EJ: Well she's a teacher in Hampton. She's the teacher in Hampton. I was surprised she had children, because we never saw her almost without a a little one, you know. In a little town like that, we could walk around to everybody's house. And our parents, as we reached those teenage years, you're talking about – we had the type of – like if they knew – and there were a couple of boys. We didn't do a lot of dating cause we were more or less a group, and there were 5 girls and 3 young boys. One of them's parents sent him to school – I guess Emory at Oxford had high school then – they sent him away. And all the parents, even the boy's parents and our parents said, so long as we know which house you are in, there's not a problem. And they would raid my parents' refrigerator, you know, and say "Mrs. Pauline cooked so and so." And they knew Mrs. Pauline always had something good, and so it truly was a different type of growing up. And as I said, Jo-Allene, and I talked about this recently. We used to be real close growing up, and she's one of those people that fought the dramas of entering medical school in 1957. It was bad, but anyway, as we said, growing up in Finleyson was good.

CO: Yeah, it was sheltered to some extent –

EJ: That's right, that's right. But they made sure, you know, we did all the things that we could.

CO: So you said, you didn't date so much as you all as a group went together –

EJ: Went together, and you know, when the Junior/Senior came along, I remember going with one of the boys. But you know, it was just – you needed a date. And the boys would decide which one they were going to take, and that was kind of it. But of course one of the boys has died, and the other one is a prominent attorney at St. Simons.

CO: Well you didn't have any brothers or any siblings, but did you have a sense of – you said, your father, you were the apple of his eye. Did you get a sense that he ever wanted a son? No? And did they – you mentioned yourself, there were few options for a woman – your friend who became a Doctor had a lot to overcome to break into that profession. Did your parents encourage you one way or another towards any particular professional –

EJ: Well when I graduated, the county school superintendent in the adjoining county knew my father. And he had said, “now we want Evelyn in the school system,” and that is where I went and taught. But you know, if there was –

CO: Did you talk to your parents about wanting to teach? Was that something that –

EJ: I don’t know that – I’m not sure how much I wanted to do it, but it was the best profession available at that time.

CO: Did your parents have college education?

EJ: No. No.

CO: Okay. But it was understood that you would?

EJ: Yes.

CO: Okay.

EJ: Well I had teachers – I can remember in elementary teachers saying, “Evelyn will be a good teacher.” And you know, you just kind of grow up with those things.

CO: So they spotted that early –

EJ: It was a small high school – small school.

CO: Do you recall at any point in your childhood or adolescence, disagreeing with your family’s values and beliefs?

EJ: Well sometimes I thought Daddy was a little bit strict. He had very definite ideas about what young ladies were to do. And so – now my Daddy never saw me in short shorts.

CO: So he wanted you to be discreet and modest?

EJ: I guess that's a way of putting it, but I guess I don't know if it bothered me, it was just –

CO: But other than – okay, that's sort of a cultural thing. So he had some ideas about how – would you say he was traditional in his gender role expectation for you as a young woman? As a girl and a young lady?

EJ: I never thought about it, but I guess you could call it traditional.

CO: Was your family conscious of the world outside their home, or was it –

EJ: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

CO: It was, okay.

EJ: Cause I remember the excitement of FDR being president, and all those things.

CO: Yeah. So did your parents talk about FDR?

EJ: Oh yes.

CO: They did. Were they supporters?

EJ: Oh yes.

CO: And did they ever say anything about Eleanor?

EJ: You know I don't remember that they did.

CO: Okay.

EJ: I'm sure they probably did, but so far as remembering that –

CO: And you've already really talked about – some people lose touch with friends, but it sounds like you've been – you've continued to be in touch with your childhood friends throughout your life.

EJ: Oh yes. As a matter of fact, there are pictures of most of them over there. We still get together – or some of us, whoever can do it – at thanksgiving. This started – my father died, and in let's say six months later, Beth's father died. And Beth had two sisters, but our parents had been close, you know, we grew up together, and loved her parents and all this. And so I invited them – that must have been – well anyway, we were living in Auburn at the time, cause when I lived in West Virginia, that was a ways away. But James and I were living in Auburn, and I just said, "Why don't you all – Mama's here, why don't you all come." And so they came a couple of years, and one day Beth said, "You know Evelyn, if you invited Jo-Allene" – this was the fiend in Texas – "she'd come." So Jo-Allene came. Well then another friend found out. Well one night – oh we just had more fun in this living room with these people. And all were revolved in my house, until we all couldn't fit in my house, and we met at a lot of different places. Probably more at Hilton Head, but we've met at – oh what was the place in Tennessee, it's near Crosspoint. I can't remember about that one, but – and they have come to Callaway. One time, we ate dinner here, and I remember we filled this room, you know, sitting on the floor and chairs and whatever. But yes, we've remained close. Now the friend in Hampton has never chosen to be a part of this group. She was invited. And the one that's a wife and mother did not. She lives in Hawkinsville and her husband is an attorney.

CO: Now you and your husband married in 1960?

EJ: Mmhm.

CO: And when did he die?

EJ: '70.

CO: Okay.

EJ: He'd been to the doctor the day before, and he said, "I'll see you in six months." We went to bed that night, and two hours later, I was a widow. No preparations.

CO: Well, I guess since you mentioned it, what happened? What was the cause of death?

EJ: They didn't do an autopsy. Why do one? It could have been an aneurism, it could have been a heart attack; it could have been anything. But I saw no reason to pursue it, and my children were almost three and eight.

CO: So your daughter was born in '67, your son was born in '62, and –

EJ: And her birthday was in July and his was in August. And James died in June, so she was almost three and Jimmy was almost eight.

CO: Wow. Well back to your family of origin. Did you all vacation very much? What did you do for entertainment and recreation?

EJ: We didn't do a lot of vacationing, but we enjoyed family things, you know. Like it was not unusual on a Sunday afternoon to go visit Aunt Georgia or somebody you know like that. But I guess vacationing would have been to Atlanta to visit relatives or to Jacksonville a couple of times. Not any elaborate – now I've done worlds of travels since, but not many –

CO: You can tell me about that travel in a few minutes. What about books, music, film? Did you have favorites growing up?

EJ: Oh yeah.

CO: What did you all read?

EJ: All the Louise May Alcott books. All the Little Col. books, the Bobsey Twins. Let's see, what else – I have such fond memories of the Louise May Alcott books, but that was of course when we got in high school, and it was required reading as we got into other areas. Sundry things –

CO: So you read a lot.

EJ: I read a lot.

CO: Was there any musicians in your family? Or artist or writers?

EJ: Uh uh. I don' think so. Now I have cousins who have children who are wonderful artists, but not within that immediate family, no.

CO: Now can you run back over – I know that you have degrees in education, but could you go back and tell me about – you went to high school in Finleyson –

EJ: No, I went to high school in Pineview – It was a mile away from Finleyson.

CO: Okay, alright. And about high school, and then where you went to college, and then where you went to graduate school and –

EJ: I graduated from Pineview High School, I went to Middle Georgia College in Cochran, then 2 years [later] I transferred to the University of Georgia. And then I did some graduate work at the University of Tennessee while my husband was finishing his doctorate. But my father became ill and died, and so that kind of went by the way. And when my husband died, I was scheduled to start – not a degree in education, that's interesting too – but we were in Auburn, and the Auburn people were marvelous. He was one of the few school finance specialists at that time, and so of course we knew the dean of Education and all of this because they had recruited him, he didn't come looking for the job. Out of all –

CO: You all were married then?

EJ: We married in 1960, and we moved to Auburn in 1967. See, we married in '60, then in '62 we moved to Knoxville, and he finished his degree. Then we moved to Huntington, West Virginia, and he was a prof – his first college job was at Marshall University. And we were there three wonderful years – I loved West Virginia. And then he got – he was recruited – Dr. Bill Pharis was chairman of educational administration and supervision at Auburn, and Dr. Graff was James' major professor at the University of Tennessee. And Bill called Dr. Graff and he said, "I need somebody in school finance." And he said, "I don't want any of my profs to have graduated from the same school." So Dr. Graff said, "I have just the fella for you." So Bill called James, and when James came home, I was to guess. He said, "It's the college closest to home." And I never guessed Auburn. I never thought of Auburn. So we were there 3 years before his

death, and as I said, we could not have been in a community where people were kinder. And I did a Masters that year after he died – I barely remember going. His graduate students – he only worked with Doctoral students, and his doctoral students had been in and out of our home. And they were the kindest things, and they'd come and one of 'em kind of walked me through, and said, "now Mrs. Jordan, you need to write a check." I remember this (laughs). I said, "Oh, okay." You know, "Mrs. Jordan you need to sign this." And so we did that, and I finished my Masters that year, but I did it in 4 quarters – we were in the quarter system. And I started teaching in Elementary school, and my little girl's brain tumor was diagnosed. And anyway, I was in and out of that year – the second or third year – I'll have to go back and look at the dates, but anyway. I didn't teach anymore after that, cause we were very invested – Dr. Hazouri said to me the morning she died, smiled through those tears "Mama, you got 4 years I didn't think you'd get." And I was at home with her, and my mother was with me at that time, cause being an only child – my Daddy was dead. You can imagine that my children were the light of her life, and so anyway. So my mother and Dr. Mildred Ellisor, I'm sure these are names that mean nothing to you because you're too young. But anyway, Dr. Ellisor and my mother decided that I should start taking graduate courses. It would get me out of the house. It would give me something else to think about. And Mama was there with Evelyn Ann. And so my doctoral program was as my friend said, very different, because I took my core classes and I went home – I didn't hang around with doctoral students. I don't know whether you did, but in those – previous years, even when James was in the doctoral program at UT, you'd see people we knew at Georgia when he was in the Masters program – this sort of thing. There was always some hang arounds, you know, they'd get together and hash the profs. I did none of that. I went to school, I knew what I had to do, I did it, and that was with my children. And when Mama would mother the children, and so then it came Evelyn Ann died, I was in my last course, and I tried – I told Dr. Ellisor to tell Dr. – thought I'd never forget his name. But I said, "tell him to give me a B or something, I don't care." And he said, "no, she wont make it. She will never make a B, I know her work." And so I wrote my dissertation, I said to them "I will be through one way or the other." Evelyn died in '76, and I said, "I will be through one way or the other in '77 because I've got a son, and he's got 3 years left in school, and they need to be as normal as possible." So I wrote my dissertation, and graduated, and we moved to LaGrange.

CO: And he was eight –

EJ: When my husband got –

CO: Oh, okay.

EJ: So he was almost 14 when she died –

CO: Okay, alright.

EJ: Mmhm. And then we came to LaGrange, and he graduated from LaGrange high school in 1980. And so as I said, that's the quick and dirty.

CO: Right, well you can come revisit that when we talk about the experience itself, of loss. If you *can* talk about it. But so you got your doctorate in –

EJ: '77.

CO: '77, okay, the year after your daughter dies.

EJ: Mmhm. I finished it. And I wrote the dissertation.

CO: What'd you write your dissertation on?

EJ: The perception of graduate students at the early childhood program. Not what I'm wanting to do, but see I had all lined up – this is not a pleasant experience to talk about – I wanted to deal with creativity in second and third graders. I was just real fascinated with how much creativity children lose in those early years. Cause you know, they've got to be tested, they've got to do this, they've got to do this. Well Paul Torrance's work was just real interesting to me. And he had done so much in this area, so I had decided –I went before my committee. Well, the statistician on my committee – I had a wonderful committee – and I liked Charlie, but uh uh. They said, and I said, "But I have my experimental plans, I had my flights, I had everything." But there wasn't anyway – so Dr. Ellisor was one of the – I recommend that everybody chose their major professor wisely. And Dr. Ellisor knew that I'd about had it, and she knew I was on the verge of tears. So she said, "Evelyn lets us go out here and talk a minute." And she said, "You go home, and you come back tomorrow, and you and I will talk." And

so she said, “Let’s do what they want you to do, and then when you get out, you can do what you want to do.” So that’s what I did.

CO: Sometimes you just have to do that.

EJ: And so – have you by any chance interviewed Billie Wakers in Columbus?

CO: No. Is that somebody I should know?

EJ: Not necessarily. And I’m not sure Billie’s health is very good right now. But the reason I ask is she had – in the midst of things, she had to change major professors. And cause she was living here at that time, and we had lunch together several times. Well see I couldn’t empathize – you know, I’ve learned so much about the expressing feelings and this sort of thing because – people say, ‘I know how you feel. I know how you feel.’ They don’t know –

CO: But you never say that.

EJ: Nuh uh, not me. And so anyway – but I couldn’t because I’d had such a marvelous experience so far as a major professor – this sort of thing. And see, I went through when you went through the drill of all the hours, you know. 15 hours of writing with nothing but paper and stuff. It was so different from what – I’ve just been appalled at doctoral students telling me that they’re getting their course work done and “oh I’m working on my dissertation.” Okay, you don’t know what you have to be thankful for. You probably – where did you get yours, Michigan?

CO: Michigan State.

EJ: But anyway, I went through those horrible orals to be admitted to candidacy, then after I was admitted to candidacy I had to do all the written stuff, and all that sort of thing.

CO: It’s rigorous, very rigorous.

EJ: It really was. A lot of people don’t go through that now, but anyway –

CO: Well they do in my discipline; I know it hasn't let up any. But when I was at Michigan State, the attrition rate for PhD's was 98%, so that was pretty intimidating. So I can somewhat understand the rigor that you're talking about.

EJ: Well as I said, it wasn't easy. But of course as I said, there again, my mother -- never occurred to her that I wouldn't get through. Uh uh. And good friends at Auburn.

CO: Well my experience was, you couldn't not do it. It wasn't about – people would say, 'how in the world could you do all that?' I was like 'I can't *not* do it.' So you kind of -- sometimes you work – I mean sometimes work can be therapeutic, that was my experience –

EJ: Oh, absolutely. Now remember, I have to watch the clock, cause I have a board meeting with the new director at 4:00.

CO: Oh well we will move on.

EJ: Now tomorrow I don't have any problem (laughs).

CO: We'll do what we have to do. About romance, ideas of romance; were there notions of how you ought to go about – you didn't do traditional dating, and then you met your husband – can you say something about where you met your husband and how you met your husband?

