University of Illinois Student Life, 1928 - 38:
Oral History Project
Mary Kay (Hansen) Peer '34
Champaign, Illinois
October 26, 2000

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

Ellen Swain: This is an oral history interview for the University of Illinois Archives. The interviewer is Ellen Swain. The narrator is Mary Kay Peer, a U of I alumna from the class of 1934. We're at Mrs. Peer's home in Champaign, Illinois, and the date is October 26th 2000.

Ok, could I ask you to state your full name and birth date.

Mary Kay Peer: Yes, Mary Katherine Hansen Peer. Birth date February the 2nd, 1914.

ES: Ok. I was wondering if we could start out talking about your family, your parents, and where you grew up?

MP: Well my parents were, my mother was one of ten children, born in Indiana, and then her mother died and her father re-married, he was Superintendent of Schools. With his second wife he had 9 children, so mother had 18, nine brothers and sisters

ES: Oh my goodness.

MP: And half brothers and sisters. Very close knit family. I mean, we knew each other and were close all the time. And one of her sisters, the baby, mother went to visit her, at her father's home and didn=t think the stepmother was doing a very good job taking care of her. And, she was of high school age, so my mother brought her back to live in Illinois to live with my father and my mother, so my Aunt Ruby was very important to me. Then she had two sons, and those two now are the closest relatives anyone could possibly have. One lives in California, he graduated from the University of Illinois in '36. The other one lives in Florida, he attended the University, did not graduate. The one in California has really been one of the few people I know that has lived up to his possibilities. He's retired now, but when he retired he was a Brigadier General in the Army.

ES: I see.

MP: I'll have to tell you a story. He was fighting the Battle of the Bulge, it was a very nasty, nasty battle. Here were the Americans and here were the Germans; it was a bitter battle, and finally the Germans held up a white flag, indicating that they were willing to give up. So Bob (he was a commanding officer) to one of the young men in his group, "Please go across to the Germans and ask them to send their commanding officer over to me so we can talk terms." So the young man went over and the young German started speaking perfect English. Bob said, "Wherever did you learn to speak such perfect English?" He said, AI graduated from the

University of Illinois." Bob said, "So did I." And here they were enemies. Every time I tell that story I get chills.

ES: Yeah.

MP: Just think, that far apart, and the young German said, "Can't we get together?" And Bob said, "Protocol, no, we can't." And he said, "That was the one regret of my life that I just didn't say to hell with it and break the rules. I say, here he was, graduated about the same time I did, isn't that amazing?" It makes me want to cry every time I think about it. We lived on a little, tiny farm. And my father could no longer farm. And we had a principal at the high school that my mother did not like. And she said, "I just don't feel that Mary Katherine will be treated justly in that atmosphere, I don't want her to go to school with that principal." So we moved to Champaign.

ES: Where did you, you were in Allerton prior to that?

MP: Yes.

ES: So you moved from Allerton to Champaign?

MP: Champaign, rented a rooming house and knew nothing about it, went out and bought furniture for four rooms, mother started keeping boys, and it was wonderful.

ES: She kept boys from the University?

MP: She kept boys from the University. And you know, I think it's wonderful that they have all these wonderful, fabulous dorms and all that. But there's something that the young men miss when they don't have a house mother like my mother.

ES: What was that like growing up with--?

MP: Oh, it was like growing up with eight brothers. And, they all treated me like their little sister. I was only 13 and I was just their little sister, and they treated me that way. I mean all these things about, oh, what do they call it, when people touch you and that, all that sort of stuff, that kind of thing didn't exist, they were my big brothers. There was one young man who had quite a lot of money, and none of the boys had any money. Their rooms were $8 a month, and he said, "Mrs. Hansen, if I went out and bought a great big beef roast, would you make a good dinner for all the boys?" Mother said, oh she'd be glad to. So she made us dinner. I mean there was a coziness about it, a warmth about it that you don't get anywhere else. And I still know some of those people from way back, of course most of them are dead. But, it was just a wonderful friendship that you had—And this one that was wealthy, they always kidded me, they said, "You know, he really likes you." And I said, "Well I like him," but I mean, it was just a platonic thing. And they said, "Why don't you see [*laughter*] if you can't make him feel romantic." Prehn's on Oregon was a wonderful place and they had delicious desserts, so John asked me to go out and have dessert with him one Sunday night. And I did. And we were sitting there and I looked at him, and said, "John, if you could be anywhere in the world that you

wanted to be and with anybody, where would you be and with whom?" He looked at me and he thought for a minute and he said, "You know Kay, I think I'd like to be in Egypt with my grandmother." So much for romance [*laughter*].

We've had more fun, you know, it was just—and they came down and then during the *real* Depression, Mother rented rooms for $8 a month, and two boys, two young men came to the door and said, one of them, (Adriane Johansson, he just died not too long ago, I saw it in the *Alumni News)*, "Could we come and live with you for this semester without paying you anything and give you a note that when we get out of school and have jobs we'll pay you?" So mother said, "Yes, that would be fine." That was the year of the World's Fair in Chicago and we wanted desperately to go to the World's Fair, but we didn't have enough money to go. So Adriane said, "My folks live in—," oh, Glendale I think, suburb of Chicago, "Why don't you come and stay at my folks house for the three of four days for the Worlds Fair and they'll charge you, and that will cancel my debt to you for the room for the semester." So that's what we did. So simple. And you know life could be that easy again if everyone somehow cooperated. The boys didn't drink or make noise in the house. They were just very thoughtful and considerate. Mother always had lovely birthday dinners whenever anyone had a birthday in that month. There was a birthday dinner we had in our dining room. Very personal, and that is lacking.

ES: Did you all eat together?

MP: Oh no, mother didn't cook for the boys.

ES: She didn't? Okay.

MP: No she just on special occasions she'd cook for them.

ES: Now this is in the 20s?

MP: Yes. Is it the 20s? No, this would be the 30s.

ES: Prior to when you were in school?

MP: Yes being when I was 15 years old, '29, late 20s, early 30s. I got through school in January from high school, and started college in February. Mrs. Fraker said, "I have a woman living with me who is a secretary in the Political Science Department, why don't you go over." I was very young and Professor Garner said, "I think we can use you." And so I started in with them and worked for three and a half years, till I graduated. But you know what really saved my life, was when I went to Mr. Williams at University High School. I went in to talk to him, and I said, "You know my parents cannot afford this really and I'm going to have to start making my own way through school. I want to take typing." And he said, "I'm sorry Miss Hansen," that was when they called you by your last name, "I'm sorry Miss Hansen, we don't let freshmen take typing." And I said, "Yes, but I've got to make a living." I guess he looked at me and I looked kind of desperate. Anyway he said, "I'll make a deal with you, you can sign up for typing, if at the end of eight weeks your grades in your other courses are on average or above then you can continue with the typing, if your grades go below a C you have to drop the typing." But I walked into that typing room B

ES: Where was that?

MP: At University High School.

ES: At the High School. So you're a high school student when this is going on?

MP: Yes, and Miss Lowry, she was the teacher, she had the most beautiful strand of amber beads. I always envied her, she was, she was a beautiful teacher and a demanding teacher. I came home after the first week and I said to my father, "I've got to have a typewriter." "Mary Katherine, we don't have money to buy you a typewriter." I said, "I have to have one because I've got a lot of work to do at home, every night we had things to do." Finally, someway we managed to get $100 together and bought me a little Royal Portable. I would sit there and type, Miss Lowry demanded perfection, I would get down the last line and I'd make a mistake, and I would start crying and I'd tear it up. And my father would say, "Oh, one little mistake doesn't make any difference." "To Miss Lowry it does." Has to be perfect. You know. And it was, and you worked for it, but you wanted to work for her. So then I stuck a sign out on my mothers front porch, typing 10 cents a page.

ES: This is in high school?