EJ: My husband taught me in high school.

CO: He taught you in high school?

EJ: He was 8 years older than I, but we never had dated, never thought anything about it, you know. And I had some – I guess you'd call it serious dating in college, and this sort of thing. And my parents thought they'd probably met their son in law, but they were wrong. And when I went teaching in Wilcox County, the 2nd year I taught, I was Star Teacher. And that *may* have been the first year of Star Teachers in the state of Georgia. And my husband was president of the local teacher ed group, GEA or something like that. And so to some of the things that – my Star Student

was Joyce – that Joyce and I were invited to, he was invited to. So we all went together, and then we dated from there.

CO: Okay, I see. Was he your first love?

EJ: No.

CO: No he was not your first love. Can you talk about your first love?

EJ: Oh he was delightful. And I think we would have married, but when we left, he was at Middle Georgia College, and when I left Middle Georgia, I went to the University of Georgia. And he had to go to Georgia State – I guess, I can't remember exactly, but I think it was finances or something – there was some reason he had to go to Georgia State. And he came to the University several weekends, but it was never right because he seemed to resent the fact that my parents were paying for my education.

CO: And he was paying for his?

EJ: Yeah. And then I was at the University and he was at Georgia State. So that was the end of that one.

CO: But he was what you would consider your first love?

EJ: Oh yes.

CO: Alright. Did you have romantic notions about marriage and about dating, courting, marriage and family when you were a young girl?

EJ: Hmm. Well I dated some in high school, cause we dated some of the boys from Hawkinsville. But no, I don't think I – you know, it never occurred to me that I wouldn't marry, or that I wouldn't have children.

CO: So you never considered not having children or not marrying?

EJ: No, no. Never.

CO: Did you have a number of children in mind that you wanted to have?

EJ: Well, I didn't want an only child.

CO: (Laughs) Yes, I hear that often.

EJ: But we've just finished – let me interject, I have to talk about our Storytelling Festival. Its one of the longest running in the country.

CO: Sure, Storytelling Festival?

EJ: The Azalea Story telling – that picture is a picture of the 3 of us who founded it. And its 16 years old. Well this weekend, we have people from all over the southeast and from as far as Michigan, Minnesota that come. But anyway, one of the tellers was from – I bought his book, *Holiday Inn* by Kevin Kling. Kevin is a fella that was born with his left arm deformed – he had no wrist, and no thumb. Okay. A few years ago he had a motorcycle accident, and it messed up his right hand. It just hangs, or he wears it like this. Now when he's on the stage telling stories, its down, but if he's flying or anything its up. And he said, "it's not the gift I would have wanted, but it's what I got."

CO: Storytelling?

EJ: Talking about his situation. And it never occurred to me –

CO: Are you a storyteller?

EJ: Well, not really. I would have been, but I got all involved in the organization. And we have received – I've forgotten which year – we've received the national leadership award for our festival, and its just been a wonderful experience. All total, we had almost 2000 people here this weekend. Different people, but you know like Friday night and Saturday morning, Saturday night and Sunday morning. And Saturday afternoon when you totaled them. Now last year we went over 2500, but Donald Davis, when he's here is the key – but anyway, you don't want to know all that, I can talk about the storytelling a long time.

CO: But that's here in LaGrange?

EJ: Yes, it's the Azalea storytelling festival, and it's widely advertised in magazines and this sort of thing. But anyway, as I say Kevin Kling– that's been the interesting thing, and one of the tellers was Andy Offutt Irwin from Covington, Georgia, and he's been the artist in residence in the Emory at Oxford – best whistle I've ever heard in my life, but in his stories on Sunday morning, and he told em about – that he and his wife had twins. The first one died – one of em died at birth, and the other one died 2 years later. And you know, you hear these stories and these people share them. And of course as Donald Davies always said, "you laugh and you cry." It's just – but it's been a marvelous experience. And now the college student tellers all came in on Thursday. When there was money, Donald Davis, they were here sometimes for 6 weeks in the schools, and all this but you know, with what the money situation is now. But anyway, you don't want to hear about that –

CO: Well I would under different circumstances, I certainly would. Was there a time when – when you had your 2 children – did you ever stay home for any of that?

EJ: Yes, I did it all the time. We had decided that when we had children, that I would be at home until they started school. So I was at home from 1962 till 1970.

CO: So okay. That in itself is a lot of work – that's plenty of work, but you didn't have – well you did, I mean even after – if you went to work after your husband died?

EJ: Well, I went to school for a year. See I did my Master's program, so then I went to work.

CO: Okay, so how did you handle all the things that you had to do at home that you'd been doing –

EJ: My mother was there –

CO: And she helped?

EJ: And she was a – I would never be where I am today if it had not been for my mother, a strong faith in God, and wonderful friends. I'm the first to tell you that.

CO: So your mother is the reason you didn't have the quote, 'double burden' of outside work as well as work at home?

EJ: That's correct. Cause she and I shared things at home, and she was – as I said, she had always been a homemaker, so she was right at home. And she made sure she was cooking what the children liked.

CO: Well could you describe your relationship with your children? Is that too painful?

EJ: Uh, no. It was good. Jimmy and I had some ups and downs, which was normal.

CO: When did those come, in his adolescence or later?

EJ: Oh, some of them in his adolescence. And as I look back, it was probably that I was just so snowed under with so much. But not a lot because I kept all of his cards – he was special, very special. And very, very bright. He was National Merit. But one of his cards was "to my mother – my best friend." And that's a treasure. And he lived – he graduated – he started out at Duke – it was not the place for him. I never will forget, I knew the day I left him there in the place – the dean stood up and said, "Don't put any pressure on your children, we'll do that. We take care of that." I thought "Yes ma'am, I don't believe I want to leave my child here." And I cried all the way back to Atlanta to pick up Mama. But anyway, he graduated from LaGrange College – did very well here, and went to graduate school at Florida State thinking he wanted to be a chemist I'll just say. Well after a year he just said, "Ma, I don't want to spend my life in a research lab." He was a people person, so he went to work – he said, "I will stay in school if I cannot get a good job within the next couple of months." He went to work as the environmental chemist for the state of Florida, so he was there 3 years – then he went with Northrup in Athens, and went there a couple of years. Lockheed recruited him, moved to Las Vegas, and then he did some work for Bechtel until 2 years before his death. And so –

CO: Did he have children?

EJ: No. He had only been married – they married in 2005, and they were divorced in – this girl that he married, they had grown up together and she was truly the love of his life. But she wasn't ready to really be a wife – she'd been married, she had a little girl and Catherine loved Jimmy, and we thought all was – but she couldn't quite leave her sister and her mother and it just never worked right. And so anyway, he was here for 2 years before his death.

CO: And again you told me, but I didn't have the recorder on. He died from a –

EJ: Well there was some blood problems and kidney problems, and so he went in the hospital on January 4th and then he went to Hospice and died January 26th. I am a trained Hospice volunteer too. I have not been back since Jimmy died and don't know when I will, but I –

CO: I'll say it for the recorder: This was very recent, this was 2010. So this is very still probably very close to you.

EJ: Well, you know, I thought my husband's death was so hard, and then when Evelyn Ann died – and I had a friend who told me before Eveyln Ann got sick – she said, "you know Evelyn, if you were my child, I'd almost be afraid." Said, "She's so sensitive." This was a little girl, you know. So anyway.

CO: Oh my goodness. So what did she mean by that? I mean, that's obviously –

EJ: I mean her wisdom at that age, and her sensitivity to things and all – she just –

CO: She was wise beyond her years it sounds like.

EJ: Yes, very much wise beyond her years. And as I said, that was so hard – but see, when James died, I had the children, and I had to –

CO: Your husband, when he died, yes –

EJ: Mmhm. I had the children and I had my mother. Well, when Evelyn Ann died, I had Mama and Jimmy. Well Mama died in 1980, so she's been dead. But Jimmy's has taken longer for me to get through. And I still have hard days, and somebody said, who lost a son about the same time said, to me in a tone of voice I did not appreciate, "You know, I don't really have bad days, I turned it all over to God." I thought yes, but you've got a daughter, you've got a sister who – they are just so close, you know? She didn't realize who she was saying that to. Because I do have hard days (crying). And I'm honest about it, and sometimes, I'm sure I'm criticized cause its on Sunday mornings, I just simply cannot get to church. And that's not – you know. When – Evelyn Ann and Jimmy – and as Jimmy said, in Auburn, summer days were spent in First Methodist there and anywhere waking hours is the way I think he put it. And of course, I mean it was never a question, on Sunday morning, their eyes were up "hey, its time to get ready." And Evelyn Ann would say, "We're gonna be late to Sunday School." And you know, so there are some Sunday mornings that just can't

CO: Can you talk about her a little bit, and your relationship with her?

EJ: Oh, well, we were always – now she was very close to her Daddy. I mean, when she heard his car in the driveway, she was at the door with her arms up and they had this little ceremony of him taking his pens out of his pockets, you know. Getting rid of his tie and this sort of thing. And she and I were, you know, because James and I, we read to them a lot. But a lot of the times he read to them at night.

----------End of part 1 ----------

EJ: and up to during the day, he would. And one night – this is back to Jimmy – cause see Evelyn Ann wasn't quite 3 when he died, so see. But one night, he had read to Jimmy – we had a Bible story book called *Beautiful Bible Stories*. So James had read him a story and he came down there, and he said, "I think you need to go talk to your son." I thought what has Jimmy said now? Jimmy said, "Why are they beautiful? They're killing people, they're doin all this sorta stuff," you know. So anyway, but Evelyn Ann and I were just really close because as I said, once Dr. Hazouri told me that she was – that I was gonna lose my child one day – he didn't say it in those words, but I knew that's what he was telling me. See I didn't go back to work. I didn't teach again. And so we were at home, she and my

mother and I, and it was just – it was wonderful. I have wonderful memories of both of my children. I do of Evelyn Ann and me, those are all her Madam Alexander her dolls over there.

CO: Did you recognize that sensitivity in her at – how old was she when you realized that this is an extremely sensitive child?

EJ: Probably before she was three, because she'd be so concerned about situations, you know. We'd be in the store and somebody would be yelling at their child and the child would be crying –

CO: Well now how did she handle her father's death at 3? How was that –

EJ: Wonderfully. Now Jimmy didn't – it took him a while. But she said, – I never shall forget this – she said, when we were eating dinner one night – he hadn't been dead very long – she said, "Do you think Daddy and Jesus are having supper together?" You know, these things just came out of the blue. And she would wonder if they were eating the same thing, or what they had done that day.

CO: How was that for you? Did that help you?

EJ: Very difficult.

CO: Oh it was difficult –

EJ: It was difficult, because I thought this child, you know –

CO: Mmhm. Now how did her brother respond to that?

EJ: Oh – I don't think he – he'd just smile at her. I don't think he made any verbal response to her. I don't think she expected us to say anything. Maybe it was just one of those rhetorical questions that she –

CO: So as a 3 year old, she recovered fairly –

EJ: Oh yes.

CO: But your son had problems.

EJ: Mmhm. And I did not take her to the funeral service – a good friend kept her with her little girl, and then we took James' body back home for burial. And Jimmy went to the service with me, but when we got back to my mother's house before we went out to the cemetery, they both stayed there. I didn't make Jimmy go, I just didn't – I just didn't think – and I said, to him, "Are you going, and that's up to you." See, we had always been – and I guess that might have been the way I had been treated as a child, you know. What do you want to do, how do you feel about this, and –

CO: So you gave them both a relative degree of autonomy as children?

EJ: Oh yes.

CO: Now did you ever regret that? Because I've heard parents say it – I let them be too independent. Did you ever second guess that?

EJ: I may have since he died, but no. Because we'd talk about the things, and where we were going and what we were going to do and we continued to do that because – while he was in Nevada and California, he came home twice a year, and I went that way twice a year. So you know, we did a lot of traveling in those 2 states as a result of it. And I don't know, it was just easy – we talked on the phone a lot.

CO: So was that kind of an agreed upon parenting approach between you and your husband? That the children would sort of decide as much as possible for themselves when it involved them?

EJ: I guess it was. My husband was a wonderful school person – he had been a principal. And you know, it's hard for me to say yes or no cause I don't remember we sat down and said, that, you know. It was just the way

CO: Now do you feel like you 2 had similar parenting beliefs and ideas about how you should parent?

EJ: Yes.

CO: Okay. Do you think mothering shaped you into the person that you are today? Or maybe I should ask what role do you think mothering played in shaping you into who you are today?

EJ: A big role. Cause I loved my children. My children were very, very special to me, and to watch them grow and as I said, Jimmy was so bright and walked away with all sorts of honors at LaGrange high school. You know, my mother was always proud – I was always proud of the children, and of course Evelyn Ann just loved everybody. I mean, she did! And there was never a day in Auburn that she was at home that there weren't one or more people in my house.

CO: Visiting her?

EJ: Mmhm. And they'd bring flowers – she loved flowers. That sort of thing.

CO: Well, if you could go back and do mothering again, would you do anything differently? That's a terrible question for you to have to answer.

EJ: It really is. I don't know. You know, there probably are – I'm sure there are some things, I'd just make different mistakes.

CO: That's a wise statement.

EJ: You know, we all make mistakes, and you do these things, so I'd just make different mistakes. But they were wonderful memories, and wonderful years – all of that.

CO: What to you does it mean to be a good mother? What is a good mother?

EJ: Well the first thing is the child needs to know they're loved. They need to know that they are loved and cared for. And I'm a great believer in talking things out, and talking to your children, and looking at the pros and cons, and sometimes there are things that they want to do that maybe you are just not real sure about. But the more you talk to 'em, you might change your mind. I guess what I'm trying to say is, don't be so set about – and something's you have to be. But not everything. Choose your battles. Choose your – and there are those things.

CO: Do you think it's more difficult today to mother than it was say when you raised your 2 children?

EJ: From what I hear, yes. All the things they're supposed to – you know, it was in the paper last night. 13 year old girl took a gun to the magnet school. I mean, you know, maybe she's – anyway, she's at the magnet school and it goes through the 8th grade. And I thought "What?" you know. And you know, we have another situation here in town, and I don't have any idea about this now. But a large number of my church members feel like this child is telling a story about her stepfather, to get back at him because he wanted her to have good table manners and act like somebody. And he's going to prison.

CO: Do you believe she's telling a story?

EJ: Well see I don't know. I don't know them, so I can't answer that. But the minister thinks she is, the principal at that high school thinks she is. Some of the teachers do, and a lot of people at the church that know them do. I have not been as involved at the church in the last several years. I think I had chaired on everything except in the choir – they didn't want me to sing. And I understand why, so that's always been a vital part of my life, but I don't know this girl.

CO: That's heartbreaking whatever the cause or the case. Well would you say what you admire about – well I would ask about both children, but since your daughter was so young, you want to say what you admired most about your son, Jimmy?

EJ: Hmm. I guess that the thing that I first think about – and I don't know– "admire" kind of throws me – but was his love and care for me. And several people have said, you know, he really tried to protect you, you know, from some things. And always – I always admired that he was so intelligent. So bright.

CO: Was his last illness – did it last a long time?

EJ: Well, he'd had problems off and on, you know, but they diagnosed the blood problem. And it was probably inherited, but we never knew there was – but he had been in and out of the doctor's offices, and he'd been in the

hospital a couple of times. But I guess I never wanted to admit it – that it was – bad. And when they told me that "we really need to go to Hospice, Mrs. Jordan." I thought "uh oh."

CO: Oh my gosh. Did he resist that?

EJ: No. He may have.

CO: He did?

EJ: Now he didn't talk to me about it.

CO: He didn't?

EJ: Uh uh. We spent a lot of time in that room at the Hospice, but he – 2 months before he died, almost to the day, I had had major surgery at Emory for plural effusion. Now of course he had been there with me, and so I really didn't feel good. You know, if you've had major surgery that recently. And wonderful friends and people that he knew and loved and –

CO: You had major surgery *when*, and he died *when*?

EJ: November 20th.

CO: Of 2009?

EJ: Yes.

CO: And he died in January? You hadn't even recovered fully?

EJ: Uh uh.

CO: Good heavens, it's no wonder it took you – it has been so – because just recovering from surgery takes months.

EJ: And I didn't know about this, but see they go under your shoulder blade and come around. Anyway, as I said, – cause there were 3 or 4 days there I don't remember, you know. I can remember seeing – Jimmy said, I'd say

“Well Jimmy said he was coming today.” And he’d say “Mama, I’m right here.” And I can remember seeing Dr. Stewart Gulley– he had left LaGrange College, and was then Woodward Academy. My claim to fame is that I served on the search committee that brought him to LaGrange College. The most wonderful president.

CO: What years was he there?

EJ: He came in 19 – he came 16 years ago. Because his son just turned 16 and Andrew was a little baby – he’d been born in February, so that would have been 1996.

CO: Yeah, that was after my time here.

EJ: So Stewart was just a wonderful, wonderful person.

CO: When you serve on those search committees, you get kudos if they turn out well, but people just really resent you if they don’t turn out well.

EJ: Well, yeah, I know a little bit about that too (laughs). No, but Stewart’s very thoughtful. He is an ordained minister also – he was one of the ministers at Jimmy’s funeral, and both the past 2 years on the anniversary of the death, that’s been the first phone call I’ve got – is from Stewart Gulley.

CO: That’s a good president.

EJ: Mmhm. And he’s doing a wonderful job – he was named – just won a special award in Atlanta. So –

CO: Now your whole work life has been in education, right? So you haven’t really had – but you’ve probably been in that field in different capacities. I’m looking at that –

EJ: Yeah.

CO: Now do we want to stop at a quarter of? Would that –

EJ: We probably should – that'll give me time to get to the library. I wouldn't do this, but this is our new director's first meeting with all the boards, and I'm chairman of the regional library committee.

CO: Well I understand, and its – I can come back tomorrow. Um, so were there some of the things that you did that you enjoyed more than others when you were – what – like were you always teaching or did you serve in any capacity as administrator at times?

EJ: Well, I was chair for 5 years. That was not the happiest experience, the last couple of years. I think there was some strong jealousy and there was a male that resented me, you know. You know how those things go.

CO: Sure, yeah. So you enjoyed being in the classroom?

EJ: Oh yes. Oh yes, I enjoyed my students.

CO: Yeah, okay. Was it – besides being in education, was there anything you ever – not that you would change, but was there anything else that you might have been interested in doing other than being in education?

EJ: You know, I wondered about that because I was very good in math, and I had a math prof I had CLEPped– most of the math courses they taught at Middle Georgia College. And Dr. Wilson called me in one day and said, "You need to go to Georgia Tech." He said, "You've got the math mind that's for you." And of course I didn't. You know, and I left the University of Georgia with the promise of – with a scholarship at UT and I didn't go, and I said, I've had enough school. So you know, I've thought about a lot of things of the Methodist – are you by any chance Methodist?

CO: No.

EJ: What?

CO: Episcopalian.

EJ: Oh, you're Episcopalian. Well that's alright, I've just finished – well I'm not just finished, I did your 4 year EFM, Bible study. And that was right after I retired, one of my people who had retired a year before said, "You have to

do it! You just have to do it." And it was a wonderful experience. A lot of hard work. I have another friend who has a doctorate, and she said, "I'm going to put this certificate up there with my doctorate." It represents that much work.

CO: I have not had time, I would love to do it but have just not had time.

EJ: Well see I had retired, so therefore – Oh now I wonder – Oh I was gonna say, talking about other things – Bishop Arthur J Moore's son, Harry, lost his eyesight and came to our small church to preach because he could handle that, being blind. And he did everything in his power to get me into Emory University. And there are days I think that's what I should have done, but –

CO: Now what would you have done at Emory?

EJ: I'm not sure. I'm not sure. Christian Education probably, or something like that. And I don't know, you know. But anyway, Harry Moore was just sure that I should be at Emory. But anyway.

CO: I'm going to end with this question for today. Are there any jobs – and we'll get into these ideas more for tomorrow – but are there any jobs women ought not to do?

EJ: Not really, I don't think. If they wanna do em and they can do em, more power to them.

CO: Alright. Well since you've got to get to a meeting –

EJ: I'm sorry about this –

CO: It's okay, that's really okay –

EJ: We laugh at each other and I never shall forget that. He'd sit there and play with Jimmy's feet, but it is.

CO: What a sweet, sweet memory.

EJ: And I did find some pictures.

CO: Oh great, that's great. But could you go over some of the –

EJ: Okay. I married in June in 1960. James died in June of 1970. We'd been married 10 years and 2 weeks.

CO: And before that – cause I didn't have this on at the time – your father died in '63, after your baby, your firstborn was –

EJ: Yes, Jimmy was born in '60 – well let's just go back through. I married in '60, Jimmy was born in '62, Daddy died in '63. Then – you want where we lived?

CO: Yeah sure.

EJ: Okay. We lived in Knoxville 2 years – from '62-'64, my husband finished his doctorate at the University of Tennessee in '64. We moved to Huntington, West Virginia where he was a professor at Marshall. We – Evelyn Ann was born in Huntington in 1967, and that was the year that we moved to Auburn. That's when they called and Bill Pharis was hunting. And then we moved to Auburn in August of '67, and in June of '70 my husband died.

CO: And tell me again, that was from – his death was from – not sure, they

EJ: We didn't do an autopsy, it was just – we had gone to bed and 2 hours later, I was a widow. I heard this strange noise, and I turned over and said, "James?" And he couldn't answer me. And he died before the doctor got there.

CO: So did you take him into the hospital?

EJ: No, I called Dr. Thomas. He was – and he came to my house, and he looked at me and he said, "There's nothing I can do. Who can I call?" So he called some friends, and they came, and several sets of friends kind of took over from there.

CO: And you were at Auburn at the time?

EJ: Yes. Mmhm. And then I went –

CO: So your daughter was 3, your son was 8 when their father died?

EJ: Almost. They're both – cause her birthdays in July, and Jimmy's was in August. And then in 1972, was when Evelyn Ann's brain tumor was diagnosed. And that was one of the weirdest things, because her first symptoms were just throwing up. You know, that's a normal thing for children to do, and we thought that. And then one day, we had a wonderful pediatrician, and Dr. Curry said to me "Mrs. Jordan, I'd like for" – the ophthalmologist, what was his name. I can't remember right now, but anyway. "I'd like him to look at Evelyn Ann." So we went to the ophthalmologist's office, and he did some tests. And he said, "Well, you go back to Dr. Curry, he's gonna talk to you." Well in the meantime, Dr. Curry had made the appointment with Dr. Louis Hazouri. He was the one they had on the plane to go to JFK, and they called him and said, he's dead, so he didn't go. He was as everybody said, as near a genius as there was in that department.

CO: Can you spell the name for me?

EJ: HAZOURI. Hazouri. And he and Evelyn Ann just bonded, and they told me she will have the best care. Because too many nurses had lost their jobs because they didn't follow him, and I have to share this funny story, and when I get too long you tell me. But anyway, she was in intensive care for – I think it was 16 days. And so one day, (laughs) he went in and they said, he was chomping at the bits. He was so angry with the nurse upstairs who had done something, and so he and the nurse were in pediatrics – in intensive care. We're dressing Evelyn Ann, and Evelyn Ann said, "Something smells." And the nurse said, "Oh Evelyn Ann, I ate something with garlic for lunch." Evelyn Ann said, "No, you have b.o." And Dr. Hazouri just---they said, it just broke up the place.

CO: I bet it did.

EJ: And when he came in from then on, he'd say "Now you have used your right guard today?" (laughs). But anyway, then when she got moved – we

were in Columbus 38 days, and when they moved her from intensive care, he had her moved into a private room with a bed for me. So I'd be in there, but he'd come and he'd say "What have you done to her?" And I'd say "nothing!" And he'd say "Well she doesn't tell me as much stuff!" (laughs). But she would run into his arms and that sort of thing, so that was – so anyway, that was in 1972, and she died in '76.

CO: So she lived with this brain tumor for 4 years?

EJ: Uh huh. And the morning she died, and they had taken me in the nurses lounge along with some friends that were there, and he came in and held my hands and said, "Mama, smile through those tears. You got 4 years I didn't think you'd get." So we had a good 4 years, I had taken the children to Disney in Orlando – that was already planned before she got sick, and I said, to him – he said, "you go. We'll do what we have to do when you get back." But it was inoperable – the brain tumor he said,.

CO: Did she continue to go to school?

EJ: She did some, yes. Because she wanted to. And the teachers understood, and the children did – there was one little girl in her 1st grade class that called her Evelyn and Ann. We never figured that out – why Connie said, – and she'd say to her mother "Evelyn and Ann is just real smart! She just doesn't get it out as fast as we do." (Laughs) So anyway, she died in '76. I was in my last course as I told you yesterday – my mother and Doctor Ellisor decided as I told you, I went through a graduate program in a totally different way from – cause I took my courses, I did what I was supposed to do, but I could always go home to my children and my mother. And then I took the job – Dr. Reid had talked to me right after Evelyn Ann died, about coming to LaGrange College, and I said, "No, if I leave without writing the dissertation, I'll never do it." I said, "I need to stay and write." So then the next year, he said, "The dissertation is written. You comin'?" And it was good, because the only other jobs were in big cities in South Carolina and other places. My mother's brothers were – my mother's family was close by, and they were very supportive. She had 2 brothers – one in Kennesaw, one in Marietta, one in Warner Robbins, one in Cochran. And then she had the 3 sisters, and so they were in and out. And so they were frequently – they had been just so supportive during Evelyn Ann's illness. And then – let's see –

CO: Now did your mother come on to live with you right after your husband died?

EJ: Yes. We did not intend that, because I thought I had arranged this lady that had worked for a lady in the consumer affairs department – which I had really intended on going to, and not into education – but I decided Education so I could teach and be with my children more than an 8 to 5 job. So anyway, let me back up. And so I had arranged – but when I sat down and put pen to paper, I wouldn't have been making a penny. I would've been paying it all, so my mother said, "Let me come" cause my father was dead – as I told you, I was an only child. "I'll take care of the children, and we'll work it out as time goes on." And then once Evelyn Ann became ill, it was never any question that she would be there. Because my children were the light of her life – I remember she was in the hospital one time when we lived in West Virginia, and Jimmy must have been about 3. And we flew home, and my Uncle – they said I couldn't take Jimmy to the upstairs where she was, and Uncle Jake said, "You go on, Jimmy and I." And after a little while, he'd found a back door and Jimmy came – I never will forget him crawling up in the bed with Mama in the hospital and batting her face and saying – they called her Mama – James' mother was Amomma, because his niece couldn't say – they wanted her to say 'grandma', and she couldn't get it all out and it came out 'Amomma' (laughs). And she was Mama and I was Mommy, so that was how they separated out Mamas. But anyway, as I said, he was – so you know. But Evelyn Ann's death probably hastened my mother's death.

CO: The grief from it?

EJ: Yeah. I've always thought that, and of course we moved to LaGrange. Well in Auburn, I don't think there was ever a day passed that there wasn't somebody that came by just to check, just to see how we were doing. They were there all the time when Evelyn Ann was living, cause everybody – she just loved company. And so that –

CO: And how did your son handle her illness and then her death?

EJ: Probably not as well as I thought he did. But he was very supportive, and he loved her and he read to her. And he never – there was never any

quarrel about something I couldn't do because of her. Cause when she would have the pain, she'd say it feels like rocks in my head.

CO: Did they have her on some kind of pain management program?

EJ: Nuh uh. No, they gave her 30 treatments of cobalt. Which we think that – and that was – oh, she got to take her girlfriends to see them do it. So we would go back and forth to Columbus after they saw that she was tolerant and it was no problem. And we ate most of the filet mignons that I've ever eaten in my life because she had to have red meat. She had to have the iron. And then we came here – my mother died in 1980.

CO: Now did she die of something diagnosable?

EJ: Oh, you know –

CO: Well she was old, I mean she was 77. Well that's not really old actually – that is not old at all.

EJ: Nuh uh (laughs).

CO: This past year that was really young.

EJ: That was really young. But anyway, as I said, she had lots of grieving problems. And see this was so interesting to others – my mother had never even touched a cigarette. My Daddy wasn't a big smoker. I believe Mama said, he quit when I was 2 or 3. She said, he didn't smoke that much, but he quit because he was afraid when I was in his lap, he might burn me. And so cigarettes were – as I told you, I remember sitting in his lap, listening to the radio and those kinds of things.