MP: Yes. So 10 cents a page. I would have people come back to me, every summer, graduated students would come back to get their masters degree and they would bring their typing to me. And they would come back the next summer and I was still typing you know so. This one time this young man came to me and said, "You know there's a girl down the street who types for 8 cents page." I said, "Why don't you go to the girl down the street." I found out he had. He said, "I'm sorry, she doesn't know how to spell or punctuate [*laughter*]." So my 2 cents more a page was because I could spell, he was a terrible speller. You met such interesting people. I remember the first Black students who came into the English Department, and they were not treated kindly.

ES: At the University of Illinois.

MP: No. But Hobart and I by that time were married and we invited them to our home. And then, one night a young man called to see if I would type his thesis. And I said, "Oh yes!" He said that it was in mathematics. Oh, I can type figures as well as I can type letters. He came to the door and it was a young Black man. He came in and sat down like we are here, told me what he wanted and how soon he needed to have it. Said, "I can't pay you until my parents come down for my graduation when I get my Ph.D." I said, "That's all right." So I typed it for him. Then after I finished it, Professor Shaw (the head of the Mathematics Department) called me and he said, "Miss Hansen, I want to thank you." I said, "What are you thanking me for?" He said, "You typed the thesis of one of my very top notch graduate students." He said, "Five other girls had turned him down because he was black." So you see the progress we have made.

ES: Could you talk some more about that. What it was like, how people got along - Jewish people and Blacks and--?

MP: My mother was very unsophisticated, she didn't know a Jewish boy from a Black boy from a white boy. Anybody who came, who wanted a room, fine. So we had Jewish boys, we had lot of Jewish boys. And then on graduation day, the person who was in charge of getting us in order, came up to me and said, would you mind changing places, and I said, "I don't care where I am as long as I get the right diploma." And she said, "Well there is one girl back here is supposed to be standing next to a black boy for alphabetical order and she will not stand next to a Black man." I said, "I don't care if he's black." Somehow I never, ever had any prejudices. But there were prejudices against them. We really only had, I think, one black graduate student that I remembered, his mother was white and his father was black. But, we didn't have black graduate students. They had hard times getting rooms.

ES: What did they do? Did the Black students live together?

MP: Well, Mrs. Grey, and, Mr. Lee [Albert Lee], who was in the President's office did a lot to help get them rooms with black families. But I never will forget, sometimes during vacation periods, they would have different kinds of contests, athletic contests, and I remember one night that the coach came to our door and said he had eight boys who needed rooms, and mother said, "Oh well that's wonderful, that's extra money." At $2 a night and eight boys that's $16. A fortune at that time. And the coach said, "I have to tell you, two of the boys are black." And mother said, "Well they're just nice boys aren't they." What difference does it make? For the person who really has very little contact with the outside world, it was an amazing thing that she was that broad minded. Jewish, black, whatever. But when I started going to college she decided that she should start keeping girls.

ES: Did you live at home?

MP: Yes, I don't think the girls were as good an influence on me as the boys. But you know, I still have lunch once a month with three of those women who were there. And, actually, they could tell you as much about the University as I can because they graduated the same time, or around the same time, as I did. Now they're both very successful, had wonderful husbands and homes. When we get together we laugh and think, how did all eight of us use one bathroom. The University wouldn't permit that now. No?

ES: Was your mother's home on the Dean of Women's list?

MP: Oh yes! Yes.

ES: How did that work?

MP: Oh it was wonderful. Mother had a wonderful reputation. We had a Swedish girl one year who was a student. Her name was May, I can't remember her name. No, May Larson, and she was from Sweden, and she wanted to name the house. So we named it Vanlig V-A-N-L-I-G, which is the Swedish word for "friendly." I still keep in touch with May Larson, after all these years we still talk to each other. The Dean of Women was really very much impressed with my mother's house. She would send special girls there who needed special help because mother

was, though uneducated, wise far beyond her years and was wonderful in helping young girls who needed help. The Dean kept mother's house filled all the time, we never had a vacancy. It was fun.

ES: These were students who needed help financially?

MP: Some of them just were troubled and needed some guidance and the Dean thought that my mother could give it. She had some problem girls, but really always they came out the end of the year and graduated and were all right. She kept girls ( ), well until we decided that she could no longer could keep girls, she was getting too old and had a bad heart so we sold the house.

ES: Where was the house?

MP: Well, the house was at 506 E. Daniel. But Hobart and I were married in 1937, he had a very good job with one of the big accounting firms, I'm not sure which one, but I think it was Ernst and Ernst. Any they had promised him a partnership after a few years of satisfactory sevice. When got married, he said, "You know Kay, if I'm traveling I'll be in Chicago. I don't want to have to take you away from a job that you love to be in Chicago. I don't want to have to be traveling all the time." So after one year he quit his job, came to Champaign to start his own office in accounting, without a single client, with no money, and started his own business. It took a lot of courage to do that, but I was making $100 a month. When I told my family I got a ticket one day for over parking my car at a parking meter and it was a 50 cent fee and I said, "That upset my food budget for the week." They'd just look at me a laugh, 50 cents was 5 loaves of bread.

ES: What year was this?

MP: 1939.

ES: '39? Wow.

MP: We had an apartment for $37.50 over on Goodwin, which really would be condemned now. The kitchen was so small that if I was standing at the sink and Hobart wanted to go behind me, I had to crawl under the sink. It had one room, just as you walked in the door, off to the left, a bed room, and we rented that to two boys for $25 a month, so our rent was only $12.50. And those two boys were like family. I mean every Sunday morning they would come in and we had breakfast together. There was, a friendliness and a warmth and a trust in people I doubt that it exists today as it did then. It was a wonderful time to be living, and the Depression yes, but the Depression made you very close to a lot of people. My job in the Political Science Department, James Garner was a tall thing, aesthetic looking man, very gentle, and he had a lovely wife from the south. They were really, very, very good to me. He was standing at the window one day and it was pouring down rain, he looked at me and he said, "Miss Hansen, isn't it strange that when it rains, the bad man always has the good man's umbrella." Now isn't that a crazy thing to remember? His wife would call and say, "James isn't feeling well today and he has a lot of

letters that he needs to get off, could you come to the house to take dictation." And of course I would go to the house and take dictation.

ES: And this was when you were a University student as well?

MP: I was a freshman and secretary in the Political Science Department. And, then Professor. Hillebrand, I had had him as a teacher, he taught theater and I had had him in a course. And, I almost had a crush on him as a college student who was 18, 19 years old. He was very tall, very handsome. I really liked him. He was a good teacher. Then when I went to the English Department as a secretary he became the head of the English Department. It was wonderful working with him, I really enjoyed working with him. But one day he was very cross, I still remember this, he was very cross with me. I don't know what I had done to irritate him, but he was cross. I was crushed, and I was staying late that night to finish a job and I heard him stalking down the hall. You know, he didn't walk, he stalked. He came to the door, looked right at me, "I'm sorry." Turned and walked off. It was the nicest apology. But that was when people had wonderful teas. Professor Hillebrand lived with his mother and they had teas once a month for the young graduate students. And then Paul Landis.

ES: These were all English Professors that you had when you were a student?

MP: Paul, I had 13 heads of Department that I worked under in my 41 years. They used to say I was hard on heads. But Paul Landis and his wife Agnes, had a very pleasant, comfortable house. Books strewn everywhere, magazine scattered all ove, but the warmth and personality that they gave and their hospitality with their young graduate students, it meant so much to them to go into one of their professors homes and see this very, not lavish, but delicious different kinds of food than they were used to having. And the graduate students, maybe they still do and I don't know, but they used to have potluck suppers all the time. None of us had any money and we just had such delightful, wonderful times together. We played charades, I doubt if any of these students know what charades are anymore. You know I feel sorry that we have become so technological, so sophisticated, there are so many of the simple things that make life worthwhile that aren't available to people now.

ES: You know, I'm going to have to stop the tape I think.

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MP: I don't want to name this Dean, but if I took an extra course in summer school. You were allowed eight hours, but if I took ten hours I would be able to graduate in February in three and a half years instead of four. So I went to this Dean permission to take two extra hours. And he looked at my record, and he said, "We don't even want people like you graduating from our University." I had quite a few Cs, I had As and Bs, but there were some Cs. And, so I just went to another Dean and got permission [*laughter*].