CO: Now what did he die from?

EJ: Kidney failure.

CO: Okay. But I love that story about him and your son. Tell that again, because I didn't have this on.

EJ: Oh he enjoyed – and he would always, when we would come, he would say, "What can we have for the baby?" And my mother would say because see, James was a graduate student at UT. "Baby food." Honey, my Daddy would have boxes of baby food waiting for us (laughs). But what I had told you was that when were at their house when we came on, and he would hear Jimmy – it could be 5 oclock in the morning and Jimmy – he'd say "Mama, go get him. He's awake!" And he would bring him and they would play with him, and then – you probably don't even know what the first infant seats looked like – but they were plastic, and they were small and they had that brace to put on the back. Well he would put Jimmy on the bed in their bedroom, and then he would sit in the chair backwards – you know how men do that. And oh he and Jimmy would just laugh together. There are pictures, but now they are on slides and I wasn't about to get the slides out. But anyway, so my parents enjoyed the children, and I remember one slide I have of Jimmy as – my mother made the most wonderful chicken and dumplings. And you know dumplings were thin and – you know, women back then just knew how to do those things. Well, my mother was making – well Jimmy had to help her so she of course pulled up the chair. He stood in the chair, and here he is with flour, but he was rolling that dough (laughs). And so you know, I have such pleasant memories of my children. And in the kitchen with me, I said, – it was a long time before I knew I could turn my mixer on. Because as Evelyn Ann got to where she could switch it on. And Jimmy – they would argue over whose turn it was to switch the mixer on when I was baking – and I liked to bake. I did then, anyway (laughs). Not sure I like to cook anymore, but we did. And their birthdays were their cakes. I made a little rocket on a Launch pad, I made a butterfly, made a log cabin. We made batman's face, and just – it was whatever they wanted for their birthday, and we made the cake – we didn't go buy the cake. We didn't buy the cakes.

CO: Well now, your husband died in 1970. You were –

EJ: I was 35.

CO: Yeah, have you ever considered remarriage? Did you ever consider it? Did you ever come close?

EJ: No. Uh, it wasn't that I didn't consider it, it just didn't---the opportunity just (laughs), didn't present itself.

CO: So did you want to remarry, or did it –

EJ: Well, part of me – somebody said, the greatest compliment I could ever pay him would have been to remarry. Because – and of course now my friend Beth, which you'll see Beth's picture, who I've known since 1st grade said, "you couldn't have remarried. You had too good a marriage." Cause she said, "you and my mother had the best marriages I've ever known about." Well see, he loved all my friends, and they all knew him and it was – it really was a good marriage. There were up and downs, which is normal, but never anything major.

CO: So you just –

EJ: So, you know, it's never bothered me that I wasn't married again. There are times – and still now – it would be nice to have an escort once in a while (laughs). Or to do – but as I said, I lose myself in books.

CO: And you've got a lot of friends.

EJ: Oh yes, lots of friends. Both and here and across the country – from wherever we lived in different places.

CO: Okay. Well now, we were just really getting into your work and career yesterday when we had to stop so you could go and take care of the library director –

EJ: Oh he's wonderful! I hope; I hope; I hope –

CO: Oh that's good. So you all hired a new –

EJ: New director and he came to us from the Gwinnett Public Library – 42 years old. I believe he pronounces his last name 'Shermaker' or 'Shermauker', I still haven't gotten that down pat.

CO: Well I know that was important. When your son was growing up, your daughter 'crossed over' as the Native Americans say before she had a chance to – did she ever talk about what she wanted to do when she got grown? Was that something she –

EJ: You know, I don't believe I remember that. No, I don't – if she did, that didn't stick.

CO: Yeah. So what about your son? Because he –

EJ: Well he always – back then said, he wanted to be a doctor. But as he got older, his mind changed, and the history profs here thought he should go into law, and the science people said he needed to be in a science field, and so anyway. He went into the science field.

CO: He went into science, okay. And do you want to tell me about your accomplishments – your awards and so forth? Because you said, – can you get me a copy of your vitae? Could you send me a copy of –

EJ: Oh heavens no. (laughs) No, no, no. I don't even know where one is. I was named Candler Prof (?). Now that is a 2 year thing, but the real honor that comes is your colleague's select the Candler Professor.

CO: The colleagues'?

EJ: The faculty.

CO: Uh huh. They vote?

EJ: They vote, and um –

CO: Candler professor.

EJ: And that carries a stipend for the 2 years, you know, you get an additional stipend.

CO: When was that?

EJ: I'm not sure.

CO: A long time before you retired, or?

EJ: Oh yeah. I came in ’77 – it was before Stewart Gulley came, because Frank James was dean, and Walter Murphy was president.

CO: And so what are the qualifications for getting the Candler Professor?

EJ: Well normally they’d look at one that students respect, and that you are active on campus, and of course I’ve always been active in community affairs. And so –

CO: So you were named Candler Professor at some point, you can’t remember when?

EJ: No – isn’t that something?

CO: No that’s okay.

EJ: I’d have to go look at the names listed that – there’s a wall hanging at the college with all the Candler Profs –

CO: Well I’ll get somebody there to look it up.

EJ: (Laughs). But I really – isn’t that strange?

CO: So is that the thing that in your career – is that what meant most to you?

EJ: Well, I don’t know. I guess the respect that I gained from the president and the dean, and as I think I said, to you – when I was named to the search committee for the president, and when we interviewed, and when we named Stewart before he accepted it – and he asked us to call him Stewart. I got my hand slapped one time – I was very active in Delta Kappa Gamma, and probably would have been a president, but I decided I wasn’t sure I wanted to spend 2 years traveling the state of Georgia. And so I didn’t, but I chaired a number of things. I was first vice president – yeah it must have been first vice president, and I chaired some of the state things we had two of the state workshops. When we had a workshop here at LaGrange College, and then we had – what did we call those things that I chaired? But anyway, during the summer and the people came on campus and stayed – and that’s when I always asked Stewart to come and you

know, welcome them and talk to 'em. And one of the ladies slapped my hands and said, "That is Dr. Gulley." And I said, "I'm sorry" you know, "he asked that we do that." But what I was gonna say to you – and this was a very special meaning – he talked with the members of the search committee, and he talked with – Greg McClanahan and I were the 2 faculty members on board. And he talked to us, and he asked us – he was in the process of finishing his doctorate, and he wanted to know how we thought the faculty would receive him, you know. See he was only 35 years old, so he – and I said, "you don't have to worry about that. You will be the first president LaGrange College has had with an earned doctorate, and that they will be" I said. Well anyway, supposedly that was one of the deciding factors. Now he has told this in public, and I was in the audience and was kind of embarrassed when he told it (laughs), but that was it. But as I said, honors and things in Delta Kappa Gamma –

CO: Now Delta Kappa Gamma, tell me what that is.

EJ: That is professional women. Educators – professional educators. I don't think it's nearly as active as it used to be – I'm not active in the group here. Because it just wasn't enough time, and as I said, I have been active in the American Cancer Society, I was a division chairman in –

CO: Now the presidents at LaGrange College didn't have earned doctorates – okay so they were mostly in the ministry. Was it mostly – they were more concerned about having people –

EJ: No, they had been ministers. That was not – now Walter Murphy had been at Florida Atlantic, and he had been at Andrew College, so he had been at several. See Dr. Waights Henry was here forty years, and of course they all, as we said, it's been interesting to see what LaGrange – to hear what LaGrange was when Waights Henry – now Waights Henry hired me, but he retired in a year or 2. And then Dr. Murphy came on, and it was interesting to see how they've each built on, and of course it was just right when Stewart came. And with the Calloway backing, you know, if it hadn't been for Callaway money, LaGrange would be another little town. Absolutely, there is no – people who have been here all the time I don't think really realize that. Because I've seen raised eyebrows when I said, that, you know.

CO: Oh my goodness, yeah.

EJ: See, so that's been an interesting thing. But as I said, and as I said, to you church things. So I've served in so many leadership roles.

CO: Well clearly this has been your calling in life, but have you ever had – were there times where you've thought "well, I might have liked to have done so and so if I hadn't gone into education. There might have been other professions or careers I might have been good at." Have you—

EJ: I've always thought about it, and I don't know that consumer affairs is the right thing, but see I was enrolled to enter the doctoral program at Auburn in one of the areas in what used to be called the school of home economics – but it was consumer – it wasn't textiles or nutrition or anything like that. And I always thought that would be an interesting thing, and I still do think it would have been a fascinating thing. To have been a part of it – not home economics, but in this area of home economics. That would have been a fascinating field to have been in, to watch it grow and – but –

CO: But you're satisfied. It's just interesting to me what things we think, you know, at one point in our life we sort of – at a turning point, and you think 'well gee, why didn't I get a law degree?' Or 'why didn't I go to medical school?' or whatever.

EJ: Not medical school (laughs).

CO: Yeah, okay. So what was it like to retire? You've been retired now since – what'd you say, '96?

EJ: No, no, 2001.

CO: 2001. Okay, so what was that like?

EJ: Well, I just moved on to all sorts of volunteer work. Callaway gardens – I was at – and as I said, I was a Hospice volunteer, and all sorts of things at the church, and I did EFM. I did the Bible study, and so it was just – and I enjoyed playing bridge. I enjoyed – and I also play Mah Jongg. Now play Mah Jongg – I do play once a week, there are 4 of us who get together.

CO: For our students transcribing, spell Mah Jongg.

EJ: MAH JONGG.

CO: Yeah.

EJ: I can't remember – is that a hyphen in there?

CO: Listen, that's okay, they can look it up. But that'll get 'em started. Just for the --

CO: Is there anything you miss about work?

EJ: I miss the people. I miss the students, I enjoyed them. And as I said, I guess one of the nicest compliments – I was never known as the easy teacher. But one day, a student came by my office and my door's always open – If I was there, the door was opened – and she came in, and she said, "You know, all the students ought to come in here and sit down and talk to you. They'd find out what a real person you are." (Laughs).

CO: So you had a reputation for being –

EJ: I had stiff requirements. They told me they loved an A when they got it (laughs).

CO: Well they appreciated the A I'm sure. Well how do you feel about your life now that you're retired? Since you've been retired?

EJ: Well, I traveled – of course I traveled a lot back then, even when I was teaching. And until Jimmy was out on his own, he did the trips with me. I made sure that we did the trips together because we spent a month in Australia. We have a lovely friend – she was here this fall – you'll see her picture too. But Leone is a special lady, and she and Jimmy had a nice relationship. So anyway, Leone is retired and she taught at QIT. The way we got there – my friend Beth, who is the retired professor at Georgia Southern – did exchange teaching with a fella from QIT in Queensland, Australia. So for a year they exchanged jobs – everything she said, except salary, cause she didn't make nearly as much as he did (laughs). Beth never finished her doctorate. She was not willing to give up the time and –

CO: Yeah. Now what is QIT?

EJ: Queensland Institute of Technology. And I think its now Queensland University, I've forgotten the name has changed slightly. Cause Leone was talking about that when she was here, but Jimmy and I went and spent a month – at that time, when Dr. Henry was here, one of the favorite things with the students was when the college closed at Thanksgiving, it did not open again until after New Years Day. So students could get to work, could get the Christmas jobs and back then that was important. And so we got out and we left a day after Thanksgiving.

CO: So you had a whole month to stay –

EJ: So we were there a month and it was – we did a lot of traveling around Australia. As much as you could, cause everything in Australia is a long way from everywhere else you go.

----------End of part 2----------

----------Part 3 1:00:28----------

EJ: -- I went with the Friendship Force from Atlanta. Dr. Gill Watson, a former minister of ours, was involved and he said, he was at Oak Grove in Atlanta, and he said, "want to go to New Zealand"? And I said, "Oh, you better believe it." And he said, "Okay", so we spent a month in New Zealand. That probably is the singular most beautiful place I've ever been. Now the traveling to a lot of Europe, and of course the Swiss Alps were magnificent, but there is something – oh, when you go down to Milford Sound – and we were in private homes for a week. And the most unpretentious people I've ever met. And that was a real – that was a real compliment. But it was interesting – a lot of things about their school system was interesting. But anyway –

CO: Well now, I have a whole section as I told you yesterday, on the experience of loss and grief and so forth. And you've already told me plenty, and so we don't have to revisit that. I think that – one of the questions I ask is what is the most difficult in terms of having to just get through the grieving, and you told me yesterday – because every time you lost somebody, you had somebody, but with your son –

EJ: Oh this has been the hardest. This has been the hardest, and as I said, there is still so much stuff to go through. Cause see, it's like consolidating two homes. And you know, like I opened up a box, and here were all the cards that I had sent him while I was traveling. Then you open up another box and here are all the cards that I'd sent him for birthdays, and all that sort of stuff.

CO: He was a very sentimental man, wasn't he?

EJ: Well he really was. And I found a card just this morning when I was hunting for pictures of – and that was a typical note.

CO: (reads card) He says "This is a very feeble attempt to tell you how much I love, admire, and respect you. I love you so much, Jimmy." Now how is it to find stuff like that? How –

EJ: Well it just kind of tears you apart. And also, sometimes I just have to quit that, you know.

CO: Sure. Well, I don't know if there's any way to try and pass along information about how to grieve, but you know, nobody teaches us how to grieve.

EJ: Well, and it's different for everybody. I've read these books, *Good Grief,* and – Oh God – books that people have given me. I tell you of a little book – let me think – are you familiar with a little book called *Fall of Freddy the Leaf*?

CO: No, uh uh. What's it called?

EJ: *Fall of Freddy the Leaf*. Let me see if I can put my hands on it. Dr. Watson, when he was our minister, he did a 6 week course on grief. Of course this was years ago, and we were intro – my – I guess Beth – see, I got this book in – Beth had come in 1985, and it's a beautiful way of talking about how the last leaf falls of the tree. And it's about death, and there was a couple in there whose 16 year old son had been killed in an automobile accident, and he was in a private school over at – What's the one that's over near Greenville? I can't remember the name of it now, but anyway, they bought this, and gave it every member of the senior class. They

bought one of em – these were care notes about grief, you know. But it's a special – it's a story of life for all ages, and about how he watched the others fall. And I guess one thing – of course, you need to find things to do, and keep yourself busy, and sometimes that's when Bridge and Mah Jongg come in handy.