ES: Oh my goodness.

MP: But you know, my father worked out of the Horticulture Department for years, oh, for about 25 or 30 years, out where they had all the fruits and apples and all this sort of thing. He loved it.

ES: What did he do, what was he—?

MP: Well he just worked with all the different kinds of experiments that they were caring on. And at that time I was working in Political Science, he was working out there. We had to get permission from the Dean for two people from the same family to work in the University.

ES: Is that right?

MP: Now, two professor in the same department, it doesn't make any difference.

ES: Is that for financial reasons?

MP: When two people from the same department or the same university are working, nepotism. There was nepotism and nepotism was not allowed at any level, not even at 35 cents a hour level. You had to get permission, so we got permission for me to work in political science and my dad to work out in horticulture. But now, you see, nepotism, I don't even think is a word that even used anymore.

ES: You were speaking about your father. Could you speak about how you ended up at the University of Illinois?

MP: How I what?

ES: How did you, how were you able to go the University? You said that you B

MP: How was I able to work at the University? Oh! I had room and board at home.

ES: You said you made a, made a deal with your father?

MP: No, with my father, to go to University High School, yes.

ES: I see. Okay.

MP: I walked home every day for lunch. It would have been 50 cents a day to have lunch at the High School and that would have been $2.50 a week and over a period of years that was about the same as tuition at University High School. So, my walking back (of course the walk was good for me) and so I got to go and I graduated. I had wonderful, wonderful teachers at University High School. Miss Dugas in English, Miss Lowry, Mr. Harnish.

ES: Do you remember the Stock Market Crash? And what did that do to your family?

MP: Didn't do anything to us because we didn't have any stocks. The only thing it did was that people could no longer write checks because their bank accounts were closed.

ES: And that was your senior year in high school?

MP: We paid $16,000 for our house, we rented it for one year and then we bought the house for $16,000. Every month my father would go down and say, "Zora, we can't make any more payments. We're going to have to give the house up." And then he'd go down to the First Federal Loan and say, "Can't make a payment. All we can do is pay the interest." And they'd say, "Mr. Hansen, we don't want your house, as long as you're paying the interest, you keep the house." So we managed to keep it. But it was tough going. It really was tough going. I mean there *was no money*. When you tell people today that you didn't have *any money*--

ES: They don't understand, yeah.

MP: Kids now get $10 to go out and go to a movie. I'm not sure if that is all good.

ES: How were you able to go to college then?

MP: Well I knew how to type and I worked.

ES: Because you worked in High School?

MP: Yes, I worked. You see, I was making $50 a month but I didn't use it to buy clothes and I didn't buy records. I used it for cash for money, for the family, to eat. I mean that $50 a month was a big part of our living expenses.

ES: Did your parents support you in going to college? Did they want you to go to college?

MP: Oh! From the time I was born, my mother said, "you're going to go to college." And we had a neighbor lady whose two daughters were at the University of Illinois. So, she would come to visit them frequently and she would say, "Mary Katherine is a nice little girl, she never gives me any trouble. Why don't you let her ride up to Champaign with me to see my two daughters who are in college?" So, from those two women, I just knew that I was going to go to the University of Illinois. There was no question that I was going to go to college. Both my mother and my father felt that education was the most important thing, but I wanted to go to California. When I was a junior in high school they promised me that I could go out to California, one of the universities there. But by the time rolled around there was no money for that. One semester I didn't make very good grades, I had a couple of Cs, an A and a B. My mother said, "Mary Katherine, you are capable of doing far better than that. From now on you are on your own. We no longer pay your tuition."

ES: Oh my goodness.

MP: My grandmother when she died left me 3 shares of Central Illinois Public Service stock, now how she got them I don't know, but she left me 3 shares, and they were $8 a piece. So I

turned in my CIPS stock and I got my tuition for that semester. Then after that I worked, I never had any trouble making my tuition. Really, by the time I graduated, I had enough money saved in the bank to buy the lot on which Hobart and I built our home.

ES: Is that right?

MP: So in 1939 we built the house at 510 E. Daniel Street. You should go buy it. It's that pretty little brick house with the stone front. We kept graduate students. Of course, that paid our mortgage. So it was a lovely little house; we had nice graduate student living with us. And, so it worked out all right. As soon as the War started, Hobart volunteered and went into the Navy and got his commission and was gone for almost 3 years. Just after he had started his business. He just had gotten a half dozen good clients and had the business just on the brink, where we were able to make a profit, enough money to pay his office rent.

ES: What was his profession?

MP: Certified public accountant. But those clients were loyal; when he came back, they were right there waiting for him. Then his firm kept growing and growing and finally, it was Peer, Hunt and Curzon. Then they realized that five of the senior partners had serious illnesses and it was not fair to the young people in the firm to have five senior partners, all of whom had cancer, heart, that sort of thing. Several big firms wanted to absorb them, so they looked at them very carefully and finally found one, Clifton Gunderson which had about the same ideals and the same values and the same high level of perfection that they wanted for their clients so they merged with Clifton Gunderson. Clifton Gunderson is now the 10th largest accounting firm in the country. It all started from absolutely nothing, I mean nothing. I think it probably would be easier now for a person to start in. But I don't think, I'm not sure that there is the same feeling of integrity, and loyalty, and faithfulness that there was back at that time. You trusted people, and now I'm beginning not. I'm too old not to trust people. The University was a wonderful place back then. I think we have a lot of wonderful people now at the University. I think the Dean of Liberal Arts is one of the nicest, kindest persons. I like him very, very much.

ES: Was that going on much when you were a student?

MP: No, not like it is now. Although—

ES: What were students doing with their free time?

MP: I don't know what they were doing. I was working all the time, so I didn't have any free time.

ES: Tell me, just so I'm clear. What was your first job when you were an undergraduate? How did you find your first job?

MP: The English department had a vacancy and they wanted me.

ES: So they approached you about it?

MP: I had my degree in English and I was working on my master's degree.

ES: Oh well, didn't you work when you were an undergraduate? Your freshman year?

MP: As an undergraduate in Political Science.

ES: In Political Science.

MP: Three and a half years.

ES: You worked in the office.

MP: Yeah.

ES: I see. How did you get that job?

MP: Well, the neighbor lady had a friend who was getting married recommended me for the job so I went over and applied and got it. My knees shaking.

ES: This was your first year in school?

MP: Yes.

ES: Oh, ok.

MP: See I was only 16 years old, between 16 and 17 years old. Very young to be starting a job in a high powered office because they had a lot of quite well known staff. They had Professor Fairlie, a little Scotch man and he always wanted to give me dictation, had a mustache and he'd make [*mumbling noises*] and I would say, Professor Fairlie. But he was a brilliant man, everyone thought of how stingy he was, and in little ways he was, but he helped so many graduate students. A graduate student would come in and say, "I need a book that says something about this. And he'd say, "in the top shelf over there about the third book you'll find what you want." He was brilliant and you were working with brilliant people like that. Now, my mother thought I should join a sorority, she said, "you don't have any sisters." Well I said, "I've got all these girls that I know." "No, you should belong to a sorority."

ES: Well, you were living with girls in your house?

MP: I was living at home the whole time.

ES: But she had other girls from the University there?

MP: She had eight girls.

ES: So you knew all of them and their friends?

MP: Yes. So I went through rushing--

ES: What was that like? What was rushing? What did you do?

MP: It was horrible. I just felt it was so superficial, so artificial. And I would see these girls coming into the Dean's office weeping because they didn't get into the sorority they wanted to. And I thought, "What difference does it make if I make this or not." I came home and told my mother, "Ok, I've got a bid to go into a sorority, but it's going to cost me $25 a month to go over and have dinner with them one night a week and I have to go the Library with them one night a week and I have to go over on Saturday mornings and polish silverware." I said, "I can't afford to belong to a sorority, I much prefer studying alone. I'm not going to go over there and answer their telephone when I could be typing." No, no way.

ES: How were they viewed on campus-- sororities and fraternities?

MP: When they [Mary Kay's parents] were keeping these boys there was one boy that I liked and he liked me. It was platonic completely, but we were good friends. A sorority girl invited him to come to there to dance and told him to bring a girlfriend. She had a boyfriend, so bring a girlfriend. So he invited someone. My mother said, "Why didn't you invite Kay?" Oh, he said, "I couldn't, she doesn't belong to a sorority."

ES: Was there tension between independents and ...?

MP: And this friend ours from our home town often came to Sunday dinner with us. He was talking about the night before he had had a date with a sorority girl and they were riding home on a bus, that was before you could have cars, riding home on the bus, and she turned to him and said, "What fraternity do you belong to?" He said, "I don't belong to a fraternity." "Oh," she said, "I'll be penalized, I can't go with a non-fraternity man." So he just rang the bell and got off the bus and said, "Then you can go home by yourself." It was terrible, the snobbishness was unbelievable. Snobbishness against Jewish people, snobbishness against, well either you belonged to a sorority or a fraternity or you literally amounted to nothing. I mean that was the way. It never bothered me, I didn't give a hoot, I've always been an independent spirit, and that just didn't bother me one bit whether I was accepted as a sorority or non-sorority. I knew what I wanted to be, and that was all that mattered. But, it was terrible, there really was unbelievable snobbishness at that time. Whether it still exists, I don't know. I really don't know much about the campus anymore.

ES: Well, it's so much bigger now ( ).

MP: So much bigger. There were just 10,000 students when I started.

ES: What do you think the division was ... between Greeks and independents? Were the majority of people involved in the Greek system?

MP: I think it depends on the individual completely. I could never belong to groups.

ES: Well, it cost a lot of money, was it finances ( )?

MP: Well, it cost a lot of money and personally I like to choose individually who I want to be with. And the older I get the more I find that if I find people are boring or I don't enjoy them, I'm not going to waste my time with them. I have eliminated quite a few people that I find very dull. I think, why should I sit and talk to a dull person when I can be reading a book that isn't dull. So, I'm very selfish. I have maneuvered my life to be exactly a kind of a life that I want it to be. I don't think I've hurt anyone else by doing that. I'm not a selfish person. I do a lot of community work. I work for the Reading Group. I work at the Community Foundation. I work for my church. I'm on the Board of the Champaign County Historical Museum. I've been on the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Guild. I've been on seven or eight boards and I give a lot of my time and a lot of my energy, but my spare time is my time.

ES: Sure, sure.

MP: If I want to spend it in bed, reading a murder mystery, that's exactly what I do.

ES: Sounds good.

MP: I told Marilyn the other night, "I have to admit my entire life that I've been fortunate enough to do only what I wanted to do." And the University in itself has given me that privilege of doing that by giving me a good job, interesting courses, things that I've learned at the University. I really love the University, very deeply. I keep telling the Dean, when I talk to him, "make an alum out of all your freshman" Your freshmen should come in with a notion of feeling that this is *my* University. Now my cousin out in California comes back every year for his anniversary. Now he's graduated, he's got a Ph.D. and a Law degree, he has all kinds of degrees from other schools, University of Illinois is his alma mater.

ES: That's his home school?

MP: That's his home school, yes. And when the LAS gave me that honorary plaque for ..., he said, you shouldn't have to go to an affair like that by yourself. He had been here, oh about a month before, and when he found I was going to get this award, he flew all the way back just so he could be my escort, for that. You know, it's a very deep family love for the University.

ES: You mentioned that you knew some of the people that I'm interested in. Maria Leonard. Could we talk about rules that were enforced for students in the Dean of Men and the Dean of Women? You worked in the Dean of Women's office?

MP: Yes.

ES: Was that as an undergraduate?

MP: I just worked in there as a secretary.

ES: As a secretary? Was that when you were going to school?

MP: That was when I was going to school. That was when I was working half-time in Political Science and half-time in the Dean of Women's office.

ES: Tell that story again. Tell that story about how you ended up.

MP: About what?

ES: About how you ended up with more money.

MP: Oh. That one [*laughter*]. Well, Dean Leonard said, "I can only have a half time person and that's $50 a month." Political Science said, "We can't have anything more than a half time secretary, that's $50 a month." So that was a hundred dollars. So then the English department job came open. In the budget it was 12 times 80, it was $960, for the year. And I said, I just can't afford, because at that time I was married and helping to support my husband, so I said, I can't afford to lose that much money. So then the nice Bursar, he was an awfully nice man, I wish I could remember his name, but it was in 193—, well '35 I guess, '36, something like that. Anyway, he just picked up the telephone and called the business office over in Springfield and said to add $250 to the English department secretaries line. It was done. So--

ES: So then you moved to the English Department?

MP: So then I moved to the English department.

ES: And that was after you had graduated?

MP: Yes, it was, you know, it was nice. I was under 13 heads of department. I only had one, only one head, whom I could not get along with. He was a very difficult man. I went into the English department, there were two idols in the department, Professor Bernbaum here, and Professor, can't remember his name on the other side. And they said, now you'll have to take sides, one or the other, you can't treat them equally. And I said, "No, everybody's equal." And I got along with both of them. But Professor Bernbaum, whom I did not like, became Head of the Department. He was a horrible Head of the Department. Very, very bad head. And it was a bad year. I remember it was when Hobart was in the Navy, and Hobart was going to be in New Orleans. He called me and said, "Can you come down to New Orleans to meet me for two or three days?" So I went into Professor Bernbaum, I said, "I'm going to need to take a few days off to meet my husband in New Orleans." "It would not be convenient for the Department." And I said, "I'm sorry, I will just have to resign from the Department because I'm going to New Orleans." The next day, AI guess we could arrange it." Don't you know, that was the only head that I didn't like, I loved Professor Altenbernd, I don't know whether you had the pleasure of meeting him or not, he is a wonderful man. Professor Rogers, I loved, and now his wife is one of my very close friends. He had Alzheimers, sad, sad. So I got interested in the Alzheimers and do what I can to help support them. You know what worries me about this community, is that we're not nearly as giving a community as we could afford to be. We really aren't. I go down the list of donors and the names of people that I know that should be giving are not there. The Virginia

Theater, I had so many wonderful dates at the Virginia Theater, and I really want that Theater to succeed, and I said to somebody not too long ago, "Why don't you give anything to the Theater?" "Oh, I never go to the Theater!"

And this person had several . I said, "You know, Hobart and I never had any children, but we pay taxes to support your kids in school." She was not happy about that. It was the truth. You do it for the good of the community. I don't always go to the things I support, why am I supporting Planned Parenthood, you know, why am I supporting Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, why am I helping support, the Cunningham Children's Home? You do it because the community, if it's going to be a good community, needs the support of everybody in the community. And that was one nice thing about the English Department. When we got married, one of the women, Miss Kelley, came over and asked my mother what I would like, what we would like for a wedding gift. They sent us a lovely sterling silver tea set, 99 strong with our love. One of the worst things about the University, we had six women in the English Department, that is at the graduate level, they never got raises, they never got promotions. I would go to the meetings to take notes and they would talk about promotions, "Well, we can't promote one unless we promote all of them." And I would say, "You're not saying that about men, there are half a dozen men, and you're picking out one to be a professor. Why can't you just do that with the women?" "Well you just can't do that with six women in the department."

ES: This is in the 30s?

MP: Yes, it was terrible. They were all, most of them were instructors, once and a while they would get promoted to an assistant professorship, but when it came time to giving them raises, they would say things like, "Well, she has a husband, she doesn't need anymore money." That just used to make me furious. That has nothing to do with it, that person is an excellent teacher, she should be based on what she is doing. If a university, the size of Illinois, isn't big enough to recognize the scholarly people and good teaching, it's not a good University. We are improving, but it was terrible back then.

ES: I'm going to need to turn the tape over.

START OF TAPE 2, SIDE A

MP: I used to say that the professors could take care of themselves, but the graduate students were, you know, just the same age as I, or about the same age, came without any financial. Do you know a Mrs. Carringer who works in one of the offices, I've forgotten which one, backing? Well, she was one of the graduate students that I keep in touch with a lot. She said, "You know, when we came, we didn't we didn't know anything. You sent us immediately to a person's home." I really, honestly cared, truly cared about them. And I hope that that sort of thing still goes on.