CO: Well now yesterday you said, something about you had to learn how to express emotion. Did I misunderstand you? You said, something to that effect. That you had to learn how to express emotion – do you remember that or –

EJ: Well, you know, I may have said it that way, I don't know. But you do. You kind of have to learn, you know. And I've – the one thing that I have learned that has meant the most is it's not what you say that makes a difference, it's the fact you were there. Cause I remember one of my former students – she came back to LaGrange College later, you know, finishing the degree. Her son was a student out of the Academy, and he was killed going home from a basketball game one night evidently went to sleep. And of course as it is true in most schools, they call in ministers and everybody – and I was very close to the head mistress at that time – Martha Ann Todd. And so that afternoon, I just couldn't *not* stop at the school. And I went in, and I said, "There's nothing for me to say, but you need a hug." And there were 2 or 3 of them, and we just kind of commiserated a little bit. I got the loveliest note from her that said, "You didn't come in with lots of words, but you gave of yourself."

CO: When I hear about someone dying, and especially if it's a –

EJ: Well you've been through it with your sister.

CO: Right – but I want – it's the hardest card to send, because I – you don't know what to say. You don't want to say something that is trite, and "thinking about you" doesn't hardly seem to, you know. Nothing seems to convey the depth of what you feel –

EJ: And there is not – the main thing is that you have expressed yourself in some way. You have left – because there are several people that I did not hear from when Jimmy died, that to this day, I still can't quite believe that. But I think one of 'em, it just really and truly was she didn't know what –

and she's a professional educator and all of this stuff. But you know, not a lot of courses deal – have anything dealing with death.

CO: Right. Well I lost a colleague in late 2009 – I wasn't especially close to her, but we went together once a week to something, so our paths crossed frequently. And she died in late 2009, and there were a couple of colleagues that never showed up for anything – nothing, she had a long, sustained illness. Never showed up to the hospital, never showed up to the – and the only thing that people could speculate – I mean people didn't sit around talking about them, but you know, it got brought up because they had traveled together – the one who died and this particularly other colleague. They had been buddies, and then when this befell the one, the other one just never showed up and we couldn't – we just finally said, it just must be she can't face her own mortality, you know.

EJ: And that could be true – see that's another thing, as you said. See I have good, close friends that have died – Dr. Williams who was in the English Department –and I traveled together. She was so interesting – we visited a friend of mine in Brevard, and it was a heavenly weekend. So they wanted us to come back, and Muriel said, "No. We've never had a bad trip, and if we go back, it might be a bad trip." But Muriel died – she knew she was dying, and she was going to St. Francis in Columbus for some surgery. And so I said, "Now what time will you be leaving?" She and her son were taking her – Dave. And she said, "1 o'clock." So I went by the house between 11:30 and 12:00 – there wasn't anybody there. And I knew she – you know. Of course she never gained consciousness, so that was it but she died. My good friend Sue Vollenweider, who I played duplicate Bridge with – we've played tournament Bridge – and so – oh my. And then Jimmy was here – as a matter of fact, one of those paper weights over there is one that Sue gave to him. There's a Crystal Factory in Germany – they lived in Germany, her husband was a nurse anesthetist in the Army. And they make only clear glass – everything's clear. Well, Sue had given him this, and somebody who was sitting behind us said, that during her funeral service, I just was having a hard time. And one of 'em said, "We saw Jimmy reach down and hold your hand." And so anyway, that was nice to have him here at that time. And then a good friend, Jean Herrin, developed Alzheimers and thank goodness died quickly.

CO: Well one of my questions – not to change the subject at all – but is about loss other than death. So have you experienced the loss of a friend through Alzheimers or something?

EJ: Oh yes. Jean – she's the one that – the main one I can think about right now. And that was so hard – she had been the administrative assistant at First Methodist for years, and when Jimmy was in Tallahassee, she had a daughter that lived there, so many times when I was going to Tallahassee for the weekend, Jean went and visited her daughter. And she and I would go to Atlanta and go and visit with Watson – who is now at Northside – I think – I know he'll retire from Northside, because of the accomplishments that have taken place there since he's been there. But anyway, we'd go to Atlanta and have lunch with Gil, and that was a tremendous loss. Because all of a sudden, she didn't remember. And to watch her – and then her family– placed her out at Florence Hand and another friend went in to see her and she said, "Evelyn, she was taking off her clothes." And this beautifully groomed, careful, caring person, you know. And so that's why that was bad. And let's see, of course – I'll tell you what else has been hard, is for them to move away.

CO: Right, well that's another kind of loss.

EJ: Because a friend – her nickname was Phil, her name was Mary Ann Lynch. And oh my –

CO: So tell me how do you – that's so much loss – how do you recover from that time after time after time?

EJ: Well, you never--I can't answer that. I don't know that I've recovered, but you know, you just kind of – and not many people want to talk about it.

CO: Right. But it's such a – because when it happens to you, you don't – you're at a loss, you know, you really don't know how to do this. And you have to do it, you know. Grief is a thing that you –

EJ: And you know, one of the hard ones also is Nina George – she's the only person that I've ever known that had severe, crippling rheumatoid arthritis. If you've never known anybody with it, you don't wish it on anybody. And of course when they moved to LaGrange – he taught at the

college, he had been with C & S Bank for many, many years in Atlanta. And they recruited him in the business department for whatever his specialty was. And they were active Methodists, and so I knew them well and I would go and sit with Nina. But she – I don't know if it was 2 or 3 years, I can't remember now – that she was in the nursing home. And she would just get so agitated, and be so ugly. And that was so unlike her, you know. And then the last year or so, when I'd go in and talk to her, I didn't know whether she knew me or not. And that was so hard. And I said, – I guess that's – I don't think it's my punishment, I shouldn't use that term – but I don't make friends to lose them, except by these ways, you know. And of course I've had – some of 'em just quit. (laughs). I guess I wasn't what they wanted, but anyway.

CO: So – but you have friends now that hang on – were your friends helpful for you in processing the grief all those times? Were friends able to help?

EJ: Some were, and some – see, it's a subject people don't want to talk about. They don't want to deal with it, you know. This is just and life. Did I share the story about – I don't know what I shared yesterday – but I was working at the storytelling festival with a lady, and she lost – her son died about the time my son did. And –

CO: He died of what now?

EJ: Her son died – I don't – I think he died in his sleep. But anyway, it was totally unexpected, and something was said to me – or maybe she said, it and I said, "Well, I have good days and bad days, and I expect you do." And she said, "Oh no, I put it in the hands of God." And I thought if you knew who you were talking to, you wouldn't say that. Because anyway –

CO: Right, you did tell me that and that was – it just hurts to think about how that must've felt.

EJ: But you know – well it does, it kind of cuts through you, and then you just have to – you know, you don't hold it against people because you understand that they don't know what they're talking about.

CO: Well now, another subject that's not all that – well, it's not quite as maybe painful, but its none the less sobering, and that's aging – the experience of aging.

EJ: (Laughs)

CO: (Laughs). You know when I – I remember as a child myself thinking what old was, you know. And 30 – I remember thinking 30 was old –

EJ: Oh, 40 was *really* old – I remember those days.

CO: Yeah, well, now I've really – it's really moved – it's well past into centenarians before I can call people old anymore. But do you remember thinking what life was gonna be like when you got old?

EJ: No, I didn't have time to worry about that until the past 3 years. And I've never really had health problems, you know, I have hypertension, but they give me a pill and that goes on, and all this sorta thing. But then when – well, the first thing – I guess that was – don't pull me to dates right now, but anyway. It`s been in the last 3 to 4 years that I've had some health problems, and the one thing we all laughingly say is I used to could do so much more, and I used to do lots of things in my house at night. But I find it nicer to read or watch TV (laughs).

CO: Yeah. So energy level is down then.

EJ: Yeah, energy level is something, that's true.

CO: That's what everybody – everybody comments on that. How old do you feel in your mind and in your heart today?

EJ: Not 76. I mean, I don't recall names as well, you know, some of those things, but so far as doing and going and that sorta thing –

CO: So what was your –

EJ: I can't answer a number.

CO: Yeah. What age do you – when you look back over the past – what age do you recall most nostalgically? Or if you could stay at an age because you recall that age as being whatever, you know – the best of – I mean, some people might say 18, but most of us don't feel like we've got enough wisdom at 18, you know. What is an age that you look back where you've had enough wisdom but you also had, you know, energy and good health and –

EJ: Well of course it's hard to skip over the 10 years I was married. But then, getting past all the tragedies, that there have been some good years. And so –

CO: Well do you recall those years you were married? That decade you were married with nostalgia?

EJ: Oh sure.

CO: And you would have been –

EJ: I was 25 when I married, and he died when I was 35.

CO: So that decade would have been a good age –

EJ: It would have been a good age, uh huh. Cause that was when I had both children, and we loved our children and enjoyed them.

CO: Yeah. Well what – there's gotta be something rewarding about aging – what's the – the downside is the physical disabilities and so forth, but what are the good things about –

EJ: Well, the good thing of course is wonderful memories. Wonderful memories and sharing with good friends, and we're very fortunate in LaGrange to have a very strong cultural community. The plays and our symphony---it's wonderful, and you know, I kind of believe in my head – you have to pick up the pieces. My saying is you have two choices, you either fall apart or you pick up the pieces. And you pick them up as best you can. You also – now how do I say that – I'm not sure. You are never the same – all of these things take their toll. Not bad – I don't mean bad, you learn a lot from them, and you learn a lot from your friends. But – and

even this time it's been harder to go on with some things. It's harder to get going in the morning.

CO: Do you think that's – has that got anything to do with your age, or is it just the gravity of the loss?

EJ: Probably both. And it probably – if we're honest about it – it's both things. Because if I wake up – sometimes when I wake up early in the morning, thoughts go through my mind and I can't turn my mind off. You know, you go through those times that you can't do that, and so – that makes it hard. That makes it hard. Like I've been down – it was interesting that you asked about pictures, I've been in lots of memory lanes before you got here because I was the one with the camera at the storytelling festival – early festivals. Now in the last few years, people have got all these fancy things, and they were – one of the ladies who was working with the scrapbooks was alarmed that we didn't have many pictures from the – I said, "I do." So she said, "Well, we need em." And you know, you're always gonna put 'em in albums and everything. Well, I've got lots of albums, I can show you the build up. But a lot of 'em never reach the albums, because you know, that takes time, and you leave 'em over here. And so now I have decided that maybe, maybe one day, I'll take photo boxes and just put 'em by years and let it go (laughs).

CO: And that in itself takes time.

EJ: Well it does, but anyway I had pulled out. And it's been fun to go down memory lane with different – you know, think "oh these are things Sue and I enjoyed," and I think "Oh these are things, Billy and x, y, z" And I enjoy that sort of thing, you know. So that's been – I don't think I answered the question, but –

CO: No, no, no, that's okay.

EJ: I don't even remember quite what it was.

CO: That's okay. But now we are moving on to something that's pretty different than these really personal things. Although to some people, this is very personal, but – some people, when I talk to them about regional identity, they know exactly what I'm talking about, and other people just

look at me like I'm speaking Greek. So how you respond is fine – it doesn't matter, but since I study southern history and southern culture, it's – which means, you know, I'm analyzing it under a microscope so to speak. But if you've traveled a lot, or lived outside the region, you know that it's regarded as different everywhere –

EJ: Oh yes –

CO: So how would you describe to somebody from let's say another country how different the south – the southern United States is from the rest of the country? How would you describe that difference?

EJ: That's not easy (laughs). Um, well, first of all, I think southerners are so much warmer and more accepting of other people. They are more willing to share, and we know we talk different. (Laughs).

CO: If we didn't know it, we'd sure get reminded of it.

EJ: Absolutely! My husband's chairman at Marshall University said, "Well Evelyn, there's one thing you won't have to work on when you get back to Auburn, Alabama, and that's your southern drawl." I thought I talked real well. But anyway, I find that we are warmer, we are more sharing – I had an incident. My next door neighbor in Huntington's father died, so guess what Evelyn did? She knew when they were coming home, so I organized dinner. And she asked me why I did it. That was something – she just didn't know about that. And in times of tragedies, whatever they may be, people respond like – I've just been through getting rid of lots of – and still have a long way to go – lots of stuff to a little church out here called Ayers Memorial Methodist Church. Well my neighbor's down on the corner of the street are very active in that church, and I knew they were having a yard sale and I'd never given it a lot of thought. And I was talking to – now my neighbors across the street are just wonderful, and they know what life's all about. She had a kidney transplant, and then was diagnosed with lymphoma. But right now, all is well – we hope. But anyway, I was talking to David and Brenda because they've always kind of looked after me, and when I go off out of town, I'm supposed to call them when I get where I'm going (laughs). But anyway, she – they said, "Why don't you give a lot of that stuff to Annette's yard sale?" And that's the church's yard sale, and I said, "hadn't thought about that." Well I did, and I talked to Annette just this

morning. She said, “Evelyn, we cleared over $1400.” Well they serve – that money goes for their own food pantry. Now there’s a food closet in town, but now see there are a lot of people out here that don’t get to town.

CO: Now what’s the name of the church again?

EJ: Ayers Memorial –

CO: Ayers?

EJ: AYERS.

CO: Ayers Memorial, okay.

EJ: Uh huh. And you know, there is that desire –

CO: So you attribute that to a southern – an aspect of southern culture?

EJ: Yes I do. I really do, and as I said, – now the farthest out of the south I’ve lived is West Virginia, and I had wonderful neighbors there, we lived on a cul de sac, and we had, you know – And I find that southerners get to know people – sometimes I think they get to know people easier than others do. As a matter of fact, in this board meeting yesterday afternoon, Dr. Sabat’s wife is on the board, and they have a house. Of course, you know, with their money – but his family, when they came to this country, settled around Sausalito, outside of San Francisco, and her husband own a house in Sausalito. So she has a wedding – a daughter getting married in September, and we said, “hows the wedding?” She said, “Going to California, I’ll worry about it when I get back.” But to hear her talk about how nobody around her knew any neighbors – well see, you know.