ES: What was your position in the English Department?

MP: Well, I was just in the office. I worked from clerk typist 1 to administrative assistant.

ES: So your job was to keep track of the grad assistants? Part of your job.

MP: Well, that and the budget. The budget was the thing that really bothered me because as a department you really didn't have complete control of your budget. The Dean had more control than you had, which I suppose is way it should be. But I never will forget, one year, our desks for our graduate teaching assistants were in shambles, they were in desks in shape. The assistnats would get runs in the hose all the time and desks were wobbly and bad. So one year I saved very, very severely, (they used to call me penny-pincher) but I really saved enough money so I could buy ten new desks at the end of the year. At the end of the year I got my last budget, there was nothing on there. I went over to the Dean's office and I said, "What happened to my budget, I had that money saved for something." "Well, we're sorry Mary Kay, but you know Chemistry ran in debt so deep this year we had to use your money to bail them out."

ES: Oh, how frustrating!

MP: And I exploded, I was just furious. Not too long after that I decided I was going to retire. If I don't even have control of the budget then I feel that I don't even have control of what I'm doing. And I'll admit that I liked having control of what I was responsible for. I didn't try to control other people with it, but what I was responsible for I wanted to know I could do it. So, I never will forget that day. Kenneth Kinnamon was the Head of the Department and they were having a Christmas Party and so they had called Hobart and said, AI hope you and Mary Kay will come to our Christmas Party." So Hobart came home, "Are you ready to go?" I said, "Honey, I don't feel like going, I don't want to really go over there for a Christmas Party, I'd rather stay at home." "No," and he never talked to me like that, "No, you're going to go." "Well, if you feel that way about it, okay," so I put my hat and coat on and went, and that was the day that Ken said, "We're naming the lounge after you, Mary Kay Peer Lounge."

ES: Oh, very neat.

MP: Had I known about it, I would have been upset, so all I said was, "I'm flattered, I'm pleased, and I can't think of anything I like more." Hobart said, "That was the best speech you could have made." But he knew what was happening, they had told him. So now there's the Mary Kay Peer Lounge, used frequently and very lovely.

ES: How neat.

MP: And I really do feel very, very strong about that, it means a great deal. It=s kind of nice and my family appreciated it.

ES: What year did you retire?

MP: 1976. 24 Years ago. And we moved into this house in 1975. We lived over on Mayfair, and I loved the house on Mayfair, but I wanted a porch and I wanted a basement. And I said to Hobart, "I'm in my 60s, I want it now. I'm not going to have that many years to enjoy a porch and a basement." So he scouted around (he always gave me anything I wanted, he was a perfect husband, you know). And I am sure that people probably do not believe me and think I idealize

it, but it's the honest to God's truth, never in the whole time we were married, in the 47 years did he ever speak meanly to me or ever deny me anything I wanted.

ES: Now tell me, he was a graduate of the University too. How did you meet him?

MP: Oh that was an interesting story. I had a date with a young man. On Sunday afternoons we used to go to Smith Music Hall where there was a man from the, math department who used to be a wonderful organist, and every Sunday afternoon he gave an organ recital. So this young man and I, I can't even remember who he was, went to the organ recital. Coming home, he said, "I belong to the McKinley Foundation Church," which was just a half a block from my home, he said, "why don't we go down the McKinley Foundation, they always have nice teas on Sunday afternoon, they're kind of fun." By that time I was bored with him, "No, I don't want to go," so he left. I think I do want to go. So I went in and put on a real fancy hat and went down and the room was full. It was a big reception room. One seat was left empty and I went over and I said, "Are you saving this seat for anyone?" "No, sit down." So I sat down and we started talking and then it was almost 5 o'clock. I said, "I'm going upstairs to vespers, would you like to go with me?" He said, "Yes." So he went upstairs to vespers.

ES: What was that? What is vespers?

MP: Vespers, oh it's a Sunday evening service where they have just a little music and a few prayers, and vespers service, I don't think they have them anymore. I like that name. So then he said, may I walk you home. "Yes," I said, "but it's only half a block." So he came home with me and I took him in, introduced him to my parents. They had a friend there who was visiting my father, Mr. Fahrenkopf said, "He seems like a nice young man." My dad says, "He's just another student." So, when Hobart left, he said, "I'll call you this week." And I said, "Fine." But he didn't. And then on Thursdays I had a class between Lincoln Hall and Gregory Hall, I was walking and we met each other. He had just come from the Commerce Building. He said, "I've been intending to call you, but haven't" So he said, "How about a date for Saturday night." And I said, "fine." I already had a date for Saturday night and I thought, AI can break that without any problem at all, I'll just call him and tell him that I don't want to go." So, Saturday night I had a date with him and then he said, "Some friends of mine just got married and they've invited me to take a ride with them Sunday afternoon, want to go along?" I said, "Oh sure." So we sat in the back of a little rumble seat and drove down to Homer Park and wandered around there for a while and they had just gotten married and they were living on the 3rd floor of some little apartment building that was not particularly nice, and of course they had no money either, but they invited us for supper. So we had peanut butter sandwiches and cocoa and as I was helping clean up afterwards, picking up paper things, I looked at Hobart and I thought, "wouldn't that be funny if I married that man." He said he didn't have a chance after that. There was just that somehow, just that two days with him I felt his loyalty, his kindness, his integrity, his thoughtfulness, and I just liked him from the very beginning.

ES: What year did you meet him?

MP: I met him the year I graduated in 1934.

ES: So he had graduated?

MP: No he graduated in February after that. Then he had a job in St. Louis with Ernst and Ernst. And he came back at Christmas time to give me my little engagement ring, and I still wear it.

ES: Oh, pretty.

MP: Well, it was, somebody said, "He could afford to buy you a bigger ring." I said, AI wouldn't trade that little ring for a million dollars." I wouldn't. I had to have a new set because I wore the other one out. But it set just about like it was. It was really, you know, it was really just—

ES: What did you do for fun?

MP: What did we do for fun? Well, we did a lot of things for fun. We went to all the football games. We went to *all* the basketball games because they were in Huff Hall, Huff Stadium, and of course our house was just on Daniel Street so we went there. Our girls who lived with us were an awfully nice bunch of graduate girls. Some of the girls worked, and some of them were graduate students. But on Sunday nights we always turned off all the lights and listened to that, those radio programs that they used to have. And one of the girls always made fudge and Hobart always popped popcorn. It was a very family kind of thing that we had, all the way. And then we had a lot of potluck dinners with the young graduate students, some of whom were married and some who weren't married, and Hobart was good friends to all of them. The department liked him.

ES: What was his position?

MP: What was his position? Oh, he had no position! He was starting his own business.

ES: I see, how was he involved in the University?

MP: He wasn't involved with the University.

ES: He wasn't, okay?

MP: No not at all. He started his own business.

ES: He was involved because you were involved?

MP: He had an office on the second floor on the corner of Green and Wright Street, you know it used to be a drug store down stairs, and he had an office on the second floor, one room. He had no secretary, I was his secretary. I had to type, any business he had I had to type all of it. Then he got a job down in Collinsville, IL, auditing their newspaper and they didn't have enough money to pay him and the people who advertised in the newspaper didn't have enough money to pay for the advertising either. So they paid. I got more clothes that year than I ever had because there was a department store that owed a lot of money so I could go there and that would offset

the debt. . . it was, somehow it was a wonderful world. And now being as old as I am I don=t have an opportunity to observe whether the world is as wonderful living in it now as it was to me living in it then.

ES: You felt this way even though the Depression was–?

MP: The Depression was never important to us, since we never lost any money because we never had any money. The Depression never bothered me. My mother was an artist as a seamstress, she could really do just anything. When we lived on the farm she used to make wedding dresses and bridesmaid dresses and all that sort of thing for all the wealthy people in town. And so then when they came to Champaign she made all my clothes—

ES: What did you wear?

MP: One winter I had two beautiful wool dresses. A red wool dress that had lapels that had inserts of black and white, and a blue wool dress: and those were the only dresses that I had, two dresses. Then I went to a military ball and she made an elegant rose colored silk formal for me that had a scarf across that had sequins on it. She was really a seamstress, out standing seamstress, outstanding cook, outstanding person. And my father was the same. And I hope I didn't disappoint them. I'd like to tell young people to live their lives so they have as few regrets as possible. When you reach a certain stage you look back and think, if only I had done, if I had been kinder, if I had been more generous, if I had done that. My aim in my life has been, almost from the time I was in college, I don't want to have regrets, and I don't have very many, very, very few. I have none when I think of my parents because I was a very good daughter. And—

ES: How did you graduating make them feel?

MP: Oh they were so proud of me. My aunts all came—

ES: They did?

MP: Yes, the whole family was proud of me.

ES: Where did you, where were the ceremonies held?

MP: Where was it held?

ES: Uh-huh. Where was it held?

MP: Where was graduation? I think it was in Huff gym. And I got my diploma and I was so proud of it. Mother expected it of me. There was nothing grandiose about it. From the time I was a little girl that was what I was going to be doing and I jolly well better do it, you know.

ES: What about my masters degree? How did you decide to go on and..

MP: Well I just enjoyed going to school so much and I enjoyed writing term papers, so I thought. My mother wanted me to be a teacher, her whole family had been teachers. Her brothers, and her father, and she wanted me to be a teacher. I went through all those horrible education classes, that were just dead weight. Then I had to go through practice teaching so I thought I'd take practice teaching in typing. I like to type and I can be a good typing teacher and I had Miss Lowry as my supervisor. So I worked very hard and I was teaching footnotes, and I worked hard to make it a good lesson. You put your thing, your number up here and you have to meet it down here and there are several different ways you can do it, but this is the way. And I made all these samples, got to their class and a little hand went up, I said, "Yes Ruby." I still remember her name, "Yes Ruby, what do you want?" "Miss Hansen, what are all those little numbers for?" I came home and I said, "Mother, I'm not going to be a teacher." She said, "Oh, yes you are." And I said, "No, I would feel completely responsible for every student who didn't learn what I had learned and I'm not going to be responsible for that. I am just going to not teach."

So I had an interview for a teaching job out at Fisher, Illinois and I went praying that they wouldn't even want me. So they said, "You can teach English can't you?" And I said, "Oh, yes." And then they said, "We'd like you to teach French." I had 16 hours of French. I said, "I'm sorry I can't teach French." They said, "Well, you have 16 hours of French." I said, "That doesn't make any difference, I don't know enough French to teach it to anybody else and I won't teach something I don't know." So, they said, "Well, then we can't hire you." So I got out of that and I never applied for another job teaching.

ES: But that was your intent?

MP: No, no. When I went into college what I wanted to do, I wanted to go into management. There was no such thing. Business administration didn't even exist. When I told them I wanted to go into management, they just said, "Well, you'll just have to go into Home Economics." I said, "I don't want Home Economics. I don't like to sew, I don't like to cook and I'm not an artist. I can't do any of the things you have to do in Home Economics. So I don't want to go into Home Economics." Well there's no such thing as Business Administration. I wanted to run a hotel, and that's what I really wanted to do, but there was no place for a woman like that at that time. So I took the course of least resistance, got a Liberal Arts major in English. But you know, to this day, when I open a magazine like *Good Housekeeping*, *McCall's*, and I see the name "Editor in Chief," I think, damn it, I could have been a good editor in chief. You know? I'm not sorry about the life I lived, but I never lived up to a potential that I could have if I could have had the training at the time I needed it. So now young women should be very, very grateful that anything they want to be, they can be.

ES: Did you feel restricted at the time?

MP: Pardon?

ES: Did you feel restricted?

MP: Oh, yes, I felt very restricted!

ES: In what way?

MP: That I couldn't take the kind of courses that I wanted, they didn't exist. The College of Business Administration, they said you can take a course in Accountancy, so I took one course in Accountancy and got a D. They said, of course they thought I was a nice girl, but that was not my field. But I could have been, I would have been in counseling. I would have been good in Business Administration. I could have been good in a lot of things that simply were not available.

ES: To anyone. Men or women?

MP: To anyone. They didn't have business administration even then for men. Hobart just took straight accounting, he said, this is one reason he feels such a great loyalty to the University. He really had some outstanding teachers in Accounting. There were really people who made it possible for him to take a Certified Public Accountants examination and pass it. I mean, it was an outstanding, and of course it still is an outstanding school. Back then, women really didn't have ... maybe if I had been more aggressive I could have done something. But I was not aggressive.

ES: What were other women students doing? What were they majoring in? Or what was the--

MP: Home Economics, English...

ES: And were they there to become teachers?

MP: Yeas, most of them were there to become teachers.

ES: How were they looked upon by faculty–?

MP: Oh, I think as second rate citizens sort of. Even the graduate students that we had, we had far fewer women that entered the graduate school in English in comparison of how many men would apply. But we had some outstanding graduate students, a lot of them went on to president of colleges and heads of departments. I get such a thrill when I get their letters at Christmas time. I really truly loved what I did. It was not spectacular, it was not a Barbara Walters kind of thing, but it was what wanted to do, although I would have loved to do some of the other things. I used to not like Barbara Walters very well but when I stopped to think about what she has done for women in her field, she truly opened the door for all of them, she truly did. I would have like to have had an opportunity to do that to.

ES: Did you have any role models in school? There weren't any women?

MP: No, I didn't have any role models. Well, I had one teacher that was something of a role model, but I really didn't have, no I really didn't, my typing teacher was as much of a role model of anyone I had. Beautiful young woman. And my English teacher, Gertrude Duguid, D-U-G-U-I-D, very, very lovely woman. One semester I was terribly sick. I had a nervous breakdown and I had to be out for the last half of the term, and Mr. Williams said, "Don't worry about it,

don't worry about it, we'll let you take the exams in the summer time when ever you want to." Miss Duguid called me and said, "Are you ready to take your English exam?" And I said yes. "Why don't you just come up to my apartment and take it?" So I went up to her apartment and took my exam.

ES: Did you feel, did undergraduate students feel close to faculty. You talked about graduate students being invited to go to faculty's homes--

MP: Yes, I think they did, fairly close, yes. The graduate students liked their professors. I had one dear professor, it was Professor Secord, he was gentle, sweet man. I have one of his chairs in my other room that he gave me when I retired. He came in one day and sat down, "Miss Hansen," no I was married then, "Mary Kay, I am so tired." And I said, "Oh, Professor Secord, I'm so sorry, I have scheduled you for three doctoral examinations next week." I said, "Let me try and change at least one of them, that's just too heavy a schedule for you." He said, "Oh no, no, that's too much bother to change too many people, I'll be all right." He walked out on the street and dropped dead.

ES: Oh my goodness.

MP: Somebody came into the office and said, "Can you go over and tell Mrs. Secord that her husband has been ambalanced to Carle Hospital." So I went over and picked Mrs. Secord up, of course I knew he was dead, but I just went over and told her that he had been taken by the ambulance and took her over there. But you know. That weighted on my conscience for a long time, you know. There were so many funny professors. There used to be Harry G. Paul, a very popular teacher in American Literature. People just flooded to his courses. One reason, he was a very easy grader. Edith Sweney graded classes for him and she was an easy grader. He was fun, it was a fun course.

ES: He was here in the 30s?