CO: You think that that’s a regional thing?

EJ: I really do. But now my experience is not broad. Now I have a friend who’s a military wife, and she describes women on a military base as being very warm and accepting. And I’m sure she contributed to part of that too, but I think friendliness and acceptance of people and –

CO: Well you know that outside the south – the south, whether – I mean, everybody knows that race relations – troubled race relations -- are not limited to the south.

EJ: Oh no.

CO: But it is true that the south has had definitely had more than its share, and for obvious historical reasons. One thing that scholars try to understand is at what point people become aware of what it means – what the color of your skin means. It means – and if you live in the south, especially if you lived in the south in Jim Crow, before the Civil Rights movement, and before the changes that came about in the '50s and '60s, there was a certain racial etiquette that was observed by –

EJ: Oh yeah. The black have a place to drink, a place to sit –

CO: Yes, right, right. So I think before we get to that though, I would like to ask if you recall the time in your life – and for most people it is childhood – certainly for most people in the south. Now I've talked to some people who weren't born in the south – some women who weren't born in the south, they were born outside the south – they didn't even see a person of a different race until they were a teenager, so they don't -- But in the south –

EJ: We did.

CO: You grow up seeing it. But was there a time in your childhood when you recognized that it meant something different – you had white skin and that meant something different than somebody who had black skin?

EJ: No.

CO: No?

EJ: And maybe it was because this little town that I grew up in, and – see, my Daddy always worked, always had lots of black men as well as white men that worked with him. And those – some of those black boys – young boys who are now men, I have seen occasionally when I went home cause I visited my friend who's – she and her sons had a big peanut processing plant, and they processed cantaloupes and watermelons and all this sorta

stuff. And one day, she said, “there’s somebody here that would like to see you.” And his name was Eddy, and Eddy hugged me and said, “I never will forget all that good food your Mama cooked.” And all these things, and you know, even like in Auburn – when we moved to Auburn, the chairman’s wife said, “Evelyn, I have a lady that comes once a week, and I think with your baby, you need a day that you – So Carry came on Wednesdays. Well, if Jimmy were still alive and Carry was still alive, he would hug her first thing when she walked in the door. They loved Carry – you know, never occurred to them. But I never will forget Evelyn Ann’s first experience with a black child. She was in the university nursery school. They took her because of the fact that her Daddy had just died, and she – this was three years old. And the little boy – and he was bad – and one night she was describing this little boy – I didn’t know he was black, I didn’t know anything about him. And she patted her face and said, “His face is brown, not like mine.” And so anyway, and I went to pick her up one day, and he was over there. She said, “We’ll go this way, he might hit us if we go that way” (laughs). But that was – but let me share this with you – you talked about my children and death. She was the shark of the nursery school. They ate lunch with – you know how students were – and one of the girls went flying to the director and said, Margie Hinton, “do you know what Evelyn Ann just said,?” And she said, “No, but I probably won’t be surprised.” Said, “She just said, that they –“ Oh, well we went to the beach before her Daddy had died. Said, “you know, my Daddy died, but that was after we had been to the beach.” And this girl was just shocked out of her mind. She just couldn’t believe that this 3 year old was just talking about it like that. And she – after that, they weren’t shocked because she’d come out with things, you know.

CO: So she knew a before and an after at 3.

EJ: Yes, she knew a before – “but we went to the beach, but that was before Daddy died.”

CO: Well, about race relations –

EJ: Oh I’m sorry –

CO: That’s okay, that’s alright. What were race relations like in Finleyson? Were there many blacks in Finleyson?

EJ: Oh yeah, we had a good many. But you know, they had a black community, and but you know, as I said, I remember that on Thanksgiving and Christmas when we had the big dinners, my mother did plates for several of the older families. And Daddy took 'em over sometimes before we ate.

CO: So you mean the black families that didn't have Thanksgiving dinner, they –

EJ: Well, they didn't know what they were having and they wanted to share the good stuff, you know. Cause there was always so much.

CO: Alright, yeah. Well do you remember – cause I do remember asking myself before I even had words to articulate it – why the man who did the yards who was black wouldn't come to the front door, you know? And so why did – that kind of etiquette – what was that all about? Why wont the woman who cooks for us eat lunch at the table with me when I eat lunch, you know? I just couldn't process that. Do you remember asking questions about that? No?

EJ: Nuh uh. Nuh uh. Cause they were so accepted in Finleyson.

CO: Okay.

EJ: Of course they didn't eat at the table with us and I guess – I probably asked questions, but I don't remember that. That I don't remember, because see, we would have moved to Auburn, and Jimmy would have been in the 3rd grade when the schools integrated.

CO: So at what stage were they when school desegregation? Well your daughter was born – really after –

EJ: But see Auburn schools were not desegregated when Jimmy was in 1st grade, and 2nd grade. Cause oh my, that 3rd grade –

CO: When school desegregation happened?

EJ: Mmhm.

CO: What was that like for them –

EJ: Awful. It was awful. He had a black teacher, and they knew that James had just died – the principal knew it. Well – but as I said, Jimmy was always protective of me, and he would know – One of the girls that met me through the nursery school said, to me "Mrs. Jordan, do you know what your little boy goes through at school?" I said, "No." She said, "If you did, you wouldn't send him back tomorrow."

CO: Oh my goodness, what happened?

EJ: Well see, he read on about a 7th or 8th grade level. The teacher sat him in a little cabinet like thing to do his work because he was doing different things from the other children.

CO: So he was smarter –

EJ: Oh yeah, so bright.

CO: And she didn't know what to do with him?

EJ: She didn't know what to do with him. And so I went to her very nicely and said, you know "tell me about how Jimmy's doing" and this sort of thing. "Well, he doesn't usually--- I don't know exactly what she said, to me, and I said, "Well don't you talk to him?" I'll never forget – "I talks to him sometimes!!" And the principal said, to me "Oh nothing's wrong with him, he just misses his Daddy." So those were painful years in Auburn.

CO: And that was '60 what?

EJ: Uh, no –

CO: Was that '70s?

EJ: Let's see, he started school – he was born in '62 – would it have been in 1970?

CO: Well, okay, because his Daddy died in –

EJ: ’70 would have been – ’71 I guess, school year. I think.

CO: What month – what was the actual date of your husband’s death?

EJ: June 26th.

CO: June 26th, okay. So your memories of desegregation are not good –

EJ: Are not good – not in the school system. And that was in – oh, oh, it was bad in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. I could’ve kept him – probably should have homeschooled at that time. But I couldn’t homeschool, I was trying to teach, you know. I had other things, and I felt like if there were neglectful years, those were probably the neglectful years.

CO: So the years after your husband died –

EJ: And due to the school situation.

CO: Okay.

EJ: Cause see, when he reached the Junior High School, they had started the Alabama gifted talented program, and there were a group of – he was in a very bright class, and your IQ had to exceed 140 to be in it. And so he had lots of nice experiences from being in the Alabama gifted talented program. But those other years were horrible.

CO: And what do you attribute the – to what do you attribute that difficulty?

EJ: Well part of it was to the teachers. That year – that first year after James died, it was tethered to that moment.

CO: That particular teacher –

EJ: And the principal saying things to me like “he just missed Daddy.” Well sure he missed his Daddy, but there were other things going – and of course Mack wasn’t a strong principal. And so it was not good at all. And she didn’t know what to do with him. See, when he was in the first and second grade, he was with – there were 2 of the little boys that were very,

very bright. It was Jimmy and – what was his first name? Billy I think. But anyway, he and Jimmy worked together – the teachers there, you know – but due to desegregation, he had to go to a different school. His name was Bill, cause I remember his mother talking to me. And we said, "What a shame that those little boys had to be separated." Cause her son did not have a good experience – it was better than what Jimmy had because they didn't have the death of a father to blame things on.

CO: Well, okay. I can see certainly how that would color your opinion on the whole.

EJ: Absolutely.

CO: But did your attitudes towards race relations – were they different from your family of origin? Or did you – because you went through a different time than –

EJ: Well see, it was so different. It was so different, and of course I've had – when you talk about loss – one of my best friends here was Laura Lewis, and she was black. And that was oh so hard.

CO: She died

EJ: Uh huh. Of liver cancer. But Laura was very active in the storytelling world, and she and I spent a weekend at Oakracoke together. We were invited by Joyce and Bill Young. And they were there, and they always invited somebody – they were always going to Oakracoke for – I don't know how long they stay now, but at that time, they stayed 2 weeks and one of the weeks they always had guests. And Laura and I, and she was black and Frank was – as a matter of fact, the beautiful new Library that meets the Leed and everything, it was one of the first in the state. It's named the Laura and Frank Lewis Library, and her husband was the head of the library for a number of years, and so Frank and Laura were in my home frequently. And that sort of thing, so you know, that was –

CO: Well what was desegregation like in Finleyson? Did you have any idea – was it less or more –

EJ: It was just like it was.

CO: Do you think they had a similar experience of what you and your son had?

EJ: No.

CO: No?

EJ: No.

CO: Do you think that was the individual, or do you think that that was just a –

EJ: Well, it was – it happened in a number of places in Auburn, and so see –

CO: Do you think it was because it was an administrative issue? That it wasn't handled properly?

EJ: Well, I don't know what he could have said, to her, cause she was very headstrong and – you know, 'I am in the white school now.'

CO: So you detected an attitude?

EJ: Yes, very much an attitude and – so anyway, but I hadn't thought about that, you know. But that was true. As I said, I never had liked her. Do you know who I'm talking about when I say Kathryn Windham?

CO: No.

EJ: Alabama's treasurer, she died the summer of 2011. Her next door neighbor was the black artist – Charlie – but anyway, we won't go into all that. And at her service – a lot of us went for her service, and he and the black man that made her coffin – she was buried in a pine coffin, wrapped in a Gee's Bend quilt. Within – you know, if you aren't embalmed, you have to be buried within 24 hours, and she was buried the next morning.

CO: Wow. And when was this? When was this death?

EJ: In June.

CO: Oh goodness. Well moving on to a few –

EJ: Things that you didn't ask about that I'm telling you –

CO: No, that's quite alright, no, that's okay. A few historical eras that you've lived through – what to you has been the most important historical event that you've either lived through or participated in?

EJ: I think JFK's death – cause he spoke at my graduation from the University of Georgia. I don't remember anything he said, – my parents were real impressed (laughs).

CO: So are you one of those people like so many of us who know exactly where they were when they heard?

EJ: I know exactly where I was – I was lying on the sofa with Jimmy. He was going to sleep, and I had the TV on. Mmhm.

CO: So what was your reaction to that?

EJ: I guess anger – upset, and I just couldn't believe – I guess I just couldn't believe that this was happening. And you know, I can't believe that are happening in our country. It's shocking.

CO: Yeah. Well now you were born in the middle of the depression. Do you remember your family talking about it at all? Cause it was already well on the way by the time you came along. Did they –

EJ: Well, I remember them talking about the importance of the – wasn't that when they had the stamp books and that sort of thing. But it was just a fact of life, as I said, – all of us that grew up said, we guess we were poor, but we didn't know it. You know, cause we had a good time, and –

CO: Yeah. Now did we talk yesterday at all about FDR? About how your parents were FDR fans?

EJ: Oh that's one of the few times I ever saw my father cry – was the morning he died.

CO: Oh my goodness, wow, yeah.

EJ: Oh yes, for FDR was –

CO: Well he was bigger than life for a lot of people.

EJ: Oh yes, oh yes. Well, and he made a significant difference according to them.

CO: A lasting difference – well, I ask in decades, like 'what do you recall about the '40s?' You were very young in your '40s, you were a child –

EJ: I started to school –

CO: Yeah, an adolescent, okay. What do you recall about them? Yesterday you talked about your childhood as almost idyllic, and –

EJ: Well, I don't know that that's how you describe it, but it was a peaceful – you know.

CO: Right. Okay, so your '40s were your childhood and early teen years, and so do you remember the Second World War being talked about and during it?

EJ: Oh yes, because we had – I had a little WACK uniform. We lived out in – I guess I was in about the 4th grade, I don't remember. But we wore – the girls had their little uniforms, so we knew the – oh, and there is a – I am sorry I do not feel the sense of patriotism among younger people that we had, and that there was. And we knew all the songs. I mean, you know, when you go places and they go through all the songs and that sorta thing. So yes, I do remember – and I remember writing letters to uncles and cousins that were in the service.

CO: Because you were sort of encouraged to do that –

EJ: Oh yeah –

CO: Because they were in desert areas, and – where were they? Do you remember where they served?

EJ: No.

CO: Okay, that's okay.

EJ: No. Jean was a sailor, cause I still – well, I think I gave his daughter the picture I had of him. Oh, I'm sure she had one of those, you know. But no, I don't remember where they served.

CO: What about the '50s? What do you remember about that decade? You were like 15-25 the decade of the '50s –

EJ: That was high school graduation and college.

CO: Do you remember the Cold War in that decade?

EJ: Not a lot. I – you know – I knew that it was going on, but there were other things on my mind.

CO: Yeah. So you weren't worried about nuclear war or nuclear accident?

EJ: I didn't worry about that.

CO: Okay. And what about the '60s? It was a tumultuous – and of course that is the – that is your decade. That's the decade of your marriage, that's the decade your children were born.

EJ: Well you know, um –

CO: That was a tumultuous decade. The decade of your life –

EJ: I was trying to put – but I guess the things that stand out most are the things that happen to me personally. The marriage, and the babies, and that sorta thing. And my father dying in '63.

CO: Okay, your father died in ’63, in June, right?

EJ: No, he died in the fall – September. I intended to look that up.

CO: Because JFK died in November –

EJ: That’s right, and Daddy had not been dead very long when JFK died.

CO: So that’s a – the Cuban missile crisis, JFK dying, then in 1965 – well, a lot of people died, but Malcolm X – do you remember the black power movement?

EJ: Yes, yes.

CO: And then in 1968 was a horrific year – Martin Luthor King was assassinated –

EJ: I’d forgotten that was ’68 with the war –

CO: Robert Kennedy was assassinated right after that – it was just a really tumultuous decade. How did that hit you? All those things happening – do you – because so much was happening in your own life –

EJ: As I said, there again, I guess I knew they were happening – we watched the news and read the newspaper and this sorta thing. But – and we were getting adjusted in the late ‘60s to a new life at Auburn. We moved there in ’67 –

CO: After Evelyn Ann was born –

EJ: Born – moved when she was 6 weeks old.