MP: Yes. Then Edith Sweney went home one day and found her son hanging in the garage, he had committed suicide, and next Tuesday she was there to grade papers. I said, "Mrs. Sweney, don't you need some time off?" "No, Mary Kay, time off is not what I need.@ But sensitivity to all the lives of those people, I really enjoyed it, I mean I knew them as people and they knew me as a person. It was really a wonderful 41 years. Yes, wouldn't change any of it. I had an offer, Professor Hook was very instrumental in working with the National Council of Teachers of English, which was a national affair and I always had charge of arranging all the programs that were around that. Every year that had a big conference and I had to arrange all the rooms and lectures and everything for it. I loved doing it. And I knew all of the high school teachers all over the state. So then the National Council decided that they wanted to bring their national office to Champaign, it's still out along Canyon Road, the National Council of Teachers of English. Nick Hook was the President of that and he came in one day and said, AI want to talk to you. We're opening the National Conference Office and I would very much like to take you with me, as my assistant." And I was sorely tempted and I liked Nick Hook very much, we worked together so well, and I thought well maybe it was time, I had been in the English office for nearly 20 years. I came home and I really agonized over it. It was a good opportunity to

have probably a more prestigious job, probably more money, I agonized about it. Hobart said, and I can still remember, "Kay, why don't you quit agonizing? You're not going to leave the English Department." It was as simple as that, and I didn't. But, I have always said, I think God made one mistake. You come to your life and you go like this and you make a very important decision and you go one way. Instead of dying wouldn't it be nice if you could just be born at that point where you made that decision and take that other route and see what would happen?

START OF TAPE 2, SIDE B

MP: I can remember typing at 2 o'clock in the morning and my dad would come down, "Katie, Katie, someday you're going to pay for this." But, he was about 6 foot 3, kind of an austere man, people, children were not comfortable with him, but he was really, really kind, very wonderful. His mother and father had come over from Denmark, his father was a Danish sailor and had sailed around the word 13 times and on the last trip he was making there was a young Danish girl that was on the ship that was coming over to meet her family in Ohio that had immigrated to America several years earlier and they fell in love on the boat and he got off and terminated his contract with the company and they came to Illinois and that chair was his chair, that was his chair. I did know my grandmother she died when I was six. Charming Danish lady, wonderful, you know, I would have like to have had the—. But my grandfather [my mother's father], as I said, was the Superintendent of schools, he would sometimes come to visit us or we'd go to Indiana. One night I had been terribly ill, I had a severe ear infection that the doctor thought it was going to go into mastoids. And he said, tomorrow morning if Mary Katherine isn't better we'll have to take her into the hospital for surgery. That night I woke my mother up, I was probably about 15 years old. I said, "Mother, who do you want to die? Grandpa Armstrong or me?" "Well," she said, "I don't want either one of you to die." I said, "No, you can't tell me that. You have to tell me which one of us you want to die." She said, "You're a very young girl and he's a very old man, he's had a good life, if you have to know, I would rather you live." The next morning we got a telegram, he had died at 2 o'clock. Isn't that weird?

ES: Wow. Yeah, it is.

MP: Whatever, I told my group friends, I really don't want a lot of mourning when I'm gone. You know I have lived such a full life, to me, other people don't think it's very full. My cousin who has traveled around the world a dozen times thinks I lead a very dull life: what's dull to him, to me is fine. But, he wrote my obituary for me, so I took it down and gave it to my church, gave it to my minister, he said, "Well, what about your funeral service?" He was kind of joking. I said, "I'll get it ready for you." I want a memorial service at 11 o'clock. Then after the memorial service I want to go down to our very lovely room, where we have all of our dinners and things, and I want a beautifully catered luncheon for everyone who came to the funeral. That way," I said, "they can come to the 11 o'clock memorial service, have lunch, and go back to work." He said, "You want to get them back to work." I said, "Yes." He asked me, not too long ago, "Have you made the menu yet?" "No, I haven't gotten the—" He said, AI think you better start doing that." Okay. You know, I suppose in some ways I'm a hard headed, stubborn person, but I don't really think it's been to anyone's disadvantage, I really don't. I've given as much money as I can. I've given my energy as much as I have, and what more can you do?

ES: That's right. You've answered so many of my questions. I'm looking at my list to see what I have.

MP: I've babbled on all this time and nothing is of any importance.

ES: No, I've enjoyed it. I did want to ask you, and you were here before he died, Thomas Arkle Clark was the Dean of Men before Fred Turner. Did you have any impression of him?

MP: Yes, I had, I didn't know him. He was the Men's Dean, I had no way of knowing him. Except there was one funny story that went about him. You've probably have heard it, that he had never had sex with his wife. Now whether that was true, no one could ever know that, but that was that funny little story that went around about him, that he wanted to keep his wife a virgin.

ES: Is that right? This circulated among the students? That's what they thought?

MP: Yes.

ES: Tell me again about the Dean of Women. What she was like?

MP: Oh she was, she was at the same time she was the Dean of Women there was a woman who was in charge of the Health Service Station, I can't remember her name, and they lived together. And always of course if two women lived together, are they lesbians? No one ever knew. Personally, I do not think so. Maria Leonard was one of the nicest, normal, kind, thoughtful persons, she was really just a lovely, lovely lady. A good Dean of Women. And when she said, "You're Dean of Women material. I want to make you a Dean of Women." I really felt very flattered that she felt that way about me. She sort of took me under her wing and I was very naive, really, not the least bit sophisticated in any way at all, either from my background or living with students. She taught me a lot about courtesies, a lot about manners, she was just an elegant lady. Really, I don't even know who the Dean of Women is anymore.

ES: They don't have one. They have a Dean of Students. How was she viewed on campus by the students?

MP: Everyone liked her, she was very popular. They made fun of her, in a nice way. She always said girls must sit with their legs properly together, you never sit like this. Well of course, that doesn't look very lady like. And you should never let the fact that you have panties on, they should never be visible. A lot of those funny little things. They did it, really, out of fondness for her, really, but these were her little idiosyncrencies that they liked about her. She was really popular as a Dean with the students, at least I felt that she was. I never will forget, one day, see my mother kept women, girls, at that time, and one day a real pretty little girl came in from West Virginia, shy, just so shy that she could barely speak above a whisper, she said, "I'm coming to summer school here this year, I don't know anybody. Do you know anybody or a place where I could find a room?" "Of course," I said, "Of course I know a place where you can find a room, go to my mother's." And afterward I thought, "Now, am I taking advantage of

my job by doing something I shouldn't be doing by recommend—" it bothered me, was there conflict of interest? I was in the Dean of Women's office and I was recommending my mother's home. But she went over and took a room, and to this day we still exchange cards. You know, she didn't know how to type, but she knit beautifully, I didn't know how to knit. That summer I typed all of her term papers and she knit sweaters for me. You know, there was a give and take. I think this is one of the important things about the years of the Depression and those early years, was the give and take between students, between house mothers, and I think you lose that in the massiveness of it today. There's not any good house mother that's going to cook a big roast beef dinner, so I cherish all of that. I can't sleep at night, I just think of all the things that I enjoy remembering. I just think, I wonder if the people growing up today are going to have as many nice memories, sweet memories, as I have. I am so grateful that I can still remember them.

When I see people with Alzheimers, it breaks your heart. But you know Dean Rogers, every once and a while Elizabeth would say, "Mary Kay could you come over and spend a couple of hours with Bob? I do need to get out and do some shopping." "Oh, Elizabeth, I'm happy to come over and see Bob." He'd meet me at the door, "Oh, Mary Kay," throw his arms around me, said, "Let's go back to my study, we can talk back there better." I'd think, he's all right, there's nothing...then we'd go back and he'd say, AI forgot to ask you Mary Kay, how's Hobart?" You know, I'd want to cry. His wife, Elizabeth, gave me this wonderful angel. She said, AI just saw that in the shop and I thought that reminds me of Mary Kay."

ES: Yeas, that's so nice.

MP: I love you. You know, I could talk to you. You never disagree with me, you look right at me, you don't fuss. I talk to my angels. You'd be surprised how much good it does you to talk. People think I'm crazy, my family in particular, but, I'm blessed with good family, and I'm blessed with a good cleaning girl that I've had for about 13 years. She would just do anything I ask her to do, silly things I want done and she'll do it for me, hanging up my clothes or something like that, but she doesn't mind. And I have a wonderful, wonderful yard man, I don't even have to water my flowers, he does everything for me. You know, it's people like that. And my garbage man, I tell him every time I see him, "You know it's people like you that make it possible for me to live in my own home." And I'm grateful for that. Someone wants me to go out to, what's the name of the place out there? The retirement home. They said, A you don't have to worry about your house, you don't have to worry about your yard. I don't worry about them now! All the things that I do that I don't like to do would have to be done out there. Paying bills, answering letters and all those thing that you have to do in any kind of business at all, I would still have to do those kinds of things. What I need is a good secretary.