CO: Whoa, okay.

EJ: So anyway, as I said, that was it.

CO: Okay. Well you know the ‘70s – the ’60s was mostly the Civil Rights movement in terms of big social changes, and then the ‘70s was kind of like

all these movements were spawned by that. The Native American or Indian movement, the Ecological Awareness – I remember that my own self. And then the Women's movement – what were your thoughts about the Women's movement?

EJ: (Laughs) That brings back to mind a funny story. One of the women – I don't know which

----------End of part 3----------

EJ: Women's movement was speaking at Auburn.

CO: I wish you could remember (laughs).

EJ: And anyway, as I said, I had these wonderful friends (laughs). They were Jimmy's youth leaders at church, and I said, to one of them "wonder who went to that." Something about why would they go or who went to that – cause I was so caught up in what was happening to me that I didn't have time to worry about some – and later they laughed. Janice said, "You were talking to one of the people who went, Evelyn!" And I said, "Oh my goodness, I really got my foot in my mouth." But I remember summer and a couple of people that I know fairly well were very much in that feminist stuff, you know.

CO: Mmhm. Did you ever read Betty Freidan's *Feminine Mystique*? Do you remember it?

EJ: I think I read it or started it and didn't finish it –

CO: It didn't speak to you? Didn't – so have you ever felt that you were personally yourself discriminated against because you were a woman?

EJ: The only time I thought that was when I first came to LaGrange College, and they – a fella came with me. I mean, a man came – joined the department at the same time I did. And they all said, to me "now remember, he will always make more money than you do." And I said, "Why?" You know, and he showed me his first check. He said, "Now I want you to see this. Now I won't show it to you again" – but it was exactly the same thing I made. But later – but when I took over as chairman, I was real proud of

myself. I said, “I will not take it for one penny less than you’re paying him.” Because we came at the same time. And I said, “I’ve done a lot more on this campus than he ever did.” And the president was embarrassed when he realized the difference in the salary. Dr. Murphy said, “Oh indeed you will get that.” And he said, “I am embarrassed.”

CO: Okay, but now let’s go back, because you said, you saw his first check and you all made the same thing. So at what point did he start making more money than you?

EJ: I don’t know. See, I don’t know, I can’t answer that.

CO: But clearly, okay so –

EJ: But that first time – cause everybody was saying –

CO: He’ll make more money –

EJ: That he will make more money.

CO: Okay, so did it not anger you to discover that after all that work you had done – you’d given that college much more than he had –

EJ: Absolutely.

CO: So you realized that –

EJ: And they said, – and when I talked to the dean about it, he said, “but Evelyn, he never said, – gave any reason that you should have a significant raise.” I think –

CO: What? Who never gave a significant reason?

EJ: The chairman who had a lot to do with the raises at that time – I don’t know what they do now. But anyway, it was – I went through the fact of 2 men who I worked with who were jealous. And I didn’t realize it at that time. Cause I’m so, you know –

CO: But did they make that right? Did they then give you the money you – to raise you up to what –

EJ: Oh yes. Yes ma'am. I wouldn't have taken the chairmanship.

CO: Yeah. So how did you find out that – how did you find out about the inequity?

EJ: The president told me when he came – when he came, and he said, –

CO: So do you think he had a sense of gender equity? Did he care –

EJ: Oh I think he would have done differently. But you know, the president – I don't know about at Valdosta, but the presidents here didn't have much to say about salary. And of course now they've got all sorts of –

CO: Now when was this? That you came to –

EJ: I took over as chairman in 1994.

CO: Okay, but between the time you came and 1994, this person had come to make considerably more money than you.

EJ: Yes.

CO: Okay. But they didn't hesitate? Now did you have any problems getting the money?

EJ: Oh no, none whatsoever.

CO: But did it not make you angry then when you discovered all those years he'd been making all that much more money?

EJ: Yes, of course it did!

CO: Alright, okay. But then – okay, I was asking about the Women's movement that was 94. The Women's Movement as a movement had really sort of run its course by the 90's. It was really a visible movement

anyway, let's hope it never ends until there's genuine equal pay for equal work. But

EJ: Yeah that's what I said,. I said, you know I don't want anything that's not mine.

CO: Yeah, right.

EJ: But -- I knew I was working a lot harder than that man was

CO: Right -- As has been so often the case, but so then for the other movements – gay and lesbian movement, Native American movement, ecological movement, did those, did you have feelings about those in one way or another?

EJ: Oh, I can't be – not where the gay is concerned cause one of my good friends I grew up with is gay, and she is one of the loveliest friends I've ever had -- never in that relationship, but

CO: Did that color how you perceived sexuality? Did having a friend who was the friend open about it, about the sexuality?

EJ: She's never talked about it to me but she knows I know? I'll sum that up. -- Also wonderful person that I worked with for 20 plus years -- I was on the Altar Guild at the church and that was always on the symbol because we redecorated. And the lady that was in charge of it said, "I never met a gay man I didn't like." Now I admit, we didn't know a lot of em, but I have been cut from a party list because I could not go against – probably the best organist and choir director we've ever had. He was gay, and she was determined – this woman – to get him out. And I just couldn't do that, because he wasn't doing anything to any of us, and he was by far the best – oh, our music was – everybody in town said, First Methodist has got the best music. And I knew him, and enjoyed him, and –

CO: Did he get cut?

EJ: He left.

CO: He left, okay. The pressure got to him?

EJ: I think that's what it was. Course they knew – and then he was teaching in a public school music – at Junior High in South Carolina and the first year he was there was named Teacher of the Year. I thought "I hope that woman knows." But she has a big Christmas party and I used to be invited but I was never invited again.

CO: Now how did you deal with that?

EJ: That was her way of dealing with it – that was her problem, it wasn't mine.

CO: So did it make you mad, did it hurt your feelings? Or how did you feel about being excluded because you had stood up for something that you –

EJ: Well I wasn't angry. As I said, I just – a lot of times, I handle things by saying 'it's her problem, not my problem.'

CO: Okay, alright. Well, do you have strong feelings about – like okay, I'm sure you hear on the news about – it's such an issue in churches now. It's just a huge – and Episcopal churches particularly touched by it. And it really is a divisive issue – I see it in my own church divide people that are otherwise close friends. But over this issue, they just, you know, they can't see eye to eye for lack of a – and it's very divisive. Do you – is it that way in your church?

EJ: Not yet.

CO: Okay. So you don't have the issue of the –

EJ: Nuh uh, nuh uh.

CO: Pulpit, and being bishops and that sorta thing.

EJ: Well, we have the bishops and everything, but –

CO: But it hasn't become a –

EJ: But it has not become the problem in the Methodist church that it has in a lot of churches. Or not in North Georgia anyway.

CO: And what about women in positions of leadership in the ministry?

EJ: I don't have a problem with it because the female Episcopal minister who led the EFM was female – Laurie Low led the EFM course that I took,– and we've had our past 2 former associate ministers have been women. One of em – the last one – had been in the business world for 20 years, and entered the ministry –

CO: Well that happens. When people become mature, I think they explore a spiritual dimension they didn't explore –

EJ: Uh huh.

CO: What do you think finally has been the legacy of these movements? I ask particularly about the women's movement because I'm talking particularly to women. But any of the movements – but starting with the women's movement, has the legacy been positive or has it been negative? As far as you've –

EJ: Well there's some positive things that have come out of it, but I'm sure there are negatives too. There always are, you know. But I would hope that there are more positive things –

CO: Yeah. You think you would have gotten that pay – that equity pay if you'd – what do you think would have happened if you'd of insisted that you get pay retroactive?

EJ: Oh, I don't know. Oh, I don't think that would have happened.

CO: But you deserved it, don't you think?

EJ: Sure (laughs). I worked hard, long hours.

CO: Okay. Well can we talk about religion? Is that something you'd like to talk about?

EJ: Mmhm. If you want to.

CO: I do, I do. I start off – well, you can call it religion, you can call it spirituality, whatever you're comfortable with. And I start with a question that I got off NPR – it was something that they ask – they had a special – they had people write in or blog in, and respond to what is the core value that has driven your life. The one most significant value that has been the driving force in your life – or the most – you know, you have many values obviously. But what one has driven you more than any other?

EJ: Hmm. And I'm not sure this is what you're looking for, but a strong faith in God.

CO: Sure. So your faith?

EJ: Mmhm. Mmhm.

CO: Okay, I think that's a core value. When you were at home, were your parents religious? Were your mother and father?

EJ: Mama more than Daddy.

CO: And she was also Methodist?

EJ: Uh huh. And we laughingly say, you know, most of us – as we said, "Why are you Methodist?" "Mama was." You know, as I said, it was a small – of course I grew up ecumenically because the 1st and 4th Sunday, you went to the Methodist church and the 2nd and 3rd Sundays, you went to the Baptist church (laughs). And our vacation church schools were all the children – Baptist and Methodist, you know. That sorta thing, but anyway.

CO: So could you tell me – I ask people this sometimes and they just are dumbfounded – they can't – they just don't know what I'm asking. And it sounds pretty simple – could you identify what your religious beliefs are? Your spiritual beliefs? What do you believe?

EJ: In other words, do I believe there's life after death?

CO: Well, that is another question – do you believe in an afterlife? But that's just one. Otherwise, you have a strong faith – a faith in what? In who?

EJ: A faith in the God that is portrayed in the bible. Now I know, also, that there are things in the bible that may have just been stories. Because they came down through – you know – the way that they came. But I guess the Beatitudes would be one of the things that is very strong. And the 23rd Psalm, always.

CO: Has that ministered to you at times in need –

EJ: Oh yes, oh yes. That has just – and I did this once with it, and I think this is a true thing. That as a devotional, read the same one every day for a period of time – I think they suggested a year. I got tired and quit after a while, but it's true – the more you read something, the more you know it comes to you. But as I said, to believe, and also those beautiful words – I think they're from Ecclesiastes about there's a time for everything. There's a time to cry, and a time to laugh, and a time to do – you know, that whole thing. Those are guiding principles for me, that, as I said, – the 23rd Psalm, the Beatitudes, the book of Proverbs holds a lot. I have – if you've never read Peterson's Proverbs it;s interesting. He put them in common language and they have been – it's been interesting to use that some. Does that answer?

CO: Yes, yes it does. But in the Beatitudes, do you have a favorite one?

EJ: Blessed are the peace makers.

CO: Yes. Okay.

EJ: (Laughs). That's one that I said, Beatitudes, that one –

CO: That really comes to mind –

EJ: That truly comes to mind – "Blessed are the peacemakers."

CO: Well. And so how do you think your spiritual values or beliefs affect how you live? Do you feel like you are an extension of those beliefs and those –

EJ: I would like to think that, but I'm sure I fall short many times, you know.

CO: What do you – you must have many of these, and so this may be a question – you say there's so many I can't answer, but what has been the most profound, spiritual moment of your life?

EJ: That is hard to answer.

CO: Well when you're going through spells of grief, the kind of deep grief you've suffered, when you have moments of relief, do you regard that as a spiritual – as a grace? When you've suffered through a particularly painful spell of grief?

EJ: Yes, I guess that's where the faith in God comes through. That you do, but I also remember when I joined the church very –

CO: How old were you?

EJ: 9 years old.

CO: Mmhm. So there was an experience attached to that?

EJ: I would assume so. But –

CO: And so was that in your Methodist church?

EJ: Mmhm.

CO: Because in the Baptist church, there's an altar call, you know. In the Methodist church, did you have an altar call?

EJ: Yes, they always opened the doors of the church. And that was after a service that Dr. Arthur Charlesworth from Tamiami Temple Methodist Church in Miami – I heard out of the great Methodist ministers – because I

think I told you that Bishop Moore's son, who was blind, was our pastor for a number of years. And oh my, you never knew who was going to – and as I laughingly say, Mrs. Bishop Moore was a better speaker than Bishop Moore I thought (laughs). But as I said, and that's probably another reason I'm Methodist – because I grew up with such fine – in that little tiny town – such fine ministers and leaders and Miss Bernice.

CO: And so do you feel a spiritual guide within? Do you feel that from inside you?

EJ: Most of the time.

CO: Okay, alright. And when you feel particularly drained – whether it's from grief or physically exhausted or whatever, how do you renew yourself?

EJ: Hmm. That's kind of hard to answer. Sometimes talking to a close friend, you know, sometimes the sharing aspect of it because that's always been a part of my life. Because sharing with both parents – but especially my mother. And then my husband and I shared so much, and then there's always been a special friend. So you know, that's always been – right now, I can't quite feel that I have the closeness or the type of special friend that I have had, you know. Because as I said, they died, or they moved away, or something. And I don't know – and a lot of people now are so involved in their own families and problems and grandchildren and this sort of thing that I sometimes feel like oh if I call them, they wouldn't have time – they would not want to explore or talk about these things.

CO: What about a miracle? Have you experienced something that you would identify as a miracle?

EJ: I don't think so. I guess the nearest thing was the 4 years that Evelyn Ann lived, but –

CO: Have your values or your religious beliefs changed at all over time?

EJ: I'm sure they have. I'm sure some of them have grown stronger, maybe some are not, you know.

CO: But your faith you think is stronger?

EJ: Oh yes. Oh yes, the grace of God. And of course the other thing that I've really had to come to grips with is the fact that the grace of God is there for the asking. It's not because of what all you do, and I think that's very hard for some people. I know a little lady that's just sure those of us who aren't in Sunday school every Sunday morning are going to hell in a hand basket you know. And I think – I don't think so. I don't think that after all our life from Monday through Saturday's is just as important as Saturday [meaning Sunday].

CO: Yeah. Well you said, a few minutes ago that you do believe in an afterlife. Did you say that?

EJ: Yes. I have to believe in an afterlife.

CO: What do you think it's going to be like? Do you have ideas? Cause you got plenty of folks you'd like to see.

EJ: Well, you know, that's what I would – have you read that book about the little boy that describes how he –

CO: Yes, yes.

EJ: That's what he – I can't remember I read it. I've read so much lately that –

CO: The preacher at my sister's funeral gave several copies of that out –

EJ: Oh really?