ES: Me too.

MP: You know, Professor Goldman, oh he was a wonderful professor. I really love Professor Goldman, he used to write a lot of books and I typed all of them. He always gave me a copy of them. When he reached a point when he had to be in a retirement home his family asked me if I would be his secretary. I went out and I was his secretary for several years, just on a personal basis. Go out three of four times a week and take care of his mail for him and thing like that. So, I've kept in touch with a lot of them. Well, I used to collect all the money for the United

Way. I always had one Professor who came in near the end of the drive and say, "How much do you have? Is that as much as last year?" Then he'd give me a whopping big check to make up the difference. That was Professor Arthur Scott, he was the one from the Carson Piere Scott family, he had money and he was generous with it.

ES: How nice. Can I ask you one more question?

MP: Yes!

ES: I know that Prohibition was lifted in 1933, was that a big deal on campus?

MP: Not to us, it was not a big deal at all.

ES: Your group didn't drink?

MP: No. As far as we were concerned, Prohibition, once and a while my mother would find a beer can or a liquor bottle, but they never brought it in the house through the door. They'd have somebody down at the foot of the driveway and they'd tie a string around it and they'd bring it up through the window.

ES: Were these the boys she kept when you were a girl?

MP: They were when we kept boys. But there were never, ever...When the time that we left campus and moved out to Mayfair, which was 40 years ago, the campus had become so noisy on weekends that we could no longer tolerate it. Friday nights and Saturday nights you simply got no sleep. I just think when we were in Stockholm, the guide said, "Be very careful, do not drop a tissue, do no drop a candy bar wrapper on the street. If you do you will be picked up. There's a fine, a very heavy fine, so don't do it." And our group adhered to what he said. Why, what bothers me about the University is that they have let the students start running the University. When I was in school you could only have a car if you were married or if you had a job that required you have a car to get there. Okay, now anybody can have a car, so they have this horrible, horrible parking problem. Back then, if you lit a cigarette on campus and you put it out on the ground and the police saw you, you were expelled from school. You were expelled.

ES: You were allowed to smoke though?

MP: Not on the campus. Not on the campus. No where on that campus green could you, on the Quad, could you smoke. I think it applied everywhere, but the Quad particularly, you could not smoke on the Quad, but if you did, you were penalized. Now, anyone can do anything. Students can drop whatever they want on the ground. Why don't they say, "If we see you drop something on the ground, either you stoop and pick it up or you pay a penalty for it." Why does the University, that is offering this wonderful service to students, why do we have to tolerate what they want to make of the campus. I am ashamed to go to the campus anymore. Walking down Daniel Street, walking down Green Street, all that litter, there is no excuse for that at all. And why the University, it seems to me that our University is great enough, we have enough prestige,

that if you do not want to abide by the laws that we have, they go somewhere else. And if I had anything to do with ruling it, there would be a lot stricter laws. They say, "Oh you can't do that with kids now." Damn it you can, you say that this is it. You know, you can. You can't come to our University if you're going to be a drunkard, or if you're going to drop things all over the floor and be a mess yourself. We don't want you. There are enough students who would want to come to a place where that sort of thing didn't exist. We don't have to take that kind of people. I really think that our University is much to lax. I really do.

ES: You think the rules were more strict back when you were–?

MP: Oh, girls had to be in at 10:30 at night on weekends they could be out until 11. I mean, my mother locked that door.

ES: What did you do if you were late?

MP: If you were late, you had to call her on the phone, explain why you were late, and she would unlock the door and you were reprimanded very unpleasantly. You simply didn't do it. I mean, this is what I can't understand about people who are raising children. Ok, like my mother when I wasn't making good grades, you're on your own. You either do what you are capable of doing—I don't understand the lack of willingness to say, "This has to be the way it's going to be." I mean, some things are right and some things are wrong. And dropping things on the ground is wrong, so if you do it you're going to be penalized. If we did that, and enough students had to pay a $50 fine—

ES: It would be a lot cleaner.

MP: Yes. I mean, where is there pride. I mean, if I take out a piece of candy with a little tiny wrapper, I would no more think of dropping it on the ground. I would either put it in my pocket or drop it in my purse, bring it home and put it in the wastebasket. Why can't the University standards start in the first grade setting standards. My first grade teacher set standards. And they say you can't do it in this day and age, well you can't if you don't start. You know, kids who have cars. What do you need a car for? You live close to the campus, you eat your meals in the dormitory, what do you need a car for? Have you got a good reason to have a car? Are you working somewhere that you have to drive to jobs? No? No reason I need a car. So then why do you have one? Oh well you can't do that. Well of course you can't after you've let it go all that time. But if you'd start at the beginning without first letting everybody have cars, they wouldn't have had this problem. I was very, I wouldn't say bitter because that's not the right word, I was very upset that the University didn't have enough guts to say, "Look, if you don't need a car than you're not going to have one."

ES: When do you think that exploded?

MP: Oh, they've had cars for I don't know how long. Longer than I can remember. But, they wouldn't have had to have had. There are colleges in the East that don't have cars. You know, if you don't have a real reason for having one then you don't need one. My feeling is now that the University is much to lax. They're beginning to try and control bars and that sort of thing

and they're really trying to do it. But I think they're starting too late to really be effective. They should have done this umpteen years ago.

ES: Did you notice a change between, back when you were in school here, between when Thomas Arkle Clark was Dean of Men and there were lots of rules–?

MP: Yes, you know we never had drunken parties back on the weekends back then. That sort of thing.

ES: Yeah, but I just wondered if you noticed a change when President Chase came to the campus?

MP: I don't know when the change came. I think it was when, I really think it began to change when Stoddard came. He was a much more liberal president than presidents before had been. I think that Henry was one of our greatest presidents, he was a true gentleman and a scholar. Now, and this is a viscous thing to say, but I feel it's the truth, now presidents, and most of them, are really high geared money makers. Everything is geared at getting money. We didn't used to have that at all. I mean when Hobart and I first joined the Presidents Council 25 or 30 years a go, it was an rather unusual thing, it was not a big deal, we didn't have, there's so much emphasis, now don't misunderstand me, I am very proud of our people who graduated from here and have been very successful and have felt, as Hobart has felt that they want to give millions of dollars to the University, I think that is wonderful. But I think the University now is slanting so much toward that that you begin to feel that what does this University want from me? Anything other than my money? You know, isn't there loyalty, isn't there love of a people you have worked with, isn't there appreciation of the stature that those people have had, doesn't that count for anything? Doesn't that fact that I adored Dean Rogers and Dean Peltason, doesn't that count for anything if I can't give you a million dollars. The slant is becoming much too commercial, and it is making people like me, like I am, who doesn't have a million dollars to give you, well, so what, I'm just another graduate. And it is the wrong emphasis, and it bothers me a little. Because you can't go back again, I know, what is, is. But somehow if the University could start giving more recognition just to very ordinary people who love the University without expecting a million dollars. Does that make sense?

ES: Uh-huh.

MP: We're getting, like AT&T, that broke up so many years ago, now we're getting broke up again into four pieces, things just get out of balance. I think the University has to be very careful in the future that it doesn't concentrate so much, every time I get something from the Foundation, which is fine, and I appreciate it, and I appreciate the people that give and I am not jealous of them, I think of the hundreds of people who do things and are not recognized. If they could find very ordinary people and say, "Let's give them some recognition."

ES: That would be nice, I agree.

MP: Now, we don't give enough recognition to scholars, always. So, but I still love the University.

ES: Well, I want to say, it looks like we're coming to the end of the tape here. I want to thank you so much, it has been very interesting.

MP: I probably haven't given you any information!

ES: You have, yes.

MP: Have I? Well—.

END OF INTERVIEW.