CO: So it circulated, and that's how I would up with it.

EJ: Was your sister Episcopalian?

CO: No, my sister was a sort of interdenominational person.

EJ: Oh okay. Well I've forgotten what you've asked.

CO: Well, now I asked about an afterlife, and you said, what it would be like

EJ: Oh, I don't know. I don't know. Somebody – you know, we can't look as we do now. So it's interesting what we know em, you know, you think about it – but yes, as I've said, I have – I just *have* to.

CO: And do you feel at peace in yourself?

EJ: Most of the time. I have times that I'm not, but I guess that's normal too.

CO: Right, under the circumstances. And are you certain of anything?

EJ: Hmm. I don't know. I don't know that I can answer that. Am I certain of anything…

CO: Well given all that has happened in your life, would you not be certain of death?

EJ: Oh yes. Oh yes. That each life ends.

CO: That's something that – that's kinda surprised me. I mean, some people who have a strong Evangelical faith will say that they're certain of an afterlife, but just as many people – you know, they're certain that they're gonna see God or see Jesus. But more people – even women who *are* Evangelicals – the only thing that they're certain of is that they're gonna die. So I have found that interesting myself – that that's the case.

EJ: What are you certain of?

CO: Well it sounds hokie –

EJ: Probably not to me –

CO: I think love is the strongest force in life.

EJ: Oh yes, it's so strong.

CO: We don't always recognize it I don't think, because we have images of what it ought to look like. And another hokie saying that God is love, and wherever love is, that's where God is.

EJ: You know, I almost said, when you asked me – it is that there is a God.

CO: Okay. Because love is the evidence? That's how I would answer that – that love is the evidence that there is a God.

EJ: Mmhm. I think you're right, cause I know I hadn't really thought in terms of what I'm certain of.

CO: Well I hadn't either –

EJ: But the other thing, as you said, about love, that's what makes the world go round as the saying goes.

CO: Mmhm. Well all these silly maxims are maxims for a reason, you know? So –

EJ: Mmhm. But it is love and compassion and all the things that the apostle Paul wrote about.

CO: Yeah, okay. Well now we're on the last page, so we're almost done – on the home stretch. You know as scholars look for cause and effect – well actually they don't so much anymore, but what are – you can't always determine what cause leads to what effect, but to the extent that cause leads to effect and all of our lives are part circumstances beyond our control, and partly because of decisions we've made. You know, it's both those things – in your mind, is yours more one than the other? Where you are today, you're a very successful woman. Obviously you have dealt with a lot of tragedy, but you're still doing quite well in spite of that. Are you – is that due to circumstances beyond your control or have you just – have you been successful at doing the right things? Which of those is more – does that make sense? If it doesn't make sense, you don't have to answer it.

EJ: Oh I know what you're asking, and I'm not sure that I can answer it. But maybe back to my saying – maybe I picked up the pieces at the right time in the right way, because now it – and this time it's taken longer. Of course

as you said, I was getting over major surgery too at the time Jimmy died, but anyway. And I really punish myself – my mother always said, I didn't have to worry about anybody being hard on me –

CO: Because you were hard enough on yourself –

EJ: I took care of that – I took care of all of that. And I don't get to the phone with out of town friends as much as I used to. And that's not good, but anyway.

CO: Well now I asked you about the time you recall most nostalgically – I have a question about what was the happiest time, and I'm gonna assume that's pretty much the same thing – that decade you and your husband had together?

EJ: Those were very – those were happy years.

CO: Yeah. So what has been the hardest years? I know obviously around each loss.

EJ: And as I said, this one has been the hardest, because it's just me. Of course I've got – you know, I've got some cousins and all that are very close to me and a friend in Auburn that's just wonderful. But you know, everybody has their families and their responsibilities and as we get older, their grandchildren – and that's the way it should be. But as I said, the other years were hard – like when Evelyn Ann's illness – that was so hard. When you see your beautiful little girl – so. But so far, it's just – day to day, it just seems – maybe it's because it's the freshest in my mind. But these past 2 years have just been – but friends – people don't understand that.

CO: I can see where there'd be a gap in understanding – and you probably are considered such an expert on this experience. But has it affected your faith because it's been so hard?

EJ: There have been those times, but I think we're back on even keel now. But there have been those times that – that I wondered. And well, you can't help but wonder why? You know, you're not normal if you don't wonder why (laughs).

CO: Of course. Well people say – it's another one of those hokie maxims, but its true – you don't expect to bury your child.

EJ: Oh no. Oh no, no, no.

CO: You expect to bury your parents –

EJ: But not your child.

CO: Right. That's why you should write a book on grief. That's how you should spend the next few years, because you could write a book.

EJ: Well, I had a storyteller once when we were just getting started. I went to a storytelling workshop up at the Model Starian Conuments (?????18:00). I mean this was 17 years ago I guess, but anyway, this storyteller – he started us off, you know. Then he went around talking to each one, and when he got to me, he was so fascinated with the way I'd grown up – in the community and with the girls and all. He said, "You got a book in you. You got a book." And I laughed (laughs) and said, to him "but would I have a friend left?" (laughs). He said, "No", but I had talked to one of the storytellers one time, and I said, "you might want to" – cause he's very good – but he won't tell somebody else's story.

CO: But you could do it. And there's all kinds of guides to doing that, you know it would be –

EJ: Well, and as I said, I really am sorry that I didn't pursue this 20 years ago – and her book's over there too – I've forgotten her name. But she was one of the early tellers, and she came here and did a program at the library and this sorta thing. I went to a reception afterwards and we were talking, and I thought there are lots of stories. And as I listened to tellers, I suddenly realized that worlds of sorties from Finleyson – from the 5 of us – and from the small high school. And just from my own life –

CO: Your own life – is rich –

EJ: That it was. But no, I guess we'll let that one go.

CO: Well, I think you probably ought to consider it before you let it go (laughs). But maybe I forgot to say this at the beginning, but I guess because I got so caught up in the things that you experienced – especially the losses but – one thing that people who collect these life stories is interested in – well, are interested in – are the turning points. You know, identifiable turning points. Defining points in your life – and clearly, each loss has been a turning point for you, no doubt about that. But can you identify other major turning points, other than the losses?

EJ: Finishing the Doctoral program, that was one that was a major – and as I said, also a lot of the – you know, traveling has been a real key thing. As I told you, I spent the month in Australia and a month in New Zealand. Spent a month in France with the French prof here – we swapped houses. And of course she had been lots of times – spoke French fluently, and I drove the car. (laughs) I drove the car. And she would – but some of those, and just other – and one of the things that was most interesting experience was Dr. Williams – who I told you died – and I did what was called Writers in the Environment in Sheffield, England. And it was a 2 week program, and they took – I think there were 20 of us from 13 countries. And we met in the professor's home, and his wife – you know, we paid him, and she did the food, and we had tea in the afternoon. We stayed in the home of one of the major officers of the Whitbread Brewing Cmpany simply because they liked to have Americans in their home. They liked their children to be around them. But that was – like today, we might study Shakespeare, and tomorrow, we went to Stratford to see a play. And then we went to – when we studied – what's Lawrence's name? Anyway, when we got to his home town, his aunt – who was – he was dead, she was 84 years old – she got on the bus with us, told us all about – so we studied one day and traveled the next day. That was a wonderful experience. And of course I'd been on some trips with the college – that was always fun. They do it – I can't believe what they're doing now – John Lawrence told us about, you know, January's the interim term at LaGrange College, and they travel. A lot of them – a lot of em have classes on campus, but it's usually a group – at least every other year goes to the Galapagos Islands, and France, and Greece, and Italy, and Turkey. John showed slides from Greece and Italy and Turkey. And anyway, I haven't done any of those trips – with them – but I don't know, there's something very rewarding – made me appreciate being an American. But also, it made me appreciate the world and what it has to offer.

CO: Sure. I say all the time, and I want to travel when I retire – I haven't been able to travel a whole lot. But I know enough to know that there is nothing we can do in the classroom that can compare with the education that travel brings.

EJ: You know, like yesterday, John was talking about students and I shared with him – and some woman told me – well I didn't think it was a real one(?). But anyway, we were in Paris, and we went to the Louvre. And then I was going to see the Mona Lisa, and I never understood the impact of the Mona Lisa till I stood looking at that little picture. But this little woman sitting back "[?????10:39] the real one." And I thought "well, I thought it was, and it was wonderful." And that sorta thing, but as I said, it is. And as I said, part of it comes from—like for Jimmy's 40th birthday, we went to Kauai Hawaii. And I'd never – well he'd been to Hawaii – Honolulu, when we were going and coming from Australia too. But you need to see some of the islands to really appreciate it. Did you wanna look at pictures?

CO: Yes ma'am, but I'm not thru. Can we get finished? We're almost done.

EJ: Oh, I'm fine, I just thought you were through.

CO: No, not now. We gotta – just a few more, and they're kind of important, so – Do you have – I know that this is – you said, something yesterday that to me was profound. When I asked you –

EJ: Oh dear.

CO: No, seriously, well everybody I talk to says something profound. It's just been an altering experience for me. But when I asked you about would you do mothering differently? And you said, "Well, I'd just make different mistakes." And I thought what a healthy way to look at that.

EJ: (Laughs).

CO: But do you have regrets? Do regrets bother you?

EJ: Not really, as I said, sometimes, you know nighttime thoughts are not good thoughts. And like when I think about those years – those 3 years Jimmy's been in Auburn City schools that were so awful. That was it, and –

CO: But do you see a silver lining in that?

EJ: It's hard for me to see one. It's hard to see one, because those were impressionable years, and –

CO: Do you think they marked him? Is there some – did you feel later in life that he was really hurt by that?

EJ: No.

CO: No? Well, yeah.

EJ: No. Mama probably was more than he was (laughs).

CO: Yeah, well, right. What do you consider the most valuable lesson you've learned in life?

EJ: To love and live every day. And sometimes, that's hard to do.

CO: Yeah. Seize the moment kind of thing?

EJ: Mmhm.

CO: Okay. What is your biggest worry right now?

EJ: (Laughs). You'll really laugh at this one. Getting through all this stuff and getting my house back in some semblance of order.

CO: Oh, well, I can see –

EJ: Cause it's just so hard.

CO: Well, If you like order, and having things in disarray – it can be very difficult.

EJ: Well, I do, and I've never lived with this kind of – and as somebody said, "Just go through the boxes and get rid of everything." I said, sure, sure. But that would probably be my greatest worry right now.

CO: Getting through it?

EJ: Mmhm. Is just getting done. Mmhm.

CO: Okay. And what has been the greatest source of inspiration for you? What inspires you or has inspired you in your life?

EJ: Hmm. Does this make sense when I say the belief that others have had in me?

CO: Absolutely. Belief that others have had in you—absolutely.

EJ: I think that's it. I think that's it.

CO: Okay. And what are you proudest of?

EJ: Hmm.

CO: Not proud in the sinful sense, but proud the way one is proud of one's child or one's degree or whatever.

EJ: Well of course I was so proud of Jimmy. And I have great pride in the fact that I suffered through a Doctoral program. That was – that was, as I said, yesterday, wasn't a bag of tricks to get through it. And also the large number of friends I have. Cause they mean a lot. They really do, to know they have done – so many are as close as the phone.

CO: Right. Well how do you want to be remembered? How do you want your legacy to be?

EJ: Hmm. You know, this would not be mine, but I don't know what mine would be. But Kathryn Windham's was twice blessed. I just thought that was so rich – she wrote a book that's called *Twice Blessed*, but –

CO: Well I'm gonna ask you – the next question really besides if there's anything been left out. But I want to ask you to title your life story. Most people have a terrible time with that – they just kind of –

EJ: Oh, I don't know.

CO: You don't know? You don't have a title?

EJ: Nuh uh.

CO: Well, who does? So few people do. Occasionally, somebody will just spout off something that is appropriate, but it's mostly people have a hard time with that.

EJ: I can't imagine.

CO: Yeah, well that's okay, that's alright. Well is there –

EJ: Survival maybe (laughs).

CO: Absolutely. Dr. Evelyn Jordan: Survivor.

EJ: Cause I've survived a lot of stuff to have been, you know – I think back when I married, and you know, you think "Oh, this is just the beginning of the rest of my life." I always knew that I would probably be a widow, cause James was 8 years older than I. But you know, I didn't intend for it to happen in 10 years. And that sorta thing, but as I said, that's the – I don't know, put it anyway, as I said, Survival maybe –

CO: Right. Well I don't know how anybody could challenge that. But is there anything we've left out that you would like to add?

EJ: I don't think so.

CO: I also ask people towards the end if they're – they have children or whoever – relatives or good friends or whatever. If there's anything those people don't know about them, that they would like for them to know about them. Like was there anything you wanted your son to know about you that he didn't know about you?

EJ: Hmm. There may have been things – but no, because we, as I told you, about this Thanksgiving thing when we'd get together, and he was

always here. And I never shall forget one night that there was one person that was not always with us – she was in our class and was close, but she didn't live in Finleyson. She lived out in the country. But anyway, Joyce had come and I never will forget, she was sitting – how was she sitting? It was a funny thing. She was on the floor, and Jimmy was sitting in the chair, and he was just mesmerized by her. Because she was telling all these things we did, and he said, "I never heard all that before." And we pulled out my high school scrap books, which were, you know – and looked at those and talked about them. And of course, Jimmy had no idea what a prom party was – where you just walked up and down the highway, you know (laughs). Something like that, and that kinda thing I laughed when I read the Doctor from Fayetteville—

CO: Ferrell Sams?

EJ: Ferrell Sams. He was Dr. Facler's classmate at medical school here, and Dr. Sams, when he wrote in one of his books about prom parties – and I thought "I know about the prom parties." (laughs).

CO: You do, you know exactly what he was talking about, yeah. So many people recall him, and his works.

EJ: Well, one of his was filthy. *The Widow's Light* I think is the one – and my minister's wife gave it to me, she had not read it, and she read it – she called him and laid him in the shade. I think that's the one – it was a little one.

CO: So was that more a later one?

EJ: It was after *Run with the Horsemen* and *Whisperer* and all those things.

CO: Yeah. Well I'm gonna turn this off and we're gonna look at pictures if you've got those available.